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WELLNESS

THE EXQUISITE ART OF MANGALAGIRI

- Aligina Anvitha Sudheshna & Dr. Meenu Srivastava

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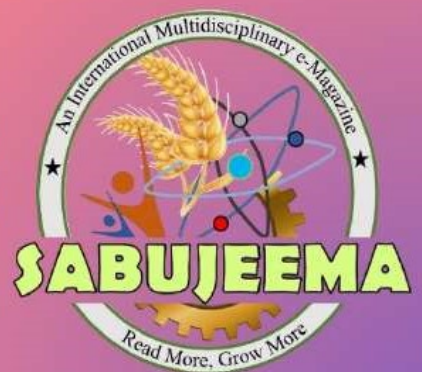
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THE EXQUISITE ART OF MANGALAGIRI

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ABSTRACT

Mangalagiri is a traditional town of Andhra Pradesh state with weaving as main occupation. The history of weaving here is as old as 500 years old. The town was famous because of the deity Lord Panakala Narasimha Swami, devotes visiting have a tradition of buying the hand-woven saree from the local weavers thus flourishing the local weaving communities. Speciality of the weaving includes using of the traditional age old pit loom for saree making, durability of the fabric produced with hundred percent cotton or silk. With the diversification of art blends of cotton silk, apart from sarees, dress materials and accessories were also been made. As old as the art and fondness from all over the world the art is diminishing due to the increased competition from the powerloom and raw material cost, low wages

weavers are migrating to the other sectors. Then the major blow came in the form of covid-19 pandemic which robbed most of the daily wage weavers from their decent work.

HISTORY

Mangalagiri is a traditional town of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. Mangalagiri which translates into “The Auspicious Hills”, is home to an ancient temple of Lord Pankala Narsimha Swamy and is honored as one of the eight *Mahakshetrams*. The pilgrimage is known to exist since 225 BC; inscriptions put up that the weaving occupation is as old as 500 years. As a part of the pilgrimage, the visitors of the temple had to offer reverence to god by purchasing a saree from the local weavers, thus boosting their livelihood.

MANGALAGIRI SAREE:

The uniqueness of the saree is due to its durability. Pit loom is used by the weavers, which exerts the weavers to produce fabric without any gaps towards the edges. 100% cotton is used for saree making, whereas silk and cotton-silk combinations are flourishing nowadays. At present, handloom weaving is the prime occupation of Mangalagiri town and around half of the population depends on this cottage industry for their living.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES:

- The saree consists of distinctive gold and thin zari borders with a plain body
- Motifs used are predominantly mango, parrot, leaves, gold coin motifs, stripes, checks, line patterns, intricate tribal designs
- Fine cotton and silk threads are used for the crisp effect of the saree
- Mangalagiri saree's are known for their durability
- Nizami border style was considered to be popular of all styles
- Bright and bold colours with an attractive colour combination



STEPS INVOLVED IN SAREE MAKING:

- Procurement of raw materials- pure cotton yarns, silk yarns, gold and silver zari, natural dyes, chemicals, etc.
- Purification of the procured raw yarn-removal of impurities and making it suitable for dyeing.
- Yarn winding- done manually on charka and bobbin to form warp threads whereas weft is woven on a prin.
- Weaving- jacquard weaving process is used and the weaving is only done in pit loom
- Dyeing- includes bleaching or colouring through vat dyes

SPECIFICATIONS

Cotton saree starts from 600 rupees, pure silk saree around 6000 rupees, cotton silk mixed saree starts from 2,500 rupees. In here all the saree's comes with accompanying blouse pieces woven along with the saree. Average length of the saree range from 6.0-6.5 meters. Dress materials available range from 600 rupees, with top, bottom and dupatta (2+2.5 meters)

DIVERSIFICATION

Apart from cotton and silk saree's the weavers have diversified the style by weaving dress materials, stoles, kurtha's to modernize the look and to increase the export potential. Online retailing has been started in the past few years with diversified means of online websites, Facebook retailing, and direct calls to the weaving houses and through Whatsapp groups etc.

Repercussions faced: During Qutub Shahi Dynasty (1593), tax levitation had hit the weavers due to which many weavers have fled the town, and gave a blow to the flourishing industry, later which the ruler enabled a more favorable tax norms.

In the early 2000s around 10,000 looms were run by weavers with flourishing handloom business. In the present day, the looms dwindled down to around 2,000 with fewer people involved in the weaving process, due to the inadequate wages, competition from power loom sectors, increased production costs that were lingering over.

The next hit came with the onset of Covid-19 and lockdown, during normal conditions a weaver used to weave around 12-15 sarees per month; but now the number has fallen down to 3-4 sarees. Artists are depending on the master weavers for financial help, and issues are also been faced concerning production, marketing as well as exporting.

SCHEMES FOR REVIVAL/ SUSTENANCE:

In the financial year 2019, the YSR Nethanna Nestham scheme was announced allocating rupees 200 crores for the weaver's welfare, where rupees 24,000 was the allocated amount per weaver per year. However, the catch is that weavers who have their own loom can only avail this scheme whereas, weavers who work under the master weavers or working in any other weaving community were barred from this making the lives of small weavers difficult.

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