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### Reviving the Livelihood of Habaspuri Handloom Weavers- A Case Study of Kalahandi District

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#### Abstract

*Odisha handloom has its glorious past and is having a place of pride and prominence for art, culture and handlooms. From the days of Kalinga civilization, it has kept its long tradition of unmatched excellence and craftsmanship. Handloom is an important cottage industry in Odisha. The Habaspuri saree is another glorious chapter in Odisha's handloom tradition. It has also got the much-celebrated Geographical Indication tag. However, the art is on the wane due to various factors. Ironically and tragically the Habaspuri art is no longer practised in the Habaspur village from where it derives its name. In the above light, the researcher has made an attempt to study the weavers' community and understand the issues and challenges faced by them to sustain their livelihood. The study was conducted in Junagarh block of Kalahandi District with a sampling of 40 weavers from Chicheiguda and Neherunagarpada Weavers Co-operative Society. The researcher based on the findings of the study has made recommendations and suggestions to revive the livelihoods of Habaspuri weavers through a "Sustainable Livelihood Model" which can be taken up on a cluster level.*

**Keywords:** Odisha Handloom, Kalahandi Weavers Co-operative Society, Sustainable Livelihoods, Habaspuri craft

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### Introduction

Kalahandi is one of the tribal districts of Odisha with dense forest, hills and minerals. Taking the socio economic and geographical condition, the livelihood of people can be divided into four categories in general. These are agriculture and allied activities, cottage/ handloom/handicraft and small-scale industries, large scale industries and livelihood based on non-timber forest products and minor agricultural products particularly in the hilly areas. In Kalahandi district three to four decades back, agriculture was mostly dependent on monsoon. In the meanwhile, with the construction of Indravati Project and scores of minor irrigation projects, deep bore wells, dug wells, lift irrigation projects etc., there is sea of change in the scenario and Kalahandi is in the path of green revolution helping to rebuild the economy and paving way for sustainable livelihood for the people. Along with agriculture, there is also scope for allied activities like horticulture, animal husbandry and aquaculture to provide livelihood support.

With the development of communication, development of interior areas and positive development in entrepreneurship there is scope for different kinds of small and medium scale industries particularly agro based. These industries will go long way to provide sustainable livelihood to large section of the population. In the field of large-scale industries, unfortunately Sterlite Vedanta Alumina Refinery Industry at Lanjigarh is the only large-scale industry in the district which is struggling for survival. In Kalahandi, there is ample scope to establish many large-scale industries of the nature of electro meteorological, engineering and mechanical industries. With the simultaneous development of the sector of agriculture / allied sector and industrialization there can be permanent nature of sustainable livelihood along with general development of the district. In the hilly areas of the district on the other hand

the livelihood is supported by Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) / Minor agricultural products (MFP) for the forest dwellers. The livelihood support and income generated from these sources are however not adequate for survival for the entire year. Hence, there is necessity for proper planning to change the present situation. To support the vulnerable communities, mainly the Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTGs), Agriculture Production Cluster Units have been planned in Lanjigarh block of Kalahandi district. Currently there are around 20,000 Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs) which are functioning under Mission Shakti and 80 numbers of Producer Groups under National Rural Livelihood Mission. They are supported by Odisha Rural Marketing and Supply Society (ORMAS) to ensure better marketing of different income generating activities. Currently there 20 number of Producer Groups under Mushroom Cultivation, 12 numbers under vegetable cultivation, 6 under Leaf Plate cup making, 6 number into Goatery activities, 4 under Woodcraft and Bamboo craft, 3 numbers involved in Pulses and Garments making, 5 under Terracotta, 2 each under Spices, Badi making and Onion cultivation, one each under Dokra and Hill broom making, stone carving, bio pesticide, kaju and mango processing. Recently one producer group has been formed under handloom sector in the name of Radhakrushna Handloom Producer Group and one Producer Group in Habaspur has been formed, who are into garment making. The district has a great potential to create large scale cluster-based livelihood opportunities under handloom sector. Albeit it is considered as having less impact on the direct employment which is considered less in number but as a whole it creates a great impact through indirect employment generation as it family and tradition based sector. This sector is much more neglected and of late it has been realized that if this sector is developed on

cluster approach, it can set examples for others and create better scope and opportunities in the long run.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To make a detailed survey of the socio-economic profile of the handloom weavers of Chicheiguda and Neherunagarpada and understand the issues and challenges faced by them to sustain their livelihood.
2. To create a market and increase more and more working weavers and productions especially in “Habaspuri” design which has high demand in the present market.
3. To create opportunities through convergence and recommend suggestions to upscale the production and give it a platform in the national and international market.
4. To revive the livelihoods of the Habaspuri Weavers on a cluster-based approach.

