



THE BRITISH SARI STORY

EDUCATION PACK

Developed at Barham Primary School,
Wembley, Middlesex

Written by Amita Nijhawan,
Sital Punja, Susan Roberts
and Helen Scalway

Edited by Susan Roberts



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INTRODUCTION

The British Sari Story celebrates the wonderful South Asian garment, the sari.

Through the sari, we look at traditional South Asian heritage and some of the different cultures which make up our cosmopolitan cities in the UK. The exhibition presents traditional saris from South Asia and new saris with patterns reflecting aspects of British Asian life, 60 years after independence. Traditionally, saris are regional garments and everything about how them, from the fabric they are made of to how they are worn, evokes identity. By looking at the traditional saris, we learn about South Asian heritage. The brand new sari patterns tell us about life in this country today.

This pack, aimed at teachers of primary school children (Foundation to Key Stage 2), accompanies the exhibition. We hope it will help teachers to work with children to explore and understand something of the cultural heritage which may be theirs, or that of their neighbours, in Britain's multicultural cities. We would like them to explore their own stories, triggering discussion and story-telling. By doing this, children will learn more about themselves and others.

In the pack are learning tools for the following National Curriculum areas: History, Geography, Citizenship, English, Maths, Science, Design Technology and Art.

PUPILS CAN:

HISTORY

- recognise the distinction between present and past in their own and other people's lives by studying women's experience in South Asia and the UK
- develop an emerging sense of chronology by studying the historical relationship between India and the UK
- know and recount episodes from stories about the past by studying migration, the experience of people coming from overseas to work in the UK
- find answers to some simple questions about the past by gathering oral histories.

GEOGRAPHY

- learn about the physical and human features of different localities by studying the regions where the patterns originate and the countries left by migrating people



MATHS

- use patterns as a starting point to discuss mathematics.

CITIZENSHIP

- learn about themselves as developing individuals and as members of their communities by studying the way the patterns on saris reflect people's lives and experience
- become aware of their own and other people's feelings and the views, needs and rights of other children and older people by studying social themes like dress, marriage, migration, work, health, food, entertainment and racism.

ENGLISH

- ask questions and listen to others' points of views by gathering stories
- use standard English to write their own sari stories.

SCIENCE

- look at saris to describe or respond appropriately to simple features of objects, living things and events
- gather data to answer questions about the origins and manufacture of saris.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

- recognise the characteristics of familiar products e.g. the materials used in making saris
- generate ideas by collecting and using information to create their own sari patterns.

ART

- use patterns to communicate their ideas and meanings, and design and make images and artefacts
- explore ideas and collect visual and other information to create their own patterns.

This Pack has been produced with the support and collaboration of Barham Primary School, Wembley, Middlesex, where it was effectively trialled.



BACKGROUND: THE BRITISH SARI STORY

The British Sari Story project began when Susan Roberts, director of the cultural arts organisation Bridging Arts, saw artist Helen Scalway's drawings of the interior of a sari shop in Tooting. Intrigued by the mixture of traditional South Asian pattern and contemporary Britain, Helen had drawn the traditional patterns, the paisley motifs, the scrolls and flourishes and geometric patterns on the cottons and silks, among the shop's contemporary fittings such as coat hangers, the aluminium shelving, the gas meters, the telephone and digital tills.

Susan was inspired by the way the drawings suggested the intertwined histories of Britain and India. She contacted Sital Punja, of the fashion recycling label Sari UK Ltd, to see if she could provide saris to 'illustrate' Helen's drawings. The three women saw the way South Asian heritage could be explored through sari patterns and developed the project together. *The British Sari Story* was born.

The exhibition includes:

- a selection of regional saris with information about their background
- new saris with contemporary designs by young British designers
- stories by children at Barham Primary School, Wembley, about saris owned by family members and friends
- Helen Scalway's drawings.



WHAT IS A SARI?

The sari is the national costume of India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and is worn by South Asian women all over the world. It is an important part of these women's heritage and experience.

