



Participant Handbook

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Basics of Saree Draping

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Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of India

“ Skilling is building a better India.
If we have to move India towards
development then Skill Development
should be our mission. ”



Certificate

COMPLIANCE TO QUALIFICATION PACK – NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

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BEAUTY & WELLNESS SECTOR SKILL COUNCIL

for

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This participant manual is dedicated to all the aspiring youth who desire to achieve special skill which would be a lifelong asset for their future endeavours and help them make a bright career in the Beauty and Wellness Sector.

About this Book

This book is a comprehensive guide to the timeless art of saree draping, blending tradition with practical techniques. It covers everything from understanding the components of a saree outfit to mastering the most popular draping styles, like the classic Nivi drape.

The book also explores advanced draping styles, such as Bengali and Maharashtrian, alongside tips for achieving a flawless look.

With step-by-step instructions, tips for beginners, and insights into regional variations, it caters to readers of all skill levels. The book also explores the cultural significance of the saree, making it a perfect resource for both fashion enthusiasts and those seeking a deeper connection to heritage.

This Participant Handbook is designed to enable theoretical and practical training to be the basics of saree draping. The Qualification Pack of a Saree Draping includes the following National Occupational Standards which have all been covered in this Trainee Manual:

BWS/N9019: The Basic Course of Saree Draping

Symbols Used



Key Learning
Outcomes



Unit
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Notes



Exercise

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1. The Basic Course of Saree Draping

Unit 1.1 - Concept of Saree as a Garment

Unit 1.2 - Step-by-Step Guide to Drape a Perfect Saree

Unit 1.3 - Step-by-Step Guide to Drape a Perfect Dhoti

Unit 1.4 - Step-by-Step Guide to Drape a Perfect Safa



Key Learning Objectives



At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe the historical and cultural significance of saree as a garment
2. Identify various sarees basis the region in India
3. Discuss the various saree fabrics and their importance
4. Analyse the selection of a blouse and petticoat/underskirt according to body types
5. Select the saree tailored to the body shape and skin tone.
6. Identify the right saree for the occasion based on the selection of fabric, design, colour and style
7. Discuss the appropriate accessories to complement different saree styles
8. Explain step-by-step guide to drape different types and styles (Nivi, Bengali, Gujrati Maharashtrian, lehnga, dhoti, Langa Voni, Mekhela Chador etc.) of sarees
9. Discuss the ways to handle the costume to avoid wrinkles, crumpling or any damage
10. Identify the different styles of dhoti draping based on regional traditions
11. Explain the key steps involved in draping a safa, based on communities

Unit 1.1 Concept of Saree as a garment

Unit Objectives

At the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

1. Understand the historical and cultural significance of saree as a garment
2. Identify various sarees basis the regions in India
3. Discuss various saree fabrics and their importance
4. Evaluate the selection of a blouse and petticoat/underskirt according to body types
5. Identify the flawless saree match tailored to the body type and skin tone
6. Identify the right saree for the occasion based on the selection of fabric, design, colour and style
7. Choose appropriate accessories to complement different saree styles

1.1.1 Introduction to saree as a garment

A saree (also spelled sari or sadi) is a traditional women's garment originating from the Indian subcontinent. It consists of a long, unstitched piece of fabric, typically ranging between 5 to 9 yards. The fabric is draped elegantly around the body, with one end secured at the waist and the other end draped over the shoulder, often styled as a stole. This draping style can reveal the midriff, adding to its graceful and feminine appeal.

The saree is not just a garment but a symbol of cultural heritage, worn across countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan. The versatility of the sari lies in its ability to be styled in various ways, depending on the region and occasion. The fabric can be made from various materials like cotton, silk, and chiffon, and is often decorated with intricate designs, embroidery, and patterns, reflecting the rich textile traditions of the subcontinent.

Wearing a saree is an art that combines tradition, beauty, and comfort. It can be draped in multiple ways, with the most common being the Nivi drape, where the fabric is wrapped around the waist, pleated, and then the loose end (the pallu) is thrown over the shoulder.