#### **Approach of the Study**

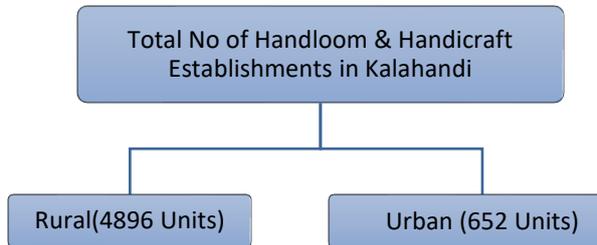
**Understanding the Handloom Sector-** Odisha has a rich tradition of handlooms. Moreover, handloom is the second largest employer in India and as well in Odisha next to agriculture. It is a caste based and tradition-oriented cottage industry of our State and plays a vital role in the rural economy. The weaving activities are performed by the weaver families to earn their livelihood with self-employment. The skill of weavers differs from place to place, men to men and product to product. The legacy of handlooms is carried on till date allowing the state to occupy a special position in the handloom landscape of the country. The craft is widely dispersed to different localities of the state. The grandeur of bandha saree of Western Odisha produced in Sonapur, Baragarh, Bolangir and Sambalpur areas are the examples of not only artistic excellence, intricate craftsmanship but also portrays sheer elegance. Mayurbhanj saree with tribal motifs and texture, the siminai saree of Dhenkanal, the Kotpad saree for its rich

vegetable dyed colours with tribal motifs, the Dhalapathar/ Kalapathar (Khurda area) and Banki sarees with bold hand crafted designs in Black and Red colours, the cotton sarees of Jagatsinghpur area, the tussar sarees of Cuttack and Keonjhar districts, cotton and silk sarees of Berhampur, daily wear heavy textured cotton sarees of Pitalo in Ganjam district were some of the once upon famous categories of hand-woven fabrics.

The Textile and Handloom industries occupy unique position in the district's rural economy, though it is observed in selected pockets. In view of its present coverage and capacity, it has been found serving as an important source of livelihood for a fairly good segment of weaver population. The artistic skills of the traditional handloom weavers have their own distinctive excellence which is needed to be explored for better livelihood and income.

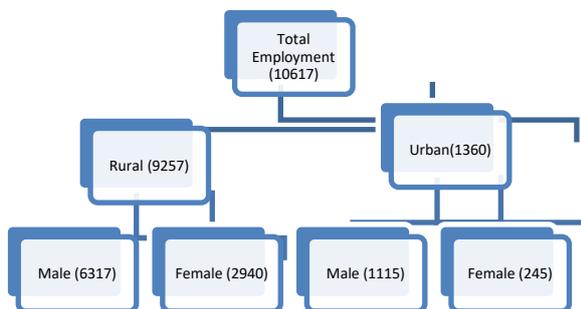
Each and every Kalahandian has got the potentiality of being a productive factor from industrial stand point i.e., from the point of view of the unique Handloom and Handicraft and Cottage industry sector. There are 5548 numbers of establishments under handloom and handicrafts sector in the district, out of which 4896 are in rural areas and 652 are in urban areas. This indicates more number of establishments in rural areas. The rural sector maintains its trend in employment generation indicating growth of 26.23 percent at the district level as per the 6<sup>th</sup> Economic Census conducted in the year, 2013. However, the growth rate of employment in the urban sector is 46.68 percent. (Figures 1 & 2 explains the same.)

**Figure 1**  
**Handloom and Handicraft**  
**Establishments in Kalahandi District**



Note: From, “6<sup>th</sup> Economic Census of Kalahandi District-2013” by Statistical Section, District Planning & Monitoring Unit, Kalahandi, Odisha, p. 13. Copyright, 2013 by Statistical section of DPMU, Kalahandi.

**Figure 2**  
 Employment generation in handloom and handicraft sector



Note: Adapted from, “6<sup>th</sup> Economic Census of Kalahandi District-2013” by Statistical Section, District Planning & Monitoring Unit, Kalahandi, Odisha, p. 13. Copyright 2013 by Statistical section, DPMU, Kalahandi.

**Kalahandi Handlooms-** While the uniqueness of handloom weaving in various states of India is now being realised, the demand for some hand weaving is on the rise while some handloom works are in a state of despair due to lack of publicity and government incentives. One such weaving is the “**Habaspuri Saree of Kalahandi.**” Habaspuri fabrics are one of the most popular tribal based fabrics of Odisha. The sarees were woven by the skilled hands of

backward tribal weavers of Habaspuri village in Kalahandi District. Figure 3 shows the Habaspuri sarees made by the weavers of Kalahandi district.

Presently, the place of production is shifted to Chicheiguda village from Habaspuri village. Ugrasen Meher, a master weaver has contributed a lot for commercialization of this sarees. Originally, it was a cotton saree, but now both cotton and silk Habaspuri sarees are available. The uniqueness of this sarees is the design in the form of vertical temples instead of horizontal as in common practise. There are other designs in the form of fish and flowers. The Habaspuri sarees and fabrics got **Geographical Indication (GI) tag** in the year 2012-13 by IIT, Kharagpur.

**Figure 3**  
 Habaspuri Sarees from Kalahandi



(Mishra. K. 2021)



**Uniqueness of the product:** The traditional saree is originally woven with coarse count cotton with less width and length has now been

diversified to finer cotton with standard size. Habaspuri style of weaving is influenced by age old tribal tradition of Kalahandi.

**Type of motifs:** Fish, flower, tortoise. The uniqueness of this design is vertical temples instead of horizontal as in common practice. The speciality of Habaspuri sarees is that the extra warp temple motifs are arranged longitudinally on the border. The anchal has extra weft design consisting at local motifs.

**Type of Product with varieties:** Weavers are concentrating on products like lungis, towels, dhoti, apart from sarees.

**Major areas of production:** Habaspur, Chicheiguda, Chakuli, Baldiamal and nearby villages in Kalahandi district.

**Type of Raw Materials used:** Yarn: Cotton Warp 20s to 2/120s and weft 20s to 2/120s, silk- warp-2 to 4 plies organize silk weft -3-6 ply charkha or malda silk Size: Length 5.30 meter. to 5.50 meter, without or with blouse piece with extra 0.70 mtr.to 0.80 meter. and width -1.10 meter. to 1.20 meter.