Saris are usually about five metres long and can be made from different fabrics such as cotton, silk, chiffon or muslin. Their patterns are influenced by historical, regional and social factors.

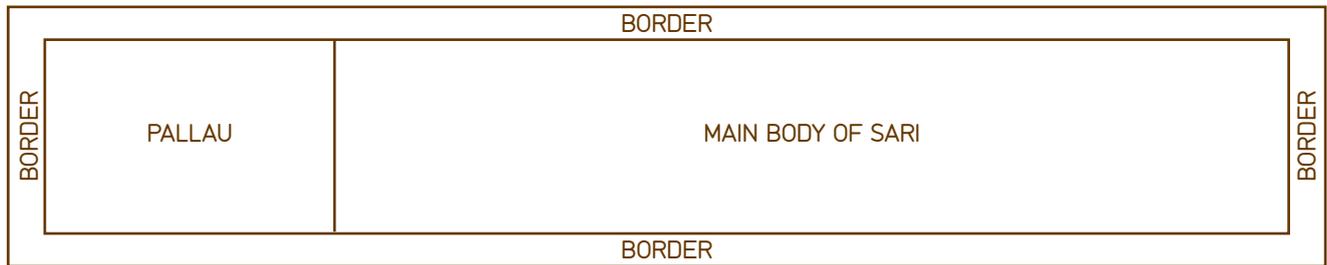
In ancient times, Banares, in the east of India, was famous for weaving cotton saris. However, during the Moghul period (a Muslim dynasty that ruled India until 1857) the weaving of silk brocades with intricate floral patterns (jasmine and marigolds) using gold and silver threads, became a speciality reflecting the wealth and magnificence of the Moghul lifestyle. These saris were and are still made by highly skilled weavers using the finest material. They are considered to be the most exclusive saris, and are associated with special occasions such as weddings.

The bandhani is a sari pattern particular to Gujarat and Rajasthan in the western region of India. The bandhani is created by tie dyeing cloth to create many small spots which produce elaborate patterns. This technique is said to have existed in India since the late 5th Century AD. Traditionally, bandhanis were created on cotton, mulberry silk or even wool and were of various colour combinations depending on the region in which they were made. In Gujarat, red and black is a common combination and red with white dots is used as a wedding sari "ghalchola" presented to the bride by the groom's parents.

The colours of saris can be meaningful. Traditionally, green and red are auspicious colours and are worn by key members of the family at weddings and religious functions.

Their fabric is also significant. Cotton and polyester are usually used for everyday saris whereas silk, chiffon, crepes and georgettes are kept for special occasions.

ELEMENTS IN SARI PATTERN



There are different areas in sari pattern:

- the border is a narrow strip running around three edges of the sari
- the pallau is a wide strip at one end of the sari, which usually carries a bold and colourful pattern. This strip 'defines' a sari. On it are the key features of the pattern
- the main body of the sari. This may be plain, or patterned, or have tiny dotted motifs (buti)
- the opposite end of the sari to the pallau is usually not patterned, as it is tucked into the waistband or petticoat.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

WOMEN MATTER: THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUTH ASIA AND BRITAIN

This timeline evokes the historical relationship between Britain and South Asia India from 1600 to the present day. Since saris are worn by women, this document highlights some issues affecting women and key historical female figures involved.

It can offer only a hint of the long, rich intertwining of the histories of Britain and South Asia. But these key facts may be useful in inspiring lessons at all levels, or as background in lesson-planning. They could help to create class-room dramas and imaginative scenarios of story-telling and discussion. They could also be used in exploring themes around dress, marriage, migration, work, health, food, entertainment and racism.

