

Design Resource

Kase Seere and Jewellery of Yakshagaana

The Making of Costumes and Jewellery
by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Abhishek Ganeshgudi,
Tushar Barman and Mahendra Patidar
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/kase-seere-and-jewellery-yakshagaana>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
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Introduction

Yakshagaana is the traditional and famous folk art theatre form of Karnataka. The colourful costumes of Yakshagaana play a very important role in this particular folk art form. Traditional “Kase Seere” (sari) is used as the main Vastra (costume) of Yakshagaana during the stage performance by artists. Udupi, Mangalore and Suraktal areas of Karnataka are the main centers for Yakshagaana sari weaving.

Weaving is done similar to other weaving techniques except for the design and colours used. Pure cotton threads are dyed and warp is prepared. The warp is then loaded into the loom for weaving processes. Production of Yakshagaana sari is limited and done only in Mangalore and Suraktal as the sari is the traditional wear of Yakshagaana from the early days. Weaving is done in basic frame looms without any jacquard technique as the sari has traditional check patterns and a simple border.

Importance of Yakshagaana Jewellery:

Karnataka is one of the well-known places for traditional folk art and culture in India. The famous folk stage or theatre drama performed in many regions of Karnataka mainly in Udupi, Dakshina Karnataka, Uttara Karnataka traditionally known as Aata, Bayalata in local names. Nowadays, Yakshagaana is popularized in other countries as well due to its cultural value. Yakshagaana is famed for its unique costumes, makeup and jewellery. The ornaments consist of headgears, armlets, belts, neck chains etc.

Yakshagaana artists practice the traditional art for several years (probably since their childhood) to become experts in dialogue delivery, singing and dancing. The performance portrays the story of mythological episodes in parts. The Purana (epics) episodes can be according to their choice. A singer and a musician (to play the tabla) together called as Bhagavatharu will accompany the play. The performing artist dances and explains in dialogues when the background song is going on.

In earlier days, the stage used to be decorated by the costume makers, and they're used to be a minimum of 6 pillars of coconut tree trunks and the whole stage used to be divided into three segments. The front most of the stage was called as “Bramhasabhe” (which was the place for the experienced and well-versed artists). The center of the stage was for the performing artists and finally, the last portion of the stage was for the Bhagavatharu.

The ornaments, makeup and costumes are the essentials in Yakshagaana performance. The makeup and clothing range from simple to ornamental costumes according to the characters. The demon characters are specified with intricate face paint designs done with natural colours. Red, black, white, yellow, and green are the main colours used in face makeup. The costumes and jewellery are designed with glittering gold, black coloured wool balls and attractive red colour costumes.

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Senior artisans are involved in the training process.



The warp of Yakshagaana sari is being inspected by weaver.



Artisan demonstrating jewellery wearing method.

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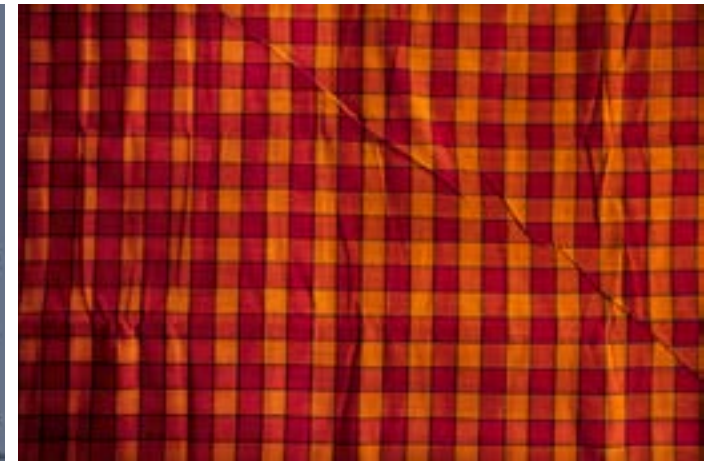
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Types of costumes and jewellery were worn by traditional Yakshagaana performers.



Traditional Yakshagaana sari has 29 check box patterns across the width.



Dark vibrant colour spindles (only red, black and yellow) are used in weaving the sari according to the designs.

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Artisans displaying folded Yakshagaana Kase Seere (sari).



The Master craftsperson for jewellery making for Yakshagaana.

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Headgear decorated with gold foil and mirror work.



Blend of dark red, black and golden colour combined with glass ornamentation.