Habaspuri saree is another glorious chapter in Odisha's handloom tradition. It has also got much celebrated GI tag. However, the weakening position of Handloom sector has posed a serious threat to the socio-economic life and livelihood of the traditional weaving communities of Kalahandi District. It has brought both despair and hope for the weaving occupation. With this notion, the present report aims to study the state of a famous traditional handloom of the district of Kalahandi called Habaspuri and the situations of the weavers engaged there in, the issues and challenges faced by the weaving community and suggest possible solutions to revive and sustain their livelihood.

Moreover, Habaspuri sarees were once the means of clothing for almost every

other person in the Kalahandi region, but is now it's a neglected commodity. Due to present advancement in technology, the handloom industry is facing stiff competition in the market for sustenance. To provide regular and sustainable employment for day-to-day livelihood of the weavers as well as to develop their socio-economic status and bring the youngsters in their traditional works, there is a need to revive the livelihoods of Habaspuri weavers of Kalahandi district. In this regard the researcher has done a study on the selected primary weaver cooperative societies of Junagarh block of the district.

Although, the sari is not woven in Habaspur village anymore, thankfully some weavers in Chicheiguda, Baldiamal, Pundkul, Limser, Punjia, Handakhalpada and Jayantpur villages are carrying forward the tradition. The reports of the Textile and Handlooms Department say that there are ten numbers of primary weaver cooperative societies in the district at present. In the year 1977-78 there were 11,737 weavers in the district having 2,755 looms, (See figure 4). The number of weaver's came down to 7,500 in the year 1998-99. In the year 2016-17, there were reportedly 1,445 weavers and 110 looms, the number dwindled down to 1,353 weavers and 106 looms in the year 2018-19 and at present there are 114 numbers of weavers and 112 numbers of looms. (See figure 4)

**Table 1**

*Information on Primary Weaver's Co-operative Societies in Kalahandi District*

Name of the block	Number of PWCS	Number of members enrolled
Junagarh	5	577
Dharamgarh	1	134
Golamunda	4	348

*Note: Table demonstrates the number of Primary weavers' cooperative societies (PWCS) in the three blocks of Kalahandi district.*

**Figure 4**

*Decline in Number of Weavers in Kalahandi District*

**DECLINE IN WEAVERS**

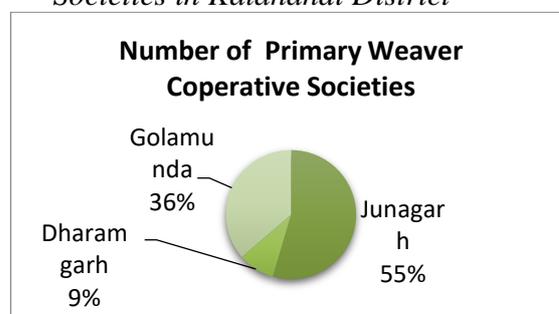


*Note: The figure demonstrates the decline in the number of weavers from the year 1997-98 to 2021-22 compiled from, "Kalahandi District Gazetteer- 1982" by Senapati, Nilamani & Kuanr, Durge Charan, p. 16. Copyright, 1982 by the Director, Government Printing, Stationery and Publications, Cuttack, Orissa. From, "Kalahandi Question: Some Answers" by Pradeep Jena, I.A.S, p. 189. Copyright, 2002 by the Director, Sahabagi Vikash Abhiyan, Bhubaneswar, Orissa. From, "Comprehensive District annual Plan of Kalahandi-2021" by DPMU, Kalahandi, p. 63. Copyright, 2021 by the DPMU, Kalahandi*

Currently there are 10 numbers of Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies in the district. There are five numbers of Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies in Junagarh block, 4 numbers of Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies in Golamunda and 1 in Dharamgarh. The highest number of members enrolled in the Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies are from Junagarh block, consisting of 577 numbers. Thus, Junagarh has 55% of weavers in comparison to it, Golamunda has 36% and Dharamgarh has 9%. The figure given below explains the situation.

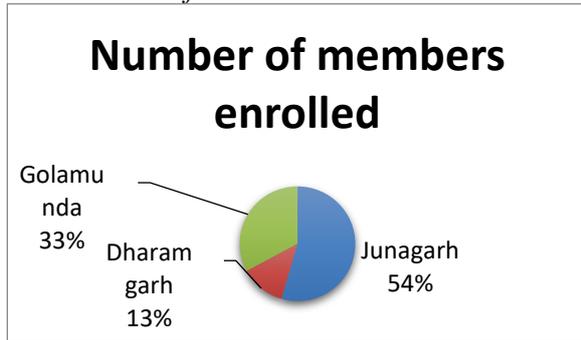
**Figure 5**

*Number of Primary Weaver Cooperative Societies in Kalahandi District*



*Note: Figure demonstrates the percentage of Primary weavers' cooperative societies (PWCS) in the three blocks of Kalahandi district.*

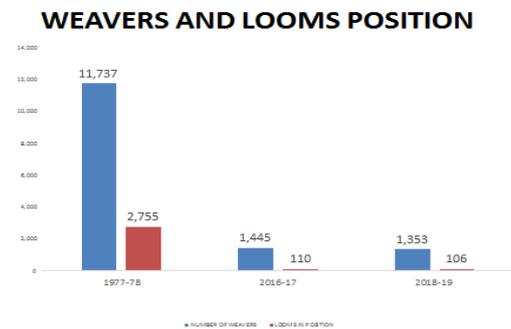
**Figure 6**  
 Number of weavers in Kalahandi District



Note: Figure demonstrates the number of members enrolled in the Primary weavers' cooperative societies (PWCS) of the three different blocks of Kalahandi district.