YR	SOUTH ASIA	BRITAIN
1558		Queen Elizabeth I comes to the throne. Her court loves spices and silks brought by merchants from South Asia
1660- mid 1700s	South Asia has received many influxes of populations. By the 17th century, there are still some indigenous kings but increasingly Mughal rulers, originating in Islamic Persia, are gaining control. The Mughal court speak Persian, though their subjects are Hindu.	Elizabeth I grants a charter to the East India Company, a trading organisation, giving it privileged trading rights in India. The Company gradually transformed itself into the main force for military rule of India. Clive of India (1725-74), along with Warren Hastings, is entrusted by the British Government to bring large areas of India under British rule.
Mid to late 1700s		In the 17th and 18th century a liking for silks, spices and jewels from South Asia increases among the English. Great ships owned by the East India Company ply between England and the ports of South Asia.
1800	Towards the end of the 18th century cotton exports begin on an industrial scale to supply demand in Britain.	The Industrial Revolution is underway in the 19th century in Britain. A major industry is textiles, particularly in northern cities like Manchester. The textile industry employs huge numbers of women workers. The great development of this industry in Britain creates a demand for patterns to put on the textiles. South Asia is a rich source, and the British develop a great fondness for South Asian textile patterns.

YR	SOUTH ASIA	BRITAIN
1854		Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole both work as nurses to improve the care of wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. Mary Seacole, a black woman, is a great pioneer in overcoming race discrimination in her day.
1857-58	The Indian 'Rebellion' or 'First Indian War of Independence' begins when Indian soldiers, who by now are employed by the East India Company, feel that the Company is denying them their traditional ways, particularly in matters of religion. The British put up a long defence and the Uprising is defeated. Many Christian missionaries work in India in the 19th century.	In Britain, the 'First Indian War of Independence' is called 'The Indian mutiny'. After the British successfully quell the rebellion, Queen Victoria is given the title of 'Empress of India'.
1863	Indian Civil Service set up. To this day Indian public administration is affected by the legacy of this government organisation.	
1870		Elizabeth Garrett Anderson becomes the first qualified woman doctor in Britain after a long battle for her right to higher education.
1928		Women are given the vote on the same conditions as men.
1929	India granted Dominion status	
1929-31		Margaret Bondfield served as the first woman cabinet minister in Britain. She was the Minister for Labour and had earlier represented shop workers, starting out in the 'drapery' trade - i.e. textiles.
1931	Mahatma Gandhi calls for all-India government. He advocates peaceful means to rid the country of British rule, including boycott of British-manufactured goods. This is the origin of the Swadeshi (self-sufficiency) movement in India, which is ultimately successful against Britain.	
1939-45	The Second World War.	Britain is at war and life is austere. Food and clothing are severely rationed.
1941	Indira Ghandi becomes involved with the India Independence Movement.	
1947	The British partition the Punjab into two, India (Hindu) and Pakistan (Muslim). India gains Independence. Women are now given the vote. With the division of India, a partition of cultures follows so that traditions, dress, and ways of life diverge. After partition the sari becomes the national costume of India while the salwar kameez, (tunic and trousers) is adopted by Pakistan.	

YR	SOUTH ASIA	BRITAIN
1950s	Large populations leave South Asia to work in northern England's textile mills	In Britain the first immigrants from South Asia begin to arrive to work in the textile mills in post-war Britain, as labour is scarce. 1960's. Young British people, including the Beatle George Harrison, begin to travel to India in search of religious enlightenment. After the austerity of the war years, pop music and youth culture explode into dominance and fashion is fun. With the invention of sheer tights. women could wear shorter dresses enabling Mary Quant to popularise the miniskirt.
1966	Indira Gandhi becomes Prime Minister of India for the first of four terms of office.	
1972		A large influx of refugees of South Asian origin arrives in Britain as a result of their expulsion from the African country, Uganda, by the tyrant Idi Amin.
1978		Margaret Thatcher becomes the first woman prime minister in UK
1979	Mother Theresa, a Christian missionary, is awarded the Nobel Peace prize for her work ministering to the very poorest people in Calcutta.	
1980s	In these years the salwar kameez becomes popular city wear for women in South Asia.	In the UK there are many fashion milestones, including the acceptance of trousers and jeans as women's' wear: artificial fibres including easy care wash'n'wear poplins, acrylics and viscose, helped hard working women who were holding down jobs outside the home.
1981		The first Hindu temple opens in Slough.
1994		In Britain the Anglican Church ordains its first women clergy.
1990s	Bollywood, the Indian film industry in Mumbai, develops and is immensely popular.	In the U.K. fashion picks up on the sparkle and colour associated with Bollywood. This becomes another, very significant, South Asian influence on British fashion.
2007	March 9th. Arun Nayar, an Indian software entrepreneur, marries Elizabeth Hurley, a British fashion model, in a lavish Hindu ceremony conducted in Sanskrit in a Hindu temple.	March 3rd. Elizabeth Hurley marries Arun Nayar, an Indian businessman, in an Anglican ceremony conducted in English, held in an English castle.



