



Dyeing with Roots, Weaving with Soul

Product Catalogue

Kotpad textile of Odisha





The Kotpad Legacy:

Where Nature Dyes and Heritage Weaves

Rooted in the heart of Koraput, Kotpad weaving is a centuries-old tradition practiced by the tribal Mirgan community in the Kotpad block. With a legacy dating back nearly 500 years, this unique textile tradition is deeply intertwined with the cultural life of the region's indigenous communities. Renowned for its use of natural dyes and handspun yarn, Kotpad weaving is a labour-intensive process where women and men equally participate in different stages of production including intricate dyeing, yarn preparation, and weaving. The motifs are inspired by nature—mirroring the close bond these communities share with their environment. Traditionally, the fabrics known as Patta were worn by tribal men and women on special occasions, with pieces like Bandi Patta, Thekkra Patta, Maai Lugaa, and Pichri Anguchi serving as cherished attire. Celebrated for its earthy aesthetics and rich cultural symbolism, Kotpad weaving is certified with Geographical Indication (GI). Today, Kotpad textiles continue to represent the soulful artistry of tribal Odisha, handwoven with care, tradition, and deep cultural pride.



The Weaving Hubs of Kotpad

Nestled in the Koraput district, Kotpad town stands as the heart of a rich weaving tradition known for its distinctive use of natural dyes and tribal aesthetics. The weaving process here is a community affair, with both men and women deeply engaged in every stage—from dyeing to weaving—carrying forward a legacy that is as sustainable as it is soulful.

Kotpad has produced some of Odisha's most celebrated weavers, including Padma Shri awardee Shri Gobardhan Panika, along with master weavers like Madhusudan Panika, Kapileshwar Mahanta, and Jema Mani Panika and others, who have played a vital role in preserving and promoting the craft. Surrounding villages such as Bhansuli contribute significantly to the weaving ecosystem, with over 80 skilled weavers engaged in production. Together, Kotpad and its nearby villages form a vibrant weaving hub where tradition, craftsmanship, and community continue to thrive, producing timeless textiles that speak of heritage, harmony, and the enduring spirit of the land.

The Weaving Process:

Yarn Preparation – The process begins with sorting organic cotton yarn, which is then washed, starched, and treated with castor oil to enhance dye absorption. Women weavers press the starched yarn bundles by foot, ensuring an even coating that sets the stage for dyeing.

Natural Dyeing – At the heart of Kotpad weaving lies its signature dye made from the roots of the aal (Indian madder) tree. The powdered root is mixed with castor oil and water, then boiled into a rich, earthy solution.

Eco Treatment – Pre-dyeing treatments include the use of cow dung as a natural bleach and antibacterial agent, followed by ash-water washing to size the yarn. These organic methods ensure the fabric retains its purity while enhancing colourfastness and texture.

Weaving - Once dyed, the yarn is stretched on pit or table looms. Inspired by nature, the motifs are woven into cloth with rhythmic precision, creating textiles that echo the spirit and simplicity of the land.



Yarn Process:

First, the threads are washed and soaked in water. Afterward, they are squeezed to remove excess water before being treated with heated castor oil (locally known as Jara Tel in Odia). One bundle requires approx.3-4 kgs of castor oil. The oil is applied thoroughly by hand, ensuring every inch of the threads is evenly coated. Following this treatment, the threads are dipped in water again and left to dry for half an hour, imparting the characteristic musty smell of Kotpad threads. (Castor oil is a sustainable dyeing agent for cotton that improves colour absorption and offers flexibility and strength to the overall longevity of the threads)



Next, a mixture of cow dung and water is applied by hand. One bundle requires approx. 30-40 kgs of cow dung. The consistency of this mixture is crucial—it should be semi-thick. If too thin, the water will run off, preventing proper absorption; if too thick, it will not spread evenly on the threads. Then the threads dried at least twice for 15 days. (Cow dung acts as a natural dyeing mordant for cotton that adheres well to both thread and the dye. The alkaline nature of cow dung also aids in the dyeing process by improving colour absorption and fixation. Additionally, it enhances wash fastness, making the colour more resistant to fading over time.)

