

Design Resource

Saree Weaving - Kasargod, Kerala

Kasargod Sarees Training Centre

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Lija M. G.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/saree-weaving-kasargod-kerala>

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Introduction

Kerala is generally known for its typical type of saree that is specially treasured and worn by every keralite during any traditional occasions. The other type of saree that is largely known is the checked pattern with colour combination mostly woven in the Kasargod region of Kerala. Kasargod lies in the northern part of Kerala with Western Ghats at the east and Arabian Sea in the west of it.

Kerala is itself known as the God's own country as it is covered by nature, Kasargod is also part of Kerala that share's the Nature's enchanting beauty. This district of Kerala in India is filled with shrines, forts, hillocks, rivers and beaches.

It is specially known for the traditional, ethnic and branded saree called the "Kasargod Saree". Long years ago it was specially woven by the Shalia community of people who is said to be settled here in this part of Kerala for weaving in particular for the ruler who had ruled Karnataka long years ago. This typical saree was woven only in Kasargod therefore the name was given to it as the Kasargod saree. It is said before there were about 500 families of weavers were the weaving was done at their homes. If the father and mother were weavers then the children also joined them in corroborating the works.

It is said that a weaver used to weave about 5 meters a day specially on the handlooms, nowadays it is reduced to about 1.5 meters a day as many of them have left this craft. Others remaining come to the Kasargod society even after their retirement spending their time in weaving the saree which was their family tradition. Upholding the uniqueness of each product with its colour patterns and borders that is woven here. Mostly woven with the natural fibers such as cotton that are more ecofriendly and edged with the golden zari's.

More of Cotton saree's are generally woven due to the climatic conditions of Kerala that are mostly of humid conditions. Art silk sarees of the Kasargod sarees are of fewer numbers compared to the cotton. The Kasargod weaver's society has taken the initiative by training the people from the Schedule caste and Schedule tribe with a monthly stiffened of small amount generally given during their training period. Later on once the experience is gained to weave the wages by piece rates or the meter of the cloth woven is given to them.

The master craftsmen's are the old weavers who even now come to this society in weaving and doing the corroborating works in his/ her own way. Though the piece rates or the meter woven are of less wages they spend their time in making of this saree which was handed to them by their parents and grandparents.

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Kasargod Sarees Training centre located in Udayagiri, Kasargod, Kerala.



Group of artisans in the weaver's cooperative society at Kasargod Sarees Training centre.

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The cotton threads from the rolls are spun into the spindle by using Charaka.



Artisan engaged in sari weaving.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for Kasargod Saree Weaving:

- **Cotton Yarns:** Generally cotton yarns are preferred to make the Kasargod saree's.
- **Boiler:** It is generally used to boil the yarn for about 24 hours.
- **Charaka Equipment:** It is used to wind the yarn onto the bobbins and pirns.
- **Warping Frames:** Warping is generally done on frames in Kasargod.
- **Bamboo Sticks:** It is generally used to squeeze the yarns after dyeing.
- **Horizontal Pole:** It is used to dry the yarns in shade for about 2- 3 days.
- **Small Bags with Sand:** It is used to hold the border yarns firmly.
- **Dyeing Tank:** Two tanks are specially made for the dyeing purpose in this unit.
- **Creels:** The coloured bobbins are placed on creels as per the pattern for warping.
- **Plastic Pirns:** It is used to wind the yarns for weaving.
- **Bobbins:** The coloured yarns wound on it for warping.
- **Brush usually of Palm Fibers:** Generally used to apply the starch on yarns on the loom.
- **Small Wood and Charcoal Pieces:** It is generally used to dry the yarns in the rainy / winter season after the application of starch.
- **Basin with Little Water:** It is used to immerse the winded pirns for strength purpose before weaving.

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Metal tanks (Two numbers) are specially made for the dyeing purpose using wood fire method.



Electric spinning machine used to remove excess of water in yarns.



Metal rods are generally used to squeeze the yarns after dyeing.



Raw cotton yarns are kept for drying in shade.

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Multiple coloured cotton yarns.



Plastic pirns are used to wind the yarns for weaving.



Yarn winded plastic pirns.

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Fly-Shuttle: This tool helps to carry the cotton threads, through the warp sheds.



Bobbins: The coloured yarns wound on it for warping.



Warping frame/equipment.



Creels: The coloured bobbins are placed on creels as per the pattern for warping.

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Palm fibres Brush is used to apply the starch on yarns on the loom.



Starch is applied on threads to gain strength.



Pedals, which helps in lifting one set of warp threads at a time to have the shed opening for the fly shuttle insertion.

