



# Indian Handicrafts: A Sustainable future of Utilitarian Consumer Goods

Akanksha Choudhary\* & Poonam Mishra†

## Abstract

Utilitarian products are those which are designed to be useful rather than attractive. Handmade products are, thus, one among the wonders of Indian artisans, which are both useful and attractive at the same time. World-renowned Indian handicrafts are imported by several countries, which is highly supporting Indian art and culture. This is a source of livelihood for more than half of the unskilled labours and artisans of the Handicraft Industry. But with high-quality décor, luxurious items being exported to foreign lands, middleman income and trade fairs are sucking up most of the profits. Indian artisans and handicraft workers are therefore left with little income in hand except for the very famous art workers of big businessmen. This is one of the major problems which can be solved by encouraging the supply of handicrafts and domestic consumer demand. Since Indian consumers have been evolving through manufactured products, globalization, industrialization, etc. they are producing harmful effects on the environment and socio-economic conditions. Hence, it is very alarming for the handicraft sector to be able to protect its art and small business during an economic crisis. To address the small businesses and art of poor craftworkers this study intends to focus on the utilitarian aspect of handicrafts as being the sustainable alternative. The research broadly focusses on the socio-economic

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\* Department of Economics, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India; [akanksha14061996@gmail.com](mailto:akanksha14061996@gmail.com)

† Department of Economics, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India; [poonam.mishra@jaipur.manipal.edu](mailto:poonam.mishra@jaipur.manipal.edu)

conditions of rural artisans and the environmental benefits of handicrafts by assessing the demand of domestic consumers and their perspectives. Based on primary data collected through the survey method, the study finds that domestic consumers are aware of the sustainable alternative handicrafts have to offer, while the utilitarian aspect has a vague response when it comes to purchasing handicrafts. However, demand for handicrafts is high because of their utilitarian aspect only. The study applied multiple regression analysis to analyse the results and conclude with suggestions based on qualitative research analysis to support rural handicraft artisans and small businesses. The study initiates a broad scope of research in consumer behaviour towards handicrafts in India as a sustainable alternative to mass production. This is one of the ways of supporting the cultural art forms as well as replenishing sustainability in the three major directions, which are economic, environmental & societal. Based on the empirical findings of this study, it concludes with the suggestions of co-existence with culture and sustainable development in India.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Handicrafts, small business, sustainable solutions, environment friendly

## **1. Introduction**

Handicrafts in India is the second-largest economic industry, employing more than half of the non-agricultural workers (Sharma Hitesh et al., 2017). Every state of India has evolved from tribal culture and self-sustaining societies, which are now vastly converted into a market economy. No wonder availability of the market is an important aspect for selling and purchasing goods, but when the economic revolution took place, globalization, liberalization, and privatization uprooted the small business of these artisans and snatched their market by replacing it with more durable machine-made goods (Kapur & Mittar, 2014). Thus, the demand and supply of handicrafts were severely impacted. Since a large number of skilled but unorganised labour/artisans have not stopped working on their family businesses, it is getting hard for them to survive in perfect competition (Shaikh, 2020). The past decade and pandemic have forced so many small business holders

to leave their source of income through handicrafts and opt for some other sources of earning like taking up factory jobs or some temporary labour works on sites and even roadside begging (Bhat & Yadav, 2016). In all these trends, the handicraft industry has faced a downfall which has resulted in the loss of cultural lineage and a self-sustaining society. Societies that produce environment-friendly utilitarian products help in socio-economic development (Greener, 1980). The need is to understand this widespread problem that is resulting in overwhelming rise in number of poor people, more deaths due to hunger, income inequality and unemployment. There have been studies to address the issue of an unorganised sector like handicraft all over the country. Every Indian state has unique art and craftsmanship based on local resources and is highly utilitarian. (Debbarma, 2019) researched the state of Tripura, where bamboo, jute and metal art are very famous and useful for different household purposes, but it is only sold in the local rural markets. There is no source of outsourcing and marketing of these products, which are highly environment friendly and hold very high socio-economic values (Haider et al., 2022). Through the research, it was found out that the education of local artisans is not much, the investment is not very high, and the available local market is limited to the village only. Youth involvement is another key factor that addresses the problem, these arts are not taken further in upcoming generations, and several units have already stopped depending on handicrafts as their primary source of income. (Alstonia, 2017) A government report for the schemes and initiatives for handicraft workers under the big investment schemes such as “Make in India and Vocal for Local” etc., highlights the advantages of producing locally. This is much more magnified in the handicrafts industry, which produces organic cotton, fair trade products and artforms with a good base in the market, for example, gems and jewellery (Ghouse, 2017). Pottery and marble art, metal arts, bamboo, jute etc needs a push for outsourcing local produce through managing units which are followed through art fairs and Haat markets throughout the countries (Debbarma, 2019). Yet these are not working out for many other artforms and there is a big dissatisfaction among the producers for not receiving equal opportunities from the local government and banking institutions. The major issue remains

