

Design Resource

## Cotton Sari Weaving - Yadgiri, Karnataka

Handloom Fabrics

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B.  
NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/cotton-sari-weaving-yadgiri-karnataka>



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## Introduction

The sari is one of the most primitive styles of unstitched garment used since Indus Valley Civilization, being a precursor for the patterns created even today. Over the millennia, it has not only become an aesthetic wear for women, but also a canvas for weavers and printers to make artistic patterns, prints, and jeweled embellishments. According to legends, both the cotton fiber and the art of weaving reached India from the Mesopotamian civilization. Hence the civilians from the contemporary Indus Valley Civilization were familiar with the fibers and wore long loin cloths. Many other civilizations also found women wearing these loin cloths around their waist, leaving the upper body bare, except in cold climate when animal skins or woolen shawls were used. Their style of draping was generally in Kachcha style, in which after the cloth goes around the waist, the person takes one end of the cloth or the center pleat between the legs and tucks it up behind for free movement of the lower body and the legs. Early history records that this style of clothing was not only limited to Mesopotamia or the Indus Valley but was common to Egypt, Sumer, and Assyria. Archives underline the role of Aryans too, who after moving southwards from north India, adopted the practice of wearing cotton cloths, structurally similar to the Indus Valley clothing style. Medieval India was also moved by all these rich influences, hence the royal families preferred the finest cotton fabrics that induct in their splendor. Hence the works of the master weavers were greatly looked upon by the craftsmen of coming ages, for their detailing and metal embellishments. Therefore Indian textile art is still held high in the annals of trade around the world.

Traditionally, the dyes used for giving colour to the saris were made out of materials from nature like turmeric, indigo plant, nuts, flowers, fruits, and even barks of trees. The colourful designs were printed using wooden blocks carved with fashionable motifs traveled to India from France, Portugal, and England. The Indian motifs were rich and elaborate while the European motifs were more gentle and simple, making the Indian version more authentic and precious for its minute details. Though after Industrialization, these traditional weavers encountered a set back with the advent of power looms and mechanized printing. The greatest heritage the Indian textile weaving gave to its natives was the sari that measures to five and a half meters in length and about one and one-eighth meters in width. Interestingly, even with each new advancements in textile technology, the sari could still maintain its place as the most well-accepted clothing among women. In India, various cities are known after their sari type and the weaving or printing technique used. Also, vice versa, where types of saris are named after its place of origin. Yadgiri, a place from the Indian state of Karnataka is one such art center famous for its traditional sari making techniques.

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A main artisan from the Yadgiri Garment center is an MPCON Limited (Bhopal) Certified Fashion Designer.



Craftsmen at the workplace.



A woman artisan posing in front of the Weaving machine.



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Women artisans assisting in weaving and spinning activities.



A warp with multi-coloured border threads (Red, green, yellow, orange, gold colours).

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## Tools and Raw Materials

The following are the tools and raw materials used for Cotton Saree Weaving:

- **Pure Cotton:** It is the basic raw material used for sari weaving.
- **Threads:** Cotton threads are used in weaving process.
- **Dyeing Colours:** The cotton threads are dyed as per the colour combinations and designs of the sari to be woven.
- **Dyeing Machine:** It is used to dye the threads in large quantities at a time.
- **Warping Wheel:** Cotton threads are reeled on the warping wheel.
- **Weaving Loom:** Small loom is used to weave sari and big looms to weave bedspreads and other fabrics.
- **Fly Shuttle:** This tool helps to carry the cotton threads through the warp sheds (opening of the warp) which are interlocked in the spindle.
- **Reed:** Reed helps in the thread jointing process.
- **Spinning Machine:** Spinning wheels are used to prepare spools and spindles.
- **Reeling Machine:** It is used to prepare spools in large numbers.
- **Spools and Spindles:** Spools are used while warping and spindles are used while weaving.
- **Bobbins:** The coloured yarns are wound on bobbins before warping.

