



# BENGAL SARI

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**ABSTRACT:** This article is about the saris of West Bengal. The entire work is based on the secondary data collecting from websites etc. Traditionally sari came from many different regions in India and sari is a garment that is weaved with many threads of within Indian culture. Every state has its own variety of different fabric of saris like Benarasi silk sari, Patola sari, Kanjeevaram silk sari and much more, these famous Indian saris are crafted in a special way using different fabrics and embroidery techniques where else, in the modern world saris are looked at the style statement or a fashion piece, it is fashionable as well as trendy Sari is primarily long piece of cloth that is unstitched and usually 6 yards length and is draped in a particular pattern. Sources of inspiration: the Bengali sari both Baluchari and tant are highly inspired by the rich Indian culture and are definitely a symbol of Bengal which is famous not in the country but across the world.

**KEYWORDS:** Bengal, saris, Baluchari, Tant.

## INTRODUCTION:

The Baluchari saris from Bengal have been awarded the status of being the 'Geographical Indication of India'. The Tant saris are woven all over West Bengal such as Hoogly, Nadia and Murshidabad can be regarded as the hubs of these saris. The weaving methods used for making these saris are traditional and the outcome is a light and colourful. The Baluchari saris are mainly manufactured in Murshidabad. The Baluchari saris are either made from Baluchari silk or from cotton.

The Tant saris are made from cotton thread and have a distinguishing feature of being light and somewhat transparent. Time brings change and there have been significant changes in the making process of these saris as well. When you take a closer look at the Baluchari sari then it will be found that more and more eco-friendly methods are being used to make these saris. The organic Baluchari saris use things such as used yarns as well as colours during the manufacturing process. The Tant saris too have evolved with time and their popularity level has only increased. The modern Tant saris have various patterns on them and some of them also depict modern art. Each Baluchari sari takes almost a week to complete and the final piece screams style and elegance. They have been a mark of aristocracy since the beginning. The Tant saris, on the other hand, are quite affordable and ideal for summers and especially for the humid climates as they are light and made from cotton. The Baluchari saris are usually made from silk and can be worn all year long. The Tant saris as discussed earlier are the best suited for the hot and humid weather condition.

Unique designs, unmatched craftsmanship make cotton or the Tant saris of West Bengal, such popular. They come in a wide variety, each with intricate texture, flawlessness and a unique style of ornamentation. Tant shilpa is commonly known as the art of weaving. Cotton saris in Bengal has been driving its inspiration from the fabrics exclusively found in this regions- Burdwan, Shantipur, Phulia, Bankura, Dhonekali and much more. Some popular saris produced in Bengal are Shantipuri, Donekali, Jamdani, Tant, and Tangail. Atpur in the Hooghly district was also known as the handloom industry for their unique variety of saris. Traditionally, Atpur handloom saris are weaved by making use of cotton threads that are popular because of their lightness and transparency being a breathable fabric, these are used for daily.

**West Bengal rich tradition of Handloom Weaving:** It is a part of its cultural heritage. The textile products of Bengal have attracted not only national but also worldwide attention and bear the timeless legacy of our cultural heritage. Jamdani' and 'Tangail' are two pioneer saris in the field of heritage handloom products of Bengal handloom. Jamdani' - the great characteristic of fine art in hand weaving derived from a "PERSION" word 'JAM' meaning a 'cup' and 'DANI' denotes the 'container'. Jamdani style of weaving flourished under the benign, rich and enlightened patronage of kings and emperors. It may be considered as a textile of excellence for its super fine qualities in the fifteenth & sixteenth centuries. Excellence in weaving lies in the virtuosity of forms drawn from the social, religious and natural environment and translated through a particular technique and the weaver's sensitivity to create a new art form. 'Tangail' was originated from Tangail, a district of present Bangladesh. Previously it was named as "Begum Bahar" where silk warp and cotton weft were used. Later on, both cotton warp and weft were in vogue. The weaver mainly of 'BASAK' community who migrated from Tangail district before partition of our country & settled in 'Katwa' Dhatrigram, Tamaghata, Samudragarh, area in Burdwan district. At present, silk Tangail saris have been revived. The technique of drawing and weaving for figured Tangail saris is more or less identical to Jamdani saris. Unlike Jamdani, two plain picks instead of a single pick are inserted for figured design.

