



**CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, INDIA**

**DIAGNOSTIC STUDY**

**ARTISAN**

**THE HANDLOOMS CLUSTER – MAHESHWAR**



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## **MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER**

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## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The city of Maheshwar, the ancient name of which was Mahishmati is known for its rich art and cultural heritage. The city was founded by the King Mahishman of the Som dynasty. Various scriptures and ballads make a mention of the historical facts of this place, which is even known to be the arena for different battles that were fought during the periods of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Mahishmanti was the capital city of the southern kingdom of Avanti, whose others names are Janpad and Nimad.

Mahishmati was a very prosperous city and had connections with other popular ancient centres like Avantika, Patliputra, Paithan, Kashi (Varanasi), Bhadauch, Kutch etc. It had itself become a popular centre for spiritual, religious, administrative, literature, and cultural activities. There is a fort at Maheshwar that was constructed during the rule of the mogul King Akbar. The moguls were replaced by the Peshawars and in 1767 the Queen Ahilyabai of the Holkar kingdom made Maheshwar her capital city. Her rule continued upto 1795.

Tourism and religion also hold immense significance in and around Maheshwar. Some of the ancient temples here are Shiv Jyotirlingam Mandleshwar, Bawangaja and Mandav. Towards 65 kms east of Maheshwar lies Onkareshwar temple, which is one of the 12 most popular Shiv Lingam temples in India. Oon is situated in Nimad, which is one of the important centre of Jain temples and excavations of the place have revealed the artifacts of even 11<sup>th</sup> century temples. The Oon is an 82 feet statue carved out of a single rock and is situated 70 kms south of Maheshwar. It is a very famous idol and is one of its kinds in the world. It was built by the King Meena Ramchandra during 1166 B.C.

Mandava is one of the most attractive and beautiful tourist places of Madhya Pradesh. This city is the symbol of love, bliss and enthusiasm. The place is situated in the hills of Vindhyas at a height of 2000 feet above sea level. This city is famous for the epic of love between Shamsah Bajbahadur and Queen Roopmati. It is also one of the famous centres of Afghan art and culture. Each monument of this region is a classic example of architecture. There are around 30 monuments here and the main ones are Hindola palace, Jahaj palace, Jama Masjid, the tomb of Hussain Shah, Bajbahadur palace, palace of Queen Roopmati, the temple of Neelkantheshwar etc.

The southern part of Mahishmati is situated at 90 kms from Indore. In the west it is at 13 kms from Dhamnod, 45 kms from Badwaha in the east and 32 kms from Khargone in the North. It is situated at the banks of River Narmada, which is one of the holy rivers of India and due to which Maheshwar too became popular as a religious city.



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### 1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SARI WEAVING INDUSTRY

Nimad has been an important centre for the production of cotton and it has a long history in cloth production. In 1767, when Queen Ahilyabai Holkar made Maheshwar as her capital city, she encouraged the development of trade and industry in the city. During this period, the craftsmen from Hyderabad, Mandava and Gujarat were also brought in to settle them down at Maheshwar. Before this, the local industry was only producing gray cotton fabric. But after the coming of these skilled craftsmen the production of sari, turbans and other dress materials also began. The sari that was 5 yards in length was called 'dandiya', whereas the one of 9 yards was called as sari. They used natural colours for the production of coloured textiles. Gradually, along with the simple textiles there began the production of checks and other fancy designs. The designs on the textiles were mainly inspired from the sculpted depictions in temples and this has given a unique recognition to the handicrafts of Maheshwar. Ahilyabai had provided royal patronage to the handicraft industry during her rule. She used to get the royal dress materials i.e. the saris, turbans etc weaved in her presence. She would also gift these products to other kingdoms and royal families and in this way, the handlooms of Maheshwar gained popularity. Other Holkar rulers also kept alive the tradition of patronizing this industry.

In 1921, the King Shreeman Holkarji Rao established a weaving and dyeing demonstration factory. The aim and objective of this factory was to create awareness about modern weaving techniques amongst weavers. At present this factory is a Handicraft training centre at Maheshwar. After the establishment of the training centre, various new weaving techniques were introduced in the cluster like the use of Dobby for border designing and the replacement of throw-shuttle looms with fly-shuttles. This increased the overall production in the region. These shuttles and dobbys were sourced from Nagpur and the weavers were given training in the usage of the same and many were even granted assistance for setting up pit-looms in their units. In 1978, Richard and Sally Holkar, belonging to the ex-ruler family established the Rehwa Society, which has contributed significantly for the growth and development of the industry.



