

Novel and Cyclic Revolution made in Indian Silk Sarees

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Abstract

Sarees are always known for its tradition and it normally exaggerates a pleasant mood and aesthetic feel to the wearer. Sarees represents the Indian tradition and it is usually worn by the ladies of adult age group. The sarees are produced with different styles, making the wearer so comfortable and as well as fashionable. Sarees are selected and worn according to various season and functions. The types of Indian sarees include silk, georgette, bridal and wedding sarees, etc. The saree is considered as a Universal feminine garment ahead of the countries it is worn. Most of the females like to wear sarees as to expose their pride and dignity. Apart from other types of sarees, Silk sarees are always preferred a lot since it enhances the beauty and elegance of the wearer. Costumes made out of silk are found to be a part of national festivals and traditional events. Sarees are always predominant in Indian weddings and especially silk sarees with 'Pallu' and gold embellished with 'Zari' border are its nomenclature. The Indians normally dress themselves in elaborate and colorful silk sarees on festival occasions. The vibrant colors, light weight, resilience, drapability are the unique features of Indian sarees. Indian silk sarees are manufactured with variety of colors, designs, weaves and patterns. Today the silk saree designs are undergoing a revolution and a variety of colours; designs are blends are introduced in the market in the form of designer sarees. This article elaborately analyses on the varieties in silk sarees from different parts of the country and the revolution in styles and designs that is taking place.

Keywords: Designs; AnjuModi; Tanchoi brocade; Amni brocade; Tissue brocade

Significance of Motifs and Designs in Silk Sarees

The fame to the Indian saree is always brought with the use of inspirational motifs and designs. The motifs and designs available in variety of colors and patterns are developed according to the trend of different regions in the country. The sarees are highly popular not only in India but also in the International level. Many varieties are there which includes georgette, sequin casual and as many. Indian designer sarees are crafted from variety of yarns including fancy yarns. Motifs are portrayed from different natural and artificial sceneries. Saree design fulfils a women dream in terms of their needs, taste and also provides a traditional look. National as well as abroad personnel always prefer designer sarees to a higher extent. Indian designer sarees are developed with variety of shades and also with a pleasing appearance. Symbols made out of natural imitations and intricate figures are used as motifs in designer sarees. Both 3D woven and knitted sarees are developed in large extent. Many decorative looks using stones, beads, sequins, and silk threads are also used in designer sarees. Variety of patterns is also used in some extent. Indian designer sarees are made attractive with embroidered floral works. Gorgeous blouse pieces were also developed with variety of designs and patterns [1-3].

Saree motifs and designs come with a variety of traditional shapes and religion art which could represent one's culture and feel. The design and motif engraved on the sarees varies with respect to different region. Mostly square motifs are widely used in tribal regions. Fabrics embossed with unique design and motif collections on the sarees provide a classy look to every woman. The Indian designer saree ranges from traditional to modern art using diamond shaped motifs for checks, chevrons and also the serrated patterns. Motifs like lotus and spiritual art have been emphasized to higher extent on traditional sarees, particularly in Indian wedding sarees. Exclusive collections with required designs and motifs on the sarees have been developed by renowned Indian designers like AnjuModi, RituBer, RohitBal, etc. They mainly use it for different Bollywood celebrities made with tikki work, Parsi handwork, Kashmiri work, etc. Currently, paisley motif and concentric circular motifs in their various modified forms are sweeping the silk saree market [4-9].

Types of Silk Sarees

Variety of Silk sarees, specific to the states, enriched with the culture, colour, and type of embellishment belonging to that state is available all over India. Few of them are discussed below.

Banarasi sarees

These sarees are manufactured at Varanasi, the city which is also called as Banaras. The sarees are among the finest sarees in India and are known for their gold and silver brocade or zari, fine silk and opulent embroidery. The sarees are made of finely woven silk and are decorated with intricate design and, because of these engravings, are relatively heavy. Their special characteristics are Mughal inspired designs such as intricate intertwining floral and foliate motifs, kalga and bel, a string of upright leaves called jhallar at the outer, edge of border is a characteristic of these sarees. Other features are gold work, compact weaving, figures with small details, metallic visual effects, pallus, jal (a net like pattern), and mina work [10]. The sarees are often part of an Indian bride's trousseau. Depending on the intricacy of its designs and patterns, a sari can take from 15 days to a month and sometimes up to six months to complete. Banarasi saris are mostly worn by Indian women on important occasions such as when attending a wedding and are expected to be complemented by the woman's best jewelry. They are available in different forms which include zari/amru brocade, tanchoi brocade, amni brocade, tissue brocade, jamavar, etc. Now the Banarasi saris are available in pure silk (katan), organza (kora) with silk and zari, georgette and shatter (Figure 1).