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The head picture of a Yakshagaana performer.



The portrait of a Yakshagaana Performer.

References:

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Tools and Raw Materials



Sari Weaving



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Sari Weaving

Different types of tools and raw materials used for Yakshagaana sari weaving are as below:

Cotton:

Pure Cotton is the basic material used in weaving process to make traditional Yakshagaana sari.

Floor Looms:

A permanent loom structure is constructed using wooden logs and wooden frames. There is no jacquard machine attached for additional design patterns as the sari does not contain any sophisticated design on it. It has traditional checks of two combinational colours.

Spinning Wheel:

The cotton yarn bundle is coloured and spun to make spindles. This process is done with the help of a spinning wheel.

Spindles:

The cotton spindles are further inserted into a fly shuttle, to weave the weft of a sari.

Bamboo Spool:

The tool is made of bamboo splits and it works as a spool. It is used to reel the cotton yarn from the bundle. This spinning initially, from cotton bundles to spool.

Warping Tools:

Bamboo poles of different sizes and wooden logs are used in the warping process.

Dye Colours:

Fabric dye colours are used to colour cotton bundles. Red, yellow and black are the colours used in the entire process.

Fly-Shuttle:

This is used to process the weft through the opening of the warp shed. These shuttles are ordered from Gujarat.

Starch:

Natural starch is made of Maida to apply on the cotton threads for stiffness.

Sizing Brush:

A big brush is used to apply starch on the warp threads. This is done to separate and stiffen the cotton threads.

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Coloured cotton warp loaded in the loom.



Different types of tools are used in the warping process.



Bobbins of dyed cotton thread.



Fly shuttles with a spindle.

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The wooden tray is used for storing starch.



Fire is used to dry the cotton threads after starching.



Charka (Spinning wheel) is used to spin the bobbins into spindles.



The weaver is putting a wooden tool (like a yardstick) to keep the width of the woven sari uniform.

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Jewellery Making

Different types of tools and raw materials used for making Yakshagaana Jewellery are as below:

Lightwood:

Weightless wood is the base used in ornament making. The shape to be made is cut as per the required design.

Lac:

Lac is used to coating over the light wood base. This helps to emboss the motif designs of the ornaments.

Decorative Elements:

Kundan, gold shaded beads, mirrors and precious stones are used to embellish all ornaments of Yakshagaana.

Gold and Silver foil:

Artificial gold and silver foil is used to coat on the surface of ornaments.

Coloured Wool:

Red and black colour wool balls are used to decorate the corners of headgears and chest guards.

Artificial Pearls:

Different colours of artificial pearls are used to make necklaces, long chains, earring chains and bracelets.

Glittering Ribbons:

Colourful glittering ribbons like red, and white, (a half-inch) are used to embellish headgear.

Peacock Feathers:

Few headgears are embellished with peacock feathers on the crown.



An enormous moustache is worn by the male characters in Yakshagaana.

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Artificial hair- generally worn by males during the performance as per the character demands.



The golden foil is used in decorating the jewellery.

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The silver foil is used in decorating the jewellery.



Flower design motifs were used while designing the jewellery.

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Lac is used as a base while making jewellery.



Different parts of jewellery are carved separately.

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Making Process



Sari Weaving



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Sari Weaving

The process followed for weaving of sari includes

- Dyeing
- Spinning
- Sizing
- Weaving

Dyeing Process:

The process starts by dyeing cotton yarn. Pure white cotton yarn is coloured by putting it into the colour dye bath. Traditionally, three colours are used in the dyeing process to colour the cotton i.e., red, yellow and black. The yarn is boiled at a high temperature in the dye bath for more than 30 minutes. Once the yarn absorbs even colour, it is taken out from the container and dried under shade to avoid colour fading. After colouring, the yarn is sent to the spinning process.

Spinning Process:

The spinning is done by using Charkha (the spinning wheel). After colouring, the yarn is spun to make spindles. These spindles are used in the weaving process by inserting them in a fly-shuttle to act as weft threads. Red and yellow colour threads are spun separately to prepare spindles. The artisan uses these red and yellow spindles as per the requirement to create check patterns.

