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Occupational Information Needs of Dewangan Community: A Study in Kurda Village of Champa Tehsil, Janjgir Champa District, Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the occupational information needs of the Dewangan community in Kurda village of Champa Tehsil, Chhattisgarh. The Dewangan community, deeply rooted in the weaving tradition, faces challenges in accessing essential information, which hinders their progress. Using a survey method with 120 adult respondents, the study analyzes demographic data, occupational status, educational qualifications, and sources of income and information. The findings reveal a significant involvement in weaving, satisfaction with ancestral professions, and a reliance on personal capital and informal loans. The study highlights the need for improved educational opportunities, strategies to balance cultural heritage with modern profession needs, and enhanced access to reliable occupational information. The recommendations aim to support the community's development by addressing the identified gaps and leveraging their socio-cultural heritage.

Keywords: Information need, Occupational information need, Dewangan community, Community information services, Janjgir Champa, Chhattisgarh.

Introduction: The 21st century is often referred to as the "Information Age," with society progressively transitioning into a "Knowledge Society." In this era, making informed decisions depends on accessing accurate information at the right time, eliminating confusion and uncertainty. Information has become a cornerstone of modern society, forming the foundation for building knowledge and improving decision-making processes. It is essential at every stage of life. Various entities, such as libraries, local bodies, NGOs, and government organizations, serve as information providers, collecting, organizing, and disseminating information tailored to individual needs. The rapid advancement of technology has significantly facilitated this process. With the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), accessing diverse forms of information has become instantaneous, empowering people to enhance their lifestyles using resources readily available through the internet. However, despite these advancements, a segment of society remains deprived of even basic information essential for sustaining their lives. This lack of access prevents

them from improving their circumstances, causing them to fall further behind in a world driven by knowledge and information.

The Dewangans: The Dewangan caste traces its origins to Hindu mythology, with Devala Maharshi, regarded as their ancestor, credited for introducing cotton and silk weaving to humanity. According to legend, Lord Vishnu gifted Devala Maharshi threads, but during his journey back, he was attacked by demons. In his plea for protection, he prayed to Devi Sakthi, who defeated the demons, enabling Devala to weave garments from the blood-soaked threads. Devi Sakthi, also revered as Chowdeswari or Sowdeswari, instructed Devala to worship her regularly. Today, the Dewangan community, primarily located in Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, continues this rich tradition of weaving.

The Dewangan community, renowned for its weaving tradition, occupies a distinctive place in the socio-cultural fabric of Chhattisgarh. Historical records reveal that the Dewangan community has practiced weaving for centuries, with their skills meticulously passed down through generations. Their mastery in the intricate art of loom weaving has been instrumental in shaping the traditional attire and fabric heritage of Chhattisgarh. (Hattiholi & Sugandhi, 2024)

Review of related literatures:

Biswas et al. (2013) conducted a study entitled “Information needs of Patial Community at Nadirpara, Dhaluabari Village of Coochbehar District: A Study”. This study sought to identify the in-depth information requirements of the Patial community, who work in the Sitalpati industries in Dhalubari Village of Coochbehar district. The goal of the study was to determine the information needs of the community and suggest ways to improve their socio-economic status. The authors of the study noted that information is crucial for all kinds of developmental tasks. This study attempted to draw a complete picture of the Patial community's socio-economic status. The study also examined information requirements on various segments like education, occupation, and training.

Chakrabarti et al. (2016) investigated the information needs of the weaving community of Sualkuchi, Assam. The authors explored how the availability of information impacted the community, noting that access to and use of information has become increasingly complex in contemporary society. The study aimed to understand how this complexity impacted the weaving community of Sualkuchi. The researchers also examined the socio-economic status of the community. The study employed a survey methodology. Based on the findings, the authors offered recommendations for improving the socio-economic well-being of the community.