A saree is typically worn with two key components:

1. **Blouse:** A fitted upper garment that pairs with the saree, usually designed to complement the fabric and style.
2. **Petticoat:** A slip worn underneath the saree to provide structure, comfort, and hold the saree in place.



Fig 1.1.1 Saree

1.1.1.1 Origins and History of Saree as a Garment

The history of sari-like garments can be traced to the Indus Valley Civilization (2800–1800 BCE), where cotton cultivation and weaving first began around the 5th millennium BCE. Early dyes such as indigo, turmeric, and madder, which were used during this time, are still prevalent today. Silk weaving emerged later, around 2450–2000 BCE.

The term “sari” originates from the Sanskrit word *śāṭikā*, referenced in ancient Hindu texts as women's attire. This evolved from a three-piece ensemble that included the *antariya* (a lower garment), the *uttariya* (a veil draped over the shoulder or head), and the *stanapatta* (a chest band). This ensemble, mentioned in Sanskrit and Buddhist Pali literature from the 6th century BCE, highlights the sari's roots in practical yet elegant clothing traditions.

In ancient times, the *antariya* resembled the dhoti wrap, featuring a fishtail design passed between the legs and flowing into pleats at the front. This evolved into the modern *ghagra* or *lehenga*. The *uttariya* became today's *dupatta* or *ghoonghat*, while the *stanapatta* transformed into the *choli* by the 1st century CE. References in ancient works like *Kadambari* by Banabhatta and Tamil poetry such as *Silappadhikaram* describe women's elegant drapery, emphasizing its cultural significance. Red saris, symbolizing auspiciousness, became traditional bridal attire in Hindu weddings. Handwoven silk and cotton saris, such as Kanchipuram, Paithani, and Banarasi, gained prominence for festive occasions. Ikat, tie-dye, and block-printed styles like Bandhani, Leheriya, and Kalamkari are seasonal favourites, particularly during monsoons. Traditional embroidery styles like *gota patti* and *mochi* enhance these saris for formal events, while modern fabrics like polyester and georgette cater to contemporary preferences.

The sari's evolution demonstrates its adaptability, retaining its essence as a timeless symbol of grace and cultural heritage.



Fig 1.1.2 History of Saree

1.1.1.2 Cultural Significance of Saree As A Garment

The cultural significance of sarees as a garment is profound and multifaceted, deeply rooted in the traditions, rituals, and values of the Indian subcontinent. Beyond being a piece of clothing, the saree symbolizes cultural identity, social status, and spiritual beliefs. Here's a closer look at the cultural importance of sarees:



Fig 1.1.3 Cultural significance of saree as a garment

“Necessity of always wearing a saree for women to conserve and nurture Indian culture”

The saree holds a deep cultural and historical significance in India, symbolising grace, elegance, and tradition. By wearing a saree, women help conserve and nurture cultural heritage, as it has been an integral part of Indian society for centuries. The saree is not just a garment but a symbol of respect for cultural practices and values. Wearing it helps maintain a link to ancient customs while adapting to modern times. It also fosters a sense of identity, unity, and pride within communities. In this way, the saree becomes a living tradition that carries the essence of Indian culture across generations.

1. **Cultural Symbol:** The saree is a symbol of South Asian heritage and tradition. It has been worn for thousands of years, transcending time and evolving with changing fashion trends while maintaining its cultural significance.
2. **Versatile Attire:** The saree is a versatile garment that can be worn in various styles and for different occasions. From casual wear to weddings, parties, and religious ceremonies, the saree is suitable for all kinds of events, making it a go-to outfit for many women.
3. **Expression of Femininity:** The saree enhances a woman's natural beauty, embracing her figure with grace. It is known for its ability to highlight femininity and elegance, making the wearer feel confident and beautiful.
4. **Connection to Spirituality:** In Hindu culture, the saree is often associated with goddesses, symbolizing divinity and purity. It fosters a spiritual connection during rituals and festivals.
5. **Cultural Unity:** Wearing a saree brings a sense of pride and unity, connecting individuals to their roots and fostering a shared cultural identity.