Sizing Process:

After preparing the length of the warp which can make three saris at a time, It is loaded onto the loom for weaving. The length of the warp (27 meters approximately) is stretched and connected between two beams. One end in the weaver's side (Take-up beam) and the other end is far from the weaver (Let-off beam). Breakages and entangles in the warp are cleared and knotted. Warp threads are coated with starch made of Farina (Maida powder and water) to make the warp threads stiff, shine and separate. Once starching is over, the warp threads are slightly warmed by giving the heat of firewood. This process helps to make threads strong and ensures easy weaving. Care is taken so that the fire does not catch the threads.

Weaving Process:

Weaving is done on the frame loom. Warp threads and weft threads are interwoven by processing weft with fly-shuttle. The shuttle passes through the openings of the warp shed and interweaves with warp threads. Thus weave is formed and the woven cloth is wound onto the take-up beam. A traditional check pattern is obtained as the warp threads are arranged in an alternate bunch of red and yellow coloured threads during the sizing process. Kase Seere for Yakshagaana is woven only in Udupi by skilled and experienced artisans to maintain traditional aspects intact.

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The warp threads are attached to the take-up beam.



The warp threads are attached to the take-up beam.



Wooden sticks (Lease) are inserted in the warp of threads for tightness and to keep the 2 sets of thread separate.



Weaver is inserting the Spindle in the fly shuttle.

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The warp is heated to dry the starch.



Artisan makes sure the warmth of fire by placing his hand on top of cotton thread.



After applying starch, brushing helps to separate the starched threads.



Final adjustment of warp before weaving.

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Artisan weaving on the traditional frame loom.

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Weaver is Verifying and mending the broken threads.



Thread from spool taken to mend the broken ends.



Artisan checking the stiffness of starched threads.



The wooden stick (yardstick) is fixed to the woven part of the sari for tightness and to maintain the uniform width.

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The woven sari is rolled to the take-up beam, which is near the pedal.



Kase Seere (Yakshagaana sari) undergoes a traditional folding process.



Sari is folded in equal two half facing both borders.



Saris is systematically folded and sent for marketing.

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Jewellery Making

Ornaments are made out of colourful stones, kundan, mirror works and weightless wood. The wood is covered with gold foil to give a more lustrous look to headgear, armlets, anklets and chest guards. Mirror works are decorated on the ornaments to give enhanced reflection. As the traditional Yakshagaana play happens at night, the glittering, striking golden sheen and mirrors of the costumes enhance the beauty of the attires.

Headgears:

Headgear is locally called as Kirita (Crown). It is the prominent part of the costume of Yakshagana. The thick stiff base is made of light wood by coating it with lacquer. Other ornamentation work is done on the surface of the base. Especially, the borders of headgears are embellished with glass, gold coloured beads and mirrorwork. Finally, coloured wool is stitched to the corners of the headgear. Different headgears are made in a different styles to represent king, queen, hero and demons.

Chest Guard:

The chest guards are made by using a metal sheet or lacquer. The motif designs are embossed on the sheet and imitation gold leaf is coated on the surface. The corners are decorated with wool balls of black and red colour. The same technique is used to make armlets and waist belts.



Wood coated with lac is embellished with gold foil.



Colourful beads are added to the jewellery to enhance the look.

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Sharp tools are used to fix the foil on the jewellery surface.



Thick cotton cloths are coiled to make headgears.

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Cotton threads are used to tighten the coiled cloth.

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Artisan measuring the required shape of the headgear.



After measuring, the base of the headgear is tightened to retain the shape.



Grass fiber rope is tied at the edge.