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Figure 1: Banarasi silk.

Dharmavaram sarees

Dharmavaram handloom pattu sarees and paavadas are textiles woven by hand with mulberry silk and zari. They are made in Dharmavaram of Anantapur district in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It was registered as one of the geographical indication from Andhra Pradesh by Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Kriya Shakthi Vodavaru Swamy named Dharmavaram after the name of his mother, Dharmambai in the year 1153–54 AD. By 19th century, silk handloom industry emerged as the main occupation. Paintings on the roof wall of Lepakshi temple and Latha Mandapam depicts the designs of Dharmavaram saris. The saris are worn in winter or cold conditions, for functions, and are mostly used by dancers of Bharath Natyam and Kuchipudi (Figure 2).

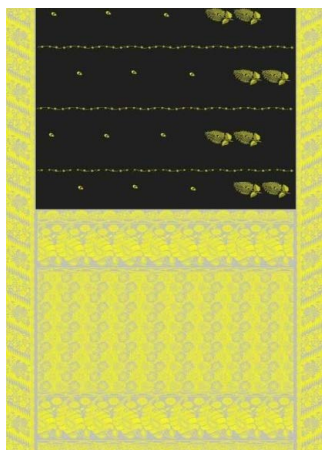


Figure 2: Dharmavaram saree.

Kanjivaram sarees

Kanchipuram Silk is a type of silk saree in Kanchipuram region in Tamil Nadu, India. It has been recognized as a Geographical indication by the Government of India in 2005-06. As of 2008, an estimated 5,000 families were involved in sari production. There are 25 silk and cotton yarn industries and 60 dyeing units in the region. The sarees are woven from pure mulberry silk thread. The pure mulberry silk used in the making of Kanchipuram saris comes from South India and the zari comes from Gujarat. To weave a Kanchipuram sari three shuttles are

used. While the weaver works on the right side, his aide works on the left side shuttle. The border color and design are usually quite different from the body. If the pallu (the hanging end of the sari) has to be woven in a different shade, it is first separately woven and then delicately joined to the Sari. The part where the body meets the pallu is often denoted by a zigzag line. In a genuine Kanchipuram Silk Sari, body and border are woven separately and then interlocked together. The joint is woven so strongly that even if the sarees tears, the borders will not detach. This will probably differentiate the kanchivaram silk sarees from the others (Figure 3).

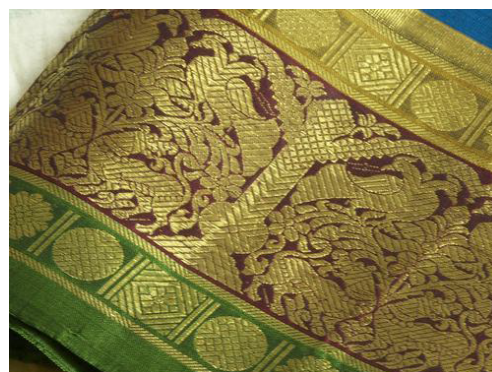


Figure 3: Kanjivaram saree.

The motifs are drawn from the nature and forms of temple architecture like peacock, parrot, temple designs, scenes from Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagwad Gita. Few of the best known patterns in Kanchipuram saris are Mayilkann (peacock eye), Kuyilkann Rudraksham (Rudrakshabeads) and Gopuram (temples). The Kanjivaram silk saris are woven from pure mulberry silk. They are of enviable texture, lustre and durability and finish. Saris are distinguished by their wide contrast borders. Temple borders, checks, stripes and floral (buttas) are traditional designs found on a Kanchipuram sarees. The patterns and designs in the Kanchipuram sarees were inspired with images and scriptures in South Indian temples or natural features like leaves, birds and animals. These are sarees with rich woven pallu showing paintings of Raja Ravi Varma and epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The sarees vary widely in cost depending upon the intricacy of work, colors, pattern, material used like zari (gold thread) etc. The silk is also known for its quality and craftsmanship, which has helped earn its name. Kancheepuram saris woven with heavy silk and gold cloth are considered to be special and are worn on occasions and festivities [11,12].

