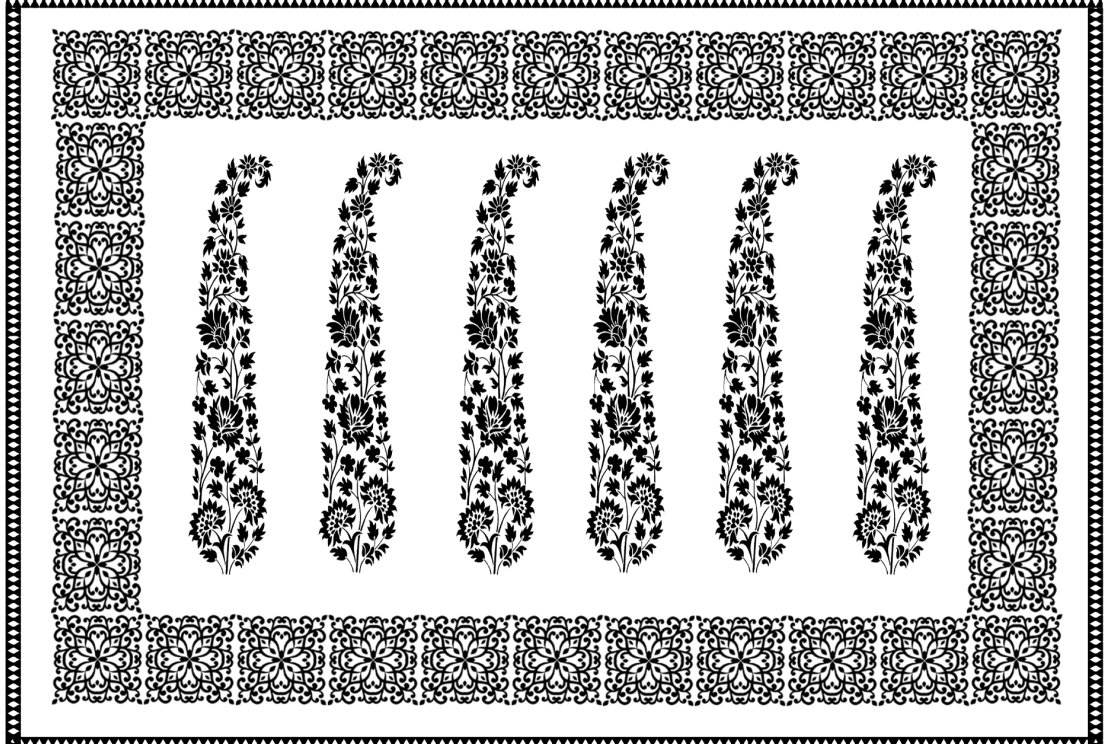




REVISITING BALUCHARI

A non profit initiative from Handloom Foundation





Dear friends,

If you've been following our endeavors, you are likely familiar with our ongoing non-profit crowd-funded handloom production projects. Our journey commenced during the initial lockdown prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the noble objective of supporting the handloom artisans of India. Even beyond the pandemic's peak, our commitment endured, as we continued to provide assistance by fulfilling bulk production orders and offering handloom enthusiasts the opportunity to acquire authentic handloom products.

For those who have recently joined our community, we extend a warm invitation to explore our organization and delve into details about our previous projects by visiting the link provided below.

Having successfully completed eight seasons, we are thrilled to announce our tenth season, dedicated to crafting exquisite Baluchari silk sarees. As in previous seasons, we warmly invite you to join us on this journey and acquire your own authentic Baluchari silk saree, meticulously dyed using natural techniques.

We eagerly anticipate your enthusiastic participation in this meaningful project.

Sincerely,

Team Handloom Foundation

Know about Handloom Foundation
handloomfoundation.org/about

Know about previous season:
handloomfoundation.org/d2c



The Project

Similar to previous seasons, this pro bono project aims to empower several artisan families by granting them economic independence. This endeavour will enable them to become self-reliant when it comes to sourcing raw materials for fulfilling orders. These families will no longer need to rely on intermediaries or local lenders. The Baluchari Project is also a crowd-funded initiative, allowing all participants to place pre-orders for the exquisite Baluchari sarees. Each saree will measure 6.5 meters in length and include a blouse piece, boasting a width of 46+ inches. The design of this saree will embody the timeless elegance of a classic Baluchari Saree.