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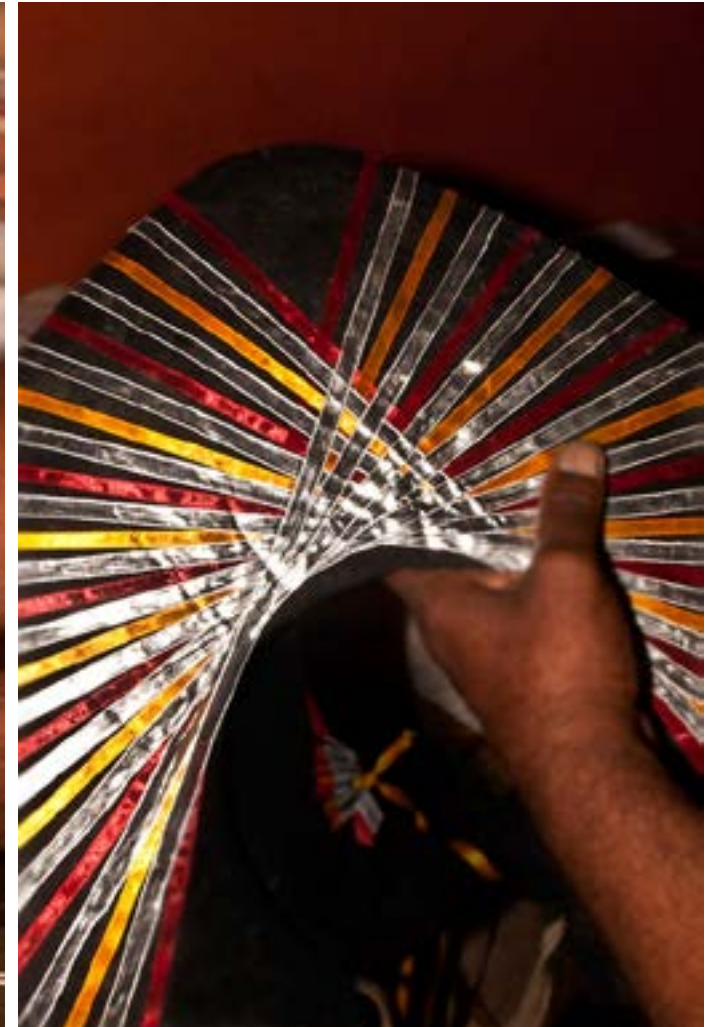
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The final tying is done with a small rope.



The cotton base is covered with black cloth and embellished with colourful satin ribbons.

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Costume and Jewellery

Traditional Yakshagaana Sari and its Uniqueness:

“Kase Seere” (sari) is a traditional wear for Yakshagaana artists during their performances. The length of the sari ranges from 8 to 9 yards and the width is 50 inches, is made for female roles. Where in the same sari can be worn like a dhoti for male roles also i.e., king, demon, and hero roles. The border – traditionally called Kinara is woven with a count of 720 threads. The check pattern has 29 checkboxes in two combinational colours (red and yellow). Black coloured cotton thread is used only in the body of sari, whereas the border is plane with two-line patterns woven with zari (thread made of imitation gold and silk).

Traditional Jewellery Products:

The ornaments consist of objects like:-

- Tadpe Kirita (Headgears):

These are the crowns, which give rich look to the character. There are ranges of headgears, which are selected and worn according to the type of role-playing. There are different headgears that vary to Ravana, Hero, king, queen and demon. The main colours seen in sophisticated headgears are red, gold and black.

- Buja Keerthi (Armlets):

It is worn to give a more enchanting look to the shoulders. These are decorated with gold foil coated conical shaped beads.

- Dabu or Santa Patti (Belts):

It is tied to the waist, which is decorated with gold foil. The designs and size vary for male and female roles.

- Gheajjea (Anklets):

This is one of the important objects tied to both ankles.

- Edehara or Edipadaka (Chest Ornament):

It is worn on the chest, which covers the upper part of the body, is made of wood and is covered with golden foil.

- Pagade Headgear:

It is another type of headgear decorated with glittering small ribbons over black background. Males wear Pagade, wherein females wear a smaller version of Pagade.

Design Resource

Kase Seere and Jewellery of Yakshagaana

The Making of Costumes and Jewellery
by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Abhishek Ganeshgudi,
Tushar Barman and Mahendra Patidar
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/kase-seere-and-jewellery-yakshagaana/costume-and-jewellery>

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Buja Keerthi - to decorate arms.

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Vera Kase - worn at the waist.



Karna Pathra - worn to the ears.



Inner view of Buja Keerthi.

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Kirita - Worn according to the lead characters played.

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Different types of Yadhea Kattu.



An artificial flower is worn by a male depicting a female.



Headgear decorated with peacock feathers.

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Yadhea Kattu - decorated with leaf motifs.



Antique headgear.



Kaal Kadaga - tied above the ankles.



Ghejea - Traditional anklets (Ghungroo in Hindi) tied to the ankle and commonly worn by all the characters.

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Close-up view of the antique headgear.



Mask made of POP depicting Ganesha.



Lion face mask.

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Tiger and Bear face mask.



Traditional Kase seere with check borders.



The border is plain with zari lines.

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Abhishek Ganeshgudi, Tushar Barman and Mahendra Patidar at [NID, Bengaluru](#)

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