

SHORT REPORT ON BIREN KUMAR BASAK



On 29 th march 2023,our college Simurali Sachinandan College of Education had organised an educational visit to the house of Biren Kumar Basak , one of the most famous and successful entrepreneurs

in sari business.

He is the recipient

of PADMA SHRI the fourth highest Civilian

Award of India.



Currently he lives in his phulia residence, in nadia district which is 100km from Kolkata. West Bengal has a rich heritage of saris

— be it Shantipuri, Dhaniakhali or

Tangail. He learnt the art of weaving

from his father Banko Bihari Basak.

Born in 1951 in Tangail district in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Biren Kumar Basak started weaving saris from the age of eight years. By the time he was 12, Biren Kumar Basak had started to weave Tangail saris with traditional borders. Basak migrated to India in the 1960s and came to Phulia, where some weavers had already set up home. “Since I knew how to weave, I started weaving saris immediately. I would get Rs 5 for weaving a pair of saris,” he said.

Biren Kumar Basak and his brother Dhiren Kumar Basak would travel to Kolkata from Phulia, carrying with them a pile of saris.



The hard work soon paid off and Biren Kumar Basak's saris were in demand among discerning buyers. It was around 1987 that Biren Kumar Basak started to work with weavers. He



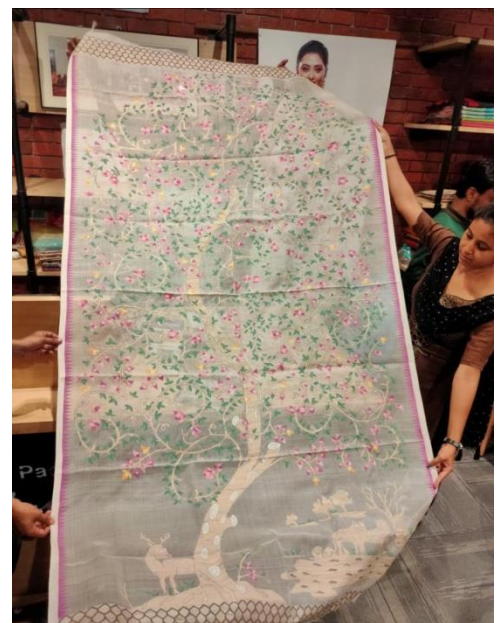
even encouraged women to weave — this was a revolution of sorts as weaving was, at that time, considered a male domain. Women were only allowed to cut threads.



In the beginning he had only eight people to start his business with, and right now he had 24 employees

and 5000 weavers with whom he sells around 16000 hand woven saris every month. Biren Kumar Basak trained women to use the loom. Today, around 3,000 of the 5,000 weavers who work with him are women. People have been working under Biren Kumar Basak since the 70s, generation after generation. They have great dedication and skill for their work.

Here we got the opportunity to observe the difference between



machine-made and handwoven Jamdanis can be understood by studying both sides of the sari. In a handwoven Jamdani, the weaving is double-sided leaving no loose ends that need to be cut on the inside. If the inside of a sari has cut ends, then it's machine-made. It needs a trained eye to distinguish between a



handwoven jamdani from a machine-made one.

Weaving a Jamdani by hand can take

anything between two days to several months to and the price of a sari can go up to lakhs. Biren Kumar Basak's famous *Ramayana* sari took around two-and-a-half years of work. Jamdani work is now done on different materials such as cotton, muslin and *matka*. The motifs vary from simple to intricate.

Weavers of Jamdani saris earn Rs 8,000 to 10,000 a month on an average.

He has also been a pioneer in changing the character of the traditional Tangail.



“The traditional Tangail sari meant a plain sari with a *paar* (border). Then slowly motifs started getting introduced and I also started making Jamdani motifs on Tangail.’ These saris were never made in Bangladesh’s Tangail. It is here in Phulia that Biren Kumar Basak started weaving a new kind of Tangail sari

while retaining traditional motifs such as lotus, grapevine or fish skin patterns. He has a beautiful showroom of his collection inside his house .

