

# Handicraft Sustainability through Tourism: A Case Study of Agra

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### Abstract

Due to India's rich cultural heritage and an element of mysticism, tourists come here to experience it for themselves. As we all know that Tourism plays a key role in the global economy. Tourism has always been a tool for cultural propagation that is necessary for a deeper understanding of people. The intersection of handicraft production with tourism is a vital junction. Fuelled by increasing levels of tourism activity and expenditures world-wide, handicraft production provides a means of income for many marginalized people, including large numbers of women and ethnic minority groups. Handicraft production is often noted as a means of income production that supplements agricultural production, fits with rural & agricultural lifestyles, is promoted by government and non-government organizations for development, foreign exchange and maintenance of indigenous traditions and provides hand made objects desired by consumers of industrialized nations. It has also been observed tourists visiting the various places purchase few souvenirs from the tourist destinations. The movement of such souvenirs at times also leads to the export of such items. The focus of this paper is to identify the relationship between the tourist in flow and the sale of handicrafts. A feasibility analysis of the handicraft store was also done. The primary data was collected on the basis of questionnaire. A pilot survey was also conducted to study the feasibility of the questionnaire.

**Keywords:** Handicraft, Tourism, Tourists, Sustainability.

### Introduction

India is one of the richest countries in the world which has a diversified type of culture and which attracts many tourists from the western countries and European nations. Due to its rich cultural heritage and an element of mysticism, tourists come here to experience it for themselves.

The country has 17 official languages and about 500 dialects. Hindi and English are the official languages. "The diversity of India is tremendous" said Jawaharlal Nehru, "It is obvious, it lies on the surface and anybody can see it. " The British historian Arnold Toynbee called India "a society of the same magnitude as our Western.... a whole world in herself." The Unity of India lies in its diversity people bound together by centuries of common traditions, faith and philosophy.

Divinity is in the air and pilgrimage is an important part of culture. It is very true that "variety is the spice of life." The adage seems to explain the dormant love for variety that we humans seem to be born with. The same love for variety attracts tourists to India. The spirit infuses the desire to explore the different shades of India. India as a popular tourist attraction which has innumerable tourist destinations, that satiates the desire of its guests. It will not be an exaggeration to strongly claim that India has a seemingly infinite variety of incredible destinations. Travel to any corner of the country and there is sure to be a land that will mesmerize you with its vibrant culture and diversity.

The original of national tourism in India has to be traced in pilgrimage. Pilgrimage may be regarded as the oldest branch of domestic tourism and one that is still of importance. The pilgrim traffic comprises the largest segment of the national tourism. The modern domestic tourism should include visits to the hydro-electric dams' sites, industrial complexes and agricultural research stations, the so-called modern temples of India. The profile of national tourism differs in much respect from international tourism. Large number of people travels in parties organized by schools or universities etc. Another substantial section travels exclusively on pilgrimage. Home tourism has no seasonal variations as it is based on religion, festivals and hence it is not seasonal crowd. India the national tourists are habituated to living pattern whose demands are not high as those of a westerner.

Due to richness in culture India motivates the tourists from different parts of the world to visit. Rich cultural heritage and an element of mysticism, motivates the tourists to come here to experience it for themselves. The various fairs and festivals induce the tourists to visit our country. Some of the major fairs & festivals which are quite popular among tourists are – Pushkar fair, Taj Mahotsav, Surajkund Mela etc.

The rich history of India’s craft tradition has evolved over the centuries offering a legacy of Indian culture promising everything - beauty, dignity, form and style. The variety is comprehensive and ranges from age-old stone carvings to modern handicrafts making use of glass flints and mirrors. The most popular crafts include metal ware, earthenware, pottery, sculpting, woodwork, hand-printed textiles and scarves, embroidered and crocheted goods, shawls, zari products, stone carving and imitation jewelry.

India has always been famous throughout the world for Handicrafts. People used to dream to possess as many enticing products as possible whenever they visit exotic places. Handicrafts are exquisite and fascinating items of manual skill and are a part and parcel of man’s material aspects. Ever since man has learned to translate his ideas into words and expressions, it resulted to manufacturing of beautiful things.

There is a myriad of art and craft traditions in India that depend on social, economic and regional factors. The present status of the sector in India owes much to the rich crafts history and tradition of the past. Majority of the crafts from the past continues to flourish due to their utilitarian characteristics, availability to the common people and popularity in domestic and global markets.

India is one of the major exporter and supplier of handicrafts and gift products to the world market. The Indian handicrafts industry is highly labor intensive and decentralized, being spread all across the country in rural and urban areas. The sector is considered as the second largest employment-generating sector after agriculture with numerous artisans engaged in craft work on a part-time basis. The industry offers employment to over 6 million artisans, including a large number of women and people from the weaker sections of the society.

India is one of the important suppliers of handicrafts to the world market. The Indian handicrafts industry is highly labour intensive cottage based industry and decentralized, being spread all over the country in rural and urban areas. Numerous artisans are engaged in crafts work on part-time basis. Today, handicrafts and handcrafted gift items manufactured and exported from India are much sought after and have established an unsurpassable reputation in the international market.

The present day handicraft tradition of India is a perfect example of assimilation between the traditional designs and modern techniques. The fast growing demand for Indian handicraft and gifts products has made this sector a full-fledged large scale organized industry that is growing day by day.