same as the outlets for the art which they are creating and keeping alive, for the best of socio-economic and environmental purposes (Manjusmita Dash, 2011). (SEEDS - Socio economic and educational development society, 2006) A study on four big handicraft-producing states defines the problem in a way that highlights the shortcomings of the handicraft industry facing currently. It is the lack of marketing and selling skills from the side of producers, investment, lack of innovation, lack of training and available institutions. Apart from that, the consumer needs and perspectives haven't been addressed or researched to create a market (Haider et al., 2022). There is a common mindset about the utilitarian aspect of handicrafts that shows they are decorative of non-essential products that do not need to be managed properly. This is the reason why the second-largest economic industry is unorganised in India. Apart from the socio-economic and environmental aspects, there is a great opportunity for poverty reduction and employment generation that goes with the handicrafts sector of India (Vyshak et al., 2018). Yet it remains unaddressed. This research is the highlight of this same mindset associated with the handicraft. The objective is to study the consumer perspective regarding the utilitarian aspect of handicraft as a sustainable choice. This as a sustainable alternative is also environment friendly as well as a tribute to the year-old Indian culture. With the intention of respecting the art of a self-sustaining society, a developing country like India can work to establish its roots by eradicating economic problems like poverty, income inequality and unemployment (Ferreira et al., 2019).

## **2. Literature Review**

(SEEDS - Socio economic and educational development society, 2006) the status study of handicraft artisans and livelihood shows that there are several reasons responsible for this condition of artisans and craftworkers (Kumar, 2019). People who introduced the market for these self-sustaining utility goods and the middlemen who exploited the artisans the lack of marketing skills and innovation to compete with the machine-made goods. Whereas the revival of handicrafts is required but it is not possible with proper monitoring and management. (Makhitha, 2016) Handicrafts are generally a product of developing countries, and in this competitive market, they are facing the same challenges (Bramwell

& Lane, 1993). One study highlights the artisanal problem of marketing products made of environmentally friendly raw materials. There is a lack of innovation in the products as they are handmade, the packaging and attractive covers, rate tags, and manufacturing details are not mentioned due to being highly unorganised and owned by individuals, and small businesses are not able to compete (Wang & Lalrinawma, 2016). All these factors combine impact consumer behaviour while their demand for handicrafts remains highly optional and not regular or intentional. (Shrivastava, 2020) highlighting the sustainable aspect of handicrafts and handicrafts of India. It is said that artisans use highly sustainable raw materials compared to mass-produced machine-made clothes. Handicrafts are much more sustainable and socio-economic-friendly. (Ghouse, 2017) But the artisans are failing to highlight this as a strategy for marketing their products. In the present time, when using sustainable clothing is appreciated by the fashion industry, these handicrafts owners can encourage themselves to promote eco-friendly clothes and dyes, yet the industry is not able to do so because of a lack of knowledge and skills to endorse their production (Nageswar R. et al., 2017).

(Bhat & Yadav, 2016) study focussing on the economic benefits of handicrafts sector shows a prominent amount of foreign exchange earnings from the handicrafts, whereas it is also making employment opportunities in the local areas providing people with a source of living. But there is a harsh reality behind these productive results, and that is ten among 50 handicraft makers can make a good return on their investment. The rest 40 face an acute shortage of livelihood, raw materials, lack of interest and investment to own manufacturing units or stores to sell their output (Rusyani et al., 2021). Therefore, the rural economy in India faces a downfall every year, and the standard of living is getting worst day by day. Lack of education and skill to run a small business, livelihood and labour mobility is making it tough to keep an art alive that people have inherited (Ali & Sudan, 2018). More jobs in manufacturing units mean mass production, more supply and complete eradication of handmade products that are also eco-friendly and benefit from socio-economic causes.