How this project can help artisans?

Typically, grassroots artisans face financial constraints that hinder their access to working capital, often resulting in their dependence on traders and middlemen. In light of this, we extend an invitation to participate in a minimum of 100 pre-orders, requiring a 50% advance payment upon order placement and the remaining 50% prior to delivery.

The significant portion of the second instalment serves as their remuneration. Receiving this remuneration as a lump sum can provide them with a substantial amount to initiate their own independent ventures. Typically, these artisans receive their remuneration in instalments from middlemen or traders, with small amounts being allocated towards their daily necessities.

Your pre-orders can assist them in receiving the entire amount at once, which can then serve as their working capital. In this process, you not only obtain a muslin product by covering the production costs, but you also contribute to a collective of muslin weavers in acquiring the necessary funds for their independent ventures.



History at a glance

In the 18th century, under the patronage of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, Baluchari commenced its journey, contributing significantly to the illustrious tapestry of Indian handloom. Undoubtedly, following Jamdani, Baluchari stands as one of the most celebrated handloom weaves in Bengal. Its origins trace back to the Baluchar region of the Murshidabad district in West Bengal, now known as Jiaganj (interestingly, the hometown of the renowned singer Arijit Singh). A noteworthy historical incident involved the migration of artisans from Baluchar to Bishnupur in the Bakura district, prompted by a flood in the River Ganga.

Baluchari and its mythical figure motifs.

As is widely recognized, the Baluchari saree is renowned for its intricate figure motifs, particularly drawn from Indian epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata. However, in its early stages, the saree did not feature these figure elements, as its initial patronage came from a Muslim ruler, precluding the incorporation of such motifs. Instead, during the nascent period of Baluchari, artisans drew inspiration from Persian textile motifs.

Subsequently, with the migration of artisans to Bishnupur, a temple town in Bengal, their creative influences began to reflect the architectural aesthetics of the region. It is noteworthy to consider that Nawab Murshid Quli Khan's reign was relatively short-lived, spanning only ten years (1917-1927). Consequently, following his era, Baluchari artisans found themselves without royal patronage and shifted their focus towards catering to the Hindu majority clientele.

Even during the British colonial era, one observes the incorporation of figure motifs representing British elites in Baluchari sarees, illustrating the adaptability and evolution of this traditional art form. "In the purported revival pieces, the prevalence of figure motifs from the recent past remains conspicuous. Despite efforts to revive traditional Baluchari sarees, a substantial number continue to feature imagery drawn from more contemporary sources.



Revisiting Baluchari: our project

As part of the Handloom Foundation, our approach to this specific initiative involves not creating entirely new designs but rather revisiting historical ones. We purposefully refrain from using the term 'revival' to avoid casual usage of such significant terminology. For this project, we collaborated with a textile restorationist from Bangladesh to seek assistance and inspiration for the design, focusing on reintroducing old designs that are not currently commercially available in the market.