TIMELINE FOR CHILDREN

- 1558 Queen Elizabeth comes to the throne. Her court loves spices and silks brought from south Asia
- 1600 Queen Elizabeth grants a licence to the East India Trading company
- 1700 Great ships start to bring goods like cotton from South Asia to Britain
- 1854 Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole work as nurses to help soldiers wounded during the Crimean War
- 1858 Queen Victoria is given the title 'Empress of India'
- 1928 Women are given the vote in Britain
- 1931 Mahatma Gandhi calls for India to have its own government
- 1947 The British divide India into two, India (Hindu) and Pakistan (Muslim)
- 1950 Large numbers of people from South Asia come to work in the textile mills in the north of England
- 1966 Indira Gandhi becomes the first woman Prime Minister of India
- 1972 a large number of people of South Asian origin come to the UK, following their expulsion from Africa
- 1978 Margaret Thatcher becomes the first woman prime minister of the UK
- 1979 Mother Theresa is awarded the Nobel Peace prize for her work with the poor in Calcutta
- 2007 Model Liz Hurley marries Arun Nayar, an Indian businessman, in an English castle in the UK and a Hindu temple in India



TEACHERS' GUIDE TO COLLECTING ORAL HISTORIES

STORIES OF SARIS AND STORIES OF SELF

SUMMARY

History can be learned through books, or it can be gathered in more informal ways. Everyone has a story - and, in a sense, this story is a history. If a person's story is carefully documented and presented after interviewing and note-taking, it can be called an oral history.

Primary School children can collect oral histories about saris owned by family members and friends. Just as sari patterns are full of history, so are the women who wear them. By gathering their oral histories, children can start to understand their own background, histories and heritage.

The stories that the children uncover will be of interest not just to them but to people far beyond their families. They are likely to tell the story of migration, of personal treasures, of family history and also what it means to British in the 21st century.

We might learn about some or all of these:

- the personal journeys and life of the owner of the sari
- the experience of migrating to England and wearing a sari in England
- why the sari selected is of importance
- where do they wear the sari
- how do they feel about wearing saris and about wearing this particular one
- what the sari means to them.

Though this oral history guide focuses on gathering stories of saris and the women who wear them, but it can also be used by any community wanting to learn about their histories through personal items.



BACKGROUND

Sari owners will come from different backgrounds. Some may have been born in the UK while others will have migrated from other countries, bringing their saris with them. Each will have their own story about being Asian, their life in Britain and their experience of wearing their favourite sari.

Some saris may have been bought here in England; others may have been bought abroad. Some may have been given as presents to mark an occasion, others as simple everyday gifts.

But saris are almost always chosen carefully, whether they are intended for an event, as a gift, for everyday wear or for a formal occasion. Each will have a history and story. Some will be magnificent and connected to landmark occasions in a life; others might be more ordinary and humdrum. All are of interest.

HOW TO GATHER THE STORIES

Children can find stories by asking their family members or a family friend a few simple questions to get some background information. A person's attachment to a sari is very personal and so are the stories that are associated with it. The person approached may feel uncomfortable talking about themselves, so it is important to explain what the project involves and put them at ease.

The key to gathering a good oral history is to encourage a flowing conversation where the person interviewed is doing most of the talking.