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### PRESENT STATUS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN MAHESHWAR

Number of working handlooms	1000
Number of units in Co-operative estates	150
Number of units outside Co-operative estates	850
No. of Employed people	3000
No. of employed persons in co-operative societies	450
No. of employed persons outside co-operative estates	2550
No. of operational weaver's Co-operative Societies	2
Annual Production (in Rs) (Includes Sari, Dress Material, Salwar Suits and Dupattas)	7 crores
Annual Production (in Meters)	6.50 lacs

### 1.3 SOCIAL PROFILE OF THE CLUSTER

People of diverse castes and communities are engaged in the handloom industry at Maheshwar. This includes Momin, Kshatriya, Salnvi, Khangar, Kohlis, scheduled castes & tribes and other backward classes. Since past 3-4 years around 100 families from the districts of Chhindwada, Nagpur, Balaghat have also settled in Maheshwar and are working in this industry. These families shifted from their old districts because they were left unemployed after the shut-down of the Government production unit.

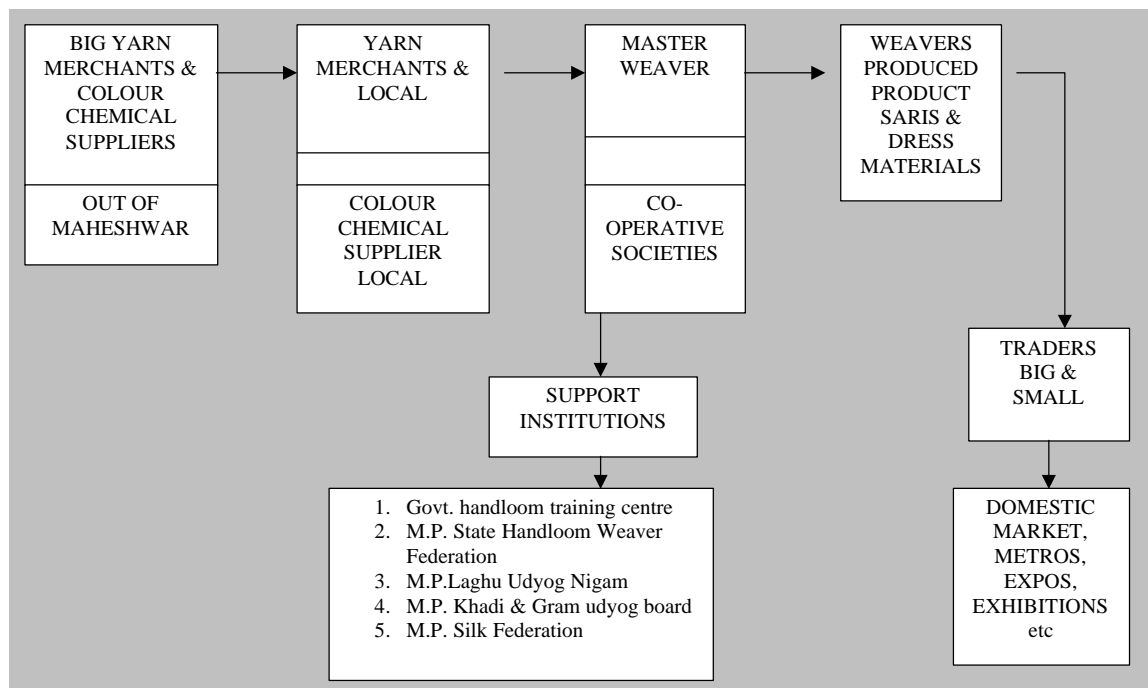
### CASTE - CATEGORISATION OF THE WEAVERS

1.	Momin(Minority)	300
2.	Ordinary Castes	300
3.	Other Backward Classes	200
4.	Scheduled Castes	150
5.	Scheduled Tribe	50
	TOTAL	1000



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### 1.4 THE CLUSTER MAP OF THE HANDLOOM WEAVING, MAHESHWAR



## 2. THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

### 2.1 RAW MATERIAL

The main raw materials needed for the production of a Maheshwar Sari is:

