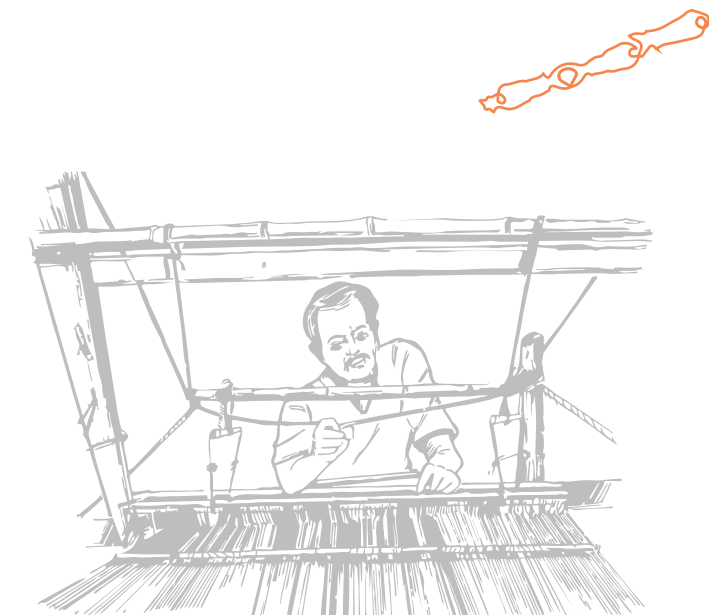
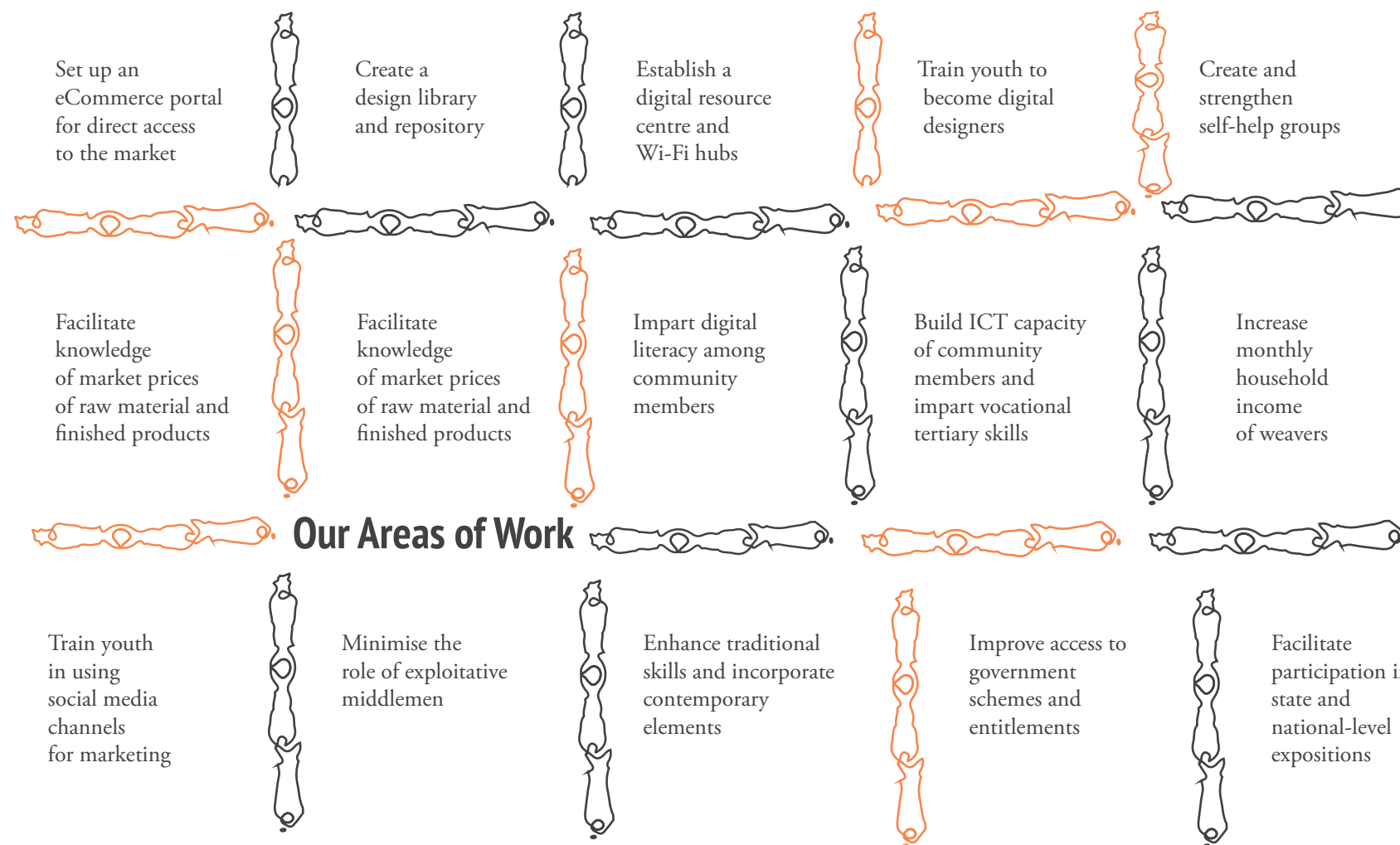


