

Ensuring Traditional Handicraft Promotions to Sustain Tribal Livelihood: A Case Study of Kisan Tribe in Sundargarh District, Odisha

¹. Debasish Pradhan,
Program Officer (SCSTRTI)

². Prachi Parimita Rout,
Assistant Director (Research),
SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar
(Correspondent Author)

³. Anamika Chowdhury Banerjee,
Social Development Expert,
OMBADC

Abstract:- Date Palm Trees enjoy a recognized stature in India since ancient times. The tribal population constitutes 8.9% (Approx.) of the total population in India as per the Census 2011. The tribal people are known for their traditions, unique lifestyle, rituals, customs and cultural heritage with the country. The tribal communities are generally economically deprived and found mostly in hilly areas of the country. The tribal's are completely depends on the ecology. They produce different kind of handicraft products to meet their day today livelihood requirements from their immediate ecology within their habitat area. The tribal communities apply their own traditional methods which they inherited from their forefather during production or preparation of handicraft products as per their requirements. The study explains the role of handicrafts and tribal culture in promoting sustainable livelihood among tribal artisans of Odisha. The main objectives of the study are to assess the livelihood options for the Kisan tribe of Kiringsera Gram Panchyat, Kutra Block of Sundargarh district. Some factors which affect the decrease interest of tribal artisan while producing the handicraft products are lack of knowledge on new designs, Market linkage for better promotion, Wages and sales. This study helps to understand the challenges of the individual artisans and extend proper support to sustain their livelihood. Date Palm Leaves are still widely used in traditional handicrafts in India particularly in rural areas due to their renewable availability and low cost.

Keywords: *Date Palm, Handicrafts, Traditional Knowledge, Tribal Artisans.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian Handicrafts industries are not only a major source of income especially for the rural communities but also employ more than six million various types of artisans including Women and people from weaker sections of the society. There is a huge scope for Indian traditional Handicraft industries not only for both Production and Export but also providing bigger employment (directly and indirectly) in the rural areas of the country. As article 46 of the constitution of

India stat that every state should take adequate measures and ensure proper education as well as economic welfare of the weaker section of the society and in particular of the Schedule tribe (ST). Socio Economic development of the Schedule Tribe (ST) is always a major subject of concern for Government of India since Independence. Indian tribal lifestyle is conditioned by the ecosystem as they are the children of nature. As per 2011 Census, Tribal people constitute 8.9% of the total population of the country. Under Article 342, there are 697 different Tribes exist in one or more than one states in India. Many of them are found in hilly areas and forests. Indian handicrafts are well known for their skills, verities, and elegance. A study conducted in different parts of India reflects the uniqueness and taste of societies on various Handicrafts. Handicraft not only satisfies the financial aspect but also strengthens the livelihood of the artisan families. Tribal handicraft products are the means of livelihood for the tribal Artisans and the product development skills are natural which passes on from one generation to another. At present artisans are migrating from their home village to other cities in search of alternative Livelihood options as a result this age old Traditional handicraft skills die its death.

II. TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS KNOWLEDGE ASSET FOR KISAN TRIBAL LIVELIHOOD

Handicraft means the artisan produces items by using simple tools used for the decoration and utility purpose. Handicraft products can be divided into Three categories namely a) Consumer goods: in this category the artisan prepare handmade products for self use as well as sale in the open market to meet his/her livelihood i.e. Wooden Comb, Terracotta Pots, textile items, Lather footwear, etc. b) Processing Unit: A group of artisan work together and produce various Handicraft products such as Natural oil from seeds, Turmeric powder, handmade herbal soap, etc for self-consumption and sales purposes. C)Decorative items: Artisans prepare handicraft goods for self-consumption or sell them for money including Appliqué work, Ornaments, Earrings, Ankle Bells, necklaces, etc.

➤ *Kisan Tribe*

The Kisan (adivasi) tribes is one of the tribe among 62 tribe found in Odisha. This tribe also found in other three states such as Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. This tribe has different names in different states in India. The Kisan communities are found in Five districts of Odisha i.e. Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Deogarh and Mayurbhanj. This community people prefer to live near forest areas as they depends upon Non-Timber Forest Produces and Hill based cultivation. Cultivation is their primary occupation. The Kisan tribe people are primarily found at Rajgangpur, Kutra, Bargaon, Subdega, Birmitrapur and Lathikata Block of Sundargarh district due to some extent these blocks are surrounded by forest and Natural Resources.