- 20-22 Raw Silk Mulberry Imported (China & Korea)
- 2/20-22 Twisted Degummed Mulberry Silk (Bangalore & M.P Silk)
- 2/20-22 Twisted Undegummed Katan Silk (Bangalore & M.P Silk)
- 80 S Mercerised Cotton
- 2/120 S Mercerised Cotton
- Zari (Emitation)



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

The above raw materials are bought through the medium of

- Co-operative Societies (2 in number)
- M.P. Silk Federation (Branch at Maheshwar)
- Weaver Association: This has a membership of around 100 weavers. The association purchases raw material in bulk and then supplies it on credit to its members at a minimal profit margin.
- Yarn Merchants (3 in number)
- Colour and Chemical Suppliers (4 in number)
- Master Weavers (40 in number)
- Dyeing Houses (6 in number)

### 2.2 PRODUCT

The sari is the main product of the cluster, which forms upto 70per cent of the total production. The other major products are salwar suits, dupattas and dress materials. In comparison to other regions, Maheshwar has a huge product variety in terms of the texture of the cloth. There is also a large production of Multi-fibre products. The use of Tussar yarn was started in the weaving units of Maheshwar itself. Now the product range has diversified into furnishing textiles also. The cluster has also experimented with exporting of curtain furnishing textile to Japan, Italy and Belgium via the MP Handicraft Development Society.

### CATEGORISATION OF MAHESHWAR SARI ON THE BASIS OF TEXTURE

- 100per cent Cotton Sari
- Warm Silk Sari
- Silk Sari
- Neem Silk Sari
- Katan Sari
- 75per cent cotton Sari
- Tissue Sari
- Mercerised Path Design Sari
- Mercerised Checks Design Sari

### CATEGORISATION OF MAHESHWAR SARI ON THE BASIS OF DESIGN

- Goonjapatti or Goonji Design
- Peacock Design
- Moon & Star Design
- Chhalla Patti Design
- Pokli Design



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

All the above designs are mainly checkered and although the trend of check designs is slowly fading away yet almost 1per cent of the production is still devoted to these.

### TRADITIONAL NAMES OF MAHESHWAR SARI ON THE BASIS OF BORDER DESIGNS

- Maheshwar Bugadi Border
- Maheshwar Bugadi Border & Zari patti
- Cotton flower Border
- As compare to other normal border this border is 8 to 12 cms wider.
- Flower Border
- Chatayi (Mat) Border
- V- Border
- Wave Border
- Crane Border
- Narmada Wave Border (The design is same as wave border but narrower)
- Bajuband Border
- (The design is same of wave border but has an extra warp. It is made in golden and silver zari)
- Half-Chatayi (Mat) border
- Pan Border
- Skirt Border
- (This design has 3 flowers on one side and one flower on the other. One border seems bigger than the other. This is based on Maharastran pattern and is called as Indori Sari in the Maharashtra region)

All the borders consist of some common filling patterns like eye, muthda, bugdi, karvat etc and it is only with the help of these patterns that a border can be increased or decreased in width.

### 2.3 MACHINERY

The handloom industry in Maheshwar utilizes the simple pit-loom. On an average the cost of these looms range from Rs 4000 to Rs 5000. Now-a-days many units have started using frame looms instead of the pit-looms and their usage have almost gone upto 10per cent of total number of looms. These frame looms are made of iron angles and can cost upto Rs6000-7000.

The Maheshwar handlooms use 100per cent dobby and around 24-40 litres of the same is used in the cluster. In order to produce good quality cloth, 50per cent of the looms in the cluster use 5 wheel take-up motions.



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### 2.4 DYEING

The raw cotton yarn procured is of both gray as well as dyed types. The dyeing process is not taken up on a large scale in the cluster and there are small dyeing houses that usually have manual processes only. Machines are neither used for colouring and nor for squeezing. Due to this the dyeing quality is not up to the mark. In order to bring about improvement in this aspect there has been the establishment of Cuntech Dyeing Machines in the Government Handloom Training centre.

The silk yarn is dyed by the weavers in their homes itself. Although only acid dyes should be used for colouring silk but it has been observed that the weavers resort to cheap dyes, which leads to a large number of complaints regarding colour bleeding. To avoid this, the Weaver Service Centre at Indore has been organising workshops since past 3 years in order to create awareness on dyeing quality in the cluster. Besides, the co-operative societies and chemical merchants are supplying acid dyes in adequate quantities.