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Gold coloured Cotton thread reeled and stored for the weaving process.

The reeling machine used to reel cotton threads on to bobbins.



The stone used as a weight to keep a side of the weaving machine tight and intact.



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Saree Design patterns.



Fly-shuttle loaded with a spindle.



A weaving machine inside an artisan's work area.



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The wheel that helps tighten the weaving machine.



Wooden spool soaked in water.



A set of gold-coloured spools stored in a water bottle.

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## Making Process

### Dyeing:

Before starting with weaving, the cotton yarns are subjected to a kind of dyeing process; often a cold water method. In this firstly, cotton yarns are dipped into a soap solution and taken back. Later after adding the intended colour dye to the same solution, the yarn is again dipped so that it absorbs the colour well. Then they are left to rest until a rod is used to squeeze out excess water from the yarn. Once done, the dyed yarns are dried in the sun; this makes the cold water dyeing.

### Spinning:

Once differently coloured cotton threads are ready after dyeing, spindles are prepared out of it. Spindles are made according to the artisan's colour, design, and pattern preferences for the sari to be woven. Later they are interlocked in the flying shuttle and using a charkha spinning wheel, the threads are spun so as to ensure no breakages in threads, ultimately helping an easy weaving process.

### Warping:

Warping involves the stretching of threads. Hereafter spinning, the cotton threads are reeled into a round-shaped wooden machine where they are stretched and tied at two opposite ends. During the process, the cotton threads are also checked for damages and then finally spun to a warp beam using heddles and a foot pedal. This warp beam is thus moved for the final stage of weaving.

### Weaving:

At most of the traditional weaving centers, still, the saris are woven on handloom machines. Here firstly, the flying shuttle is passed through the warp shed to progress the weaving. This is the stage where multi-coloured spindles are used in a particular order to attain intended designs and texture to the saris. For colourful borders, the threads are included in the selvage along with the main warp area.

