

## **BEGAMPURI COTTON SAREE**

### **Back ground**

Begampur is a small but well known village in Chanditala II block, Hooghly district in West Bengal. It is 30 K.M away from Kolkata and well connected by road and rail.

Handloom weaving is the main occupation of the residents of this village. The number of handloom weavers has dwindled from about 4000 in last decade to about approximately 2000 now, due to migration to other profession.

For a long time handloom weavers were producing a well-known sari variety, locally known as 'matapar' saris which means simple border without any ornamentation, woven with coarser cotton yarn (40<sup>s</sup>x 40<sup>s</sup>& 40<sup>s</sup>x60<sup>s</sup>). These cheaper variety saris are mainly of coloured stripes and check patterns and with designs in the borders.

After the cluster intervention, weavers were imparted training in Designing, Dyeing, Preparatory processes like drum warping, sizing etc. and importantly, in dobby and Jacquard weaving with the main intention of producing diversified products. Weavers improved their skill and they started producing new varieties of quality cotton sarees by adopting new techniques and modifications taught to them.

### **Materials used**

Normally, 40<sup>s</sup> to 100<sup>s</sup> count of cotton yarns are used for Begampur sarees both for warp and weft. Steel reeds of 56s to 76s are commonly used to keep the texture of the sarees at par with Dhaniakhaligharana. The picks per inch are almost equal to ends per inch. As a result, balanced texture is obtained which gives comfort for wearing.

Wooden Dobbies are widely used for extra warp designs and Jacquards are also in use at present.

### **Weaving technique**

Begampur sarees are woven in balanced texture with contrasting borders in red, black, purple, orange etc., emphasized by a serrated edge motif. Narrow to broader borders are woven with designs of variety of stripes and figured motifs using dyed cotton yarn. These broad borders known as 'maathapaar' or 'Beluaaripaar' were often in two colours- such as black and red with a compact weave thus making it more hardy.

Hank yarn sizing is in practice in Begampur . The starch used for sizing are mainly sage, arrowroot , rice, wheat , parched rice ( Khai) etc. Sectional warping machine is used to for warping replacing age old street warping .Local wooden dobby of capacity up to 60 levers is normally used on pit loom or frame loom for weaving Begampur Saree with extra warp of 2/100s or 2/80s cotton yarn.

### **How to distinguish genuine Begumpuri Saree**

Begampur Saree can be distinguished by the presence of designs and 'chiur' (designs made by wooden pattayas) technique of weaving in some varieties. Contrast colours are usually arranged in body and borders. Some varieties are woven with 'khejurchuri' though it is originally derieved from Dhanikhaligharana.