It's an exciting task, one done by journalists every day - or even by detectives! All children need is a pencil to write down important names and dates, or a willing helper to jot down the names for them.

WHO TO TALK TO?

Most probably, women are going to tell these stories. Children should ask their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins and family friends who might be interested in helping out.



Different generations have different experiences and often the older a person is, the more of life they have experienced and the more stories they have to tell. Women may have lived through war, migration, famine, droughts or other major events. Some may have grown up in Britain during the 60s and 70s and can give an understanding of what it was like in those years. Children will gain an understanding and be able to make comparisons of life then and now.

Children may choose a person to interview that is special to them so that they can learn about that person's life. It is always exciting to learn new things about people that are special to you.

Once they have found someone to talk to, they should agree a time and place for the interview.

INTERVIEWING

First needed: a sari that is special to the owner, that has particular memories or that was bought for a special occasion.

This sari could be a wedding outfit or a birthday present. It could be a sari that was worn on a particular journey such as leaving a country to go to another or could be a simple reminder of a place. It could have been inherited when a loved one passed away or may be a family heirloom. The favourite sari could be one that is worn regularly worn around the house.

Next: the memory of the owner information about why the sari was chosen, when it was worn, why they liked it and what is the most vivid memory that attaches to it. The following are examples of stories attached to a sari and how that sari can make a person feel.

SP, 33 from Luton talks about a sari that is special to her:

"Many years ago, about 16 years ago, I was given a sari by my Dad's best friend's wife. As a child, I always thought of her as such an elegant and beautiful woman. She had the best saris I had ever seen. She was clever and funny and I was always spoilt when we went to see her. One day, I was at her house and she was throwing some saris out and she picked out one and gave it to me. I loved it. It was gold and beige and had hand painted flowers in a terracotta colour. The sari was made from fine silk and felt so soft to touch. It was the first sari I had ever been given and every time I wore it I felt beautiful and elegant, just like my Dad's best friend's wife."



GM, 64, from Cardiff said her favourite sari was a yellow polyester printed sari given to her by her mother. She wore this sari on the day her family had to leave their home in Uganda in 1972 to come to England. This sari reminds her of new beginnings.

"I still have the sari and wear it all the time. It seems silly but the sari for me represents freedom. You see life in Uganda was great for many years and then suddenly it all changed. Our parents had made it home coming from India and it was all that I knew and then, we were no longer wanted in Uganda. We were told to leave. Some people had started to leave in the years earlier, but my family had stayed on thinking that it would all be all right in the end. Finally, we were ordered to leave the country and were not able to take anything but a few clothes. At the airport, they made us take off all our jewellery. It was very frightening. We were going to a new land and did not know what would happen. I wrapped the end of the sari around me like a security blanket and prayed that life would be better for us soon".

HS, 44, from Pinner described her favourite sari, bought last year from a sari shop in Ealing Road, Wembley. She was looking for a sari to wear to an engagement party and found a turquoise blue chiffon printed sari with little bells on the bottom.

"I fell in love with it the moment that I saw it. I remember saying to my husband, my mum used to have one like this and I hated it then." She talked about growing up in London in the 1970s and her mum wearing vibrant saris with huge patterns on them and everyone would stare. "I would feel really embarrassed and resent my Mum for looking different. However, when I saw this sari in the shop, it didn't bring back bad memories but made me smile. I felt proud of my Mum who would walk down the street in her sari not caring what the world thought of her in her clothes. I bought the sari because it made me smile I guess it resembles courage and pride."

WHAT CHILDREN NEED?

Children need a pencil and sheet of paper to write down names and dates. Even better, a family member who can help with this.

It would also be helpful if a child could take a tape recorder with them to record what is being said. When people relax, they can talk quite quickly and it becomes difficult to write everything down or remember what was said. A tape recorder can be of great help later on when writing up the oral history later. Before starting, it is important to do a sound check to ensure the equipment is all working properly and the interview can be heard on the tape player.