Chettinad sarees

Chettinadu sarees are also known by its name kandaangi sarees. Chettinadu sarees are distinctive palette of colors with earthy tones. Handloom Chettinadu cotton saree comes with cottons, these days pure silk are also incorporated. Traditional designs and rudiments of the original version are given at most respect and importance. The main body of the saree consist of plethora, summer vibrant colors such as yellow with lime green border contrasting shades, traditional vintage combination such as mustard and black color, magenta along with border contrasting shades of peach color, brick red with black color, green avocado color shade with peach few are fresh ones or pastels and simple plain sarees. These sarees are more popular because of their unique qualities like color and authenticity. The pallu of the sarees were woven with weft stripe, you can see checks, stripes and contrasting

color shades are added. Local weavers usually work in simple patterns with bold checks, stripes and contrasting tints and then add motifs while hand making them. Chettinadu sarees are very thick and heavy cotton and are not translucent, these sarees are available throughout the year and by today the thread count has also increased to make the saree smoother. These sarees are woven using wither pit looms or raised pit looms with flying shuttle weaving technique. Originally 3 shuttles were used to obtain contrast solid colored borders in both sides of the saree; presently the same is seldom used. The contrast color borders together with the horizontal and vertical stripes gives a very striking look and plus note to the fabric. An elegant Kandaangi borders have merged beautifully with embroidery designs and chic colorful patterns in Chettinad sarees (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Chettinad saree.

Madurai sarees

Madurai Sungudi is a cotton fabric of Madurai in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which is an exclusive textile product traditionally produced using tie and dye (using natural dyes) method by people from Saurashtra, a special characteristic of the Sungudi saree is that the knots created along the lines of the fabric cloth with red pigment prevent colours from intruding into the knotted part of the fabric when it is subject to the dying process in the vat. After the dying process, the knots are united by removing the thread and the knotted parts. In the traditional dyeing process, vegetable dyes are used to obtain different colours. However, in the modern dyeing process artificial chemical dyes like alizarine, naphthol and indigo are used to obtain the red, blue and other colour effects. It takes 10 to 15 days to make a traditional Sundgudi saree, with women involved in the tying process while the dying process is outsourced. This saree is a traditional dress of women of some communities worn during marriages. In recent years, in view of tough competition from other textile fabrics, to meet the market demand this fabric, "sungudi" as it is commonly known, is made with modern designs and techniques of block printing, wax printing and screen printing [13]. The Madurai saris are woven out of very shiny, highly mercerized cotton with glistening silk borders, which used to be made of silk, but are now mostly polyester or shiny cotton (Figure 5).

Mysore silk sarees

The saree, as the name suggests, is weaved out of the purest Mysore silk and is characterized for its quality, butter-soft feel and permanence of luster. The beauty of these sarees is largely a result of intricate zari work done on the border and pallu. Out of all the Mysore silks, Mysore crepe silk sari is the most sought after. Karnataka produces 9,000 metric tons of mulberry silk of a total of 14,000 metric tons produced

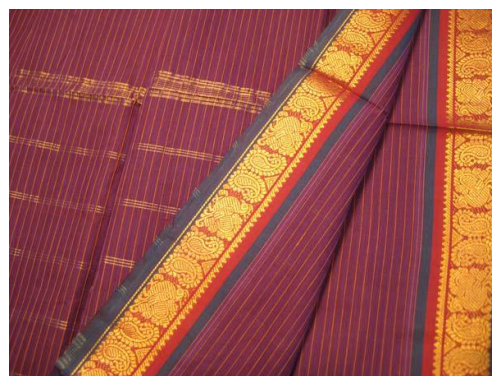


Figure 5: Madurai saree.

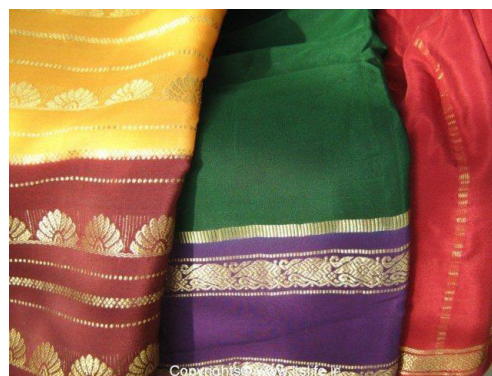


Figure 6: Mysore silk saree.

in the country, thus contributing to nearly 70% of the country's total mulberry silk. In Karnataka, silk is mainly grown in the Mysore district. The growth of the silk industry in the Kingdom of Mysore was first initiated during the reign of Maharaja of Mysore nearly 1500-1600AC. Later it was hit by a global depression, and competition from imported silk and rayon (Figure 6).

