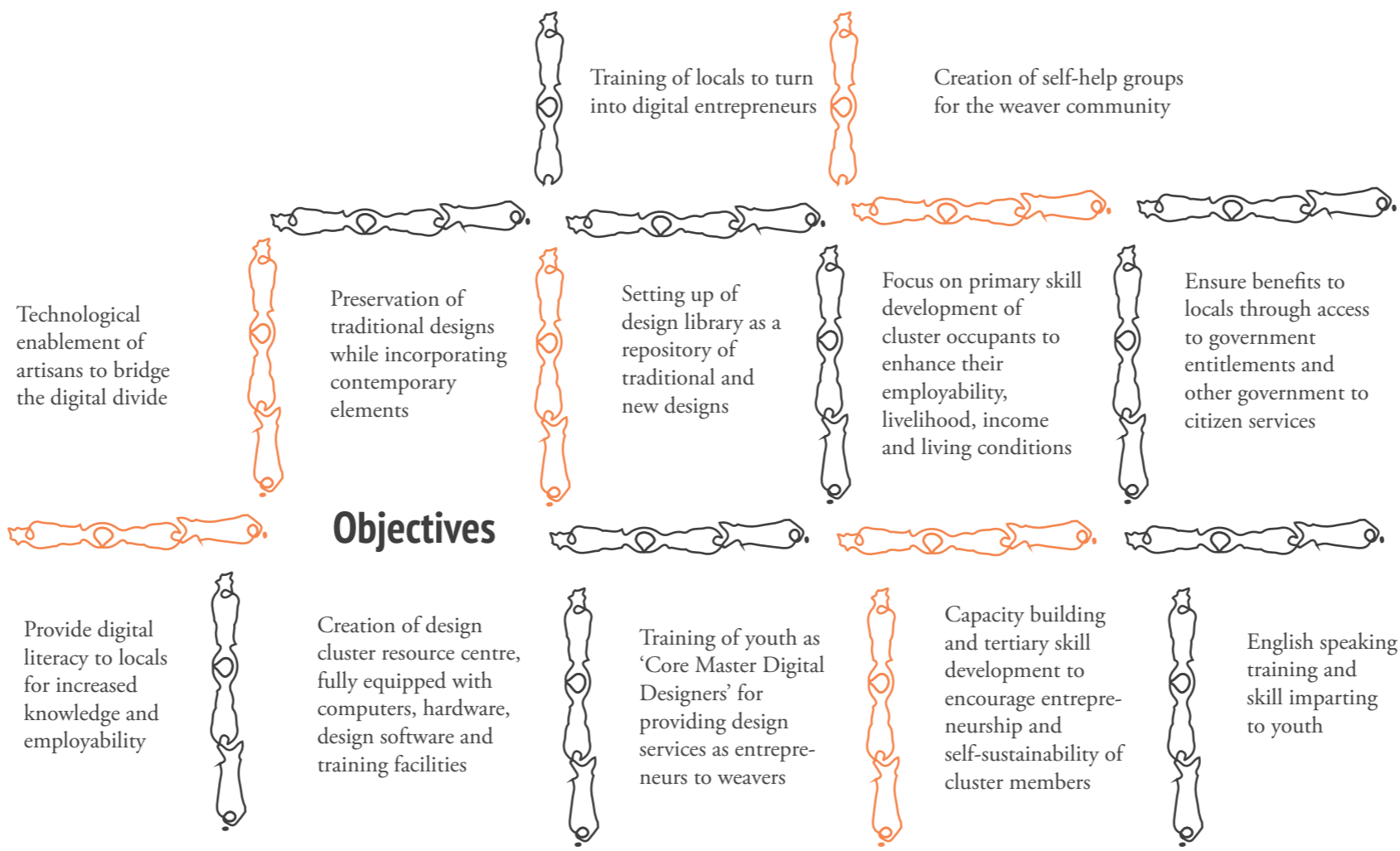
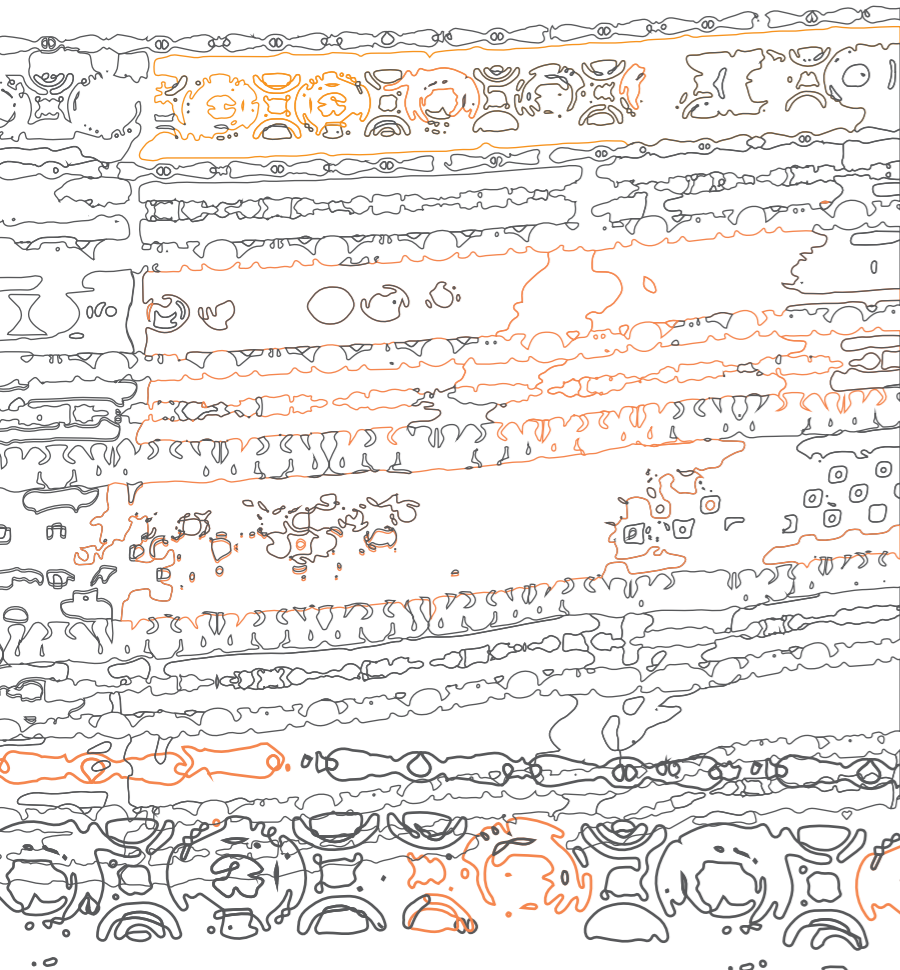