Jash, Mondal, Maity, Mondal and Karan (2016) investigated the information needs of the Dhimal community in the Jamidargauri village of Hatighisa Panchayat under Naxalbari Block of Darjeeling District, West Bengal. The authors looked at the socio-economic profile of the Dhimal community, including their occupation, level of consciousness about modern systems and facilities, family planning, and education. The researchers examined the community's awareness level of different social welfare schemes and their use by the people. They also considered the level of awareness of the Dhimal community about the existence and role of library and information centers. The study explored the level of consciousness about their indigenous culture. The authors sought to identify the Dhimal community's sources of information and the types of information they required. Finally, the authors suggested the best possible ways to improve the Dhimal community's socio-economic status.

Chatterjee, Kirtania, Mukherjee, Nishat and Chakrabarti (2017) conducted a study entitled “Information needs of the Dimasa community in the Greater Halflong in the District of Dima Hasao, Assam. The authors sought to identify how the community searched for and acquired information, both formally and informally. The study also considered the role of both traditional and formal information providers, including family and community members, as well as institutions such as government offices, banks, and NGOs. Finally, the researchers analyzed information requirements to meet the needs of the community.

Mallik and Sahu (2017) examined the information needs of the Lodha community in Baghmari and Manipur mouzas of Salboni block under Medinipur Sadar Sub-division. The researchers sought to identify the information sources the community relied upon to meet their information needs related to health, education, and employment. The study also compared the living standards between the two Lodha communities. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach, collecting data from primary and secondary sources. They gathered data from the Gram Panchayat office and block offices. The researchers also conducted field surveys and interviews. The study found that the Lodha community had a strong need for information related to health, education, and employment.

Mukherjee et al. (2017) investigated the information needs of bell and brass artisans in the Muslim Patti of Hajo, Assam. Researchers examined the socio-economic conditions of these artisans. Researchers sought to identify the community's awareness of the Community Information Centre and different social welfare schemes available to them. The study also investigated community health and sanitation practices and aimed to provide suggestions for improving those based on the findings.

Sarkar, Chakrabarti, Maity and Chakrabarti (2017) investigated the information needs of the Deori community of Sonapur Deori Gaon in the Tinsukia District of Assam. The researchers wanted to understand the community's information-seeking behavior and identify its socio-economic needs. The study also sought to examine the role of different institutions, including libraries, government offices, and social welfare schemes, in meeting the community's information needs. Finally, the study aimed to offer suggestions for community development based on the findings.

Hattiholi & Sugandhi (2024) conducted a study entitled “The Rich Heritage Of Devanga Weavers Community In Ramdrug Taluk, Belagavi District, Karnataka”. The objectives of the study were 1.To explore the historic and cultural significance of the Devanga weaving community.2.To study the challenges faced by the Devanga community in the modern world.

Objectives of the study: The Objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the occupational information needs of Dewangans residing at Kurda village.
2. To identify the information sources to solve their queries.
3. To provide valuable suggestions on the basis of the findings.

Methodology:

Scope and Coverage: The scope of this study is to present occupational information needs of Dewangan community residing at Kurda village of Champa Tehsil in the Janjgir Champa district of Chhattisgarh. Total adult population of Dewangan community is 239 in the village. Total respondents 120(50%) have been considered for study purpose.

Method Used: A survey method has been conducted for this study. Before collecting the basic information several Literature on information needs of other community have been consulted. The

respondents have been chosen randomly and each of them has been interviewed individually with a free flow of conversations. Based on the collected data the analysis has been presented in tabular form and after analyzing the data conclusion has been drawn.

Data analysis and findings: Data has been tabulated and analyzed on different aspects and finally findings are drawn which are following:

Table-1: Distribution of adult respondents according to male and female

	Adult(18 years & above)		Total
	M	F	
Respondents	59 (49.17%)	61(50.83%)	120(100%)

Table-1 shows the distribution of adult respondents according to male and female. It is found that out of total 120(100%) respondents, 59(49.17%) were adult male and 61(50.83%) were adult female.

