



## **The Role of Artisans Guild for Sustainable Development of Folk Craft and Its Marketing Aspect: A Case Study of Mukhosh Gram, Charida in Purulia District**

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### **Abstract**

The artisans guild or association (Samity) plays a crucial role for development of local art and craft practice. The creative art work completely belongs from small scale cottage sector. The local artisans acquired craftmanship by tradition from their forefathers. The Charida village is located under Baghmundi block of Purulia district. It is famous for majestic Chhau mask (locally named as Chhau mukhosh). The local artisans samity (Purulia Chhou Mukhosh Silpi Unnayan Samiti, Charida) plays a crucial role for the development of Chhau craft in respect of its production techniques, marketing channels, financial allocations etc. In this study selected Sutradhar artisans have been selected through purposive sampling techniques. This study reveals that artisans who have possessed membership of said artisan's guild (samity) remains in good socio-economic profile.

**Keywords:** *Samity, Sutradhar, Chhau, artisan's guild.*

### **Introduction:**

In present day context Industrial cluster in forms of agglomeration has emerged a strategic intervention and promotional aid of entrepreneurship development and business propagation in small scale industry like Folk craft and art as well as all type of applicable cottage sector industry. It provides a golden opportunity to participate in globally competition and wide market access. The major hindrances of small-scale sector like crafts are lack of finance, poor technology; inhospitable market access which can reduces successfully through its geographical proximity and exploration of new business windows made possible by cluster principle. In our studied craft villages, the artisans admits that the production units cluster made a healthy competitive market with enriched productivity as well as it attains the need of global market demands. This will attract the unskilled artisans to join in this craft making sector actively and the existing artisan can promote their scale of production into a large sector by combating all kind of negative factors and strengthen regional rural economy of this studied region.

The term cluster it indicates the economies of agglomeration of craft production units within a geographical territory (village). It strengthens the innovation and competitiveness of this small-scale production unit (craft unit) that helps to promote the socio-economic aspect of artisans by engaging this craft production unit a substitute of agrarian economy. The concept of industrial cluster or industrial district concept was first

invented in developed countries later its success stories motivate the small-scale handicraft sector of developing and under developed countries. Enright (2005) explored the new dimension of craft cluster in small scale sector of developed and developing countries in a comparative way. the wine industry in California, IT sector in Bangalore, ceramic tiles and footwear in Italy, surgical instruments in Sialkot; Pakistan, woolen knitwear in Tirupura; India is such example of that. Rocha and Sternberg (2005), Delgado, Porter and Stern(2001) observed the positive impact of cluster analysis in fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable business development in small scale craft sector. In small scale sector such association or formal guild (samity) formation plays a crucial role for sustainable development of folk craft in terms of marketing assistance, financial allocation, expansion of craft business etc.

### **Development of cluster concept in respect of historical time period:**

The origin and evolution of industrial cluster was made earlier by classical and neo-classical economist, geographers and planners. The Location Theory of Von Thunen (1826), The Agglomeration Theory (1920), The Marshalls Industrial District Theory, The Industrial Location Theory of Alfred Weber (1909) are the earlier invention of this theory. Later on, this theory get mounted success after the significant contribution of Michael Porter who emphasizes on industrial cluster theory in his world famous book named as "The Competitive Advantage of Nations" published in 1990. It explores a new innovative dimension of Cluster concept. The studies of classical economist in context of spatial economy and location theory explore the new orientation of cluster theory of craft marketing and its existence.

There are no universal or specific definition of Industrial cluster found unanimously. The research scholars, academicians have conceptualized the Industrial cluster theory according to different perspectives. Chen (2005) segmented this cluster into three distinct categories.

Category -I	Category -II	Category -III
It is based on the principle of localization economies	It is based on inter industrial relationship found in input and output tables.	This type of cluster is based on widest spectrum of arguments discussing about geographical proximity, economies of localization, value chain linkage, technological innovations
Alfred Marshall is the inventor.	Czamansky (1974, 1979); Roepke et al. (1974)	Porter's theoretical approach. (1980)

Source: (Deb & Dey, 2016)

Hill and Brennan (2000) defines Industrial Cluster as "concentration of competitive firms or establishments in the same industry."Morosini (2004) defined cluster as "socioeconomic entity characterized by a social community of people and a population of economic agents localized in close proximity in a specific geographicregion".