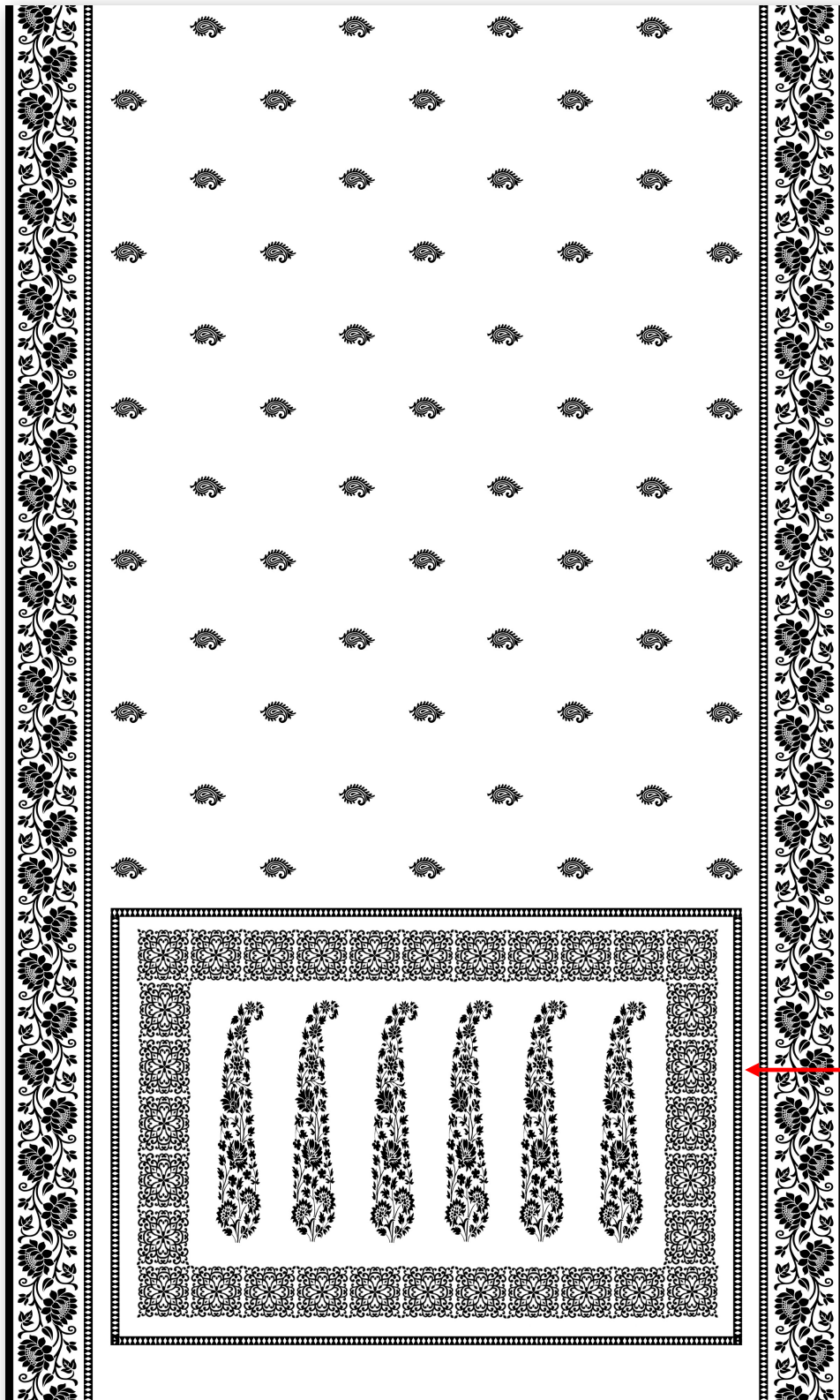
How Baluchari different from other Indian silk weaves?

Baluchari, being a Bengal handloom akin to the cotton weaving traditions of the region, exhibits notable qualities such as breathability and a refined texture. However, its distinction from other Indian silk weaves lies not merely in these attributes but primarily in the meticulous arrangement of its designs. The classic Baluchari, in its pre-figure motif form, traditionally featured a rectangular boundary resembling a picture frame, framing the motifs in the pallu. The omission of such a distinctive window in the Baluchari pallu commenced after Nawab Murshid Quli Khan's patronage, aimed at reducing costs by significantly decreasing weaving time.

The evolution of Baluchari, particularly in its 'Revival' phase, took a turn in the 1950s in Banaras, where the weave underwent various influences, incorporating elements from Jamdani and Baluchari traditions. This transformation led to a departure from its natural appearance. In the subsequent pages, we present our proposed design, delineating the marked frame for your reference, as we strive to preserve the authenticity of Baluchari's traditional aesthetics.