Baluchari sarees

Baluchari saris or locally called Baluchuri saris, today often have depictions from scenes of Mahabharat and Ramayana. During the Mughal and British eras, they had a square design in the pallu with paisley motifs in them, and depicted scenes from the lives of the Nawab of Bengal featuring women smoking hookahs, nawabs driving horse carriages, and even European officers of the East India Company. It would take two craftsmen to work for almost a week to produce one sari. The main material used is silk and the sari is polished after weaving. These saris were mostly worn by women from upper class households in Bengal during festive occasions and weddings (Figure 7).

Pat sarees

The pat silk sari has a typical cream and white sheen and can also be bleached and dyed, we get Pat saris in different vibrant colours. Though the traditional colour is white this indicates purity. Various motifs, butaas are knitted or woven on the sari field and its border. The motifs used in pat saris are mostly traditional motifs and other ornamental designs. The traditional wedding attire is created with intricate gold and silver embroidery on the Pat silk and the entire field of the body is done with muga silk or gold and silver wire called guna (Figure 8).



Figure 7: Baluchari saree.

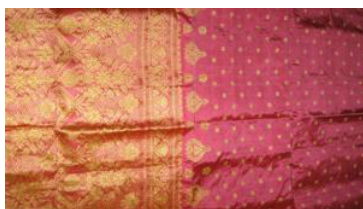


Figure 8: Pat silk sari.

Muga sarees

Muga silk is a variety of wild silk geographically tagged to the state of Assam in India. The silk is known for its extreme durability and has a natural yellowish-golden tint with a shimmering, glossy texture. It was previously reserved for the use of royalty. In the Brahmaputra Valley, the larvae of the Assam silkworm feed on aromatic som (*Machilus bombycina*) and sualu (*Litsea polyantha*) leaves. Muga silk can be dyed after bleaching. This silk can be hand-washed with its lustre increasing after every wash. Muga silk, like other Assam silks, is used in products likesaris, mekhalas and chadors. This golden yellow colour silk is prerogative of India and the pride of Assam state. It is obtained from semi-domesticated multivoltine silkworm, *Antheraea assamensis* [14]. These silkworms feed on the aromatic leaves of Som and Soalu plants and are reared on trees similar to that of tasar (Figure 9).

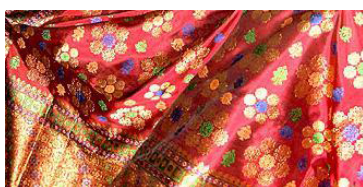


Figure 9: Muga silk saree.

Bengali saris

Tant saree is a traditional Bengali saree and usually used by Bengali women. It is traditionally made by the weavers from all over West Bengal and Bangladesh typically few places like Nadia, Hooghly of West Bengal and Dhaka, Tangail of Bangladesh are famous for tant saree weaving. Since the tant saree are meant for daily use the lowest cost of this saree is 350 (US\$5.40). Tant saree are woven from

cotton threads and distinguished by its lightness and transparency. It is considered to be the most comfortable saree for the Indian hot and humid climate. The typical Tant saree is characterised by a thick border and a decorative pallav, woven using a variety of floral, paisley and other artistic motifs. Some of the popular traditional motifs are: bhomra (bumble bee), tabij (amulet), rajmahal (royal palace), ardha-chandra (half-moon), chandmala (garland of moons), ansh (fish scale), hathi (elephant), nilambari (blue sky), ratan chokh (gem-eyed), benki (spiral), tara (star), kalka (paisley) and phool (flower). Printed, hand-painted and embroidered patterns are also used to get a larger variety of designs. Different motifs including floral element, solar element and recently even modern art are depicted in this saree. Tant Saree comes with colorful design and borders are made thicker because it is subjected to tear easily (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Bengali sarees.

Madhya Pradesh sarees

Madhya Pradesh sarees are designed with several unique motifs and patterns that alluringly attract the wearers. These sarees are simple in aesthetics and represents ultimate femininity. With plain as well as block printed designs, the Madhya Pradesh sarees are highly appealing with fine print quality and luscious handloom clothing. Featuring an incredible drape and unique golden dual color designs, these sarees are loved and worn by almost all women (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Madhya Pradesh sarees.

Kashmir silk

Kashmir is also well known for developing variety of silk designs. There are many designs and fine qualities of products produced from silk and are popularly referred as 'chinon' and 'crepe de chine'. But

it's a known fact that the Mulberry cocoon reared in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is the superior quality in the Asia. It yields a very fine fiber which can be compared with the best in the world (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Kashmir silk sarees.