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Metal hook is used while weaving to arrange the design patterns in order.



A look of a wooden hand loom equipment.

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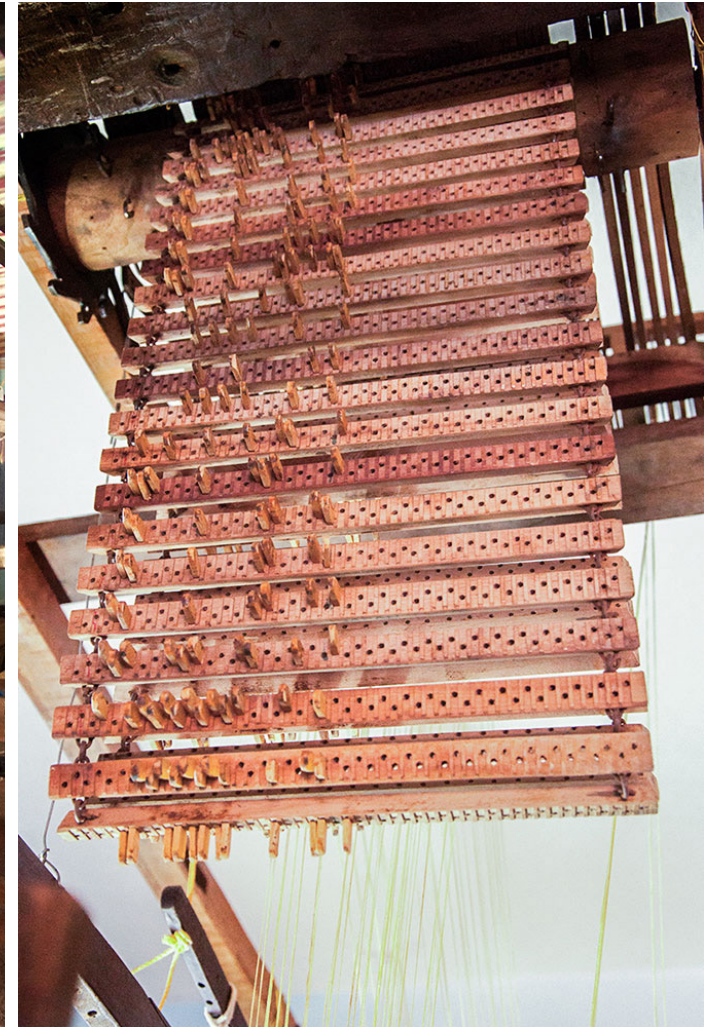
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The back view of the loom where the warp threads are passed through the healds and reeds and finally comes out in the form of a woven saree and wrapped on the take up beam.



Jacquard is an apparatus with a designs on perforated punch cards are loaded into Jacquard for getting design in the sari.

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Making Process

In Kasargod the Weavers/ craftsmen follows even today the traditional way of making of the saree all done by hand. Cotton yarns are immersed in the soap oil for about 45minutes to 1 hour to increase the dye absorbability. The yarns are boiled in the boiler with water and soda ash for about 24 hours, then washed and dried. It is taken for the colouring process that is usually done with vat dyes, caustic soda and hydro sulphite.

After colouring/ dyeing the yarns are spread on the horizontal pole for about 1-2 days completely under shade for drying and oxidation to take place. After the yarns are completely dried it is wound by the Charaka equipment to the bobbins/ pirns. The bobbins are arranged on the creels as per the pattern with colour combinations to be made and wound on the warping frames.

Each yarn is counted and each set is revolved around the axis of the warping frame as per the pattern to be made. The warp is made for about 33 saree, where each saree of 5.5 meters is separated and the pallu part of the saree of about 60-70 cms is separated, tied and dyed as per the combinations matching to it.

After drying and oxidation the yarns are spread on the looms through the combs with long nails with minimum of five people for setting. For every half meter of yarn on the loom, starch is applied with a palm fiber brush that gives a zero finish to the saree. Traditionally the starch of Tapioca was generally preferred, due to non-availability of the right quality starch. Nowadays it is generally made from rice flour or maida which is applied on the yarns in the loom. Therefore the saree's doesn't shrink that much after washing. The woven saree is then checked for quality and sent for packing.