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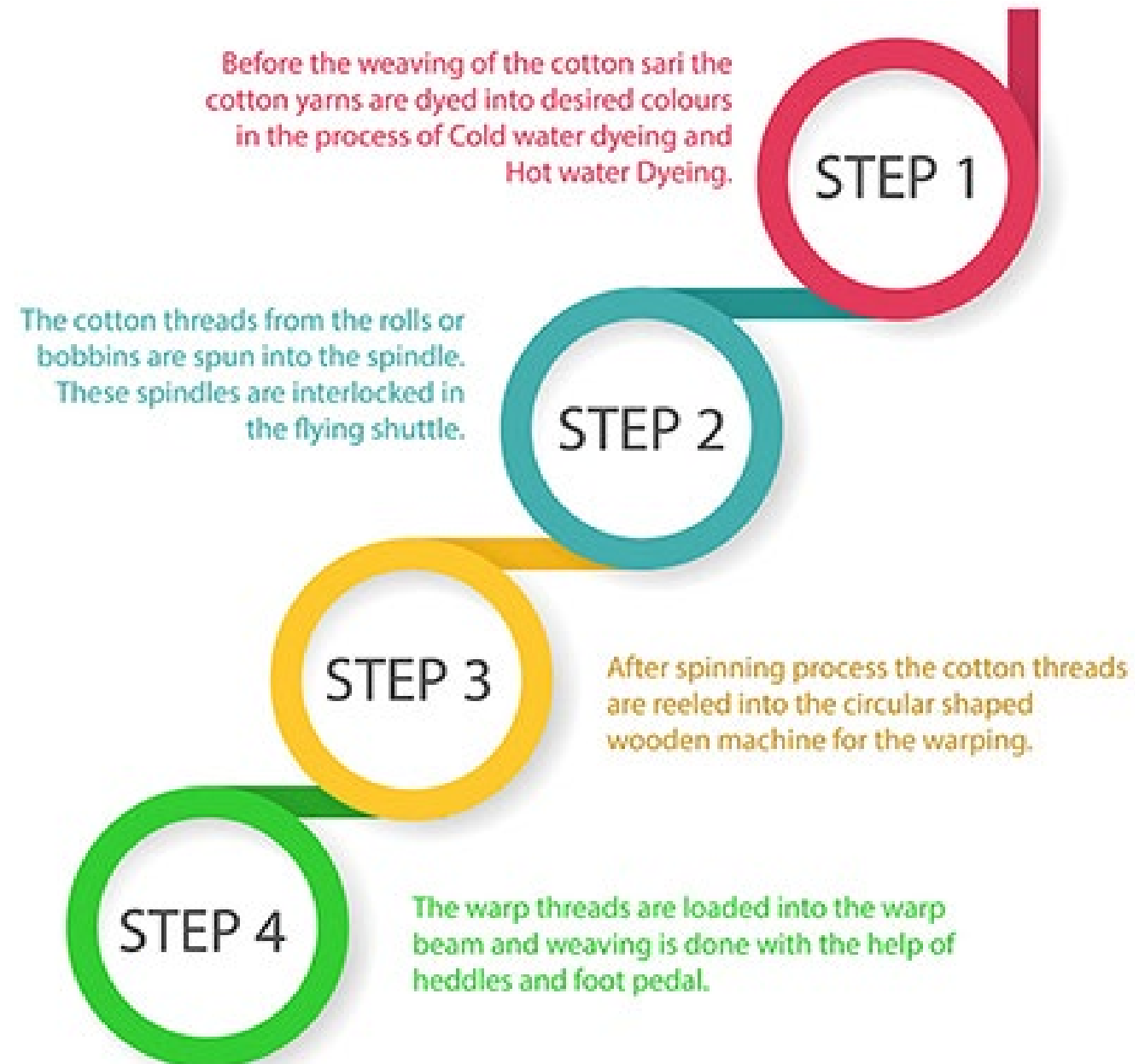
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Flow Chart:



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A woman artisan engaged in the traditional spinning process.

A copper colour thread spun on spools for the weaving process.



An artisan at work of weaving a cotton sari.



A spool wrapped with threads set inside a fly shuttle.



