

WASTE WORKSHOP WITH DOCEY LEWIS
September 2010



Introduction

WomenWeave had organised a workshop which aimed at using the handloom waste produced at the Gudi Mudi center as well as the waste produced by other weavers across Maheshwar town. We collected all the waste from Gudi Mudi and a few other master weavers in town. We categorised the waste into four main categories.

The motive of the workshop was to come up with innovative ways of using the waste to make textile based products. To help us do so, we had with us an American designer named Docey Lewis who has worked with artisans all across the world and is associated with the organisation 'Aid to Artisans'. Her area of work ranges from textiles and accessories for fashion to home furnishings, wallpapers, basketry, toys and many more.

The workshop started with Docey reacting to the categorised waste and sorting them into bunches as per colour. We then went on to material preparations for various kinds of wefts. Docey also introduced us to new techniques of braiding, looping and tapestry weave. We learnt ways of finishing the selvedge neatly as well as making shuttles to suit our purpose of weaving thicker yarns and fabric strips.

As a part of preparation before the workshop we had tried a few settings of the warp and woven a few samples to give Docey an idea of the weight of the fabric, textures etc. These fabrics were also converted into finished products (bags) by Docey during this workshop.

Following is a report with images and details of each stage of the workshop, the final outcome and the concepts /ideas taken into production.

The workshop team

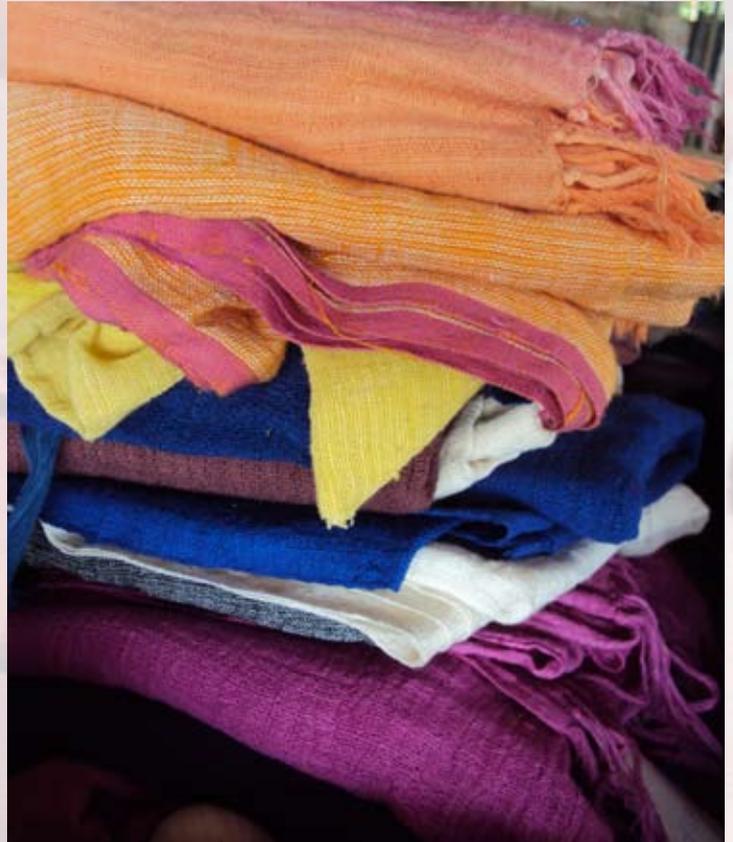
The team consisted of ladies who work at the Gudi Mudi center. Three of them were C grade weavers, two worked on finishing and one on spinning/bobbin winding and one on sewing the products. The idea of the workshop was also to develop a range which can be woven by the C grade (low skilled) weavers.



Sorted waste in four main categories:



Yarns- in the form of hanks and warp balls



Non organic fabric waste



Bagh printed non organic fabric- in the form of small lengths and garment waste



Maheshwari fabric- Cotton silk mixtures and a few pure silk pieces

Initial sorting

Docey started with the sorting of yarns in various colour combinations and then went onto combining various printed and non printed fabrics together with yarns. Bunches of such combinations were prepared before moving onto material preparations for weaving.





Combinations and ideas with existing woven pieces



Material Preparations

The waste hanks were separated into strands of a particular thickness and knotted together to make bundles of yarn which were then wound onto vetiver bunches in various ways before being inserted as weft.



Initial trials



Training the women in material preparation

The ladies were trained in bunching up vetiver and wrapping them with bundles of yarns as well as fabric strips. This was prepared to be woven as weft for table runners.