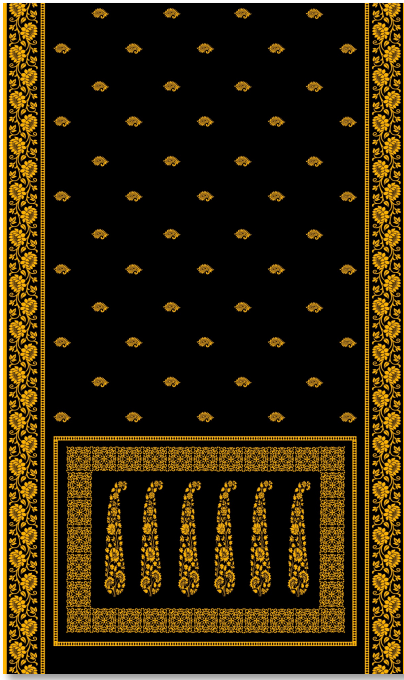
The Design

This image is for design reference only, final colour combination choices are placed in later part of this document

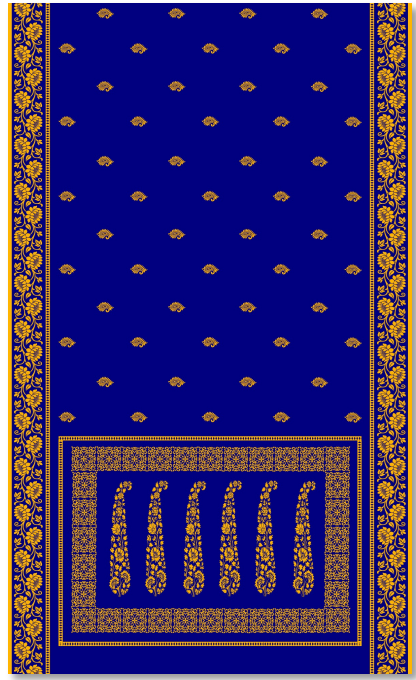


The typical classic baluchari pallu frame to cover its motifs

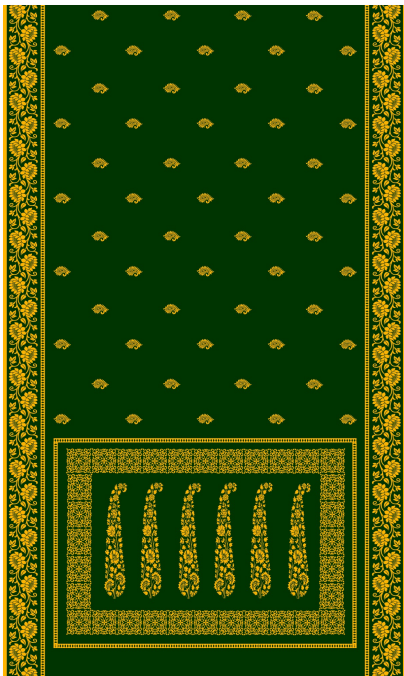
Colour Options



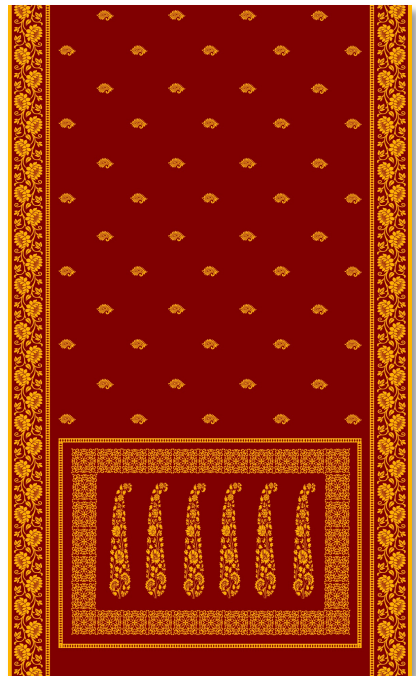
Black



Navy Blue



Bottle Green



Maroon

Raw Material

Within this project, our selected foundation material is degummed reeled mulberry silk yarn, commonly known as Katan Silk. This specific silk variety is celebrated for its exceptional luster and the opulent, soft, and silky texture it imparts.