Silks of Bengal were much acclaimed over the world since ancient times. The most well known Bengal silk sari is Baluchari sari - a production of exclusive design and fabulous weaving technique. A revival in recent time of both the Baluchari and another outstanding traditional Bengal sari - "Daccai" has led to nationwide and world wide popularity and interest in Bengal silks. Like silks cotton saris are also woven in a fascinating and exquisite range. The Daccai Jamdani is a fabric on which designs are raised in inimitable style. Handloom still remains the great employer of rural sector in Bengal. 3.5 lakhs handlooms exist in West Bengal till date. Santipur, Fulia in Nadia district, Dhaniakhali, Begampur in Hooghly district, Samudragarh, Dhatrigram, Katwa, Ketugram in Burdwan district, Bishnupur in Bankura district are the mainly handloom concentrated areas in the state of West Bengal.

### Emphasis Areas

- Sustainable employment to weavers and workers.
- Modernisation of looms.
- Encourage new designs.
- Enhancement of export.
- Skill up- gradation of weavers any workers.
- Enabling weavers- workers - entrepreneurs to develop a global vision and competitive spirit.
- Strengthening value chain from fibre to retailing market.
- Facilitating development of diversified apparel segment for both export and domestic market.
- Encouraging production of niche production in handlooms.
- Establishment of common facility centre for fabric dyeing processing and finishing
- Removal of credit related bottle necks.
- Development industrial infrastructure through private - public partnership.
- Management and monitoring of development programmes through special purpose vehicle formed by stake holders.
- Restructuring of state owned spinning mills for serving the textile industry in a better way.
- Introduction of West Bengal incentive scheme 2007 for micro and small scale enterprises to offer special package of incentives for textile units

Directorate is responsible for development and promotion of handloom, power loom, hosiery, and readymade garment industries in decentralized sector services. As it started earlier that since the early plan period co-operative society has been regarded as the best agency for implementing development schemes and therefore prime thrust has been given to Co-operativisation of artisans in the said industries. To facilitate registration of such co-operatives the Director of Handloom and Textiles is designated as (ex-officio) Additional Register of Cooperative Societies and the power of registration of handloom, power loom, hosiery and readymade garment societies has been delegated to him. Beside investing financial assistance from Government under different scheme to such cooperative societies there is arrangement to render training to members of cooperative societies for cooperative management and keeping of books and accounts from the Netaji Subhas Co-operative Training Institute, Kalyani, Nadia, under NCUI. For purposeful implementation of various schemes aimed to product and design development all sorts of technical guidance and assistance are available with the Directorate.



There are two training centres running at Santipur (Nadia) and Tamluk (Midnapore) for rendering training to weavers for up gradation of their skill in all departments of weaving and designing. There is a computer aided Design Centre at the premises of the Handloom Development Officer. Santipur set up by the courtesy of MPLAD fund from General Sankar Roy Chowdhury Nadia District Administration and weavers of Nadia District. Services in respect of computer designing are provided from the centre to handloom weavers of the district. The Directorate provides assistance to weavers' cooperative societies in marketing of their product through central marketing organization like Tantuja, Tantusree, Manjusha, Bangasree etc. The Directorate play important catalytic role to get weavers cooperative societies in touch with the national level organizations like HHEC, AEPC, and ITPO etc. to facilitate weavers' cooperative societies for stepping into the export market and also to participate in National Level exhibitions cum sales fairs. In view of the recently introduced Deendayal Hathkargha Protisthan Yojana and some other schemes, services are available for individual weavers, NGOs and self help groups, besides primary weavers' cooperative societies role in supplying computer designs and training to handloom weavers from NIFT. The services are also available for artisans' promoters of readymade garment and hosiery industries.

Handloom products of Bengal have a rich tradition. The heritage of our master weavers and artisans are now blended with new technological designs and threads to produce wide variety of products. As an economic trade & industrial activity, the handlooms occupy a place second only to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people. The Government of West Bengal has given emphasis

for the Handloom & Textiles Sector with announcement of new textile policy and setting up of Commissionerate of Textiles for development, infrastructure support and also improves attraction for investment.

**Performance:** The handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in the land and it provides widest avenue for employment opportunities only next to agriculture, prime thrust has been given to implementation of schemes for promotion and development of handloom sector. Right from the first plan period 'co-operative' has been considered to be the ideal infrastructural institution for implementation of various schemes for development of decentralised cottage industry likes handlooms. Almost all schemes are therefore formulated co-operative oriented. Emphasis has also been laid upon formation of co-operatives with handloom weavers.