### 2.5 MARKETING ASPECT

The products of Maheshwar are mainly marketed in the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Baroda & Indore etc. Maharashtra makes up for the major portion of sales of saris and in fact the Induri saris are used only by Maharashtra families in India. The popularity of these saris in Maharashtra dates back to the period of Ahilyabai's rule.

The other important marketing centre for Maheshwar handlooms is Delhi, where the products like salwar suits, dress material etc are favoured by the Punjabi families. The Government societies and associations make up for 57 per cent of the total sale of Maheshwar handloom products. The other marketing channels are Hastshil & Hatkargha Vikar Nigam (HSVN), M.P Khadi board, M.P. Silk Federation, M.P. Weavers Co-operative Federation, National Expos, Surajkund fairs, Taj Festival, IITF Delhi etc.

Although there is no existing export market of Maheshwar products yet there is a good possibility of creation of one. Efforts are being made for promoting exports through HSVN and various innovations are being brought in the product line.

As the city of Indore is located only about 90 kms from Maheshwar so the weavers generally sell their stocks directly in that market and avoid the indirect route through dealers and traders. The following gives a break-up of marketing shares through different channels:



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

No.	MARKETING CHANNEL	MARKET SHARE (In per cent)
1.	Government Federation Co-operatives and	5%
2.	Rewha Society	15%
3.	Indore City	15%
4.	Local Market	5%
5.	Other Regional Markets (Delhi, Mumbai and other metro cities)	55%
6.	Through fairs, exhibitions, expos etc	5%