Table-2: Distribution of respondents according to age and sex

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
18-27	11	9.16	18	15	29	24.17
28-37	15	12.5	15	12.5	30	25
38-47	14	11.67	13	10.83	27	22.5
48-57	10	8.33	8	6.67	18	15
58 & Above	9	7.5	7	5.83	16	13.33
Total	59	49.17	61	50.83	120	100

Table-2 presents distribution of respondents according to age and sex. So from this table it is cleared that the total number of female respondents was greater than the total number of male respondents and people of age 28-37 cover the major portion of the population.

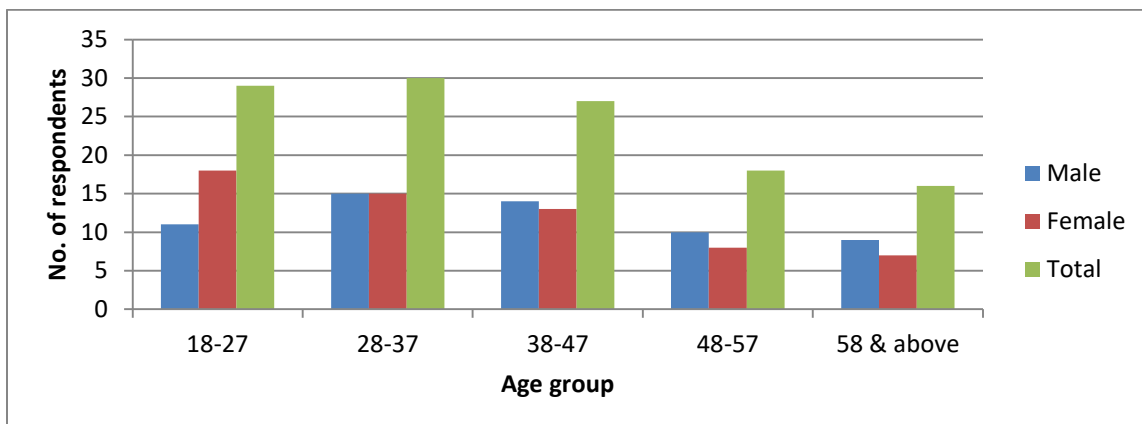


Fig-1: Distribution of respondents according to age and sex

Table-3: Distribution of respondents according to age and sex wise in respect of their educational qualification

Age group	literate												Illiterate	
	Just literate		I- IV class		V-VIII class		IX- X class		XI- XII class		Graduation		M	F
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
18-27	0	0	0	0	1 (0.83%)	5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)	5 (4.17%)	5 (4.17%)	8 (6.67%)	2 (1.67%)	0	0	0
28-37	0	0	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	4 (3.33%)	3 (2.5%)	5 (4.17%)	5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)	5 (4.17%)	1 (0.83%)	0	0	0
38-47	0	0	1 (0.83%)	5 (4.17%)	5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)	6 (5%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	0	0	0	0
48-57	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.5%)	3 (2.5%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
58 & Above	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	0	0	0	0	0	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)
Total	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.5%)	9 (7.5%)	13 (10.83%)	16 (13.33%)	14 (11.67%)	17 (14.17%)	15 (12.5%)	10 (8.33%)	14 (11.67%)	3 (2.5%)	0	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)

Table-3 presents distribution of respondents according to age and sex wise in respect of their educational qualification. It is found from the table-3 that most of the literate persons belonged to the age group of 28-37 and most of the respondents were educated between IX to X class. On the other hand, persons in the age group of 58 & above years were least educated and least of the respondents were educated up to graduation.