State wise Scheme performance

### State participation in the share capital of primary weavers'

State Govt. is used to purchase share the of the primary societies under the scheme of "State Share Participation" to raise the share capital base of the Primary Coop. societies, which will in turn facilitate in attracting required bank loan as working capital. The handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in the India and it provides widest avenue for employment opportunities only next to agriculture, prime thrust has been given to implementation of schemes for promotion and development of handloom sector. In West Bengal there are 3,50,994 handlooms as per census conducted by the Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India in 1995-96 providing direct and indirect employment to about 6,66,514 persons. 1, 83,974 lakh handlooms are registered under 2190 working co-operative societies at the end of 2000-2001. The number of active cooperative societies among them was, however, 688, covering 89,689 looms during the same period. In view of the large number of handloom weavers working outside co-operatives, schemes are contemplated to render assistance in terms of training for up-grading skill, design development, marketing facilities for their promotion. The co-operative oriented schemes have been carefully designed so as to cater to needs of societies at different times and stages since their inception. There are schemes to participate in the share capital of societies by Government for strengthening their share base in order to get adequate credit for working capital from NABARD, to obtain relief in interest charges for such credit, for training to upgrade skill of artisans, to procure improved and modern appliances and accessories for looms, to get marketing incentives, to have better housing-cum-work shed facilities, to welfare of the members of co-operatives towards group insurance, provident fund, pension to incapacitated and health care.

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Year	Budget estimate (Rs. in lakh)	Allocation (RS. in lakh)	Actual expenditure (Rs. in lakh)	Beneficiaries (Society)
2005-06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
2006-07	2.00	2.00	2.00	2 PWCS
2007-08	1.90	1.00	1.00	2 PWCS
2008-09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2009-10	10.00			

  

Year	Target	2008-2009	Achievement	2009-2010
i) Physical	1		1 Org.	1 Org. 850.00
ii) Financial (BE)	800.00		850.00 lakh.	1000.00 (as on 24.03.2010)

Production, sales of yarn and financial assistance received during 2005-2009 of six spinning mills are appended below

#### Equity participation for Kangsabati, Tamralipta & West Bengal Coop. Spinning Mills/ other three State controlled Spinning Mills.

The State Govt. has been contributing to the share capital of the cooperative spinning mills to raise their share base for implementation of the project for undertaking modernisation / expansion programme.

Production, sales of yarn and financial assistance received during 2005-2009 of six spinning mills are appended below

#### 1a) Kangsabati Co-operative Spinning Mills Ltd. (Rs. in lakh)

A) Fund received under head	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Annual Plan	0.00	30.00	0.00	16.50	0.00 (as on 24.03.2010)
N.C.D.C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Non plan	50.00	0.00	45.00	29.95	
B) Production of yarn					
In quantity (Lakh Kgs)	10.30	9.58	6.02	715.51	

**C) Sales of yarn**

Value (lakh Rs.)	1051.63	918.86	651.45	954.39
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**1b) Tamralipta Co-operative Spinning Mills Ltd. (Rs. in lakh)**

<b>A) Fund received under head</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Annual Plan	0.00	30.00	50.00	33.50	18.75 (as on 24.03.2010)
N.C.D.C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Non plan	48.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	
<b>B) Production of yarn</b>					
In quantity (Lakh Kgs)	19.26	22.54	23.50	25.02790	
<b>C) Sales of yarn</b>					
Value (lakh Rs.)	2648.74	2495.01	2883.06	2857.95	

**2. The West Bengal Co-operative Spinning Mills Ltd. (Rs. in lakh)**

<b>A) Fund received under head</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Annual Plan	30.00	0.00	138.88	275.00	56.25 (as on 24.03.2010)
N.C.D.C	0.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	
Non plan	678.67	414.44	209.40	100.00	
<b>B) Production of yarn</b>					
In quantity (Lakh Kgs)	4.55	15.41	0.758	1228.334	
<b>C) Sales of yarn</b>					
Value (lakh Rs.)	967.25	1263.22	88.38	1246.56	

**3. The Kalyani Spinning Mills Ltd. (Rs. in lakh)**

<b>A) Fund received under head</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Annual Plan	0.00	0.00	89.75	130.00	150.00 (as on 24.03.2010)
N.C.D.C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Non plan	463.75	1055.11	989.75	763.50	
<b>B) Production of yarn</b>					
In quantity (Lakh Kgs)	22.49	27.58	23.73	23.46338	
<b>C) Sales of yarn</b>					
Value (lakh Rs.)	3245.302770	272371.40	28.5784		

**4. The West Dinajpur Spinning Mills Ltd. (Rs. in lakh)**

<b>A) Fund received under head</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Annual Plan	0.00	0.00	0.00	95.00	75.00 (as on 24.03.2010)
N.C.D.C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Non plan	251.39	47.49	40.00	384.80	
<b>B) Production of yarn</b>					
In quantity (Lakh Kgs)	11.03	18.86	16.84	11.35242	
<b>C) Sales of yarn</b>					
Value (lakh Rs.)	1620.25	1505.87	1379.82	1018.00	