According to Rosenfeld, (1997) "A cluster is concentrations of firms that are able to produce synergy because of their geographical proximity and interdependence, even though their scale of employment may not be pronounced or prominent."

Porter (1998) defined cluster as "Geographic concentration of interconnected companies and institutions in the particular field". He redefined the cluster concept in the year 2000 "as a geographically proximity group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities and defining it boundaries that can range from a single city or state to a country or even a group of neighboring countries".

UNIDO defines Industrial cluster as a clubbing or amalgamation as well as concentration of micro, small and medium enterprises within common geographical territory.

Govt. of India introduced this cluster development programme by accepting the recommendation of Abid Hussain committee in 1997 for providing support to small and medium enterprises. The cluster related Governmental schemes are discussed below

1. Micro and Small enterprises - Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP)
2. Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)
3. Babasaheb Ambedkar Hasta Shilpa Yojana (AHVY)

According to UNIDO-CDP and industrial or artisanal cluster in small scale cottage sector requires at least 100 SME or 50 handicraft units in its corresponding town or craft village and surrounding areas.

Table: 1 Clusters at Glance in India

Sl. No.	Name of the Industrial/Production sector	Number of Industrial cluster
1.	<b>Traditional Manufacturing</b>	388
2.	<b>Handicrafts</b>	2780
3.	<b>Handlooms</b>	594
4.	<b>Others</b>	2896

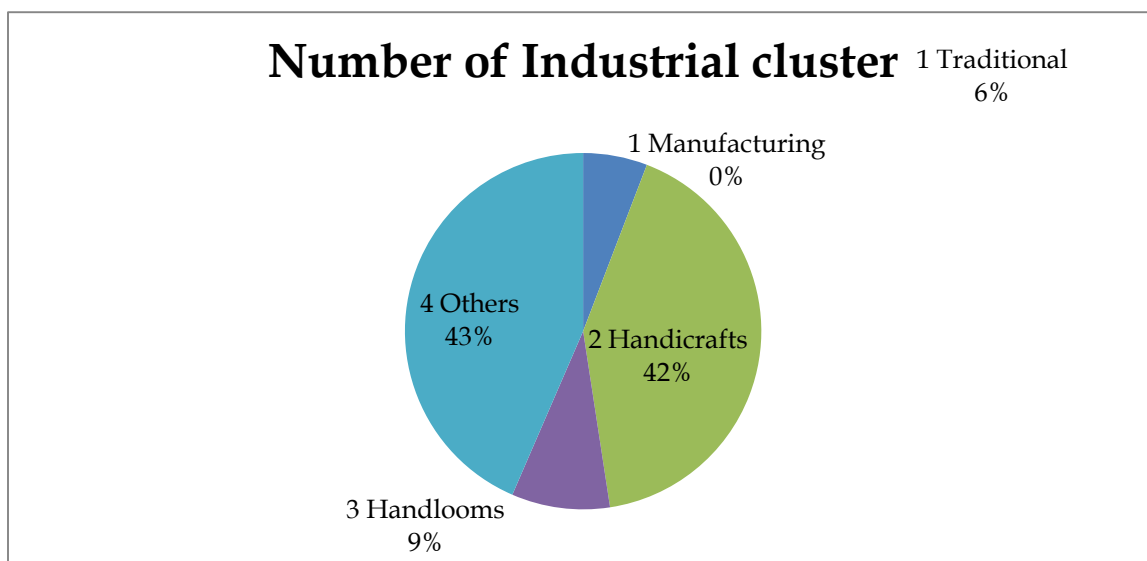


Figure 1 category wise percentage distribution of clusters in india

Table: 2 The state wise distribution of Small and Micro Enterprises (SME) Cluster in India is given below

Sl. No.	State	Clusters	Sl. No.	State	Clusters
1.	Maharashtra	58	12.	Orissa	13
2.	Gujarat	49	13.	Kerala	10
3.	Uttar Pradesh	34	14.	Madhya Pradesh	10
4.	Andhra Pradesh	32	15.	Jammu and Kashmir	04
5.	Punjab	30	16.	Jharkhand	03
6.	Tamil Nadu	28	17.	Himachal Pradesh	03
7.	Haryana	24	18.	Uttaranchal	03
8.	Rajasthan	20	19.	Chhattisgarh	02
9.	Delhi	19	20.	Goa	01
10.	Karnataka	19	21.		