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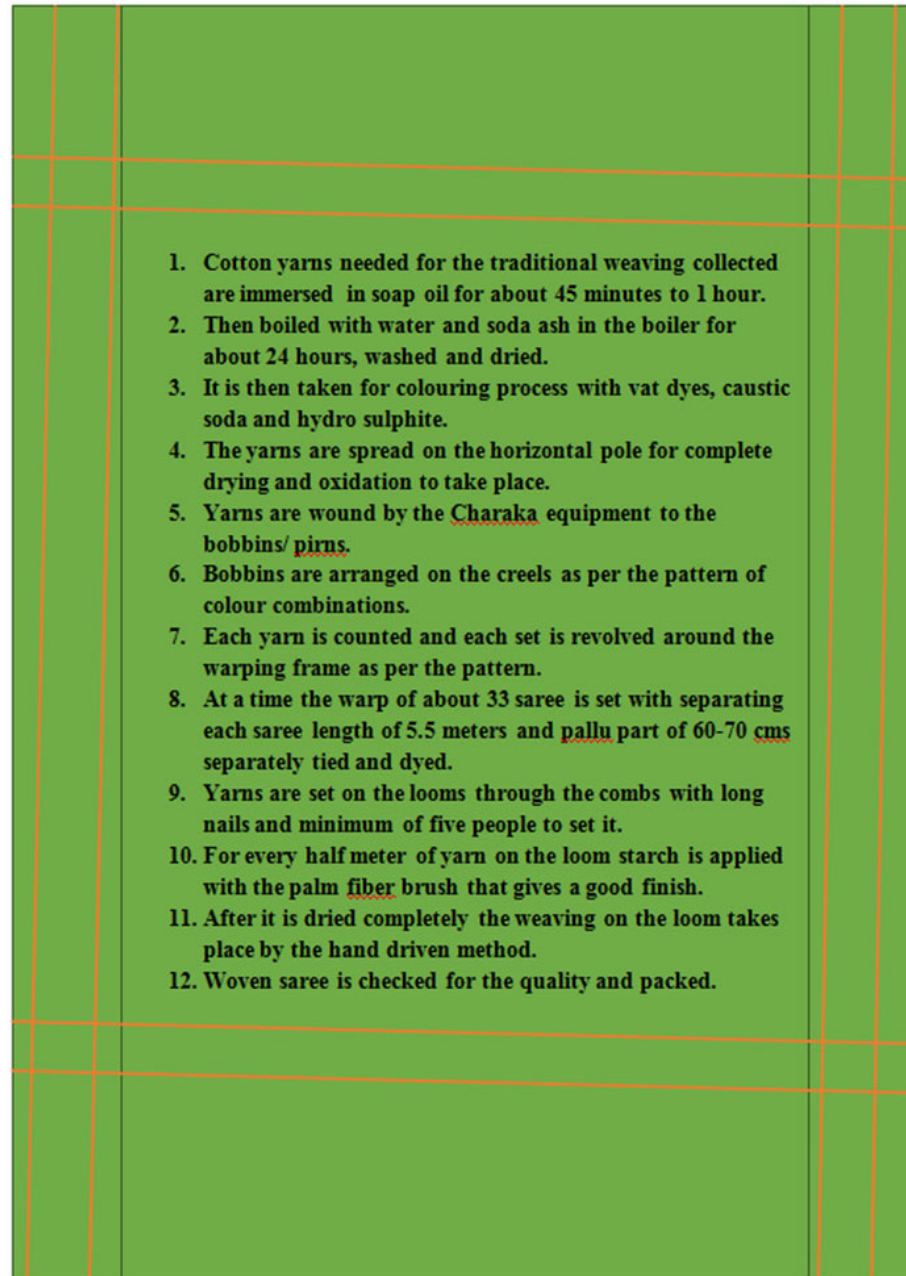
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Flow Chart of Making Process:



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Yarns are wound by the Charaka equipment to the pirns.