Table-4: Distribution of respondents according to their present occupational status on the basis of age group

Age Group	Weaving		Agriculture		Business		Govt. Job		Others		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
18-27	3 (2.5%)	8 (6.67%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	4 (3.33%)	11 (9.16%)	18 (15%)
28-37	5 (4.17%)	8 (6.67%)	5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)	3 (2.5%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)			15 (12.5%)	15 (12.5%)
38-47	7 (5.83%)	7 (5.83%)	4 (3.33%)	3 (2.5%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)				1 (0.83%)	14 (11.67%)	13 (10.83%)
48-57	6 (5%)	5 (4.17%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)					10 (8.33%)	8 (6.67%)

58 & above	5 (4.17%)	6 (5%)			3 (2.5%)				1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	9 (7.5%)	7 (5.83%)
Total	26 (21.67%)	34 (28.33%)	15 (12.5%)	9 (7.5%)	13 (10.83%)	10 (8.33%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.5%)	6 (5%)	59 (49.17%)	61 (50.83%)

Table-4 presents distribution of respondents according to their present occupational status on the basis of age group. So from this table it is found that the highest number of respondents (21.67% males & 28.33% females) was involved in weaving followed by agriculture (12.5% males & 7.5% females) and business (10.83% males & 8.33% females). Lowest number of respondents (1.67% males and 1.67% female) was involved in Govt. job.

Table-5: Distribution of respondents according to their monthly income on the basis of age and sex

Age group	Dependent		Below 5000		5001 to 10000		10001 to 15000		Above 15000		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
18-27	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	6 (5%)	7 (5.83%)		3 (2.5%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	11 (9.16%)	18 (15%)
28-37			2 (1.67%)	8 (6.67%)	6 (5%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.5%)	5 (4.17%)		15 (12.5%)	15 (12.5%)
38-47		1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	6 (5%)	6 (5%)	4 (3.33%)	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	14 (11.67%)	13 (10.83%)
48-57			2 (1.67%)	5 (4.17%)	4 (3.33%)	1 (0.83%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)			10 (8.33%)	8 (6.67%)
58 & above	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	4 (3.33%)	4 (3.33%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)			9 (7.5%)	7 (5.83%)
Total	2 (1.67%)	5 (4.17%)	8 (6.67%)	23 (19.17%)	26 (21.67%)	19 (15.83%)	12 (10%)	10 (8.33%)	11 (9.16%)	4 (3.33%)	59 (49.17%)	61 (50.83%)

Table-5 shows the distribution of respondents according to their monthly income on the basis of age and sex. In the youngest group, aged 18 to 27, few numbers of females (1.67%) earned in the highest income bracket (above 15000). Many (5% males and 5.83% females) in this age group also earned between 5001 and 10000. The 28-37 age group saw males (4.17%) dominating the highest income bracket (above 15000). Many (8.33% respondents) in this group also earned between 5001 & 10000 and below 5000. The 38-47 age group had a relatively even distribution across income brackets. A maximum number of respondents (10%) earned between 5001 and 15000. In the 48-57 age group, many respondents (5.83%) earned below 5000. The 58 and above age group had a higher percentage of respondents (6%) earning below 5000, with no respondents in the highest income bracket. The most populated income range was 5001 to 10000, which had more males (21.67%) than females (15.83%) and there were very few respondents in the lowest income bracket, above 15000.

Table-6: Distribution of respondents in respect of their willingness to change from Ancestral profession to other profession

Age Group	Interest in Ancestral profession			Not Interest in Ancestral profession			Total		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
18-27	5 (4.17%)	10 (8.33%)	15 (12.5%)	6 (5%)	8 (6.67%)	14 (11.67%)	11 (9.17%)	18 (15%)	29 (24.17)
28-37	10 (8.33%)	9 (7.5%)	19 (15.83%)	5 (4.17%)	6 (5%)	11 (9.17%)	15 (12.5%)	15 (12.5%)	30 (25%)