Children can use other forms of recording devices, such as video recorders, however, these can seem intimidating for the interviewee and also, sometimes, for the interviewer.

QUESTIONS

First of all...

It will be important to know:

- why the sari was bought - for what occasion
- why this colour
- why this fabric
- what attracted the owner to it
- why did the owner choose the pattern
- what was worn with this sari - shoes - jewellery?

OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS

If a particular sari was bought for an occasion or given at for an occasion, it will be interesting to know what people remember about this occasion.

- what food was eaten
- who attended
- where was the occasion
- how did the person feel wearing the sari?

It is also important to understand a person's family background as many British Asians have migrated from other countries. Many Indians migrated from India to East Africa during the 1930's and 1940's to seek better jobs and then during the 1960's and 1970's left Africa to come to Britain.



Children can ask:

- where were they born
- where did they live
- who did they live with
- what is the most favourite memory from their childhood?

MAKING HISTORY THEMSELVES

Children need a receptacle to keep the story they have gathered, the sari and any other items. They are then creating an instant archive. This could be a plastic bag, or a shoe box, that they can bring into class.

They simply need to make sure that dates and names are written carefully on a piece of paper and kept carefully with the sari. And be sure, too, that the sari is folded carefully.

On the following page is a letter that can be photocopied to be distributed to children participating in the project. This is useful so that they have a clear idea of the aims and objectives of the project. It also useful for them to give to the women in their families and close circles who they are likely to interview.



GUIDE FOR CHILDREN COLLECTING SARI STORIES

Dear Investigator

Thank you for offering to help collect the stories of special saris. We really appreciate your help and have written up the following notes to set you on your way.

Remember that the stories of saris will also be the stories of the women who wore them. There are also a few very important questions to ask.

Most important - find out the important details:

- name
- age
- what is this person's relationship to you?

Then ask about the Sari:

- which is your favourite sari
- why is it your favourite sari
- what is your favourite memory of wearing this sari
- how long have you had the sari
- why was this sari bought - for what occasion
- who bought the sari
- why this colour and fabric
- When do you wear this sari
- how do you feel when wearing this sari
- what do you wear with this sari - shoes - jewellery?

EVENTS AND OCCASIONS

If the sari was bought or given at an occasion, do the following piece of detective work. Ask:

- what was the occasion
- was it held in a particular place
- what food was eaten
- who attended
- did you wear the sari
- if so, how did you feel?

BACKGROUND

It is important to understand a person's family background as many British Asians in the UK have migrated from other countries. Many Indians migrated from India to East Africa during the 1930's and 1940's to seek better jobs and then during the 1960's and 1970's left Africa to come to Britain. People have a magnificent history and their journeys are extremely important when collecting oral histories.

Remember to ask:

- where do you live now
- where were you born
- where did you grow up
- as a child who did you live with
- what is your favourite childhood memory
- what is your favourite colour
- what is Your favourite film
- what is Your favourite pastime?

And ask a few extra questions about the personality of the person you are talking to. Try:

- do you have children - do your children wear saris
- where were you born
- what kind of a person do you consider yourself - adventurous, shy, sociable
- have you travelled a lot?

And that is it for now. If you are lucky enough to have been given a sari to take away and show others, fold it carefully and keep it in a special box or bag. Bring it along to school to show your teacher with the story you have written.

Thank you!



BRITISH SARI STORY ART LESSON PLAN

PLANNING A PRACTICAL PROJECT

This is a sample project plan aimed at eight to nine year-olds. It may involve a series of lessons depending on how the class periods are organised in your school. It includes a short passage for reading by the class entitled 'Some new words'.

AIMS

Ornament and pattern are significant elements in urban heritage. This project's aims are to:

- awaken an awareness of the pleasures of pattern and ornament
- explore pattern and ornament as an engaging and accessible way of understanding the cosmopolitan city as full of different cultural meanings, including the religious and social beliefs which give different groups their sense of identity and belonging
- encourage, through this visual means, the understanding that the city contains different communities, each of which prize their identity, and each of which should be respected and valued
- honour and celebrate each child's work through the process, however simple, of reproducing it in order to generate pattern through repetition.