After this, the yarn will be ready for dyeing.

Dye Process:

Red colour :

The roots of the Aal tree (known as Achu Gachi in Odia) are used to produce Aal powder, traditionally measured using a pot. This powder is mixed into a haandi (earthen pot) filled with hot water to create the dyeing solution.



Yarns are then dipped into this mixture and left to dry in sunlight for 24 hours. The following morning, the yarns are reheated and dried again.

Wood ash is placed in an earthen haandi and filled with water. Once the ash settles, the water is transferred to another haandi and heated. This water is then sprinkled on the threads and they are squeezed using legs. The process is repeated twice daily for 12–15 days to refine the threads. This process eventually brings out the colour.

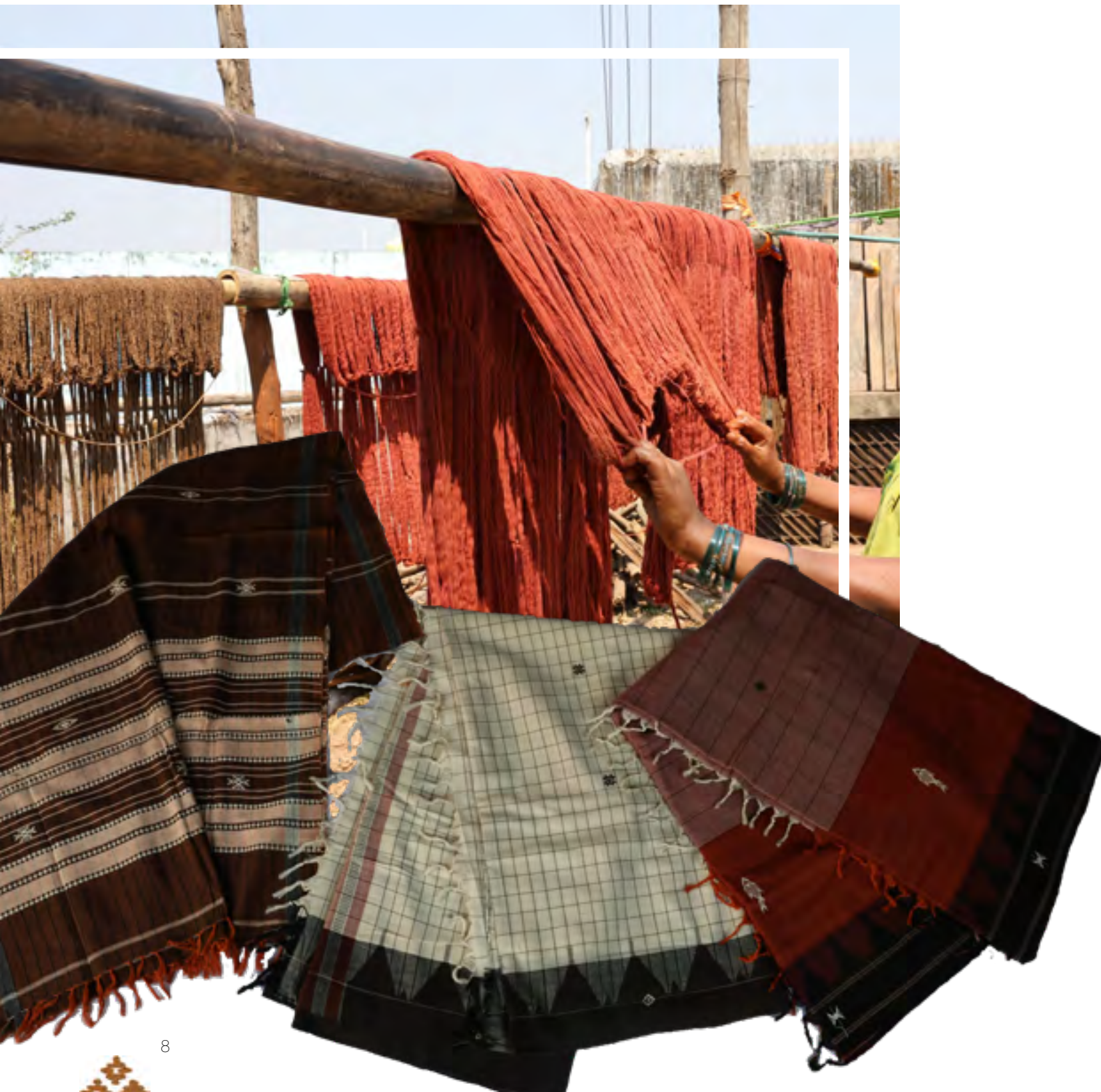
If the desired colour isn't achieved, the same process is repeated.