38-47	8 (6.67%)	9 (7.5%)	17 (14.17)	6 (5%)	4 (3.33%)	10 (8.33%)	14 (11.67%)	13 (10.83%)	27 (22.5%)
48-57	6 (5%)	5 (4.17%)	11 (9.17%)	4 (3.33%)	3 (2.5%)	7 (5.83%)	10 (8.33%)	8 (6.67%)	18 (15%)
58 & above	5 (4.17%)	6 (5%)	11 (9.17%)	4 (3.33%)	1 (0.83%)	5 (4.17%)	9 (9.17%)	7 (5.83%)	16 (13.33%)
Total	34 (28.33%)	39 (32.5%)	73 (60.83%)	25 (20.83%)	22 (18.33%)	47 (39.17%)	59 (49.17%)	61 (50.83%)	120 (100%)

Table-6 presents distribution of respondents in respect of their willingness to change from Ancestral profession to other profession. So it is very cleared from the table that maximum number of respondents i.e. 60.83% were interested in their profession, out of them (28.33%) respondents were male and also (32.5%) respondents were female, on the other hand there were not interested in their profession i.e. 39.17% respondents, out of them (20.83%) respondents were male and also (18.33%) respondents were female.

Table-7: Distribution of respondents in respect of satisfaction about their Ancestral profession

Age group	Satisfied			Non Satisfied			Total		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
18-27	3 (2.5%)	10 (8.33%)	13 (10.83%)	8 (6.67%)	8 (6.67%)	16 (13.33%)	11 (9.17%)	18 (15%)	29 (24.17%)
28-37	9 (7.5%)	10 (8.33%)	19 (15.83%)	6 (5%)	5 (4.17%)	11 (9.17%)	15 (12.5%)	15 (12.5%)	30 (25%)
38-47	7 (5.83%)	11 (9.17%)	18 (15%)	7 (5.83%)	2 (1.67%)	9 (7.5%)	14 (11.67%)	13 (10.83%)	27 (22.5%)
48-57	5 (4.17%)	5 (4.17%)	10 (8.33%)	5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)	8 (6.67%)	10 (8.33%)	8 (6.67%)	18 (15%)
58 & Above	7 (5.83%)	5 (4.17%)	12 (10%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	4 (3.33%)	9 (7.5%)	7 (5.83%)	16 (13.33%)
Total	31 (25.83%)	41 (34.17%)	72 (60%)	28 (23.33%)	20 (16.67%)	48 (40%)	59 (49.17%)	61 (50.83%)	120 (100%)

Table-7 presents distribution of respondents in respect of satisfaction about their Ancestral profession. It is revealed from the table that there were (60%) respondents who were satisfied about their ancestral profession, out of them (25.83%) respondents were male and also (34.17%) respondents were female, on the other hand there were (40.00%) respondents who were not satisfied about their ancestral profession, out of them (23.33%) respondents were male and (16.67%) respondents were female.

Table-8: Distribution of respondents retrieving occupational information from different sources

Age Group	Panchayat and	Traders and Sellers	Media (Print/Electronic)	Agents and Mediators	Family and Friends	Others
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	Municipality		c)									
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
18-27	5 (4.17%)	7 (5.83%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	5 (4.17%)	9 (7.5%)	7 (5.83%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)
28-37	8 (6.67%)	4 (3.33%)	7 (5.83%)	9 (7.5%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	9 (7.5%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	3 (2.5%)
38-47	6 (5%)	5 (4.17%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	4 (3.33%)	6 (5%)	4 (3.33%)	2 (1.67%)
48-57	3 (2.5%)	4 (3.33%)	5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	6 (5%)	8 (6.67%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)
58 & above	7 (5.83%)	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	5 (4.17%)	1 (0.83%)	7 (5.83%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)
Total	29 (24.17%)	22 (18.33%)	22 (18.33%)	16 (13.33%)	10 (8.33%)	6 (5%)	14 (11.67%)	13 (10.83%)	33 (27.5%)	22 (18.33%)	9 (7.5%)	9 (7.5%)

Table-8 presents the distribution of respondents retrieving occupational information from different sources, categorized by age group and sex. The findings of this table show that family and friends appears to be the most commonly used source for occupational information, with 33 males (27.5%) and 22 females (18.33%). Panchayat and Municipality was used by 29 males (24.17%) and 22 females (18.33%). Traders and Sellers was used by 22 males (18.33%) and 16 females (13.33%). Media as a source was used by 10 males (8.33%) and 6 females (5%). Agents and Mediators was used by 14 males (11.67%) and 13 females (10.83%). Other sources were used by 9 males (7.5%) and 9 females (7.5%).