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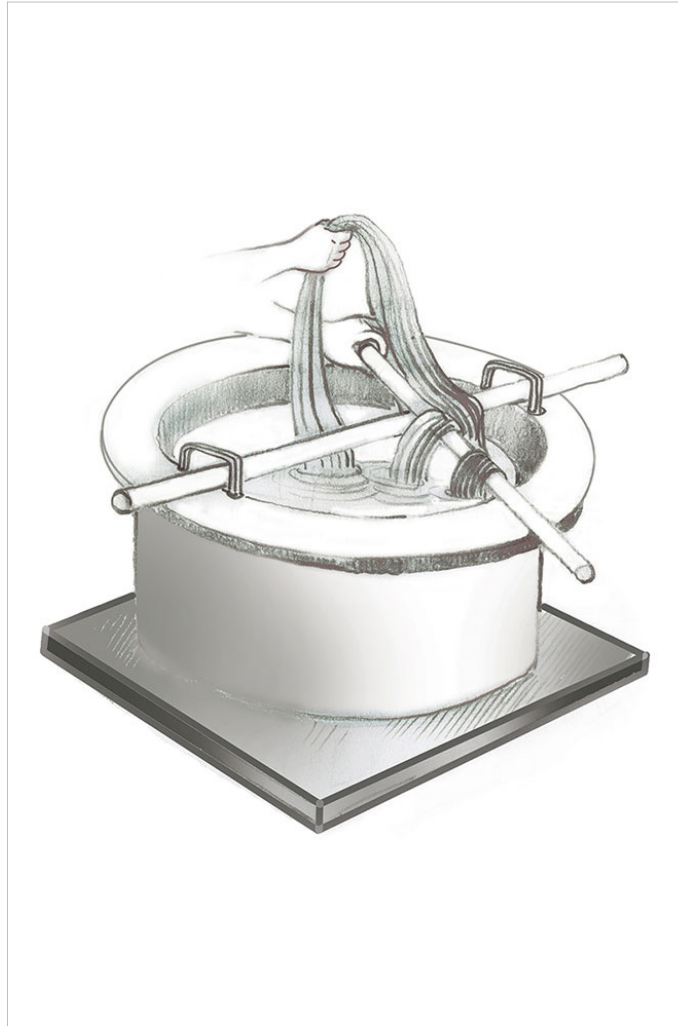
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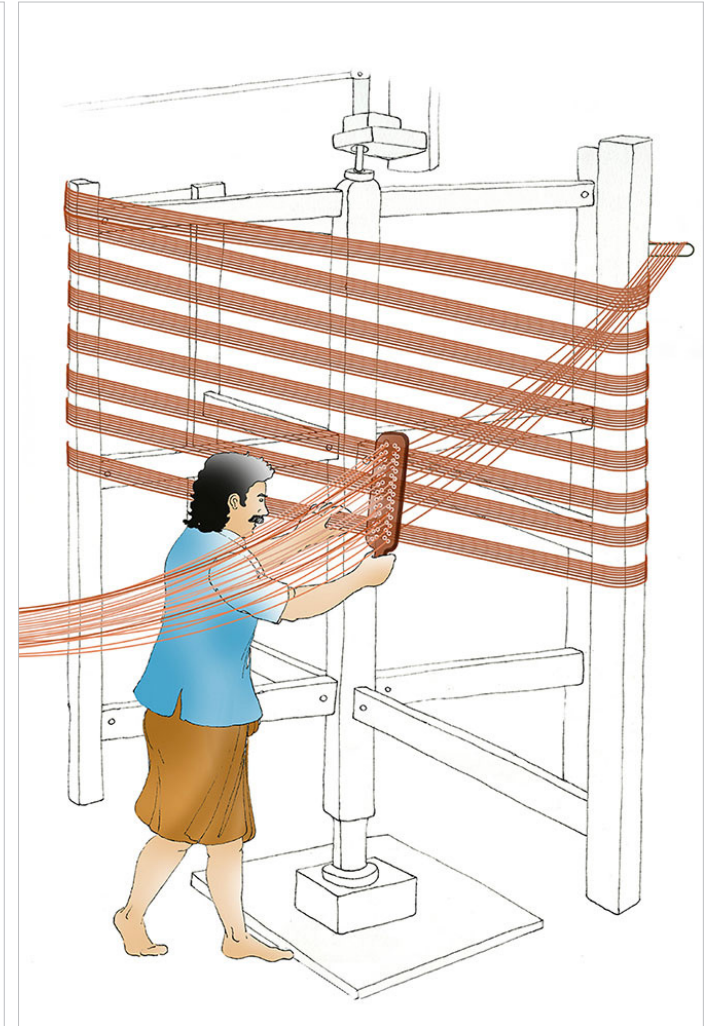
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Cotton yarns are dipped in the hot water about 30 to 45 min for dyeing.



The cotton threads are reeled into the circular shaped wooden equipment for the warping.

