

Visit to Odisho village of Jagatsinghpur district on 8th May 2025

The *SHRADDHA* team, comprising of Dr Sanjay Kumar Panda, President; Shri Surendra Kumar Patra, Vice president; Shri Bansidhar Mahapatra, Secretary; and Shri Kshirod Mohapatra, member, visited Odisho village, Jagatsinghpur district on 8th May 2025. They interacted with the women weavers and local villagers on various aspects of promotion of handloom with particular emphasis on increasing earnings of the weavers.

19 women weavers of different age group were present in this preliminary discussion. It appeared that they are weaving 40-80 count cotton saree with bandh on border, anchal and body obtained from *Maniabandh-Nuapatna* handloom cluster of Cuttack district. They are weaving cotton sarees as per local demand and selling to the Apex Handloom weavers Cooperative society “*Bayonika*” through the village level Primary Weavers cooperative society. Their earnings from handloom weaving have been around Rs 300 as wage for weaving one saree in 2-3 days and the monthly earning is around Rs 5,000.

The President discussed overall conditions of the handloom industry in the state. He referred to the competition faced by handloom from the power loom and explained that survival of handloom lies in weaving a *niche* fabric targeting the customers, who distinguishes handloom fabrics from power loom fabrics and has disposable income. Indicating that there is no dearth of such customers in the town and cities, he encouraged the weavers to reach out to such customers by using mobile phones and use of social media like WhatsApp and U tube. Production of quality, new cooler, new design and new product like running yardage in place of sarees is the surest way to increase their earnings on a sustainable basis. In this context, he referred to the recent experience of weavers of Maland village, which within a short span of six months has led to increase in the earnings by about 50%. He mentioned that fine count cotton saree woven with soft and subtle shades and blouse pieces will be a craze as comfortable summer wear. He mentioned that in due course they will be assisted for contacting the potential customers and selling the fabrics directly, by using mobile phone which will increase their earning further due to by elimination of the middlemen.

Shri Surendra Kumar Patra, Vice president referred to the glorious past of the 1990 when the area used to be famous for weaving cotton sarees on handloom/ He said same can be revived as an ideal summer wear. He dealt with the technical aspect of weaving and the support to be extended. Shri Bansidhar Mahapatra, Secretary referred to the experience of the previous project and the plan to take the weavers to the Weavers’ Service Centre and *Kalabhoomi* at Bhubaneswar for firsthand information on the vast opportunity available in handloom for increasing their earnings and living a happy life. Shri Kshirod Mohapatra, member mentioned about the experience of Maland village which has given the lady weavers not only increased the earning of the weavers but their prestige within the family and society.

Lady weavers actively participated in the discussion and took keen interest in modifying their production to new design, colour and new products. It was felt that supply of a drum will help them in preparation of the warp beam easily. Shri Bijay Kumar Nandi, who had assisted in implementation of the project in the Maland village, was also present and assured to extend required support. The product woven in Maland will be shown to them for better understanding. The event generated lots of interest among the weavers. It was decided to take the matter forward for empowering the women weavers and increasing their earnings.



Top: SHRADDHA group with the weavers, **Bottom** with OSD to the Collector, Jagatsinghpur