Black colour :

To achieve a natural black dye, a combination of Aal (extracted from the roots of the Aal tree, known locally as Achu Gachi), Harad (Myrobalan), and Heerakashi is traditionally used.

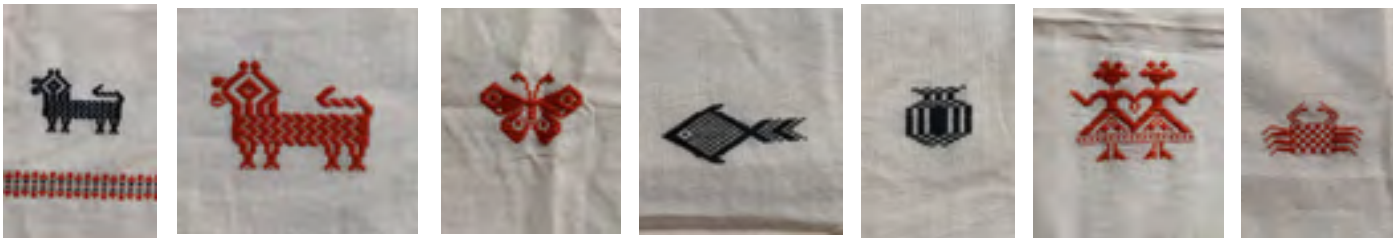
In some variations of the process, a simpler combination of Aal and Ferrous Sulphate alone is used, which can still result in a black colour.





Product Range

Kotpad weavers craft a beautiful range of sarees and stoles, each woven with motifs inspired by nature and tribal life. Traditional pitloom products, dyed with natural roots and minerals, feature earthy hues of brown, black, and white, showcasing designs like diamond, Tangi (axe), kekra (crab), and matki (pot). Table loom creations add a contemporary touch, using vibrant coloured threads sourced from the market—blending tradition with evolving tastes.