Exercise

Multiple Choice Questions:

Q1. When did the saree first appear in history?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| a) During the Indus Valley Civilization | b) During the Maurya Empire |
| c) During the Mughal Empire | d) During the British Colonial Era |

Q2. The saree, as a traditional garment, originated in which region?

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| a) Middle East | b) Indian Subcontinent |
| c) East Asia | d) Africa |

Q3. What is the typical length of a saree fabric?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| a) 3 to 5 yards | b) 5 to 9 yards |
| c) 10 to 12 yards | d) 2 to 4 yards |

Q4. The term “sari” originates from which Sanskrit word?

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| a) Svarnakara | b) Śāṭikā |
| c) Utarīya | d) Vāstra |

Q5. What are the two key components typically worn with a saree?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Scarf and belt | b) Petticoat and blouse |
| c) Dupatta and ghagra | d) Shawl and tunic |

1.1.2 Various Sarees are Categorized Based on the Regions In India

India being a culturally colourful country, each region in this vast nation has its own unique type of saree and draping style too, that it can practically be identified with. Here is information on the major types of sarees, along with the description of their fabric, printing or weaving style, draping style, colours usually used and so on.

1.Andhra Sarees

1. Venkatagiri Saree

Venkatagiri sarees originate from the Venkatagiri region of Andhra Pradesh. They are lightweight, soft cotton sarees often adorned with zari borders and intricate floral or geometric motifs. Known for their simplicity and elegance, these sarees are ideal for both casual wear and festive occasions.



Fig 1.1.4 Venkatagiri Saree

2. Mangalagiri Silk Sarees

Mangalagiri silk sarees hail from the Mangalagiri region, known for their fine handloom weaving. These sarees are lightweight, featuring zari borders and solid-colored bodies or minimalistic patterns. They are popular for their durability and comfort, making them suitable for daily and ceremonial wear.



Fig 1.1.5 Mangalagiri Saree

3. Uppada Silk Sarees

Uppada silk sarees are crafted in Uppada, using the traditional jamdani weaving technique. These sarees are lightweight, with intricate designs and rich zari work, often featuring floral and paisley patterns. They are highly sought after for weddings and festive occasions due to their elegance.



Fig 1.1.6 Uppada Silk Saree

4. Chirala Sarees

Chirala sarees, from the Chirala region, are made from fine cotton and silk blends. They are known for their unique weaving techniques and vibrant colors, often featuring bold patterns and simple borders. These sarees are comfortable and ideal for both casual and formal events.



Fig 1.1.7 Chirala Saree

5. Bandar Sarees

Bandar sarees originate from Machilipatnam (Bandar) and are known for their unique block-printed designs. These sarees are made using natural dyes and traditional techniques, resulting in earthy tones and intricate patterns. They are lightweight and perfect for casual or semi-formal occasions.



Fig 1.1.8 Bandar Saree

6. Kuppadam Sarees

Kuppadam sarees are known for their distinctive interlocked weaving technique, combining silk and cotton threads. These sarees often feature contrast borders and rich zari patterns. Lightweight and durable, they are suitable for festive occasions and daily wear.



Fig 1.1.9 Kuppadam Saree

7. Dharmavaram Silk Sarees

Dharmavaram silk sarees, from the Dharmavaram region, are renowned for their rich silk fabric and broad borders with intricate gold zari work. These sarees often feature temple and floral motifs and are a staple for weddings and special occasions due to their grandeur.



Fig 1.1.10 Dharmavaram Silk Saree

8. Pochampally

Pochampally sarees originate from the town of Pochampally, known for the ikat weaving technique, where threads are pre-dyed before weaving to create intricate patterns. These sarees are crafted from silk, cotton, or a blend of both and feature geometric designs in vibrant colors. They are popular for formal events and are recognized globally as a GI (Geographical Indication) product.