DigiKargha

An initiative of Digital Empowerment Foundation under its Digital Cluster Development Programme



www.dcdpindia.org | www.defindia.org

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About DigiKargha

Digital Empowerment Foundation first introduced digital interventions in a handloom cluster in Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh, in 2007. Since then, it has reached at least seven other handloom clusters of India through its project DigiKargha.

DigiKargha, an initiative of Digital Empowerment Foundation, aims to support its cluster under the Digital Cluster Development Programme in an effort to lead them towards maturity and sustainability through digital empowerment and socio-economic sustainability.

DigiKargha primarily involves inclusive and decentralised use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other digital tools in critical aspects of cluster development, especially improving and scaling up weaving skills, designs, marketing and entrepreneurship, besides creating sustainable livelihood options for the youth in the clusters. The development focus of the model allows the integration of both the social and economic needs of the targeted artisan communities towards inclusive growth.

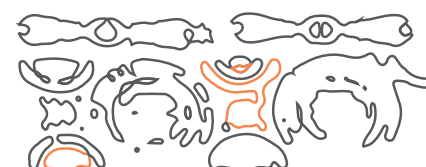
Reach

India's craft traditions and craft skills, passed on from generation to generation, are not just an important part of its cultural identity but a crucial means of sustenance for numerous communities.