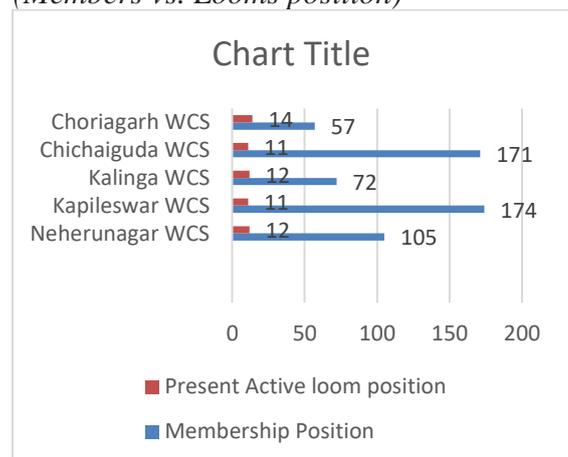
The existing weavers in the district have come down to 60-70 and currently only 20-40 weavers are engaged part time in the craft and the new generation is reluctant to learn the skill owing to low remuneration, ironically and tragically the Habaspuri craft is no longer practised in the Habaspuri village from where it derives its name. Only Chicheiguda village under Chicheiguda Weavers' Cooperative Society Ltd., Chicheiguda and Neherunagar WCS Ltd., Neherunagarpada, Baldiamal are making Habaspuri sarees. Junagarh Block Handloom activities consists of five number of Weavers Co-operative Societies, the details of Production, Sale, audit Position of these Societies and Govt. assistance availed by the weavers are mentioned in the Table.

**Figure 7**  
 Data analysis on (Weavers and Looms position) year wise



Note: Figure demonstrates the decline in the number of weavers and loom position in the past years i.e., from 1977-78 to 2018-19 in Kalahandi district.

**Figure 8**  
 Information on handloom activities (Members vs. Looms position)



Note: Figure demonstrates the information on handloom activities (Members vs. Looms position) in the five weaver cooperative societies of Kalahandi district.

As far as the production value of Habaspuri sarees and fabrics are concerned it was Rs 28.55 lakh in 2016-17 but sadly in the year 2018-19, it came down to Rs 18.89 lakhs. If we look at the root cause of the declining trend of this weave then it can be attributed to it being labour intensive and time-consuming with hardly or poor returns. As a result, the youth of

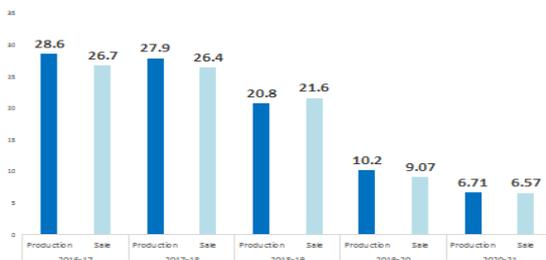
the weaving community have got involved in construction work, small business opportunities that earn them daily wages as opposed to income from weaving, which is very time consuming and lot of hardship is involved. Moreover, the members of the Weaver cooperative societies have to struggle with the sale of the products. Among the five Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies, Chicheiguda Primary Weaver Co-operative Society has been the most active with the highest number of active weavers and looms in position.

The production and sales in the last five years has been given elaborated in the figure given below. In the past two years the Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies have been suffering when it comes to sales figures due to the pandemic. The figure explains the situation in the last five years.

**Figure 9**

*Information on production and sale in the last five years*

**Production and sale of last five years**

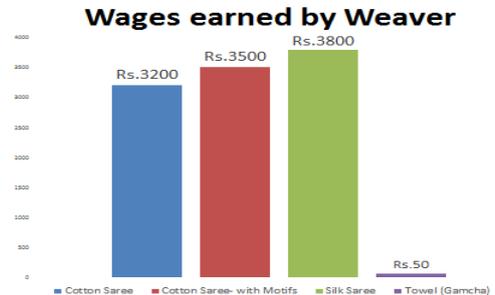


*Note: The figure demonstrates the decline in the production and sale in the last five years.*

The weavers get conversion charges for the different kinds of products they make as conversion charges or wages. During the field visit, the WCS members explained the variety of products they make and the wages they get for the same. The table 10 reflects the wage component of the weavers.

**Figure 10**

*Wages earned by the Weaver*

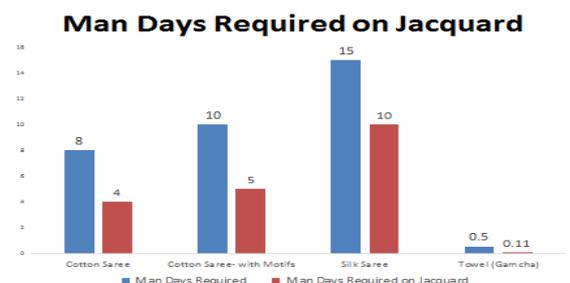


*Note: The figure shows the wages earned by the weavers for the different products.*

Though Textile and Handlooms Department has been imparting basic weaving training to the members of WCS, still there are challenges to sustain the livelihood of the weaving communities. In the year 2018-19, few youths of Chicheiguda have been given basic training along with skill development, with tie and dye and producing products in Habaspuri design. They are concentrating on products like lungis, towels, apart from sarees. The training is for a period of three to six months. After that the trainees are given looms and raw materials for weaving the saris and other fabrics. The product varieties and designs have been given in the table below with a plan to add more number of designs in future.