Fig 1.1.11 Pochampally

9. Narayanpet

Narayanpet sarees hail from the Narayanpet region and are traditionally woven in silk or cotton. They are lightweight and feature checkered patterns with contrasting temple border designs. Affordable and durable, these sarees are ideal for daily wear and religious ceremonies, showcasing earthy tones and traditional simplicity.



Fig 1.1.12 Narayanpet

10. Gadwal

Gadwal sarees, from the Gadwal region, are known for their silk and cotton blend fabric, often called Sico sarees. These sarees feature rich zari borders and intricately woven pallus with temple or floral motifs. Lightweight yet regal, they are widely worn during weddings and festivals, symbolizing elegance and tradition.



Fig 1.1.13 Gadwal

2.Assam Sarees

1. Moonga Silk

Moonga Silk Sarees are made from one of the strongest natural silks, known for their durability and rich golden hue. Produced from the silkworms found in Assam, India, Moonga silk is renowned for its natural luster, sturdiness, and elegant drape.



Fig 1.1.14 Moonga Silk

2. Mekhla Cotton

Mekhela Chador (also spelled as Mekhela Chaddar, Mekhla Chadar, Mekhlo Chador), is type of Saree comprising two pieces of cloth, draped on the top and bottom, which is the traditional attire worn by the women of Assam.



Fig 1.1.15 Mekhla Cotton

3.Bengal Sarees

Bengal has been acclaimed for its silk and cotton sarees for centuries. Let us discuss some of the most important types of Bengal Sarees.

1. Tant Saree

Tant sarees are traditional handwoven cotton sarees, known for their lightweight texture, making them perfect for hot and humid climates. They feature simple yet elegant designs, often with vibrant colors and floral motifs. Tant sarees are popular for daily wear and casual occasions due to their comfort and breathability.



Fig 1.1.16 Tant Saree

2. Baluchari Saree

Baluchari sarees are renowned for their rich silk fabric and intricate weaving techniques. Originating from Bishnupur, these sarees often depict mythological scenes and elaborate motifs woven into the pallu. They are highly valued for their artistic and cultural significance, making them ideal for weddings and festive occasions.



Fig 1.1.17 Baluchari Saree

3. Kaantha Sari

Kaantha sarees are known for their distinctive hand-stitched embroidery, where traditional motifs like flowers, birds, and geometric patterns are intricately sewn on cotton or silk fabrics. The embroidery work, called Kantha stitching, gives these sarees a unique charm. They are perfect for casual wear and cultural events.



Fig 1.1.18 Kaantha Saree

4. Garode / Korial

Garode or Korial sarees are known for their exquisite weaving and are typically made from cotton or silk. These sarees often have a white base with red or other bold-colored borders. They are predominantly worn during religious ceremonies and cultural rituals in Bengal and are considered auspicious.



Fig 1.1.19 Garode Saree

5. Shantipuri Cotton

Shantipuri cotton sarees are woven in the towns of Shantipur and Phulia in West Bengal. These sarees are made from fine cotton and are known for their delicate texture and lightness. With simple designs and soothing colors, Shantipuri cotton sarees are preferred for daily wear and casual occasions.



Fig 1.1.20 Shantipuri Saree

6. Jamdani / Dhakai

Jamdani sarees, originally from Dhaka, Bangladesh, are known for their fine muslin fabric and intricate, handwoven patterns. The sarees feature delicate floral or geometric motifs, creating a rich and luxurious appeal. Jamdani sarees are highly sought after for weddings and festive occasions due to their luxury.



Fig 1.1.21 Jamdani Saree

7. Murshidabad Silk

Murshidabad silk sarees, produced in the Murshidabad region of West Bengal, are known for their rich, lustrous texture. These sarees are typically woven with intricate zari work and delicate patterns, making them a favorite for formal occasions and weddings. The fabric is soft and luxurious, offering a regal look.