There are more than **2000** traditional skill-based clusters in India

As many as **70 lakh** artisans are engaged in these clusters



Out of 2000 clusters, **470** of them are handloom clusters

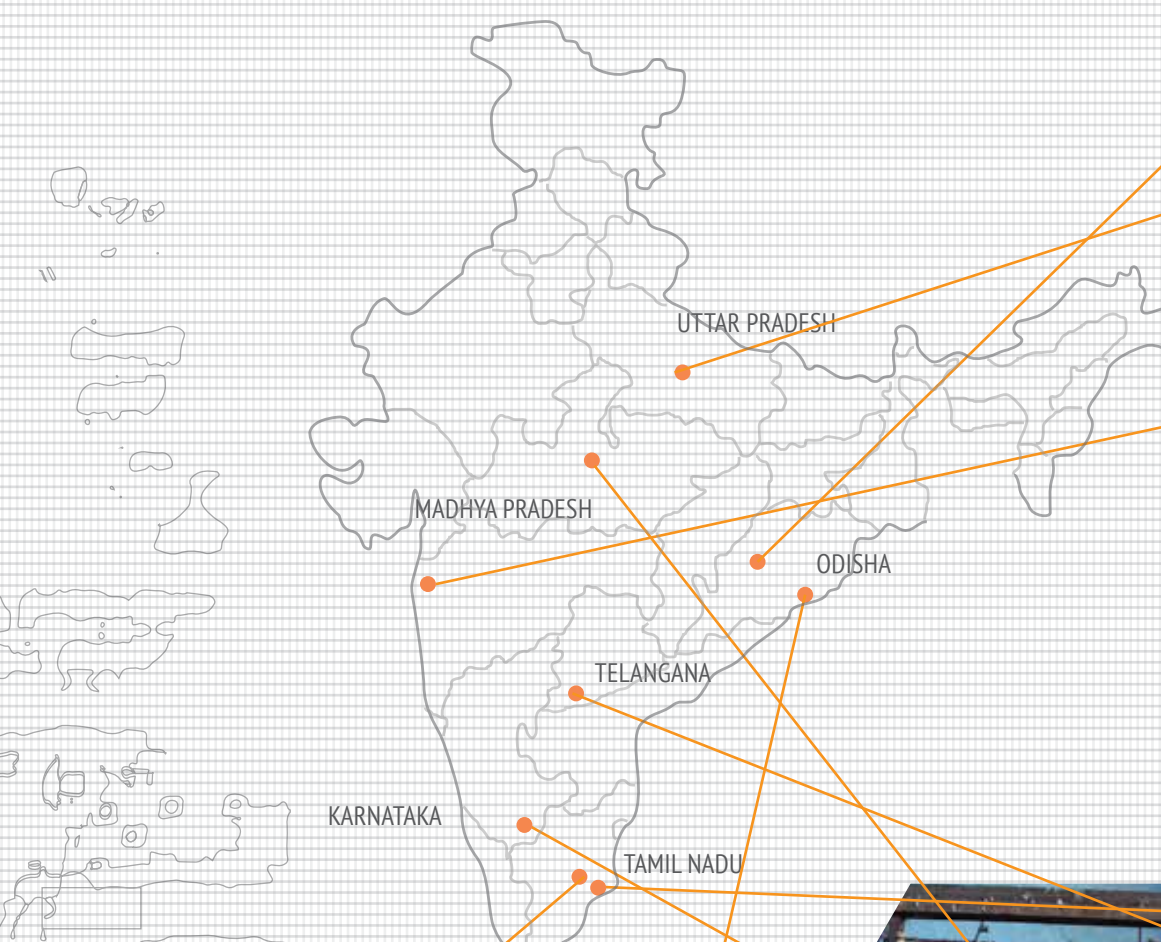
Challenges for Artisans

- Low wages for time-consuming craft
- Poor living conditions
- Poor market linkages
- Lack of sufficient support for the sector
- Outdated or inefficient infrastructure
- Low literacy levels
- Exploitative middlemen
- Disinterest of youngsters in traditional art
- Competition from powerlooms

Partners

Digital Empowerment Foundation has been able to successfully implement DigiKargha at various locations with support from:





BARPALI DIGIKALA

Located 340 kilometres north west of Bhubaneswar, Barpali is a densely populated block in Bargarh district of Odisha. In Barpali, there are more than 1,000 handlooms spread across several pockets of clusters, each at a distance of five kilometres from the other. Weavers in this part of Odisha are known for their original ikat prints on cotton and Tasar silk. However, machine-aided printing is damaging the market for handloom products as the former can be produced in minutes and costs much less.

SAIDANPUR BAANK-e-LOOM

Saidanpur in Uttar Pradesh specialises in weaving gamchhas and stoles or embroidering suits pieces or sarees in zari. Saidanpur is home to about 200 weaver families, while Barabanki district has over 20,000 looms. Most of weavers have not completed school, and live in joint families where almost every member is involved in the process of weaving. These weavers receive wages from middlemen and master weavers, but these are barely enough to sustain them.

WARLI UDDAYAM

Warli tribe in the Thane district of Maharashtra is known for their pictographic paintings on the walls of their huts. Painted in white, using brushes made of twigs, the motifs are inspired by their day-to-day lives, natural surroundings, indigenous flora & fauna, and folk tales. The central theme of most of their paintings though is Palaghata, the goddess of trees and plants, who symbolises creative energy. In recent years, for commercial purposes, the paintings have moved from walls to papers and cloths layered with cow dung, which gives the backdrop its distinct natural and dull look. Their market reach, however, is extremely limited.

MUSIRI MUSIRI

Five kilometres from Tiruchirappalli (or Trichy) is Musiri panchayat town known for weaving cotton sarees and vesti. There are more than 5,000 weavers in this area but more than half the weavers have shifted to powerlooms. Those who could not afford powerlooms are struggling, witnessing a slow death of their skills.

NUAPATNA DIGIKALA

A cluster of most talented weavers and national awardees, Nupatna is located in Cuttack district of Odisha, about 70 kilometres from Bhubaneswar. It is home to more than 5,000 weavers who make the most intricate tie-and-dye ikat designs using mostly natural dye on sarees, stoles and dupattas. However, lack of awareness and lack of direct access to the market has restricted the household income of weavers. Numerous cooperative societies established in Nuapatna, too, have failed to have a desired impact.

CHANDERI CHANDERIYAAN

Located in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh, Chanderi is rich in heritage, culture, tradition and art. At present, there are about 3,500 weavers and an equal number of handlooms in Chanderi, which has a population of approximately 40,000. However, the brand Chanderi, which is known for its intricate flower patterns on silk sarees, has been facing a stiff competition from powerlooms and exploitative middlemen.

KOLLEGAL KAULAVA

According to an oral tale, Kollegal derives its name from two hermits 'Kauhala' and 'Galava'. Situated on the foothills of the Western Ghats in Chamrajnagar District, Kollegal is often known as the 'Silk City' for its famous handloom silk saree industry. In fact, the region is famous for housing one of the last remaining silk industries in India. Weavers in Kollegal are experts in weaving pure silk sarees and fabrics. Yet many of them are vulnerable, choosing other professions.

KANCHIPURAM KANCHILOOM

Kanchipuram, a centre of Tamil and Sanskrit from time immemorial, is an area bursting with heritage and culture. Weaving is a common occupation in villages surrounding Kanchipuram, with more than 80% of rural communities engaged in it. Woven with pure mulberry silk, sourced from other parts of the country, Kanchipuram pattu is a treasured possession in every house in Tamil Nadu. Sadly, the weavers in the region are facing rough competition from machine-aided designs and fabric.

POCHAMPALLY REWEAVE

Pochampally in Andhra Pradesh is famous for its unique process of weaving Double Ikkat. Double Ikkat is produced by an ancient technique of resist dye which is also used during the process of mummification. Abode to more than 10,000 weaving households in this area, weavers in this region are experts in weaving silk, cotton and a blend of both. Weaving a double ikkat fabric utilizes hard work of more than four people and labour of ten days.