11.	West Bengal	17			
Total SME Cluster in India					388

Source: <http://www.dcmsme.gov.in/clusters/clus/smelist.htm#clus> (Data retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2020)

In India more than 50% of total cluster located five states of India namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and remaining clusters located in 16 states of India. It is also an alarming issue that 1/3 rd of Indian state remains untouched from the benefits of Industrial cluster.

### Impact of artisan’s guild (samity) in folk crafts (Chhau mukhosh) of Charida village:

#### Location of the study area:

The village Charida is situated in Bagmundi CD block of the Purulia district of West Bengal. Geographically, it is in the lowest step of Chotonagpur Plateau's. The terrain in this area is undulating with numerous sporadic hills are prevalent. A few portions of its western boundary are traversed by the Subarnarekha River. The village's coordinates are 23°19' N and 86°05' E. It is situated in the picturesque foothills of the Ajodhya Hills, approximately 5 km from Bagmundi. The village is surrounded by Bagmundi GP to the east, Ajodhya GP to the north, Ghorabandha GP to the south, Dhaba mouza to the southwest, Dhundhikhap mouza to the west, and Khirabera and Baredi mouza of Sindri GP to the northwest form the village's borders (Saha, 2017).

About 308 artisans are manufacturing masks (mukhosh) lives in Charida village. It uses to wear by the Chhau dancers during Chhau dance, an acrobatic dance style which is recognised by UNESCO as a representation of intangible cultural heritage. The Geographical Index (GI) tag was recently applied to the Chhau Mask. The colourful mukhosh (masks) depicted a variety of animals, Hindu gods and goddesses, and epic characters. Tourists frequently visited this village to know about the unique craft-making procedures. Recently the Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises & Textiles, Government of West Bengal develops arural craft hub in this village to promote its business potentialities. Usually Shiv, Durga, Kali, Ganesha, Kartika, Asura and other gods and goddesses are depicted by the masks. Moreover lions, tigers, monkeys and other animals are also well depicted in Chhau mukhosh. Recently masks are sold in a customized manner, to meet the need for lifestyle and home décor items.