**5. Mayurakshi Cotton Mills (1990) Ltd. (Rs. in lakh)**

<b>A) Fund received under head</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Annual Plan	0.00	11.24	130.76	50.00	100.00 (as on 24.03.2010)
N.C.D.C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Non plan	69.53	53.93	89.00	60.50	
<b>B) Production of yarn</b>					
In quantity (Lakh Kgs)	3.35	3.18	5.29	530.80	
<b>C) Sales of yarn</b>					
Value (lakh Rs.)	265.65	237.53	383.56	441.36	

**Share capital loan to weavers of Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies**

i) Cotton fabrics	Rs. 270.00
ii) Woolen on Handlooms	Rs. 360.00
iii) Special cotton on handlooms (furnishing materials etc.)	Rs. 450.00
iv) Silk	Rs. 540.00
v) Polyester blended	Rs. 900.00

**Relief on Interest charges on Working Capital Loan**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget estimate</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Actual expenditure</b>
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	(Rs. in lakh)	(RS. in lakh)	(Rs. in lakh)
2005-06	300.00	121.01924	121.0924 (Back log claim)
2006-07	544.00	531.26772	531.26772
2007-08	0.00	2.28	2.27665 (Back log) Discontinued from 2005-06

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**Baluchari sari:** The rich variety in the techniques, designs and texture of Bengal Baluchari Saris are endearing, enticing and exquisite. But high cost of production leads to fall in patronage in the recent past. As a result, quite a good number of master weavers migrate to other centres. Yet, as people are becoming more and more fashion conscious and going all out for exclusivity, Balucharis, once again, have very good prospects. The demand for Baluchari, it is estimated, is far above its supply today. To exploit this happy market situation and help weavers improve their lot, the Government of India and Govt of West Bengal have jointly sponsored a Project Package Scheme for Bishnupur area of Bankura district. Package Scheme for Bishnupur area of Bankura district.

Baluchari had enjoyed the special patronage of the Murshidabad court since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and developed a school of design where stylised forms of human and animal figures were most interestingly integrated with floral and geometrical motifs in the elaborately woven material. Nawabs and Muslim aristocrats used the material produced raw silk mainly as tapestry, but Hindu nobleman had it made into Saris in which the ground scheme of decoration became very wide pal lava, often with a panel of large mango or paisley motifs at the centre, surrounded by small rectangles depicting different scenes. The Sari borders were narrow with floral and foliage motifs, and the whole ground of the Sari was covered with small paisley and other floral designs. An interesting feature of earlier Baluchari Saris was the stylised bird and animal motifs that were incorporated in paisley and other floral gradually, hunters mounted on horses and elephants appeared, followed by scenes of the Nawab's court. When the British took over Bengal, "sahibs" and "mehsahib's" appeared-a "sahib" making and the "memo" fanning her. The silk yarn used in Baluchari was not twisted and therefore had a soft, heavy texture. The advent of railways and steamboats was also most interestingly documented.

on these Saris. The ground colours in which the cloth available were limited, but they were permanent, are still fresh after hundreds of years. The efforts made around 1960 by the All India Handicrafts Board to reproduce two old Baluchari Sari designs at Vishnupur on Jacquard loom with 400 hooks failed, the product lacking the softness and vitality of the original.

The project attempts product diversification, up gradation of technical skills of our artisans by imparting proper training, providing uninterrupted employment, improving the weaver's standard of living and strengthening the state's handloom industry. Besides training, necessary infrastructure facilities like jacquard machines its accessories, modification in the loom, improvement and expansion of work sheds etc. are being undertaken under the scheme. In recent years, expert weavers in Jigging in Murshidabad and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh have successfully reproduced old Baluchari Saris, using the traditional jaal technique, but too have not been able, so far, to create designs that could be considered extensions of the old tradition.



**Tangail Saree:** Tangail Sari is famous with its extra, embroidery on the loom. But the popularity of the Saris spread in other districts in undivided Bengal. Originally this product was produced in Tangail District presently in Bangladesh. In tiny repeated motifs, all over the ground of the Sari, worked like embroidery on the loom.

In West Bengal there are many areas famous for this type of saris. In the centres of Tangail weaving in West Bengal, the weavers, as in other traditional centres of weaving, are producing a large variety of Saris, no longer adhering strictly to the traditional pattern; The most important centres of cotton weaving are: Shantipur, Dhaniakhali, Bagampur and Farasdanga. All these are predominantly engaged in the production of fine textured Saris and dhotis for men. Atpur in the Hooghly district, on the other hand, was so famous for coarser Saris and dhotis for every day wear that the word 'Atpoure' has come to mean "for common wear" Coarser count handloom cotton textiles for different uses are made by numerous traditional weavers all over the state.

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