**Our Areas of Work**

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<tr>
<th>Set up an e-Commerce portal for direct access to the market</th>
<th>Create a design library and repository</th>
<th>Establish a digital resource centre and Wi-Fi hubs</th>
<th>Train youth to become digital designers</th>
<th>Create and strengthen self-help groups</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate knowledge of market prices of raw material and finished products</td>
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<td>Impart digital literacy among community members</td>
<td>Build ICT capacity of community members and impart vocational tertiary skills</td>
<td>Increase monthly household income of weavers</td>
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<td>Train youth in using social media channels for marketing</td>
<td>Minimise the role of exploitative middlemen</td>
<td>Enhance traditional skills and incorporate contemporary elements</td>
<td>Improve access to government schemes and entitlements</td>
<td>Facilitate participation in state and national-level expositions</td>
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**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- Outdated or inefficient infrastructure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

**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.
MUSIRI
NUAPATNA
MUSIRI

A cluster of most talented weavers and national award winners, Nuapatna 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.

BARPALI
DIGIKALA

Located 940 kilometres north west of Bhubaneswar, Barpali is a densely populated block in Barghat 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 embroidery suits pieces or sarees in racist. 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 clothes layered with cow dung, which gives the backdrop its distinct natural and dull look. Their market reach, however, is extremely limited.

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 ‘Kaual’ and ‘Gala’. Situated on the foothills of the Western Ghats in Chamarajanagar 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 tough competition from machine-aided designs and fabric.

POCHAMPALLY
REWEAVE

Pochampally in Andhra Pradesh is famous for its unique process of weaving Double Ikat. Double Ikat 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 ikat fabric utilizes hard work of more than four people and labour of ten days.

Established in 2002, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) aims to connect unreached and underserved communities of India. With the belief ‘Inform, Communicate and Empower’, DEF finds sustainable digital interventions to overcome information poverty in rural and remote locations of India, and empower communities with digital literacy, digital tools and last mile connectivity.