There was a time when Kisan communities were the biggest producers of hand-made mats, carpets, and brooms. They use Date Palm Leaves to produce these items and manage their livelihood. But today, they are finding it difficult to make ends meet due to a Lack of market linkage and changing preferences of people. For centuries, the Kisan communities of Kiringsera Gram Panchayat in the Kutra Block block of Sundargarh district have been living by making Date palm leaf Mats. It is almost a hereditary cottage industry of the tribal community members. It needs Five to Seven days to make a carpet and a family (Lady member) can make two to three mats in a month. People in urban areas prefer plastic and grass stick mats (sapa), Date Palm-Leaf mats are still popular among the poor in rural areas.

➤ *Study settings*

The study was done by SCSTRTI with the funding support of OMBADC.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) is the oldest Tribal Research Institutes (TRI) in India. In present time the institute is witnessed many evolutionary changes during its 66 year journey. SCSTRTI is a permanent institution under the ST & SC Development Department, Government of Odisha. Being one of the premier institutes of the country SCSTRTI is devoted to various Research and Training activities related to Tribal's, their Culture, Livelihood, Socio-Economic conditions, education and development. Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OMBADC) started in the year 2014. Since its inception, OMBADC is continuously working to meet its objective to ensure inclusive growth of the Mineral Bearing Areas and people residing in it. From the inception OMBADC has prioritized Four district of

Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Jajpur and as on date it has been extended to Eight Mineral Bearing districts (Jharshuguda, Deogarh, Anugul and Dhenkanal) of Odisha. OMBADC focus area is in some sector like Drinking Water, Education, Livelihood Promotion, Health, Rural Connectivity, Environment Protection & Pollution Control and Water Conservation. Looking at the objective of OMBADC, SCSTRTI proposed the activity under "Identification of Potential Clusters of Tribal Art/Craft in 4 OMBADC Districts and Develop Sustainable Livelihood Enterprise Model" in Four districts of Odisha.

➤ *Objectives*

1. To identify the potential traditional handicrafts among Kisan Tribe of Sundargarh District.
2. To trace the challenges to develop the handicraft work to sustain their livelihood.
3. To provide training to enhance their skills and exposure to sustain livelihood of the Kisan Tribe artisans in Sundargarh district.

III. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the above objective primary data of Date palm leaf craft tribal artisans have been collected from Six villages (Bhogra, Kalijapathar, Kurunga, Kalijapathar, Jhirpani, and Gulchupal) of Kiringsera Gram Panchayat of Kutra Block of Sundargarh District by using the following methods (i) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the villagers; (ii) Identification of tribal Date Palm Leaf Artisans; (iii) Formation of Tribal Artisans Cluster consist of 327 lady Tribal Artisans; (iv) Skill Assessment of Artisans; (v) Selection and Finalization of artisans for skill up gradation training; (vi) Explore the market to know the demand of items; (vii) 10 days product design development training for artisans; (viii) Exhibition and marketing support at district, State and National level (ix) Linkage with Government schemes and institution for sustainability. Various training experts were invited from Handicraft Department to Sundargarh study area to provide diversified product training on Date Palm Leaf.

IV. FINDINGS

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) has been conducted in six villages of Kiringasera Gram Panchayat with the villagers (50-60 villagers of each village including 15 to 20 female artisans) to identify the current status of Date Palm Leaf Artisans and their Livelihood. The population statuses of the six villages are:

Table 1 Population Status of village identified

Sl. No	Name of the Village	Male	Female	Total
01.	Bhangra	654	661	1315
02.	Kalijapathar	138	145	283
03.	Kiringsera	716	696	1412
04.	Jhirpani	297	322	361
05.	Ghantachapal	171	190	361
06.	Koronga	762	747	1509

Source: Block Office, Kutra, Sundargarh.

It was found that a large number of artisans left their traditional craft (Mate making) due to not getting market demand, fewer wages and engaged in some other work such as labor, Driver, Cook, etc. Most of the Kisan community people are not so educated, so they did not know the market conditions. Less marketing knowledge is a major challenge for the artisan. After a successful assessment of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), villagers agreed to form a Date Palm Leaf Artisans cluster at Kiringsera Gram Panchayat. Local Sarpanch and Word members were asked to inform ocal artisans to hold a meeting at the Gram Panchayat office. Identification of tribal Date Palm Leaf Artisans activity completed by identifying 327 tribal lady artisans. It is for the first time in Odisha that a tribal artisan cluster on Date Palm Leaf Craft is formed at Kiringsera Gram Panchayat of Kutra Block of Sundargarh District which consists of 327 lady artisans who belong to ST Community (Kisan Tribe). During the Skill assessment, it was noticed that only elder ladies are skilled to wave mats out of Date palm leaves. 100 artisans out of 327 were selected for skill upgradation training. Accordingly, selected 100 artisans