(Bhushan & Din, 2014) study shows an analysis of Indian exports over the year, extending good foreign earnings, yet artisans face problems producing the desired number of art products. While middlemen's income is not equally distributed with the artisans, the root of handicraft remains un-watered. This study highlights the problem of absent marketing skills and advertisement management organizations in the handicraft industry. Associations and co-operative societies must understand these problems and address them while working for each other in groups (Bhat & Yadav, 2016).

(Chaudhuri et al., 2018) Very elaborative research on artisans' situations and governmental initiatives shows how many opportunities the government has created for the smooth running of handicraft business, but there is so much to be done from the craft people's side. Despite government support from policies and fairs, they have their problems, yet the cohesiveness among business holders, customers and artisans is absent (Mehra et al., 2019). The study has divided the usage of art products into four quadrants of utility, decorative, differentiative, and aesthetic purposes and has surveyed customers on how and why they like to purchase these items from fairs and available marketplace (Pani & Pradhan, 2017). It was clear that the utility aspect of purchasing a handicraft goes a long way with its aesthetic and beautiful quality. Apart from that, it is very expensive, and hence a regular customer will buy it only occasionally or in the festive season.

Therefore, the demand and supply of handicrafts need synchronisation as it is currently not possible for artisans and sellers to sell these hand-crafted products at very minimal or low costs because of their living conditions, but if it is somehow maintained through a permanent source of earning through their art itself, there can be a huge difference which can be created in the costing of these products (BIJO JOSEPH, n.d.).

Studies have so far elaboratively constructed a base for understanding consumer demand in many ways. But there are still miles to cover before jumping to a conclusion and making managerial implications for the sales of handicrafts in the domestic market (Makhitha, 2016). Research has shown the utility and

choices of the consumer, analysing them through different angles, but there has been hardly any research that identifies the relationship between the utilitarian and sustainable perspective of the consumer regarding handicraft products (N. J. Rajaram, G. H. S Prasad, 2014). Thus, this study combines both concepts to build a framework of research based on empirical findings in the form of primary data collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed through regression analysis.

### 3. Conceptual Framework

The utilitarian aspect of handicrafts is an essential feature of sustainable products that can be used in day-to-day life. The utility of any product is like (Chaudhuri et al., 2018) to be more functional rather than attractive. Hence when the sustainability angle is being explored, it is necessary to understand that product making is sustainable, and the use of raw materials should be natural, biodegradable and cheaply available (Upadhyay & Jain, 2019). Thus, the use of such products will have sustainable benefits. Using clay pots, pottery made up of different types of adhesive mud, bamboo, jute, etc. are some examples of utility as well as sustainable handicrafts (Debbarma, 2019). The table below shows how diversified developing countries like India have so many beautiful artforms that are rich in utilitarian purposes as well as can be used as sustainable alternatives for day-to-day use (*Government of Rajasthan, 2015.*)

**Table 1: Classification of Indian Handicrafts**

S.No	Craft Name	Classification	Producing State/Cities
1.	Zari	Utilitarian/ Apparel	Surat, Bareilly, Varanasi, Agra, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Vadodara, Latur, Jaipur, Barmer, etc.
2.	Carpets	Utilitarian & Luxury	Bhadohi, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Agra, Jaipur, Bikaner, Kashmir, & Panipat, Gwalior, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, & Ellora in Andhra Pradesh.
3.	Rugs & Durries	Utilitarian & Luxury	Agra, Bhadohi, Mirzapur in UP, Jaipur in Rajasthan, Panipat in