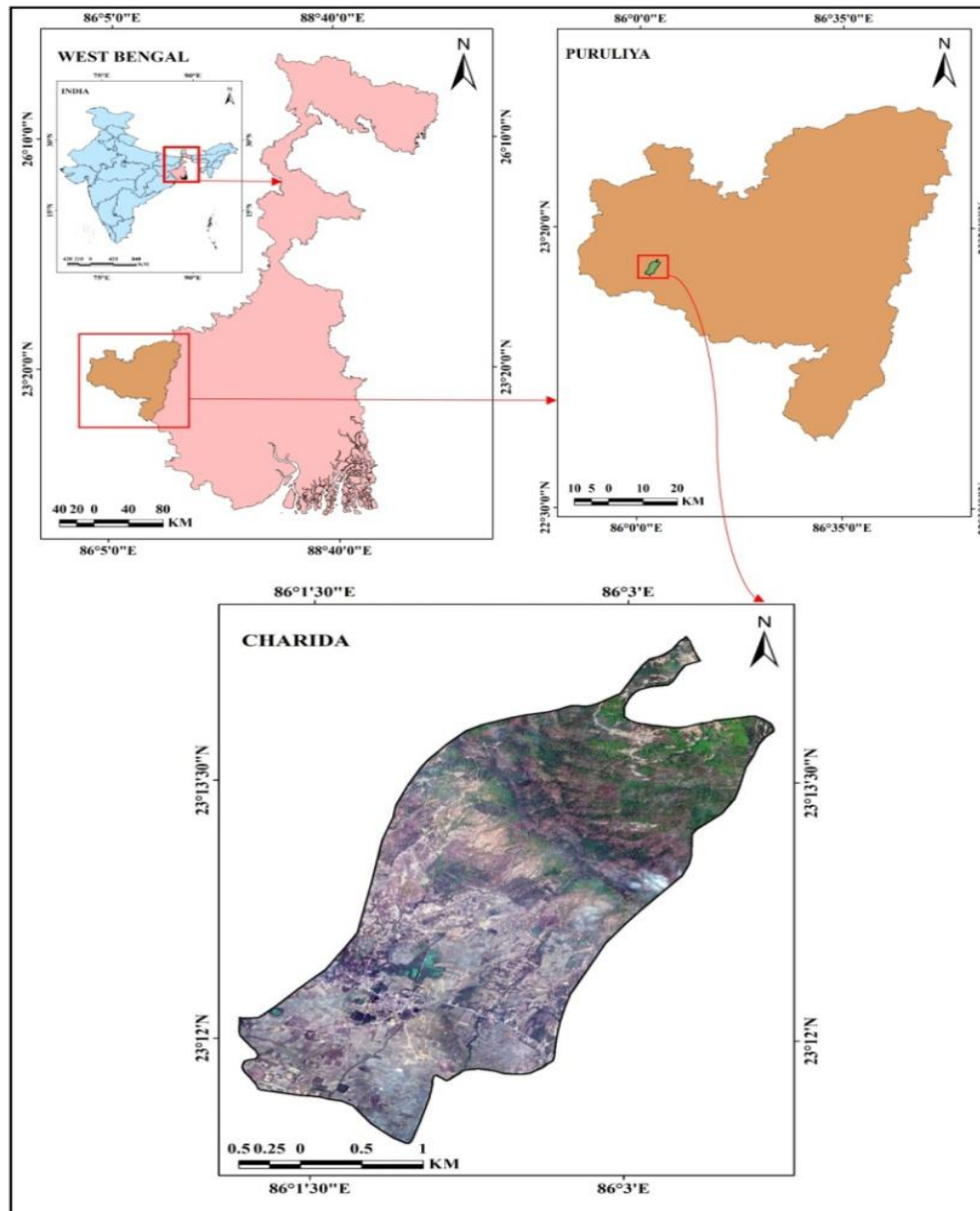


Figure: 2 location map of charida village

The impact of Industrial cluster in small scale Folk craft sector governs by numerous socio-economic parameters. In the present study 'with and without approach' are applied to study the impacts of Industrial cluster on selected crafts of studied craft villages.

In the year 2021, the government registered the Sutradhar artisans' cooperative guild, locally known as a samiti. During the formation this samiti was called "Chhow Mokosh Shilpi Sutradhar Samiti". In Charida village, there were about 250 artisan families, most of them were Sutradhar community as well as registered members of this samiti. There are currently over 112 craft shops (stalls) in this village that sell a wide range

of Chhau mask products. A small percentage of Sutradhar craftsmen (5%) who don't have an outlet setup at home, manufacturing mask products and sell them to nearby artisans.

### Techniques of Chhau Mukhoshproduction:

The Chhau masks are made by the Sutradhar artisan community through sequential stages. They start with soft paper layers dipped in glue, then pasted onto a mould. Clay components are then used for the facial cover. The mask is sun-dried, polished, segregated and then finished with frilling for eyes and nose. The mask is then decorated with lucrative colour and ornamentation. The Gods and goddesses are represented by various colour like Lord Shiva, Ganesh, and Devi Saraswati are represented by white. Evil or Asuras are represented through black or dark green, while Kali is represented by black or dark blues.

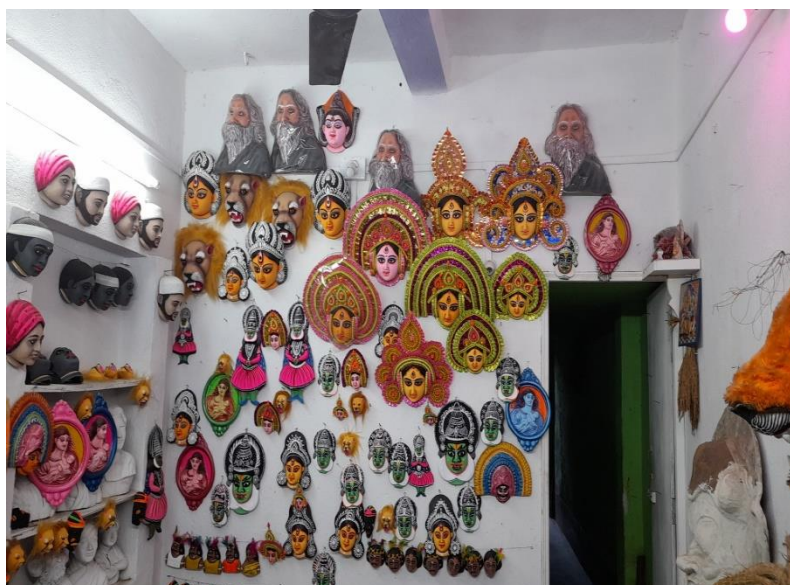


Figure 3 wide variety of chhau mukhosh adorns in a wall of mukhosh stall at charida village