Eri silk

Eri silk fabric is a boon for those who practice absolute non-violence, not using any product obtained by killing any animal. It is widely used by everyone in the regions in which it is produced. In India, eri was mostly used for the preparation of winter shawls for men and women. The thermal properties of eri silk make it a suitable fabric for shawls, jackets, blankets, and bed spreads. Dress materials and baby dresses are also made from eri silk fabric because of its soft texture and moisture absorbent quality. Nowadays very fine (up to 210 nm) eri spun yarns are available, which enables weavers to weave very fine clothing, including traditional sari dress materials. Eri silk is durable and strong and has a typical texture; hence, it is widely used in home furnishing like curtains, bed covers, cushion covers, wall hangings, quilts, etc.

Smart Saree Collections in South India

Saree-Shirt combo

It is normally referred as a combination of pattu silk saree-shirts. The silk sarees are developed with a matching piece of shirt particular to the bride and both the combinations are manufactured using pure handloom silk. The combos are developed with exclusive embroidered and printed designs.

Color-Changing saree

Color changing saree is the unique development made in South India. Sri Kumaran Silks has come up with a concept of this color-changing sarees referred as smart sarees which changes its color according to the external conditions.

Zip-n-Wear saree

This saree is also referred as smart sarees wherein a zip is being attached to the four different but matching pallus in the sarees. The wearer could attach or detach the required matching pallu by the use of zipper attachment.

Landscape saree

It is a type of saree made in South India using pure silk and the design of a rural landscape is woven into the pallu.

Denim saree

Pure silk sarees which represents the original look of denim at the same time the saree provides a soft feel to the wearer.

Current Trends in Silk

Color

Following color of sarees which is now day in trend is shown below (Figures 13a and 13b).



Figure 13: Coloured silk saree.



Figure 13a: Multi coloured saree.

Sarees with jute motif

Silk saree with jute motif is the one where jute is used in the place of motifs instead of zari threads. Even though it does not provide an elegant look like silk zari thread, it gives a classy look to the wearer (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Silk saree with jute motif.

Embossed effects in silk saree

Embossed silk or zari saree gives the natural effect of designs like flower design, temple design or leaf designs. The embossing pattern mainly includes the zari rather than preferring colors, so that the design is highlighted in the saree (Figure 15).

Cost Effective Silk Sarees

Cost of silk yarn is in increasing trend and hence the cost of saree also has increased which makes the silk saree, non-affordable to middle class category. Moreover the comfort and moisture absorbency properties of silk saree also are poor. To overcome these difficulties and to make the saree cost effective, innovative silk product development is being tried by combining silk with new fibres like lyocell, modal, jute, nylon, polyester, etc.

The innovative and cost effective silk products like stolls and other



Figure 15: Embossed effect.

related products can be produced by blending the pure silk with other fibers like modal, nylon and lyocell. The new fibres which can be tried out with silk are given below.

Ramie

Ramie, one of the oldest textile fibres of plant origin ruled the textile world as king of natural fibres. Ramie is highly adorned for its luster, strength, excellent microbial resistance and valuable hygienic properties. The major disadvantage in ramie is cohesion between the fibres. Otherwise the ramie products could be engineered and marketed to a greater extent. The demand for ramie fiber is mainly felt in the fields of blending with other fiber. Ramie can be blended with cotton, flax, wool, polyester, acrylic and silk of all types.

Rayon

Rayon is a regenerated cellulosic fibre which provides equivalent properties similar to cotton fibre. The properties like increase in moisture absorption, softness, wearing comfort, drapeability and dyed by using wide range of colors.

Modal

Modal's unique properties include higher wet strength and additional softness. It is used in towel production and referred widely as "Universal soft fibre". The high softness characteristic of the fibre makes it suitable for intimate wears such as lingerie and under garments.

Lyocell

Lyocell is one of the closest fibre which works well with respect to cotton. The basic property of Lyocell is to absorb excess liquid (perspiration), absorbs odour and ability it to release the absorbed moisture into the environment. It is one of the best alternative fibres for the most costly products made out of viscose and silk.

Nylon

Nylon 6 is the toughest fibre which possesses high tensile strength, elasticity and lustre. The fibre also possess higher abrasion resistance and chemically resistant against acids and alkalis [15,16].

Conclusion

Silk often referred universally as "Queen of the Fibres" has played a vital role in the manufacturing of apparel products and ladies garments especially sarees. Silk is intermingled with every aspect of the human life and always considered to be the symbol of Indian culture and tradition. Many research attempts in terms of making the fibre more sustainable is being carried out all around the globe. In coming years, one could find a significant revolution in Indian silk sarees. Novel products developed out of silk material are going to rule the textile and apparel business in mere future.

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