			Haryana, & Kashmir in Jammu & Kashmir, Panipat, Bhavani in Tamil Nadu, Navalgund in Karnataka, Warangal in Andhra Pradesh, & Jaisalmer & Barmer in Rajasthan.
4.	Handi crafts	Utilitarian/ Apparel	Bahraich, Bhuj, Karimnagar, Patan, Varanasi, Nawan, Shaher, Boudh
5.	Textile & Embroidery	Utilitarian/ Apparel	Chikankari & zardozi of Lucknow, Katha of Bengal, phulkari of Punjab, Kutchi embroidery of Gujarat & Kashi Dakari of Kashmir. Zardozi has been traditionally prevalent in Lucknow & the six surrounding districts of Barabanki, Unnao, Sitapur, Rae Bareli, Hardoi & Amethi. Lucknow zardozi has been accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) registration
6.	Textile & Hand Printing	Utilitarian/ Apparel	Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, Machilipatnam), Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi, Farrukhabad), Orissa, Madhya Pradesh (Bagh, Behrongarh, Indore, Mandasar, Burhanpur), Gujarat (Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Kutch), Maharashtra & Rajasthan (Bagru, Chittroli, Sanganer, Jaipur, Jodhpur).
7.	Wood Carving	Decorative	Manipur, Bhopal, Nagpur, Chennai, Madurai, Mysore, etc. Kashmir is famous for walnut wood carving
8.	Wooden Toys & Lacquer Items	Utilitarian & Decorative	Etikopakka in Andhra Pradesh is the hometown of lacquerware. Other important centres are Ernakulam, Channapatana, Chitrakoot, Devanagari, Medak,



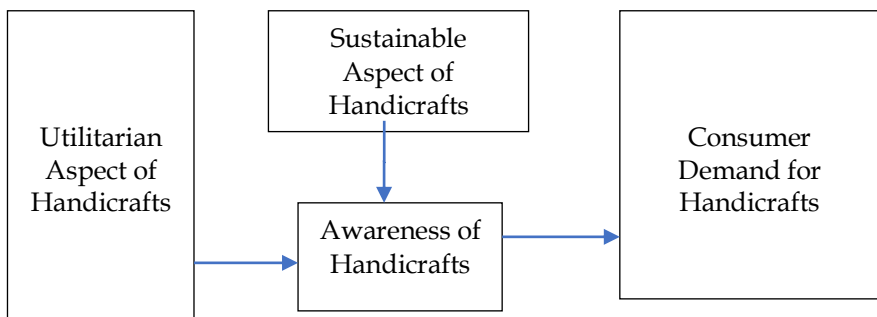
			Sankheda, & Varanasi
9.	Wooden Furniture	Utilitarian & Decorative	Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jamnagar, Surat, & Vadodara in Gujarat, Srinagar in J&K, Jalandhar in Punjab, Sikar in Rajasthan, Cooch Bihar in West Bengal, Bareilly and Ghaziabad in UP
10.	Stone Carving	Decorative	Agra, Bhubaneswar, Puri, Jaisalmer, Cuttack, Cuddapah, Bankura, Kanchipuram, Patna, Mysore, Rajkot, Gwalior, Puducherry, Mahanandi, etc
11.	Cane & Bamboo	Utilitarian	Assam (Lakhimpur, Bongaigaon, Guwahati, etc.) & Tripura (Agartala, Nelaghar, etc.) are recognized as prominent places for cane & bamboo products both nationally as well as internationally. Assam is home to about 50 species 67 of bamboo. Other major cane & bamboo handicraft centres are Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh in the North-eastern region, West Bengal, Kerala, & Orissa
12.	Filigree Silver ware	Decorative	Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh & Cuttack in Orissa
13.	Metal ware	Utilitarian	Moradabad, Murshidabad, Madurai, Salem, Cuttack, & Haryana. Whereas major centres of bell metal ware are Salem, Cuttack, Murshidabad, & Tiruchirappalli.
14.	Jewellery	Utilitarian, Decorative & Luxury	Delhi, Moradabad, Sambhal, Jaipur, Kohima (Tribal), Nellore, Mysore, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, etc.
15.	Terra	Decorative &	Asharikandi in Assam is the

	cotta, Clay & Pottery	Utilitarian	largest cluster in India, where terracotta & pottery craft is found. Other clusters are Bhadravati, Bulandshahar, Nizamabad, Pune, Chandrapur, Jaipur, Uttar Pradesh.
16.	Horn & Bone	Decorative	Lucknow, Moradabad, Sambhal & Sarai Tarin in Uttar Pradesh, Honawar in Karnataka, Gajapati in Orissa, Jodhpur in Rajasthan, & Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala
17.	Musical Instrum ents	Utilitarian	Jodhpur, Ranchi, Tiruchirappalli, Vishakhapatnam, & Kolhapur
18.	Folk paintings	Decorative	Pithora painting in Gujarat & Madhya Pradesh, Madhubani painting of Bihar, Chitrakar painting of West Bengal, Patachitras in Orissa, & Kalamkari in Srikalahasti (Andhra Pradesh).
19.	Coir Twisting	Utilitarian	Orissa (Sakhigopal, Puri, Pipli, Bhubaneswar Batamangala & Kendrapara). It is also produced in Kerala (Ernakulam)
20.	Grass, Leaf, Reed & Fibre	Utilitarian	Maharashtra (sisal), Kerala (palm leaf, korai grass), Tamil Nadu (palm leaf, korai grass), Assam (Shital Patti), Meghalaya (Shital Patti), Bihar (Sikki and Munj grass), etc. Major centres of this craft are Almora & Dehradun in Uttaranchal, Goa, Ernakulam in Kerala, Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, Midnapur in West Bengal, etc.
21.	Metal Images	Decorative	Dhokra is practised in Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, & parts of Andhra Pradesh. In Chhattisgarh, the Dhokra clusters are spread in & around Kondagaon and Jagdalpur.