# DIGIKALA

A DIGITAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



In partner with 



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## About DCDP

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. According to official figures, there are about 70 lakh artisans engaged in craft production for their livelihood. As per unofficial figures, there are about 20 crore artisans who form the backbone of India's non-farm rural economy.

Keeping this in mind, Digital Empowerment Foundation in partnership with the government or private organisations has initiated a project that 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 capital needs of the targeted artisan communities towards inclusive growth.

## Need for empowering artisans

In India, there are more than 2000 traditional skill-based clusters covering various skills from textile designing, handicrafts, and glass, leather and brass goods to wooden industries. Out of 2000, there are 470 handloom clusters in India. According to the National Handloom Census 2012-2013, the sector is providing employment to about 65 lakh people in the country — the second largest employment sector after agriculture.

However, most of those working in the sector are suffering from exploitation, poor living conditions, extremely low wages and inaccessibility to direct market. The handloom-based clusters are unable to sustain their livelihood enterprise due to its very nature of being unorganised and in a dispersed structure, lack of education, lack of inadequate working capital, inadequate infrastructure, poor institutional framework and absolute disassociation from modern technologies including digital and Information & Communication Technologies.

Hence, reluctance of younger generation to engage in their traditional arts and handicrafts is causing its rapid decline. Involving and engaging youth from the community is, thus, not only an integral part of the process of reviving traditional craft but also of ensuring that it sustains as a viable employment or entrepreneurial option.

## Scope

The project envisages implementing four major activities to accomplish an integrated development of the clusters for long-term sustainable livelihood creation. These include:

- 1 Establishing and provisioning the availability of access to Internet and wireless connectivity as basic infrastructure for seamless communication within and outside the cluster or community
- 2 Developing skills of local youth and providing specific training for entrepreneurship
- 3 Establishing Design Cluster Resource Centre enabled with digital tools and enough space to hold community sessions or training programmes
- 4 Developing an e-Commerce portal, exclusively for the clusters' entrepreneurs, products, skills and services to national and global-level customers

## Partners

DEF has been able to successfully implement the DCDP programme in the various location through support from:

**Media Lab Asia:** It has supported the Chanderiyaan project in Chanderi cluster, Madhya Pradesh, by providing technological, financial and project aid.

**Ministry of Communications and Information Technology:** The ministry provided financial support to the Chanderiyaan project in Chanderi.

**Internet Society:** The society has supported the wireless for communities project in most clusters.

**Microsoft:** Microsoft has been like a pillar for weaver clusters in Barpali and Nupatna in Odisha. It has provided support to the activities, given technological aid and shared knowledge.

**Ericsson:** The corporation has provided comprehensive support to activities, technical knowhow and equipment in the weaver cluster of Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh.

**Mphasis:** The IT company has provided a holistic support to the project in Kaithoon, Kota district of Rajasthan, for the activities, infrastructure, guidance and sponsorship.



## BARPALI

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. Project DigiKala is trying to change that.



## NUAPATNA

A cluster of most talented weavers and national awardees, Napatna 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 at Rs.1,500-3,000 only. The numerous cooperative societies established in Nuapatna have failed to have a desired impact. Project DigiKala hopes to change the scenario.



## CHANDERI

Located in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh, Chanderi is rich in heritage, culture, tradition and art. At present, there are about 4,500 weavers and an equal number of handlooms in Chanderi, which has a population of approximately 40,000. However, the brand Chanderi was facing a stiff competition from powerlooms, which were manufacturing fake Chanderi sarees, until project 'Chanderiyaan' was launched in 2009. From being worth Rs.65 crore, the Chanderi handloom industry has grown over the last five years to be worth over Rs.150 crore today.



## BARABANKI

Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh specialises in zari and applique cut-work on sarees, scarves and shawls, among other products. Barabanki and its adjoining area is home to around 50,000 weavers and 20,000 looms. Most of these 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, and their average daily income is less than Rs.100.

## KAITHOON

Kaithoon, a town in Kota district of Rajasthan, is popular for its pure cotton and silk sarees known as Kota Doria. Amid a population of 20,000-25,000 people, there are at least 3,500-4,500 weavers and 80 per cent of them are women, earning between Rs.2,500 and Rs.3,500 per month. However, this monthly income is only a small percentage of the market price of the same sarees. This is because the weavers live in information darkness and are subjected to exploitation at the hand of middlemen.

## NARAYANPET

Narayanpet is a cluster of some of the most creative weavers. Located in Mahbubnagar district of Telangana, Narayanpet is located around 165 kilometre from Hyderabad. The cluster is known for its hand-woven silks and cotton that sport a range of exotic and appealing patterns. However, those weaving this exclusive sarees make hardly any money, thus, making it difficult for them to sustain their family.