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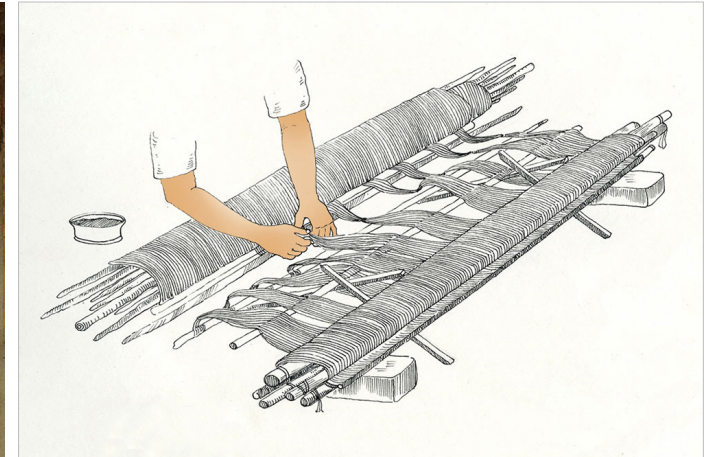
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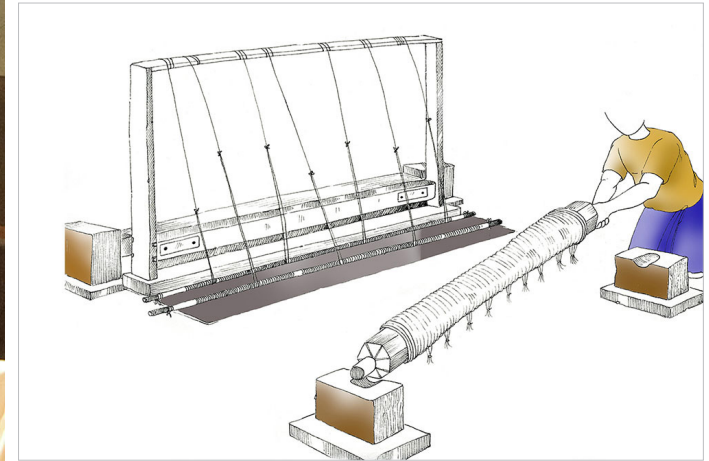
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The cotton threads are taking out from the warping equipment.



The existing ends are joined with ends from the new warp by twisting.



The warp threads are loaded into the beam.

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To give stiffness to yarns, Starch is applied on yarns on the loom by using palm fibres brush.



Artisan checking the tightness between the stretched warp.



A wooden stick fixed to the woven part of sari for better support.

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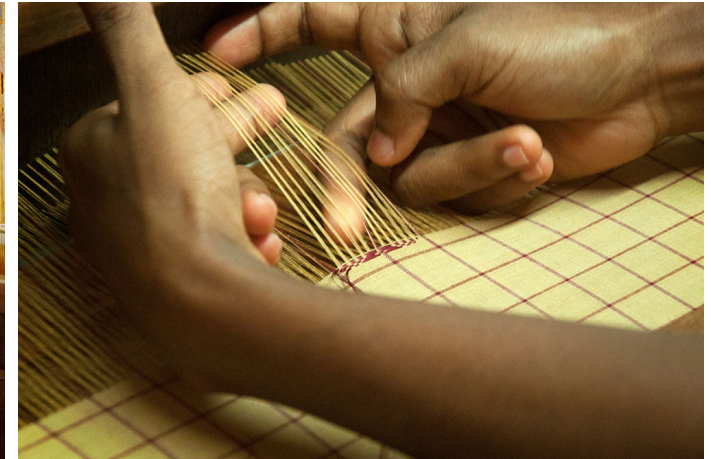
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Weaver pulling rope to move shuttle between the threads of the warp.



External Zari thread is inserted to create motif designs.

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Artisan checking the woven saree stiffness and quality.

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Products

In Kerala most of the people owns at least one type of the traditional Kerala saree with them, in their collections that are mostly preferred to wear during the occasions, festivals and programs nowadays. Kasargod saree is also another type of traditional saree that is specially woven at Kasargod with the varieties of check patterns with a huge collection of colour combinations.

Generally the sarees are measuring the length of 5.5 meter with different colour combinations of the check patterns, with the cost varying about Rs. 1000 to Rs. 18,000. Kasargod weaving society also makes the bed sheets of 240 meters with sizes of about 55" width, 60" width and 72" width of cost varying from Rs. 350 – Rs. 550.



Traditional saree with a geometrical checked patterns design.

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The varieties of saree are made in cool and vibrant colours.



Plane cotton sarees with a cool colours.



Simple cotton sari with geometrical checked patterns.



Red and yellow combination of cotton saree with a unique design border.

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Geometrical checked patterns saree with a golden yellow border design.



Unique design pattern and vibrant coloured cotton saree.

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Video



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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and Lija M. G. at **NID Campus, Bengaluru**.

You can get in touch with

- Prof. Bibhudutta Baral at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

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

Artist:

Kasaragod Weavers Co-Operative Production & Sale Society Ltd.

Vidyanagar, Kasargod-671123

India

Phone: 04994-255926

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator

Project e-kalpa

R & D Campus

National Institute of Design

#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road

Bengaluru 560 022

India

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054

Fax: +91 80 23373086

Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

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