Source: Ministry of Textile and Handicrafts

This paper considers several aspects of consumer choices and ideas, opting for handicrafts over machine-made goods, especially concerning their utilitarian properties. Hence this study wants to understand the interdependence of factors influencing the demand for handicraft items (Zhang et al., 2020). With emancipating the research objectives, the paper reads to address an analysis of consumer behaviour first, by assessing the perception towards utilitarian handicrafts and by understanding the perception, it will base the demand analysis of consumers as choosing hand-crafted local products as a sustainable alternative. These factors and their impact are shown in Figure 1.

**Fig 1: Research Framework**



Source: Author's

## 4. Research Hypothesis

*H1: Utilitarian aspect of handicrafts have a positive impact on consumer demand*

*H2: Awareness of handicrafts has a positive impact on consumer demand for handicrafts*

*H3: Awareness of Utilitarian and Sustainable aspects has a positive impact on Consumer demand for handicrafts*

### 4.1. Scale Development & Model Testing

A self-administered, structured questionnaire was used to test the comprehensive model based on psychological factors of consumer

awareness. Using a 7-point Likert scale for testing the hypothesis based on the interrelationship between Utility and Sustainable aspects of handicrafts and their impact on demand (Mishra, 2013). The independent variable and dependent variables were utilitarian, sustainable aspects, and consumer demand, respectively (Field, 2009). The latter was distinguished by their literal meaning, as explained prior. Whereas the object's utility was assessed with the product's functional aspect more than its uniqueness, sustainability is associated with the environmental and socio-economic aspects of Handicrafts (Nguyen et al., 2020). The questionnaire items were randomly distributed to represent these attributes to test the impact of awareness on consumer demand.

## **5. Research Design**

To address the problems related to handicraft market sustainability, this study follows the mixed-method research design as it includes both the qualitative and quantitative approaches to study the proposed objectives. A multivariate regression model was applied to assess the impact of Utilitarian and sustainable aspects of handicrafts on consumer demand. (Zhang et al., 2020) Henceforth, the Multiple regression techniques were conducted to test the hypothesis and the relationship among the variables.

### **5.1. Data Collection and Descriptive Statistics**

The current study has taken a sample of 262 respondents collected through the convenience sampling method. The survey method was adopted to collect raw data, and the responses were collected via a google form. Different factors were included in the survey, which was: demographic factors like age, gender, location of the respondent, etc. The states mentioned in the survey are Himanchal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Kerela, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, etc. To perform the data analysis, SPSS & MS Excel software was used, and the outcomes of the study were analyzed and interpreted as follows.

## 6. Descriptive Statistics

### 6.1. Gender description

There was a total of 262 respondents, out of which 156 were females, i.e., 59.6% and 106 were males, which is 40.4% of the total sample. These were from the age group of 18 to 35.

### 6.2. Types of Handicraft people buy

The classification of handicrafts was done based on the purpose of its usage. Therefore most people favoured their buying preferences for handicrafts for clothing and decorative items, whereas respondents also buy handicrafts for their artistic purposes and utilitarian purposes. The percentage of respondents is given below in table 2 based on the survey.