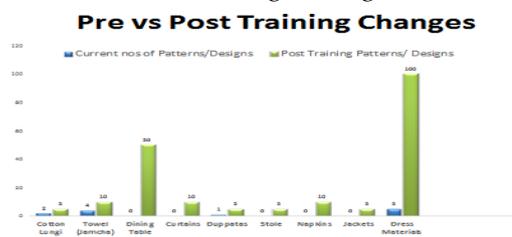
**Figure 11**

*Man Days Required on Jacquard*



*Note: The figure shows the man days required by the weavers for the different products they weave.*

**Figure 12**  
 Pre vs. Post Training Changes



*Note: The figure shows the changes in the number of varied products pre and post training sessions. Initially the weavers were able to produce less variety of products but after training they could increase the number of quantities of different varieties of products.*

### Methodology of the Study

**Pre-Study:** The researcher conducted a five days pre study to get a prima facie knowledge on the place, people, community and process of Habaspuri weaving under study. In this context, she conducted field visits involving the key persons namely the Assistant Director of Textiles, Kalahandi, Secretary of the Weaver Co-operative Society and members, NGO working in the area, the cooperative leaders, and interaction with Sujit Meher (Fashion Designer) from Chicheiguda. She also conducted meetings and discussions involving Project Director, District Rural Development Agency, Assistant Director, Odisha Rural Marketing and Supply Society, District Development Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and District Project Manager, Odisha Livelihood Mission at the district Headquarter i.e., Bhawanipatna.

**Research design:** Mixed research design has been adopted to make the

study more realistic and to provide some research input for policy designing. Thus, exploratory, descriptive and diagnostic designs give a complete shape to the study. Exploratory design is adhered to explore the situation of the weavers social, economic and their working and living conditions, their degree of fulfilment realized through the craft in detail. Descriptive design is followed to sketch the historicity of the handloom industry, the process of preparing the Habaspuri sarees, the policies, programmes and ventures undertaken by the government and the civil societies for the handloom workers. Diagnostic design is applied to capture information on the maladies, challenges that encounter the weavers as a community and hand weaving as an occupation and culture and to identify the factors that pose such challenges and to solicit recommendations to overcome them from the weavers and the functionaries.

**Data Sources:** Both primary and secondary methods of data analysis. For secondary information and data, the researcher has relied upon the existing literature finding expression through books, articles in journals, periodicals, newspaper articles, e-journals, unpublished dissertations, blogs, statistical information sources like the general census information, census of handlooms and handicrafts, district gazetteers etc. For primary information and data, the researcher has designed a questionnaire and collected information from the field.

**Research Methods Adopted:** The study has taken recourse to both **quantitative and qualitative methods** of data collection. Quantitative methods have been adopted to collect some standardized information. Particularly on the information relating to:

- General household information
- Family details
- Socio economic information
- Occupation details
- Access of weavers to various services
- Social security provisions
- Worksite conditions
- Training and skill acquisition details

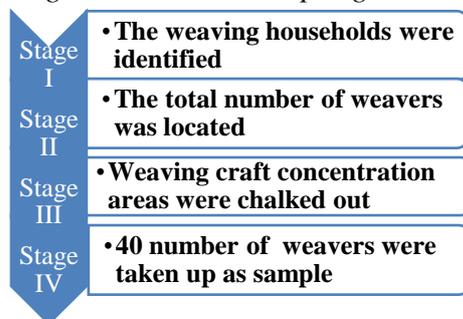
Qualitative methods have been used to collect typical information relating to:

- Good practices
- Success Stories
- Perceptions on the future of the handloom industry
- Innovations
- Opinions and suggestions for convergence

**Universe and the sample:** The study decided to undertake a sampling of the weavers for the purpose of the study.

**Figure 13**

*Stages involved in Sampling*



*Note: The figure shows the different stages in sampling of the study conducted by the researcher.*

**The research tools resorted to:** The study has opted for adopting different tools to collect quantitative and qualitative data. To capture quantitative information, the researcher formulated a well design interview schedule containing various questions and follow up questions. This effort was undertaken to cross

check and filter the right information. The researcher adopted observation, focus group discussions (FGD) and few case studies to track some qualitative information. The observation was done during the field visits and through a participatory mode. For observation, an observation tool was prepared which included the Household conditions(nature of house, assets, living styles, consumption pattern, thrifts), Worksite ambiance(Production centres, looms, raw materials, products, stockings, people at work), Process of production(Rituals, product designs, motifs, processes), Product marketing (Procurement through Cooperatives, private selling directly at doorstep or through intermediaries, bargains, nature of clientele)

Two FGDs have been conducted with the weaving cooperative members and with the trainers. Five standardized questions were made for each FGD group to maintain standardization and to attain objectivity in research.