Fig 1.1.22 Murshidabad Silk Saree

8. Rajshahi Silk

Rajshahi silk, also known as Eri silk, comes from the Rajshahi region of Bangladesh. This silk is soft, durable, and has a rich, natural sheen. It is often woven into traditional saree designs with simple borders and motifs. Rajshahi silk sarees are popular for their elegance and are worn for special occasions.



Fig 1.1.23 Rajshahi Silk Saree

9. Dhakai Katan

Dhakai Katan sarees are made from luxurious Katan silk, handwoven in Dhaka, Bangladesh. These sarees are known for their fine silk texture and intricate designs, often featuring floral patterns and golden zari work. Dhakai Katan sarees are highly valued for weddings and formal events due to their exquisite craftsmanship.



Fig 1.1.24 Dhakai Katan Saree

4. Bihar Sarees

1. Tussar Silk

Tussar silk sarees from Bhagalpur are renowned for their rich texture and natural golden sheen. The silk is sourced from wild silkworms, giving the fabric a unique, slightly coarse texture. These sarees often feature traditional motifs, making them highly prized for festive occasions and weddings.



Fig 1.1.25 Tussar Silk Saree

2. Baavan Booti Weave

Baavan buti saris are considered the only fabric of Bihar that prioritises pattern over texture. Baavan buti saris have been traditionally woven on pit looms or frame looms, with extra weft threads being used to create the fifty-two motifs along the sari's length.



Fig 1.1.26 Bavan Booti Saree

3. Madhubani Saree

Madhubani sarees originate from the Mithila region of Bihar, inspired by the famous Madhubani painting style. These sarees are hand-painted or block-printed with vibrant, folk-art designs, depicting themes from nature, mythology, and religious symbolism. They are perfect for festive and cultural occasions, representing Bihar's rich artistic heritage.



Fig 1.1.27 Madhubani Saree

5. Orissa Sarees

1. Sambalpuri Silk & Cotton Sari

Sambalpuri sarees from Sambalpur are famous for their Ikat weaving technique, where both the warp and weft threads are dyed before weaving to create intricate patterns. These sarees blend silk and cotton, offering a perfect balance of luxury and comfort. They are known for their bold, geometric designs and vibrant colors, making them a popular choice for festivals and weddings.



Fig 1.1.28 Sambalpuri Saree

2. Ikkat Silk & Cotton Sari

Ikkat sarees from Bargarh use the traditional Ikat dyeing technique, where threads are pre-dyed to create patterns before weaving. The combination of silk and cotton makes these sarees light yet luxurious, with unique, abstract designs. They are highly valued for their vibrant hues and intricate craftsmanship, making them ideal for special occasions.



Fig 1.1.29 Ikkat Saree

3. Bomkai Saree

Bomkai sari or Bomkai Saree is a handloom saree from Odisha, India. It is an origin of Bomkai village from Ganjam district, however later it is mainly produced by the Bhulia community of Subarnapur district. Bomkai is one of the identified Geographical Indications of India.



Fig 1.1.30 Bomkai Saree

5. Khandua Silk & Cotton Saree

Khandua saree, also known as Maniabandi or Katak, is a traditional “bandha” or ikat saree that originates from the state of Odisha in India. Renowned for its aesthetic appeal and cultural significance, Khandua saree holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Odisha.



Fig 1.1.31 Khandua Saree

6. Pasapali Saree

Pasapali sari also known as Saktapar is a Bandha (Ikat) handloom sari weaved mainly in the Bargarh district of Odisha, India. The name Pasapali is derived from pasā or gambling games using Chess board.



Fig 1.1.32 Pasapali Saree

8. Berhampuri Silk

A type of thick silk sari that characteristically features a phoda kumbha motif and is named after Berhampur (now Brahmapur), a city associated with the deity Brahma in the Ganjam district of Odisha (formerly Orissa). Also known as the Berhampuri resham patta, these saris are typically woven in red, white, black and blue and are often accompanied by a matching joda.



Fig 1.1.33 Berhampuri Saree