OUTCOMES

After completing this project each student will have gained:

- an experience of focussed observation of their locality or of some element of the material world
- a practical experience of developing an idea through initial observation into colour and repetition
- an insight into the way repeating motifs accumulate into pattern - which has implications for the study of geometry and mathematics



- an understanding of the power of pattern and ornament to suggest identity
- an experience of class discussion, critique and negotiation as to how each child's pattern may be deployed.

FOR THIS CLASS YOU WILL NEED:

- 3 hours approximately, but not necessarily all at once
- a roll of strong paper 6m long and 1.5m wide. This will be the basis for the 'class sari'. Of course, one class may generate several saris.
- as many sheets of paper as there are children in the class
- paper pre-cut to 25cm x 25cm.
- pencils, crayons, paint; glitter if you have it
- non-toxic paste or glue
- scissors
- rulers
- a sample sari (these may be very inexpensively purchased).

Start by introducing the sari. Explain that they are regional, that they can be made of different fabrics, that they can be worn for work or for special occasions. There is a lot of information to help you elsewhere in this pack.

A trip to the library might also produce many visual resources.

- encourage the children to talk about saris they know or have seen
- get the class to observe the different parts of the sari - background or body, border and decorated end (the 'pallau')
- discuss how saris are wonderfully patterned!

Each child can now be given a copy of the text on pattern, **SOME NEW WORDS**, for class reading.



Now suggest that each child tells his or her neighbour what they would like to see on a sari.

With this discussion in mind, the students might be taken to walk round the environs of the school, the local streets, a park, a museum, so that the class can observe pattern and ornament around them, or elements which might be put towards creating such pattern. The library is also a great resource.

Back in class for discussion: what ideas came up? The children might mention vehicles, animals, trees, plants, food, buildings, refer to games, local landmarks, etc.

The teacher might introduce here the notion of colour; the often warm colours of saris from South Asia - what kinds of colours do we see in Britain? What might they want to see?

If appropriate the teacher can introduce the idea of warm and cool colours here. The class can now begin some sample drawing and colour work to explore their ideas.

The teacher distributes paper 25cm x 25cm approx. (If the teacher wishes the students may measure and cut this themselves, if the teacher wishes to practice the skills for generating right-angles with the class).

The children now draw and colour their designs. Simple printmaking may also be used: potato printing or incised and inked polystyrene tiles may be used.

Printmaking offers the possibility of instant repetition with different colourways. Alternatively photocopying of each of the children's' designs several times is very affordable in black-and-white and each copy may be re-coloured. Where there is an IT. programme in place, designs may be drawn digitally or scanned; then exploring them digitally in terms of colour, repetition and rotation would be an interesting extension of the project.

The children should have the experience of seeing their work reproduced so that the effects of repetition and of different rotations of each motif, are visible.

The children may discuss each others' work and where on the communal sari each of their designs, or runs of the same design, should go. At any and every stage the children may be encouraged to say why they have chosen their particular motif, what it means to them, what it means to have their work reproduced.

The designs can then be stuck round the edge of the long roll of paper as a border; some may be used to create the pallau (decorative end section).

The sari(s) can now be displayed along a wall.



PATTERNS

Patterns are all around us. They happen when lots of the same thing are put together. Often the way things are made makes patterns. Think of the marks on a car tyre, or its hub caps. Now think of a row of the same hub caps! That would be a pattern. The tiles in a kitchen can make patterns, so can the bricks in a wall, or a line of coat hangers in your wardrobe. There is a word for this: when we see the same thing several times, we say it **REPEATS**. Patterns can be made of anything in a **REPETITION**. Many patterns happen by accident.

But people have always loved to make patterns on purpose, as well. These patterns are used to decorate things we use, like buildings or clothes and furniture and even cars. These patterns are called **ORNAMENTS** or **EMBELLISHMENTS**.

We can all design patterns.