### **Findings of the Study**

The findings of the study reveal the major issues and challenges of the weavers. They are:

1. **No scope of marketing their products**-Low level of education is a marked feature among the weavers and the educational backwardness is more prominent among the women. However, all the weavers are not devoting themselves exclusively for Habaspuri weaving. The Habaspuri weaving weavers are much more in number in Chicheiguda in comparison to Neherunagarpada. Ethnically the products look elegant, texture wise they are good but pricing do not suit the purse of the local consumers. Weavers still have limited looms. Maximum of them have a single loom which

constrain their productivity. So, the output also is visibly low and low output leads to low economic return which is a danger to sustain their livelihood dependence on Habaspuri weaving.

There is a mismatch between the days of work, hours of work and the pecuniary return. This is a big threat to the weaving profession. Marketing of Habaspuri saree is facilitated by the weaver cooperative society. The bulk of the profit goes to the weaver cooperative society, thus bringing utter dismay to the Habaspuri weaver. The trained weavers do not find the training to be very much yielding as they lack on the job training and post training monitoring. The component of marketing is totally a missing element in the training process. Thus, the livelihood earning from Habaspuri today is witnessing a heavy set back.

2. **Remuneration is less-** The average income for Habaspuri weavers is not sufficient to maintain their families. They earn around Rs. 8000 to 10,000 per month. This compels them to take up other means of livelihood. Expenditure pattern exhibits that the weavers spend more for their physical existence and social survival. But consciousness for quality of life is yet to develop among them. The study on access suggests that common amenities are availed like electricity and drinking water. The studied villages still have a good number of people under below poverty line. Weavers' households are generally found to be landless and those who have it have very small land at their command. This is for their subsistence economy. Thus, weaving emerges as the primary occupation of these households. Weavers hardly get any incentive to keep their spirit high. Representation in exhibitions at the national level is rare, awardees are nil and cost-free training arrangements are

done for a few. This brings their morale down and creates a class within a class.

3. **Young generation is reluctant to take up less profitable family business-** The creativity urge has gone down among the younger generation. Younger generation who are educated, have taken up jobs or keep on moving to urban areas searching for jobs like security guards, hotel boys, construction supervisors or similar jobs but not inclined to handloom weaving. This is going to have serious impact on the Habaspuri weaving tradition and practice. This is likely to push this glorious hand weaving to the dooms a making it a history for the district. Weavers have now transited to nuclear households with a few continuing with the joint families. The family size is declining almost conforming to the norms of small family. Gender parity in household composition is a marked feature of the weavers' households in both the concentration areas. Transition of the new generation from the weaving households to other alternative livelihood is becoming common and migration is becoming frequent. The sample weavers do not get adequate employment days and wage. Seasonal orders provide them an opportunity to work for elongated hours and fetch them some additional wage. This is positively accepted by the weaving community.
4. **Lack of availability of good quality raw materials and dye-** The study through secondary source survey noted that Junagarh has a rich handloom culture. Almost all the five weaver cooperative societies have traditional weavers with them. The handloom culture and the practice of the district is antique and diverse. The handloom products of the district range from simple cotton gamuchhas, lungis to sarees of Western Odisha. Other products include dupattas. Weaving

craft in Kalahandi is predominantly caste based with a large number under the Other Backward Caste. Main castes are Mehers. The skills range from very highly skilled, to semi-skilled and just skilled weavers. The hand-woven process and products underwent vast changes from using different fibres like cotton and silk but when comes to accessibility to good quality raw materials and dye, it is still lacking. Hardly few weavers are able to purchase or have the raw materials.

5. **Lack of technology (power looms), product diversification, innovation** - Till now modernization and technical leverage has not touched the weaving sector at Junagarh. Financial stringency and the lack of a concerted effort in this direction by the government and non-government agencies is a cause for this deficit and delay. The technology also has undergone massive change from preparatory section, simple pit loom, throw shuttle handlooms to the high-speed preparatory winding and warping machines, the sturdy frame looms, modernized fly shuttle pit looms, designing devices from hand selection to the dobby designs are just a few to mention for high productivity and quality.

Habaspuri weavers studied in the hub are veteran, but equipped with traditional weaving technique, design and produce the products without much diversity and innovation. The weavers bank upon family and intergenerational transmission of craft technique and knowledge. They lack external training and skill up gradation which are supposed to make value addition to their technical knowledge base. The few who have received training pertains more to weaving technique.

6. **Distress Migration**-As per the given data, there is a sharp reduction in the number of weavers in the district which

is likely to make this glorious traditional weaving languishing very soon. This will have a repercussion on the employment possibility and the livelihood of the weaver's community. Weavers are transiting to other occupations. So, culturally and economically this has appeared as a big threat for the district. The replication of the trend was detected in Chicheiguda and Neherunagarpada area of Junagarh. Transition to other crafts and migration of weaving households are noted to be a common phenomenon in the study area.

**Figure 14**

*Outcome of the FGDs conducted in the villages of Chicheiguda and Neherunagarpada*

- The loom condition over a period of time has deteriorated and the weavers lack the purchasing power to substitute them with new ones.
- Modernization of looms has not taken place to expedite the production process.
- Local consumers who constituted the bulk of the consumers are now strikingly declining.
- Procurement of raw material is becoming a great challenge to handloom production and the financial stringency of the weavers restrains them from affording for the rising prices of such raw materials.
- Manpower support for the entire Habaspuri weaving process is collapsing. The upcoming generation is lacking an interest in this traditional craft. So, the output witnesses a drastic decline which brings low economic return to the families.
- All the weavers don't find an exposure to the handloom outlets to

sell out their products. This often leads to the overstocking of the products and a stalemate in the credit supply to their weaving endeavour.