In the realm of design, we will employ spun mulberry silk. It is crucial to highlight that Baluchari cannot incorporate zari because that's not a traditional approach, and for the creation of motifs, silk thread stands as an indispensable element.

Natural Colours

Diverging from the Baluchari sarees commonly found in the market, including those claimed to be authentic, our approach involves the utilization of traditional natural dyes to achieve the desired colors.

To gain a better understanding of the dyeing process and the colors we aim to achieve, kindly refer to the chart provided below.

COLOUR OF SAREE	NATURAL DYEING MATERIAL FOR WARP YARN	NATURAL DYEING MATERIAL FOR WEFT YARN
Black (Dark Grey)	Indigo and henna leaf powder	Indigo and henna leaf powder
Navy Blue	Indigo and henna leaf powder	Indigo
Bottle Green	Indigo and henna leaf powder	Mulberry & henna leaf with iron dust
Maroon	Indigo and henna leaf powder	Madder (Manjistha)
We will use yellow marigold flower to dye the silk threads for motifs Don't worry yellow will be on muted side so that your saree wont be a loud one		

Kindly note that we'll be using natural dyes and traditional Indian processes in this project. Due to the nature of these methods, there may be minor variations, and the colours in graphics may not precisely match those of the actual saree.

What will be the cost implication?

The final cost breakup is given below but before going to that we need to make few points.

- Main component of the cost is remuneration & Material Cost where in one loom 2 weavers will be deployed.
- The dye we will use in this project are all from natural sources.

Please give a look to the detailed cost breakup

Please bear in mind that the aforementioned cost breakdown pertains to a single unit and is applicable when produced in a specific quantity. It is important to note that we will be assigning two weavers to each loom. The remuneration provided to the weavers and other artisans will align with the wages received by unskilled construction workers in metropolitan cities.

Furthermore, when determining the weight of the final product, please refrain from simply adding the weights of the raw materials, as there will be a certain degree of wastage involved in the production process.

#	Detail	Cost (INR)
1	Degummed mulberry silk yarn Yarn @ Rs 11,000/Kg (approx. 600gms)	6,000/-
2	Spun Mulberry Silk @ Rs6,000/Kg (Approx 200gms)	1,200/-
3	Dyeing cost (includes raw material and dyer remuneration)	2,500/-
4	Sizing (applying starch before weaving) remuneration & Raw Material	1,100/-
5	Warping & drafting	1,100/-
6	Bobbin winder remuneration	500/-
7	Jacquard Design Cost	7,000/-
8	2 Weaver's remuneration @ 700/Day for 12 days	16,800/-
Grand Total		36,200/-



How you need to pay and when you get your Baluchari Saree?

- You have to pay 50% (INR 18,100/- for 1 pc) at the time of pre-order.
- You will receive the product within 6 months from the order date.
- Before order dispatch, you have to pay the last 50% (INR 18,100/- for 1 pc) of the price
- Shipping within India will be complimentary and in surface courier. Shipping outside India will be chargeable and should be paid with the last part of payment.

What if you get defective product?

The likelihood of encountering any significant defects is minimal, given the delicate nature of Baluchari textiles and the meticulous weaving process they undergo. However, should you observe any structural flaw or detect signs of damage upon receiving the product, we kindly request you to promptly contact us via email at handloomfoundation@gmail.com within 24 hours, providing accompanying photographs of the identified defect.

Subsequently, we will expedite a full refund within 7 days following the receipt of the damaged item. It is important to note that normal handcraft irregularities will not be deemed as defects; only instances of damage or structural defects in the textile will be considered as such.

Last but most important point

The success of this project is contingent upon reaching a minimum order threshold, and based on our calculations, without securing 100 orders, the project may be unable to fulfill its intended objectives. Initially, we are not requesting an advance payment. Instead, we invite you to express your interest by completing the form. Only if we garner sufficient interest for 100 units (considering that one person may order more than one piece), will we proceed to share bank details and request an advance payment. It is crucial to emphasize that without a minimum interest in 100 units, the project may be subject to cancellation.

CONTACT

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