### Impact of artisan's guild (samity) based on 'With or Without Approach' in Charida Village:

In present research study we evaluate the role of artisan's guild (samity) in Charida village through 'with or without approach' is studied. A total number of 75 sample artisans were selected among which 68 (to be filled after sample selection in field study) artisans are registered as samity member and rest 7 artisans were non- registered for samity based production system. The comparative assessment of sustainability of craft production were studied between registered and non-registered artisan for samity in terms of financial assistance, literacy and training, access to wide marketing channels, rise in income, hired workers status etc.

Table: 3 Craft production-based training facilities available: A comparative assessment between 'with or without' Approach:

Training status	Without approach (Samity)		With the approach(Samity)	
	No. of Artisan	%	No. of Artisan	%
Yes	2	28	61	89
No	5	72	7	11
Total	7	100	68	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

A total 75 respondent artisan are selected from the craft village Charida. Among which 68 artisans are registered as guild craftsmen (member in Samabay samity) and 7 artisans are not registered in any group (samity). From the given table it can be said that hands on training and workshop is taken in a satisfactory percentage among samity registered artisans whereas training facilities and workshop participation rate is very poor among artisans, have not registered under samity.

Table: 4 Utilization of various medium of marketing: A comparative assessment between 'with or without' Approach:

Marketing channel	Without approach (Samity)		With the approach (Samity)	
	No. of Artisan	%	No. of Artisan	%
Own shops and joined craft market and exhibition and utilizing other marketing channels	1	14	65	95
Can't afford Others miscellaneous marketing channel	6	86	3	5
Total	7	100	68	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

From this table it is clear that the artisans of guild approach have much stability in respect of their shops position and ownership. They have wider and diversified scope of utilization of marketing channels. In contrary the artisans without samity membership having a least scope to diversify their commercial channels. So, the artisans without guild approach became deprived from financial mainstreaming and economic independence.

Table: 5 Income range per month: A comparative assessment between 'with or without' Approach:

Monthly income range	Without approach (Samity)		With the approach (Samity)	
	No. of Artisan	%	No. of Artisan	%
Less than 5000	1	14	2	4
5000-10000	5	72	8	12
10000-20000	1	14	37	54
More than 20,000	0	0	21	30
Total	7	100	68	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Around 54% of artisans having samity membership, belongs an income range of 10-20 K, where majority of artisans (72%) without samity membership have a limited income range of 5-10K. Hence, it proves that artisan's guild (samity) helps the artisans to earn much capital in comparison of artisans without cluster approach.

Table: 6 Hiring status of artisan worker: A comparative assessment between 'with or without' Approach:

Hiring status	Without approach (Samity)		With the approach (Samity)	
	No. of Artisan	%	No. of Artisan	%
Craft production unit Hired workers	1	14	57	84
Craft production unit without Hired workers	6	86	11	16
Total	7	100	68	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

From the table (Table-6) it shows that around 84 % of artisans with samity membership are able to hire workers as they have much production capabilities and demands. On the other hand, artisans without

samity membership delimits their production of crafts by themselves. Only 14% of them can hire workers as their business demands are very poor in comparison to artisans with samity membership.

Table: 7 Opportunity and ease of marketing status: A comparative assessment between 'with or without' Approach:

Marketing opportunities and scope	Without approach (Samity)		With the approach (Samity)	
	No. of Artisan	%	No. of Artisan	%
Enhanced and progressive state	1	14	65	95
Conservative and stagnant	6	86	3	5
Total	7	100	68	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The artisans belong to formal samity have more scope to opt multiple marketing channel to sale their artefacts. Around 95% of sample artisans opt this diversified scope and opportunities. Whereas the artisans without association with samity have a little scope to enjoy modern diversified marketing channels like craft fairs, festivals and e-marketing etc. only 14% of sample respondent got these opportunities. Hence, the artisans having formal membership with samity got numerous marketing opportunities which imparts a drive towards optimal business succession.

In overall survey outcome, it is clear that the Chhau mask artisans who produces under the assistance of artisans samity (guild) have unity and integrity which helps to earn satisfactory profit and sustainable business development in comparison of artisans who produces individually and doesn't have any association or craft guild (Samity).

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