Table-9: Distribution of Respondents according to their sources of capital

Age group	Own source		Bank Loan		Co-operative		Mahajan		Others	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
18-27	9 (7.5%)	13 (10.83%)				1 (0.83%)	7 (5.83%)	11 (9.16%)	1 (0.83%)	
28-37	11 (9.16%)	9 (7.5%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	1 (0.83%)		6 (4.17%)	5 (4.17%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)
38-47	7 (5.83%)	7 (5.83%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)			9 (7.5%)	8 (6.67%)	4 (3.33%)	3 (2.5%)
48-57	6 (5%)	5 (4.17%)					5 (4.17%)	3 (2.5%)		
58 & above	4 (3.33%)	3 (2.5%)			1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)
Total	37 (30.83%)	39 (32.5%)	4 (3.33%)	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.67%)	2 (1.67%)	29 (24.17%)	29 (24.17%)	8 (6.67%)	6 (5%)

Table-9 shows the distribution of respondents according to their sources of capital. From this table it is revealed that out of 120 respondents, most of the people i.e. 63.33% used their own source of capital for investment purpose. 48.34% respondents borrowed capital from the Mahajan, 5.83% uses the facility of Bank Loan, 3.33% selected co-operative as the source of capital and rest 11.67% collect their capital from other sources.

Suggestions:

1. Based on the findings of Table-3, there is a need for improved educational opportunities, particularly targeted programs for younger individuals aged 18-27 who are just literate, through workshops and adult education classes. For older populations, particularly those aged 58 and

- above, initiatives promoting lifelong learning should be introduced to help them acquire new skills and gain formal recognition.
2. The findings from Table-4 highlight the need to improve access to vocational training and skill development programs, especially for the younger age group of 18-27, who are exploring various occupations like weaving, agriculture, and business. Targeted training in these fields can enhance their skills and employability. For those aged 28-37, advanced training and certification programs should be offered to help them progress in their careers. Older individuals, particularly those 58 and above, need programs that recognize their prior skills and facilitate further qualifications.
 3. Considering the findings from Table-6 about the willingness to change from ancestral professions, it's important for the community to implement strategies that preserve cultural heritage while also supporting professional development. This can be achieved by integrating traditional skills and crafts into modern training programs, ensuring that individuals are equipped with contemporary techniques while retaining their cultural practices.
 4. The findings from Table-7 indicate a mix of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among respondents regarding their ancestral professions. To tackle dissatisfaction, it is crucial to conduct detailed surveys to identify underlying issues, which can inform the creation of targeted support programs aimed at improving job satisfaction. Enhancing skills through training sessions and workshops will empower individuals to excel in their roles.
 5. The findings from Table-8 reveal the various sources respondents rely on for occupational information, such as panchayats, media, family, and friends. To improve the usefulness of these sources, it is important to enhance the accessibility and reliability of the information provided. Collaborating with local panchayats and educational institutions can facilitate community programs that offer relevant occupational insights, aiding informed career decisions.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the study highlights the critical role of tailored occupational information and resources in supporting the Dewangan community of Kurda village, Champa Tehsil. By analyzing the occupational status, income levels, satisfaction with ancestral professions, and sources of occupational information and capital, the research provides vital insights into the community's occupational landscape. The findings reveal contentment with traditional weaving practices but also emphasize the need for enhanced educational opportunities and improved access to reliable information sources. By addressing these gaps, the study aims to empower the Dewangan community, preserving their cultural heritage while fostering socio-economic advancement and informed career progressions.

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