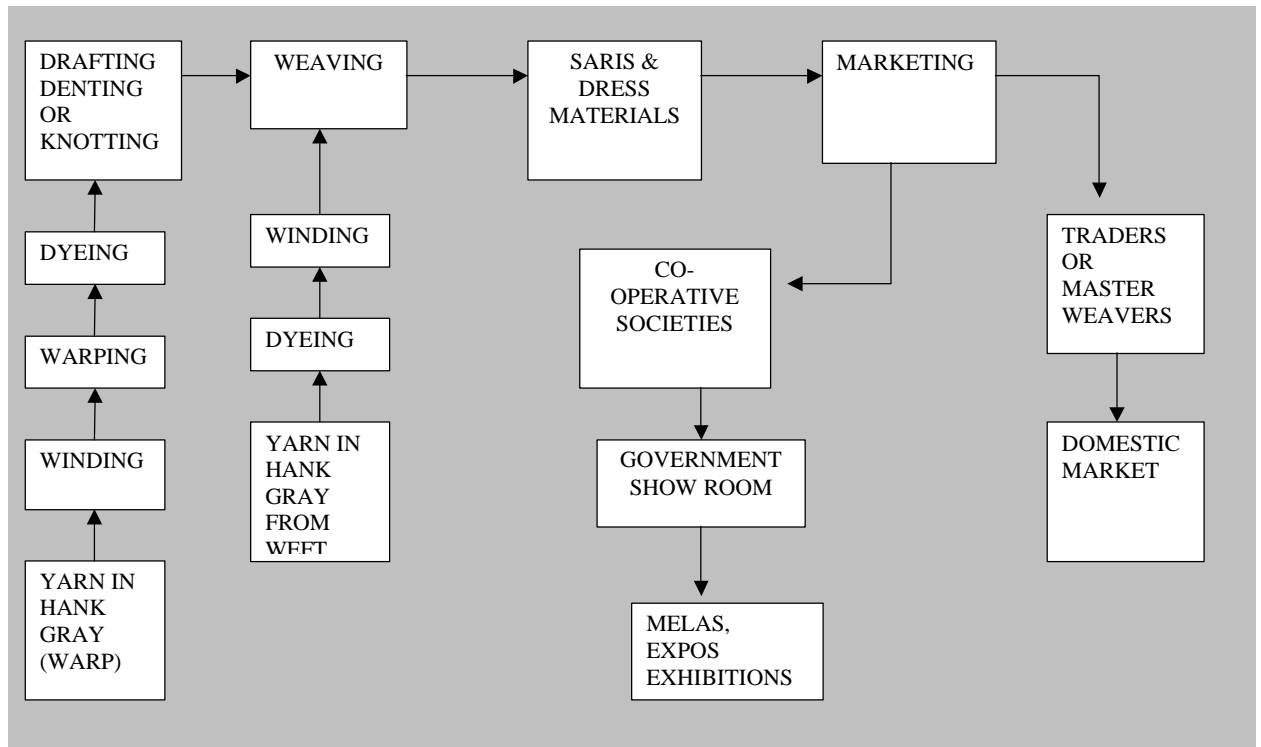
### 2.6 HUMAN RESOURCE

The weaving units in Maheshwar are managed and run by weaver's families themselves. Women contribute to around 50 per cent of the weaving work and the primary activities like winding etc is totally carried on by them. Usually these people do not need to undergo any formal training for learning the production process as they learn on-the-job while observing and helping the older family members. But now-a-days as people from other communities have also started taking interest in the activity so they undergo formal training course at the Government centres for both skilled and ordinary weaving styles.

In spite of being a traditional handloom cluster, the Maheshwar weaving activity has grown tremendously over the years. The contribution of the REHWA Society has been substantial in introducing the Maheshwar products in the upper end of the market in the 80s and the 90s. One can find people of different castes and communities working in co-operation and harmony and keeping a good social-economic balance.

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### 2.7 PROCESS FLOW CHART FOR MAHESHWARI SILK PRODUCTS



### 3. ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- There is a lack of national-level marketing initiatives taken to popularise the cluster's products.
- There is no strong union present for master and other weavers.
- Lack of market research and study.
- Lack of joint business development efforts.
- The region does not have good accessibility in terms of road and transportation network.
- No modern communication systems
- Low awareness of modern technology.
- There are no common facility centres or Research & Development centres in the cluster.
- Lack of Product Diversification
- Lack of credit facilities from nationalised banks.



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### 4. SWOT ANALYSIS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>STRENGTHS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easy availability of raw material</li><li>• Skilled labour available</li><li>• Traditional craft</li><li>• Use of natural yarns</li><li>• Huge variety in cloth texture</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>WEAKNESSES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor dyeing techniques</li><li>• Old patterns and designs</li><li>• Lack of promotional activities</li><li>• Use of old production techniques</li></ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Export markets</li><li>• Huge untapped domestic potential</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>THREATS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competition from other handloom clusters like Chanderi, Banaras – the , Saris produced in those clusters have a greater popularity.</li></ul>

### 5. ACTION PLAN

It is necessary to work in co-operation with the various private sector actors and departments for the development of Maheshwar cluster. The following table gives a proposed action plan for the development in the cluster through the government training schemes for the next three years. This would supplement the activities of the private sector.



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### PROPOSED ACTION PLAN (Govt. Sector) 2002-2003

No.	Plan	No. of Beneficiary	Share of the State Govt.	Share of the Central Govt.	Share of the Nationalised banks	Total
1	Training in Skilled weaving through the Govt. handloom training centre	30	60000 scholarships			60000
2	Handloom equipment Supply	100	300000 funding		300000 credit	600000
3	Margin Money Khadi & Gramudyog	10	200000 Funding		800000	1000000
4	Deen Dayal Project package plan	25	150000	150000		300000
5	Workshop construction	25	175000			175000
6	Margin Money Handloom Department	25	100000		500000 (credit)	600000

### PROPOSED ACTION PLAN 2003-2004

No.	Plan	No. of Beneficiary	Share of the State Govt.	Share of the Central Govt.	Share of the nationalised banks	Total
1	Training in Skilled weaving through the Govt. handloom training centre	30	60000 scholarsh ip			60000
2	Handloom equipment Supply	100	300000 funding		300000 credit	600000
3	Margin Money Khadi & Gramudyog	10	200000 Funding		800000	1000000
4	Deen Dayal Project package plan	25	150000	150000		300000
5	Workshop construction	25	175000			175000
6	Margin Money Handloom Department	25	100000		500000 (credit)	600000



## MAHESHWAR HANDLOOMS CLUSTER

### PROPOSED ACTION PLAN 2004-2005

No.	Plan	No. of Beneficiary	Share of the State Govt.	Share of the Central Govt.	Share of the nationalised banks	Total
1	Training in Skilled weaving through the Govt. handloom training centre	30	60000 scholarship			60000
2	Handloom equipment supply department	100	300000 funding		300000 credit	600000
3	Margin Money Khadi & Gramudyog	10	200000 funding		800000	1000000
4	Deen Dayal Project package	25	150000	150000		300000
5	Workshop construction	25	175000			175000
6	Margin Money Handloom Department	25	100000		500000 (credit)	600000