**Table 2**  
**Category-wise distribution of consumer's demand for Handicrafts**

Category	Percentage of People Prefer
Clothing (Handmade fabric like Khadi, tie & die, Block Printing, etc)	61.4%
Decorative (Wall paintings, hangings, marble/wood statues, furniture's, etc)	59.6%
Artistic (Jewellery, Pottery items, Kitchenwares, rare & antique items only)	39.5%
Only Utilitarian (Kitchen Utensils, mud vessels, jute bags, Bamboo products, etc)	38.6%

*Source: Primary Data*

The item was divided into four available categories of hand-crafted items, where the responders were liberated to choose simultaneous preferences. Most of them chose clothing as one of the major areas of interest when it comes to handicrafts. We can also see how décor-related objects are also very popular. More often, artistic items such as paintings and pieces of jewellery are preferred too. The option of utilitarian products is preferred less than others because of several reasons like availability in the urban market, the clusters are limited to the area only and are not much endorsed. One of the reasons why handicrafts do not hold a permanent consumer base and recurring purchases in the market.

## 7. Data Analysis

### 7.1. Reliability of Scale

The self-designed questionnaire used an ordinal scale for 17 items, which denoted strongly disagree to strongly agree, ranging from 1 to 7. The reliability of this questionnaire was checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha( $\alpha$ ). Utilitarian aspects, sustainability and awareness subscales all have high reliabilities. However, the items chosen for the reliability test were only 6 to keep randomness as a base. (Field, 2009) states the grounds of interpretation, the reliability value of  $\alpha = 0.741$  can be counted as acceptable and even  $\alpha < 0.764$  is reliable while calculating the psychological construct for a study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each construct of the questionnaire is shown in the tables below. The overall reliability of the questionnaire is 0.764, indicating that the scale passed the reliability test.

### 7.2. Regression Model

The regression model for the study shows the effect of a predictor variable on the response variable. With these objectives, we have 3 predictors who are awareness about handicrafts for their utilitarian as well as sustainable aspects. However, the response variable is consumer demand for handicrafts. To show the relationships among these variables multiple regression analysis tools has been used, the estimation is taken concerning the ordinary least square method and the regression equation is shown below:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon_i$$

The above regression equation shows values of independent and dependent variables where  $Y_i$ : Dependent variable, i.e., Consumer demand,  $\beta_0$ : denotes the constant,  $\beta_1$ : Awareness regarding handicraft,  $\beta_2$ : Utilitarian aspect,  $\beta_3$ : handicrafts as sustainable alternatives,  $\varepsilon_i$ : Standard error of estimation.

Here the relationship among predictors and response variables is simple yet interconnected, as awareness of handicrafts properties as utilitarian as well as sustainable alternatives will have an impact on consumer demand, keeping other functions constant. With this assumption, the regression model was tested to its significance

level while the predictors' impact was readily seen on the response variable.

## 8. Result & Findings

To understand the interdependence of variables, a comprehensive model was constructed in which hypotheses were tested to their level of significance. Henceforth the dependent variable, consumer demand for handicrafts, was seen as having a significant impact on the utilitarian aspect as well as the sustainable aspect of handicrafts. Whereas consumer awareness of handicrafts as a sustainable alternative was also seen as having a positive impact. table 4 shows clearly empirical results that signify the interrelationship among all three variables, while the awareness regarding the utilitarian and sustainable aspects of handicrafts do have a positive impact on consumer demand for handicrafts.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R square	R square Adjusted
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
	(Constant)	3.286	.0272		12.080	.000		
1	Demand Handicrafts	.135	0.57	.145	2.392	.017	.145	.021
2	Utilitarian Aspect	.156	.065	.145	2.392	.000	.278	.077
3	Sustainability	.180	.088	.122	2.044	.042	.152	.023

*Source: primary data*

The purpose of the model was to examine the interrelationship of the predictor variables over the response variable. The study and analysis based on primary data show that null hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are accepted as the significance level ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ) is fulfilled. At the same time, the linearity and normality of the data were tested through SPSS software. Thus, the findings of this analysis can be concluded that consumer demand tends to be influenced by utilitarian and sustainable aspects of handicrafts. But

it was also clear from the results that consumers occasionally buy handicrafts for decorative and luxurious purposes. Whereas sustainability is not always kept in mind, the utilitarian aspect is therefore influenced by handicrafts' aesthetic and decorative appearances.