|| KOTW01 | Running Fabric ||



|| KOTW02 | Scarf ||



|| KOTW03 | Scarf ||



|| KOTW04 | Saree ||





|| KOTW05 | Scarf ||

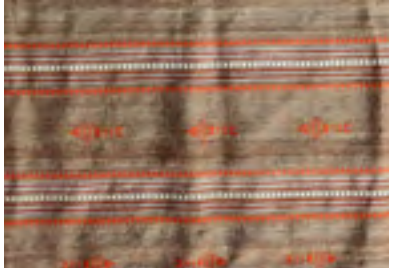


|| KOTW06 | Saree ||

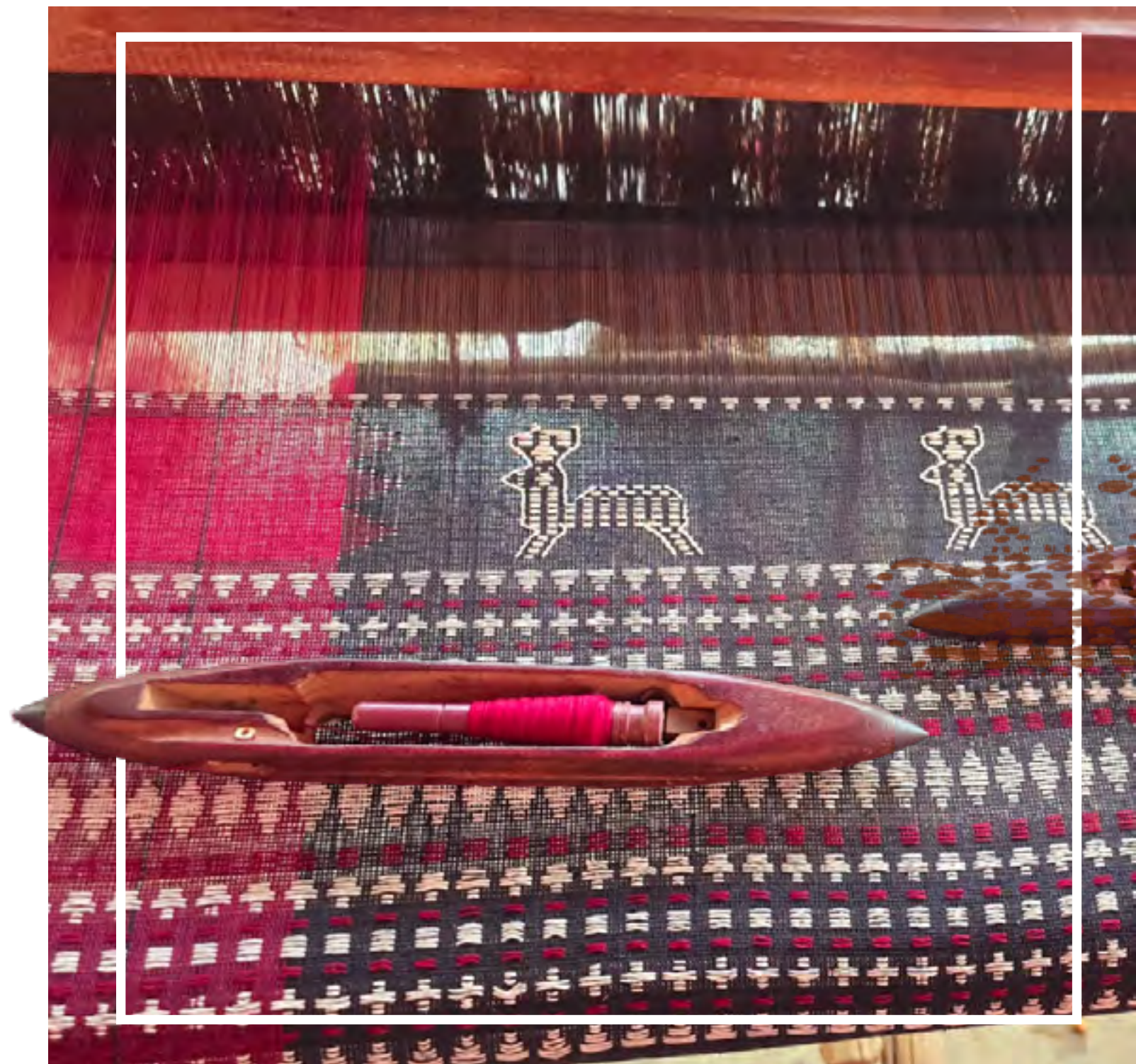




|| KOTW07 | Saree ||



|| KOTW08 | Saree ||



Products

01



02



- 01. Saree
- 02. Saree



03



04



05



06



07

08

- 03. Stole
- 04. Saree
- 05. Saree
- 06. Dupatta
- 07. Yardage
- 08. Stole

Kotpad textile of Odisha

Contact Base has partnered with Axis Bank Foundation on the “Roots to Prosperity” project to enhance culture-based livelihoods of weavers in Koraput.

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