were provided 10 days of Design development training on Date Palm Leaf by SCSTRT. Professional Empanelled Master Designer of DC-Handicraft hired by SCSTRTI for the 10 days of design development training on Date Palm Leaf. During this training the artisans learned about making products as per market demand i.e. Bags, Dinning Mats, Pen stands, Dustbin, Wall Hanging, etc by using Date Palm Leaves. 90 out of 100 artisans were shown their interest after design development training and were able to make products for Exhibitions and sales in the local market. The artisans were provided the opportunity to participate in District, State, and national level Exhibitions organized by various Government and Non-Government institutions across Odisha from time to time which make them confident enough to continue making handicraft products while sitting at home and taking care of their siblings. Further, the Artisans were linked with different Government agencies i.e. DIC, DC- Handicraft, TRIFED, and C-DAC where they can avail sufficient guidance and all kind of support to sustain their livelihood.



Fig 1 Training of Tribal artisans (Kisan Tribe) in presence of External Training Expert

	<p>Manjulata Lakra is a woman Date Palm Leaf Craft artisan from Bhogra village in Kutra Block, Sundargarh, Odisha. She comes from a family of 6 members which includes her husband, two daughters, her mother-in-law, and her father-in-law. Her elder daughter is in 5th standard and her husband is a driver and single earning person of the family. Kadambini has received formal education up to the 10th standard. To manage household finances She join the Date Palm Leaf Artisans' cluster, She has obtained design development training on Date Palm Leaf craft organized by SCSTRTI. She started practicing the craft of making products using locally sourced date palm leaf and started participating in various exhibitions across Odisha. Manjula told, Currently she can earn Rs. 1500 to 2000 per month from the Date Palm Leaf Craft product sale and feel happy that She can contribute the whole amount of her earning to homely expenses. She expresses her gratitude to SCSTRTI for not only skill upgradation training but also for funding and marketing support.</p>		<p>Sanita Lakra is a woman Date Palm Leaf Craft artisan from Bhogra village in Kutra Block, Sundargarh, Odisha. She comes from a family of 6 members which includes her husband, two sons, her mother-in-law, and her father-in-law. Her elder son is in 12th standard and her husband is a Tailor and single earning person of the family. Kadambini has received formal education up to the 10th standard. To manage household finances She join the Date Palm Leaf Artisans' cluster, She has obtained design development training on Date Palm Leaf craft organized by SCSTRTI. She started practicing the craft of making products using locally sourced date palm leaf and started participating in various exhibitions across Odisha. Sanita told, Currently she can earn Rs. 1500 to 2000 per month from the Date Palm Leaf Craft product sale and feel happy that She can contribute the whole amount of her earning to homely expenses. express her gratitude to SCSTRTI for not only skill gradation training but also for funding and marketing support.</p>
---	---	--	--

Fig 2 Success Story of Date Palm Leaf Artisans



Fig 3 Tribal Artisans Participating in State Level Handicraft Exhibitions

V. CONCLUSION

This initiative of SC, ST Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Government of Odisha, and Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) helps to understand the challenges of the tribal artisans and their emotions related with their traditional culture. This helps to understand the livelihood conditions of the tribal artisans. The initiative explores tribal handicrafts and the marketing situation of Date Palm Leaf Craft. This initiative helps migration-related challenges,

increases women's empowerment in tribal areas, and creates awareness of handicraft product marketing. With this initiative more than 150 women artisans out of 327 are able to generate Rs.2000- Rs.3000 every month. The impact has demonstrated that this kind of activity can be replicated in other districts of Odisha, so that large no of tribal communities can get the benefit out of those traditional handicrafts knowledge system.

REFERENCES

- [1]. PUNJANI, M. N. G. AN ANALYTIC APPROACH OF AN OPTION FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITY LIVELIHOOD USING TRIBAL HANDICRAFT.
- [2]. Ahmad Bhat, J., & Yadav, P. (2016). Handicraft sector: The comforting sector of employment review. *Management Studies and Economic Systems*, 3(2), 111-117.
- [3]. Datta, D. B., & Bhattacharyya, S. (2016). An Analysis of problems and prospects of the Indian handicraft sector. *Asian Journal of Management*, 7(1), 5-16