## **9. Discussion & Implication**

The study shows the positive impact of predictor and response variables which shows a high association among the variables affecting consumer demand. The utilitarian aspect shows more functionality of handicrafts as a factor that can be kept in mind from artisans' or sellers' perspectives (Sehnm et al., 2020). As buyers end to buy products which have an aesthetic look plus have utility as well. Indian domestic markets are flooded with handmade motifs, God and Goddess sculptures having traditional values and feeling associated with them. Which eventually hikes the demand for a significant period. This is how the occasional demand for handicrafts shows an upward trend. Therefore, keeping this in mind, more utilitarian plus sustainable products can be sold into the market to create an ongoing continuous demand cycle for the long term (Jadhav, 2016).

Consumers prefer to purchase handicrafts because of their environment-friendly benefits, which is a sustainable alternative to machine-made harmful products. Especially in the case of the apparel industry, where using harmful chemical dyes degrades the environment and quality of fabric (Gudimetla, 2015). On the other hand, handicrafts have a jab of natural fibre painted with plant-based colours and hold a dear value in the consumer's mind. Therefore, sustainability can be used as a great marketing strategy for attracting a consumer to buy local brands over branded fast fashion. Artisans can implement several ways to make handicrafts based on sustainable resources and marketing them as per the consumer demand.

- Natural fibre and eco-friendly labels on the products

As consumer satisfaction depends on using products that are sold to them, these items hold impulse actions, mainly in the case of



handicrafts. Since the current time is very much information-oriented, artisans and handicraft sellers often sell their products without any sign of authentication or tags. Therefore, it is very important to target the consumer based on product information and its manufacturing, for which the government of India gives GI tags. But to spread awareness, artisans and craft makers need to use these tags on the products at the time of sale.

- Using natural fibres

The use of thin materials like plant-based resources, including flax and hemp, jute, coconuts, recyclable, and discarded waste material, is popularly known as best from waste. These kinds of products are very popular when it comes to craft workshops and research, but the consumer base for these is very limited; therefore, the association needs to put forth efforts, in addition, to spread awareness while organizing competitive exhibitions for using talent-based quest for the best from the waste contest on a large scale (Birgitta Niemi, 2015). This will create the right consumer base and awareness and highlight crafts-based socio-economic conditions and uplift them for their art and craft.

- Eco-friendly furniture

Having been using unique and environmentally friendly home accessories is very much fashion blended. It is very popular and an opportunity for artisans to spread their horizons. Using artistic makeovers for small furniture will add an aesthetic and antique look while making them cost-effective and positive for nature (Kapur & Mittar, 2014). This implies that usage of wood can be recyclable, chemical rid and non-contaminated.

- Leather alternatives

Leather materials come under the handicraft industry, whereas it is not a sustainable alternative to machine-made goods because it includes animal killing and exploitation. When it comes to the vegan alternative to leather, research shows scientific ways to use veggie wastes, fibrous vegetables, and leaf-based alternatives that can be used for sustainable options and hence can be marketed properly to create the demand for biodegradable alternatives to leather (Mitra & Agrawal, 2010).

These are some of the ways that artisans and craftworkers can implement based on the findings of consumer demand. Consumers are much more likely to opt for the sustainable perspective of handicrafts rather than the utilitarian perspective. In contrast, utility is another main feature that people would like to buy handicrafts products.

## **10. Conclusion**

This research primarily focused on consumer behaviour, broadly emphasizing on demand of consumers for handicrafts. Handicrafts are those items that are handmade by using strong natural resources such as mud, stone, leaf and plant, wood, and jute. Therefore, there are two very interesting aspects of its manufacturing process, i.e., sustainability and utility of these hand-crafted objects. While this study engrossed on a survey-based method to assess the demand perspective of the consumer, taking it as the dependent variable. The effect of both utility and sustainable aspects was seen. It turned out to have a positive impact on consumer demand keeping other factors constant, which shows artisans and craftworkers can establish a fresh base for marketing their art in such a manner that highlights the utility and sustainable aspect of handicrafts. The research also found that younger generations are more likely to purchase handicrafts for other purposes. Also, handicrafts occasionally attract buyers rather than just utilitarians apart from their functional property. However, if the utility aspect is taken more seriously, the demand for handicrafts will get more recurring, which will, in turn, affect the pricing of these objects as well. Henceforth the demand will boom in upcoming years. This is the major implication of this study. While there are limited respondents who participated in the research, this paper would like to encourage researchers in the handicrafts industry to dig deeper and learn newer aspects to protect the dying and unorganised industry where millions of poor artisans depend their lives upon.

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