- Habaspuri weavers don't get the adequate support of micro finance, cooperative and banks to keep their weaving fueled all throughout.
- Lack of innovations in design, diversity, quality and quantity are the major issues that limit Habaspuri demand and production leading to unemployment, low wage earning from the craft.

*Note: The figure shows the outcome of the Focused Group Discussions conducted in the villages of Chicheiguda and Neherunagarpada villages of Kalahandi District.*

During the survey it was noted that only four number of weavers claim that they sometimes get bulk orders from some private and government organizations which fetch them a good income in comparison to their normal income. However, it depends on their contact.

**Case Study of Jalandhar Meher-** Jalandhar Meher, aged 48 from Chicheiguda village. A master craftsman in weaving Habaspuri saree with the skill inherited from his forefathers. He entered the vocation as a family profession. One of the good innovators of the craft. With the new found skill, he innovated new products with high value addition which helped him not only to sustain the longevity of the craft but also to earn better and improve his economic condition for a better living. It was therefore, no wonder that Shri Meher's work and craftsmanship was recognized and he is recognised as a **Master Weaver** who has made valuable contributions for keeping alive the handloom heritage. Indeed, he has set an example to diversify

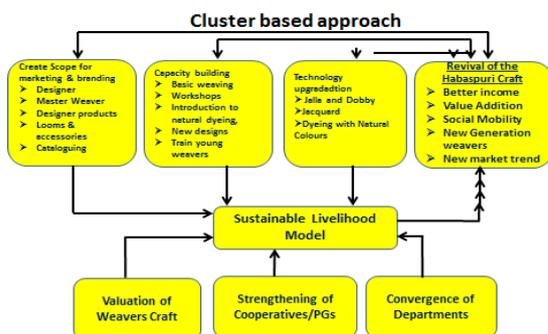
the product and make elegant Habaspuri sarees so as to cater to a niche clientele and improve his economic condition, without isolating himself from his family profession.

The case study also brings forth some exceptional weavers like Rasika Meher, Ishwar Meher from Baldiamal village who are senior weavers with ten years of experience but now reluctant to weave since full time weaving income is very less and they are unable to sustain their living. Moreover, the members are hardly aware of the schemes and support from textile department. The training as assessed by the weavers has not become fully delivering without on the spot and hand on experience and post training assessments. Irrespective of such constraints, to keep their product in demand, few weavers have ventured to introduce innovations in designs by applying their own skill and knowledge like Satyanarayan Meher, Shyamhari Meher. This has kept this traditional weaving alive. Finally, an attempt is made to come up with possible solutions and suggestions to sustain the livelihood of the Habaspuri weavers.

#### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

The researcher has tried to give the suggestions in the form a "**Sustainable livelihood Model**" which can be taken up at Custer level in Junagarh Block. The figure highlights the model.

**Figure 15**  
*Sustainable Livelihood Model*



*Note: The figure shows Sustainable Livelihood Model suggested by the author.*

**1. Create scope of marketing and brand building of the Habaspuri products:**

- i) **Engagement of Designer:** One Textile Designer from National Institute of fashion Technology (NIFT) or National award winner weaver should be engaged for the project for a period of one year. She/he will prepare/submit paper designs (at least 5 per looms) to the concerned zonal textile offices and responsible for implementation of the design on loom. The selection/finalization of designs will be done through a committee headed by Zonal officer. She/he will get designer fee.
- ii) **Engagement of Resource person:** One expert in handloom designs needs to be engaged as resource person for the project for a period of one year. She/ he must be a national award winner. He will visit to the production Area at least five days in a month. She/ he will guide the weavers/ designer during production of the languishing design. She/ he will get honorarium per day including her/ his remuneration, conveyance charges, lodging & boarding, etc.

**iii) Development of designer**

**Products:** Purchase of Raw Materials & Dyes and Chemicals along with development of samples of innovative designs on the looms is required and purchase of raw materials like yarns, dyes and chemicals per product should be fixed. The funds can be utilised after completion of the basic weaving training, as there is a provision of purchasing raw material for each design. Yarns may be purchases from RMBs/ NHDC. Hence a budget needs to be provisioned for development of products. The funds will be provided to weaver cooperative society as capital funds for rotation.

**iv) Purchase of Loom & Accessories:**

Another Ten sets of Loom & Accessories can be proposed to be purchased under the project for instalment in the Common facility centre for production of sample fabrics during the project. After that it will be an asset of that Common facility Centre in which regular production will be done.

**v) Brand Building and Promotion:**

The art of Habaspuri craft person has so far not been exposed to the national and international market even though it has the potential to catch the imagination of saree officemates across the world. Therefore, massive brand building exercise and promotional activities through audio-visual media is required.

**vi) Cataloguing:**

Habaspuri design catalogues should be made. He catalogues will be used for publicity, participation and marketing activities etc. They will also serve like a tool for brand building and awareness of Habaspuri products I the form of new designs and patterns of varied

products for home decors, garments etc.