Braiding techniques

Docey taught various ways of braiding - 8 strand square, 6 strand flat, four strand flat and round, 4 ply twisted two variations, 2 ply twisted

The ones which can be taken into production immediately are- 4 strand round braid and 2 ply twisted

Ones to be practiced- 6 strand flat braid 'kajuri chhoti'

Videos of each are taken and will be sent out in a data disc for reference in future.





4 BAL WALLI

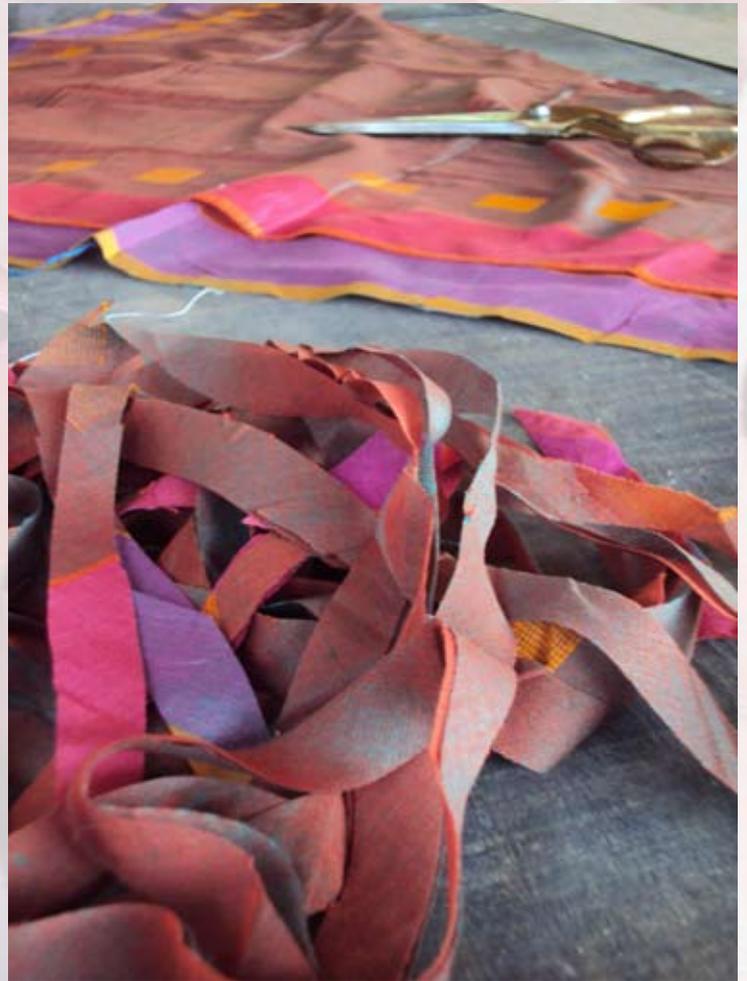


DOUBLE BAL



KAJURI CHADLI

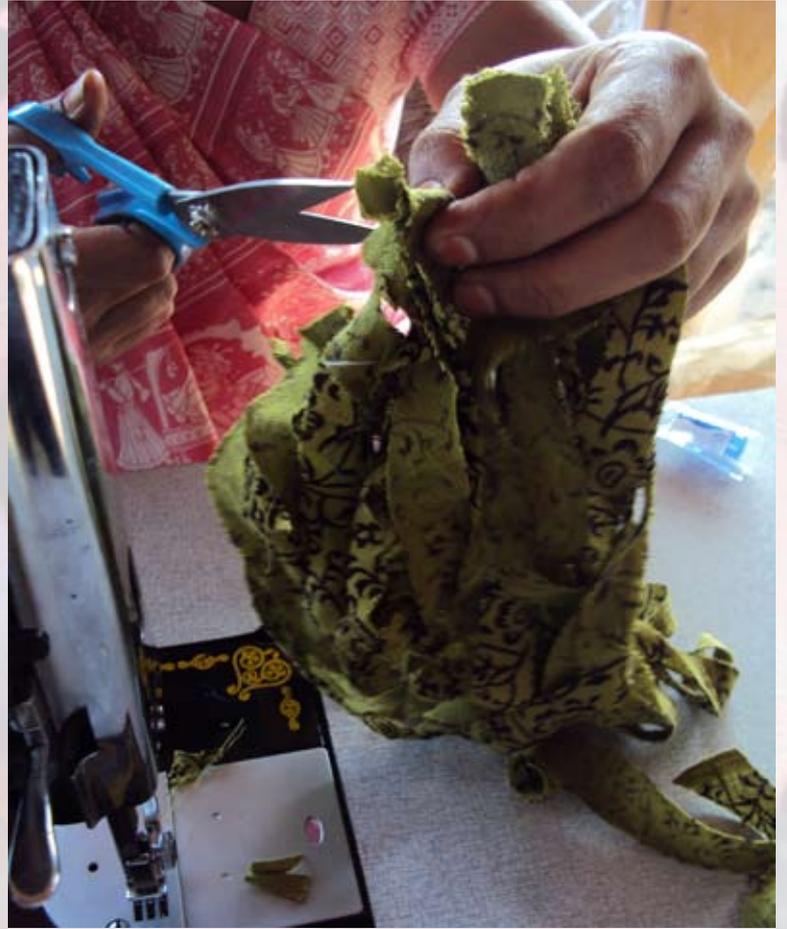
Fabric strips to be woven



Cutting on the bias



Cutting along the weft to get a continuous strip all along



The fabric strips are then joined together by running a stitch on the sewing machine twice. They are then cut and separated to get a continuous long strip of fabric which is wrapped onto plastic shuttles.

Shuttle Specifications



Plastic shuttles prepared at the workshop to aid weaving of thicker yarns and fabric strips in the weft. The yarn/fabric strips have to be wound around the shuttle to make a figure of eight. This helps winding more lengths of yarn/fabric strips onto the shuttle at one go.



Ski shuttles used for rug making can be an option in the future for easier and faster weaving as suggested by Docey

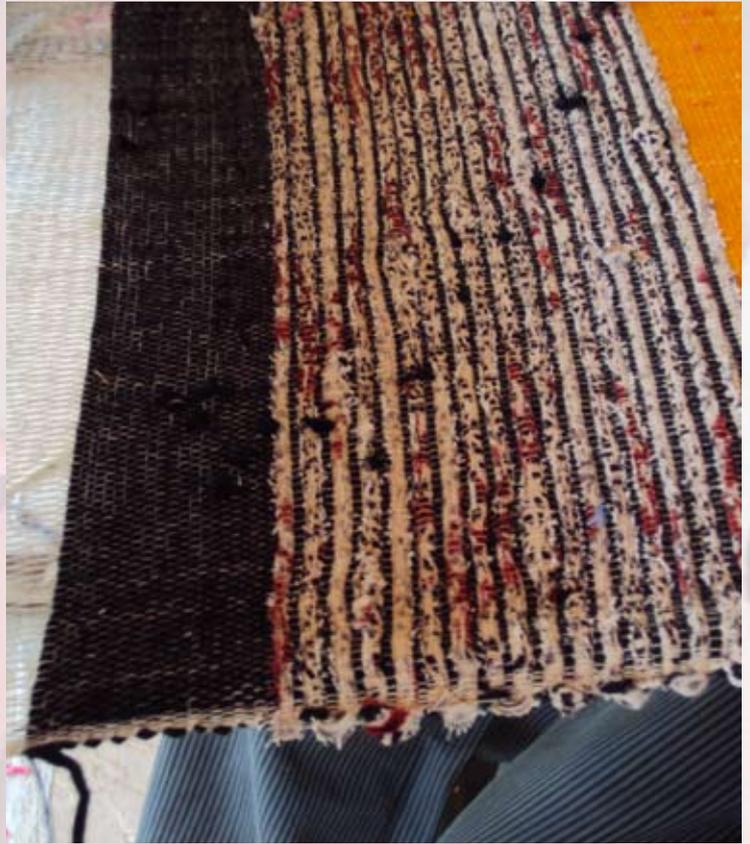
Introducing new weaving techniques



The Scandinavian looping technique was taught by Docey to our weavers



A technique which is relatively easy but gives a look of tapestry/inlay (it looks like weaving where two or three shuttles are used along one weft line- similar to temple borders in sarees)



The knots used to join small lengths of yarn were used as a design element with the pink and orange weft.



Explorations with vetiver for table mats and runners. The selvedge was neatly finished by taking the weft back in, separating it into 3 to 4 sections and locking it at a distance of few ends.

Process from weaving to finished products by Gudi Mudi participants



Final bags to be taken into production

All these patterns involve minimal cutting and no wastage. Darts and pleats are used to create the various shapes and give the bag volume. Selvedge is used at most places to hold the seams so as to avoid overlocking or hemming or french seams. In case of the small 'batuas' or handbags, 3 seams are taken along the warp ends to stop the edges from fraying and locking them (along the end which has to be cut).





Concepts/ ideas to be explored in future

1. Patchwork of our wovens, printed and Maheshwari fabrics with running stitch
2. Various bag shapes and sizes