Let's think about that word you saw just now, **EMBELLISHMENT**. It is an interesting word. In the middle is part of the word **BELLE**. It means 'beautiful', in French. (English contains many words from other languages, including French). So 'embellishment' means, to make something beautiful.

Just as English contains many words from other languages, so patterns come to us from all over the world. What patterns can you see think of?

Some of them, on saris, may have travelled a long way to come here.

They are part of our city, part of our living together, just as our language is full of words from everywhere, but we can use it to talk to each other.

How many 'embellishments', or ornaments, can you see also on your clothes or in the buildings around you? Can you think of any you go past every day, perhaps on the way to school?

Can you make some patterns of your own?

REGIONAL SARIS

1. A SARI FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION OR FESTIVAL



This sari takes its name from Kanchipuram, a small town in Tamil Nadu, which is famous for its luxurious saris, ornate temples and historical importance in Sanskrit education. Kanchipuram is known as 'Silk City', with thousands of families involved for generations in weaving saris from pure mulberry silk.

The peacocks on this sari are national emblems. Traditionally in India, when a peacock spreads its feathers, it is taken to be a sign of imminent rain. For many people in an agricultural country like India, this means relief from drought, as well as fertility and abundance for farmers desperately waiting for the clouds to burst. This motif can symbolise that a joyful hour is near. Friends and relatives of the bride and groom might wear this sari for weddings. It might also be worn to temple on a religious festival such as diwali.

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2. A GHARCHOLU SARI



The Gharcholu sari is a traditional Hindu and Jain bridal sari, usually in red or green, and divided into many squares bound by gold strips. It is given to the bride at the wedding by the parents of the groom and she wears it during the ceremony on top of the sari given to her by her mother, draping it carefully so both are visible. This symbolises the meeting of two families, a highly significant part of a Gujarati Hindu wedding.

This sari is resplendent with dancing, sequined elephants - a traditional symbol of good luck and prosperity.

After marriage, the bride might wear this sari on particular occasions which were particularly relevant to her status as a married woman. If a woman dies before her husband, often the gharcholu is placed on the corpse.

In the body of this sari are bandhani, a traditional decorating technique used on many Gujarati saris. This involves tying tiny sections of cloth with wax thread and then dipping the whole cloth in a vat of colour. When the wax knots are removed, little parts of the sari remain uncoloured. This highly skilled work is carried out by craftsmen trained over generations.

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3. A SARI FOR A BRIDE



This bridal sari makes you stop and look twice at its sheer weight and magnificence. The intricate twirls, vines, creepers and flowers of thread and beads cover every inch of the body, with a thick border of the same and large palm leaves at the corners. If this were all the bride had to wear, it would be a very heavy garment. But add to it the traditional bridal solha singar or 16 adornments, including trinkets worn on the forehead, neck, wrists, fingers, waist, ankles, toes, the bride has quite a job dressing and holding herself upright through the wedding. She wears heavy jewellery as a sign of the status of the family, and as an incarnation of the goddess of wealth and prosperity, Lakshmi. She is taking this prosperity and luck to her new family and household.

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4. A YELLOW CHIFFON SARI



In the best 1960s tradition of clinging chiffon, the sari is embroidered with big red flowers, green stems and leaves in a satin stitch. The pattern recalls the swinging sixties, days of dancing, youth and frivolity. It has a light, flirtatious look. During this time, blouses became smaller and the cloth of the sari more filmy, hugging the hips tightly.

In the 1960s in the West, skirts and bell-bottoms were in fashion. Indian fashion trends simulated the sixties feel by becoming tighter and shorter. Instead of traditional silk that tends to be bulky and has heavy folds that hide the curves of the body, or cotton that is starched and stiff, nylon, chiffon and light polyester hug the body and accentuate the hips, the bare waist and the blouse and show off the arms and shoulders. While the salwar kameez became shorter (mimicking the mini skirt) and tighter and found a ready reception among young women, the short sari did not take the market by storm and trendy saris remained ankle-length.

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