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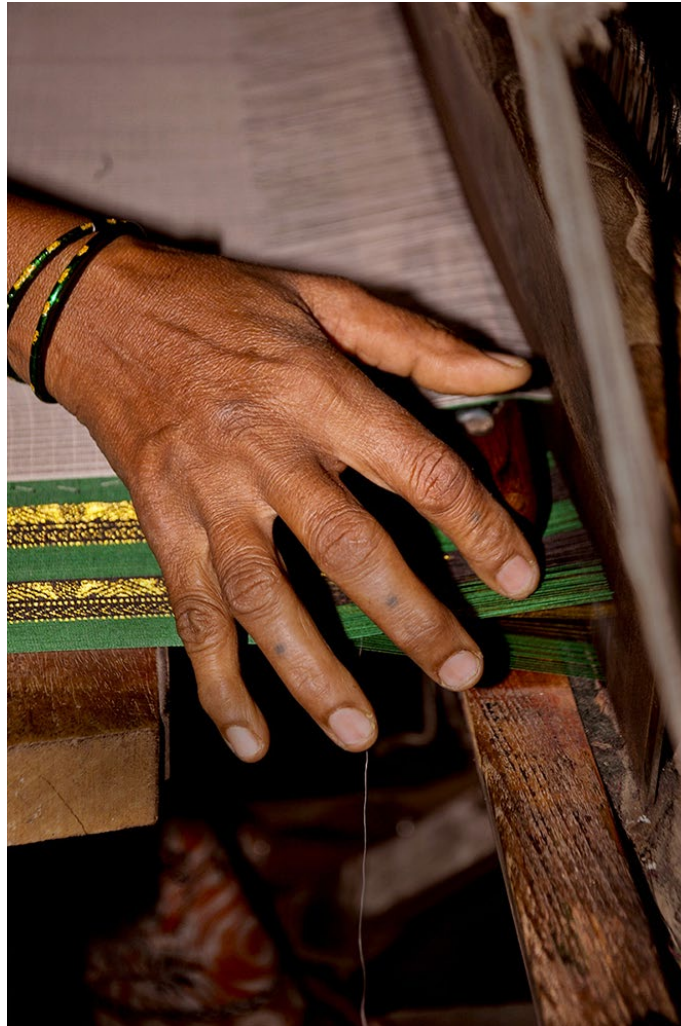
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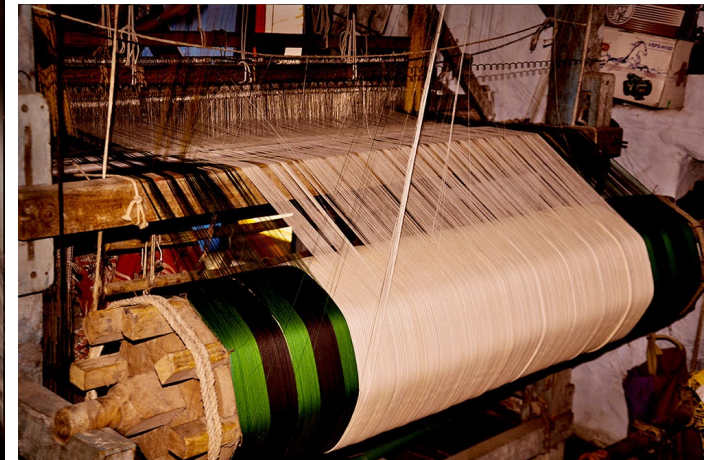
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Fly-shuttle with spindle set to pass through the warp.



Once the fly shuttle is passed through the warp, the beater is pulled by the artisan to join threads.



Artisan wrapping coloured threads on the weaving machine beam.



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A glimpse of the weaving process, where green and gold-coloured threads are entwined.



In case of any broken thread, while weaving, they are joined on the spot with hands and the process is resumed back.



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Pedaling helps in opening and closing warp shed to facilitate weaving.



The first photo shows a woman artisan weaving a cotton sari and another wrapping.



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Woman artisan assisting in spinning, warping as well as weaving.



The warp threads being loaded into the loom for the weaving process.



A weaver engaged in the making of cotton saris.

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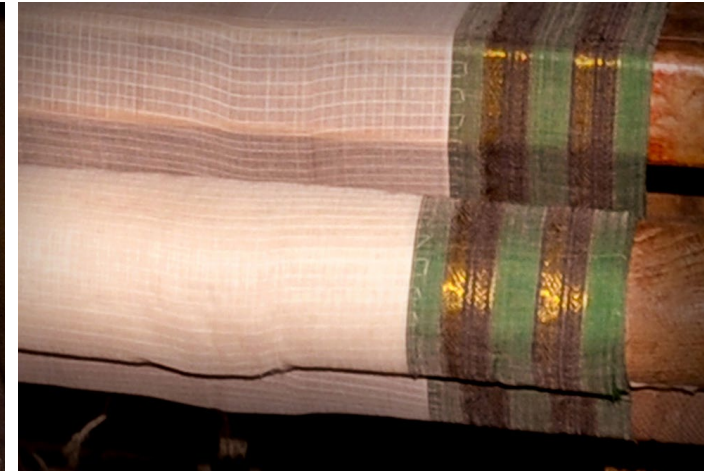
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## Products

At the weaving unit, one sari roll is made with a day's efforts and this roll holds 60 saris, each measuring 6 meters in length. Here the price of the products supplied to traders ranges from 300 INR to 600 INR.



A copper-coloured sari with gold and green border.



A white coloured sari with gold and green border.

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## Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B. at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

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You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

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