## 2. Capacity Building Trainings

i) **Basic Weaving Training:** It is observed that children of the weaver families in the age groups between 18 to 20 years or even more are not skilled enough to weave freely on the loom as a result of which the quality of the products and also the productivity is not up to the mark which results in less remuneration. Besides, a significant number of unemployed youths from non-weaving community both in farm and non-farm sector is showing their interest in handloom profession. The primary mission of the training is reduction of unemployment, poverty and simultaneously to control exhaustion of handloom resources. It is necessary to impart training on Basic Weaving to the unemployed youth to create job opportunities and sufficient handloom resources. They will further go on to get skilled training to create next generation of Habaspuri weavers.

For this purpose, Basic Weaving training needs to be imparted to minimum 40 numbers of trainees in two batches with 6 months duration at hired training centres under the guidance of Master Crafts Man (MCM). To acquire more knowledge and to gain confidence, the trainees should be motivated through exposure visit to nearby prominent handloom clusters at the end of the training. New Looms should also be provided to the successful trainees.

## 3. Technology upgradation

i) **Weaving with Jalla and Dobby:** In order to produce handloom products with intricate designs on the body, anchal & border of a saree, dress

materials, the weavers must be skilled enough to adopt Jalla and Dobby technique. The training on Weaving with Jalla and Dobby should be imparted to the weavers in three batches for two months duration under the guidance of MCM. The trainee will be provided with New Jalla and Dobby with required accessories to take up the production of fabrics with designs through Jalla and Dobby. This training is proposed to improve the skill of weavers.

ii) **Weaving with Jacquard:** In order to avoid engagement of extra person for weaving of extra warp and weft figured designs to minimize the extra labour, weaving with jacquard is mainly required in the skilled belts. As a result, the productivity as well as the quality of production can be improved significantly.

The training on Weaving with Jacquard may be imparted to the weavers in eight batches for four months duration under the guidance of master craftsman. The trainees should be provided with new loom and jacquard with required accessories to take up the production of fabrics with designs through Jacquard. For this purpose, jacquard needs to be purchased.

iii) **Dyeing with Natural Colours:** Handloom being a cottage-based industry, dyeing is carried out by the weavers in a decentralized manner. Many times, dyeing parameters like temperature, concentration of dyes and auxiliaries, soaping, washing, water quality etc. and also the dyeing methodology/ use of branded dyestuffs are not well taken care of by the dyers while dyeing yarns in hank form. Thus, in order to address the issues so as to produce

Natural colour products with good colour fastness, training on Natural Dyeing should be imparted to eighty numbers of weavers / dyers in four batches with duration of two months under the guidance at a master craftsman. The trainee beneficiaries will be provided with required equipment for carrying out their dyeing work.

**4. Increase the remuneration of the weavers-**Currently the weavers are getting only Rs. 3500 for the sarees, they spend 8-15 days on one saree and in a month they are able to make three sarees maximum. Working capital for the societies needs to be reassessed and financial assistance extended to the societies for the procurement of more fabrics from the weavers and ensure providing uninterrupted supply of inputs to keep the looms running without loss of wages for the weavers are the needs of the time. The cooperatives need to be strengthened in this light.

**5. Strengthening of Cooperatives and Producer Groups** –These needs to be strengthened and their link with the apex societies needs to be strong. This will enable the Habaspuri products to be well marketed and fetch a real price to the weavers. Regular market needs to be created which are not dependent on festivals along with Product Catalogue (design, colour, fix combinations).

Tie up with institutional buyers including Govt./private outlets like Reliance retails, handmade towels, Tribes India, foundations, international markets , use of Social media as tool–Facebook page, Twitter page, news on design, pattern, quality like Koraput coffee, give incentives to weavers, community centre creation. Banners and posters at the Tourism areas (information on Habaspuri sarees) also need to create Kalahandi textile market outlet. There is need for

opening of retail outlets for handloom and handicraft products mainly in tourist spots.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the study concludes though Habaspuri weaving is ironically and tragically no longer practised in the Habaspur village from where it derives its name yet opportunities are many. These opportunities are to be capitalized to benefit the Habaspuri weavers and keep the Habaspuri tradition alive. The aforesaid recommendations may be taken into consideration to bring changes in the plights of the Habaspuri weavers. Little more focused approach to the issues of these weavers, availability of some basic opportunities, accessibilities and affordability and finally adaptability among the weavers can resolve the challenges faced by the Habaspuri weavers today and can ensure sustainability to them from this weaving tradition. The need of the hour is to revive the art in its cradle. It needs to be strengthened through convergence of different departments like Skill Development and Technical Education, Sericulture, ORMAS, MSME, and Mission Shakti. This will not only upgrade the artistic values of Kalahandi handloom at the cluster level but also create potential buyers and attract them for sustainable market linkages. The young generations will come to handloom sector through basic weaving training and will become super skilled Habaspuri weavers to carry forward to next generation. They will come to know the old traditional weave and dyeing process and keep it alive. It will also create new economic opportunities if value addition is done through skill upgradation, introduction of natural dyeing, new designs, promotional activities etc. Moreover, if the revival of Habaspuri project is implemented successfully, it will also ensure social mobility among the marginalized people in the region. Moreover, it is seen that most of the yarn dyeing process was based on natural/vegetable dyeing; hence use of

more eco-friendly fabrics can be produced by adhering the ancient dyeing process. New market trend can be established on old designs. Young generation designers can find new scopes on revival of old designs. Expert old aged weavers will be able to sustain on the revival of old designs which are now high value product. The age-old traditional craft of Habaspuri hand weaving will get a new life.

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