**Research Methodology**

To evaluate the tourists view and the amount of sale from the handicraft stores, a survey was conducted with the help of closed ended as well as open ended questionnaire.

| Geographical Area | Agra   |
|-------------------|--|
| Sample Population | Tourists visiting Taj Mahal & Agra Fort, Handicraft Stores |
| Type of Sampling  | Convenient sampling  |
| Size of sample    | 100 tourists & 50 Stores                                   |
| Type of research  | Descriptive  |

**Objectives of the Study**

To make the study scientific and accurate few objectives were framed:

1. To find out the level of handicraft exports through direct selling to the tourists. In other words the study will focus on the volume of handicrafts purchased by the tourists directly and individually at the shop or emporiums.
2. To study the level of handicraft exports through indirect selling to the tourists. It means the handicrafts items exported in bulk to other firm in other country and from there only people can buy the same.
3. To measure the amount of expenditure on the purchase of handicrafts.

**Review of Literature**

According to Syed Khalid Hashmi in his research paper entitled “Market for Indian Handicrafts” published in Excel Journal of Engineering Technology and Management Science, Indian Handicraft has great growth potential in the changing scenario with its basic strength being the abundant and cheap availability of manpower and being a traditional profession of millions still requires very low investment compared with other countries barring China. However it faces imminent threat from the growing clout of Chinese economy coupled with their cheap yet disciplined labour as also from superior quality products manufactured by developed countries.

Dr. R Sarvamangala in his research paper entitled Challenges and Opportunities for Rural cottage and Handicraft industries in India has enumerated Cottage Industry is a concentrated form of small scale industry where the productivity of the goods takes place in the houses of the laborers and the workforce include the members of the family. The purpose of this research in paper was to assess the degree of problems of village and cottage industries and agriculture sector.

Dr. Nripendra Singh & Ms. Sunaina Ahuja , Alexandru Nedelea in their research paper entitled “Comparative analysis between centralized and state wise tourism campaigns in India “

The purpose is to distinguish the initiatives taken by the state authorities and Central authorities to promote tourism in India. Gaps in the centralized promotional campaign, "Incredible India" are identified in this study since they provide communities with a source of income and jobs opportunities, such benefit varies though from a country to another. For Jordan, the handicraft sector is performing at a level far below

its potential as a tourism product, this paper aims at exploring the reasons behind such weak performance; development aspects, strengths and weaknesses were explored, different implications were suggested to improve the contribution of handicrafts to Jordanian tourism

“Cultural destinations and the role of gender in sustainable tourism development: Focusing on handicraft entrepreneurs written by Stella Kladou, Fiona Bakas, Magda Kladou, Literature suggests that a strong relationship between tourism and culture can help destinations become more attractive and competitive.

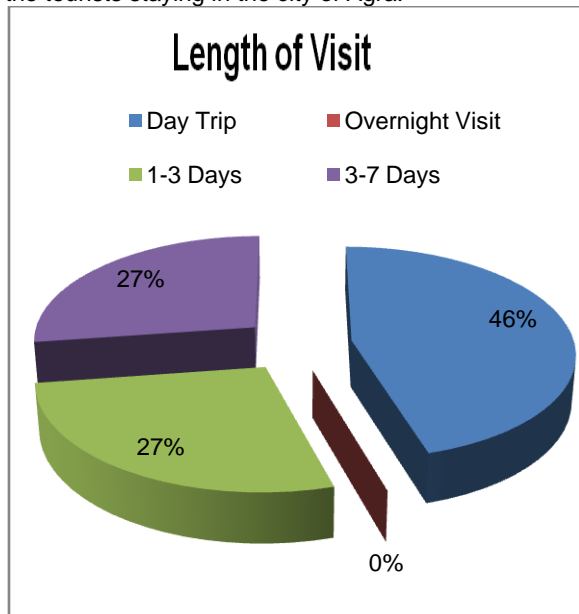
**Data Analysis**

In this analysis the researcher has tried to find out from the tourist visiting Agra about their intentions of visit and how much they are aware of the handicrafts of the place, their reasons for visiting the city and the amount spent on the shopping of the handiraft products.

**Length of the Visit**

From this question the researcher wanted to find out the number of tourist who stayed in Agra for a couple of days.

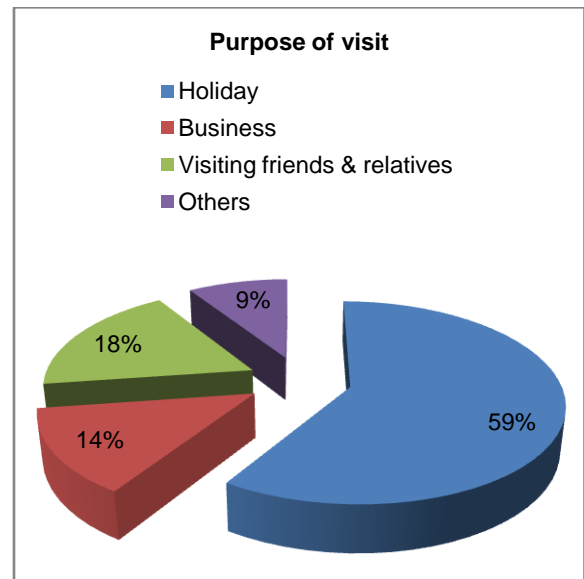
The table below shows the number of days the tourists staying in the city of Agra.



From the above exhibit it is clear that 46% of the tourist are coming in Agra for a day only . 27% of the tourists are staying here for approximately three days and only 27% are staying in the city for more than 3 days.

**Purpose of Visit**

The aim of this question was to find out the reasons for the tourists visit to the city

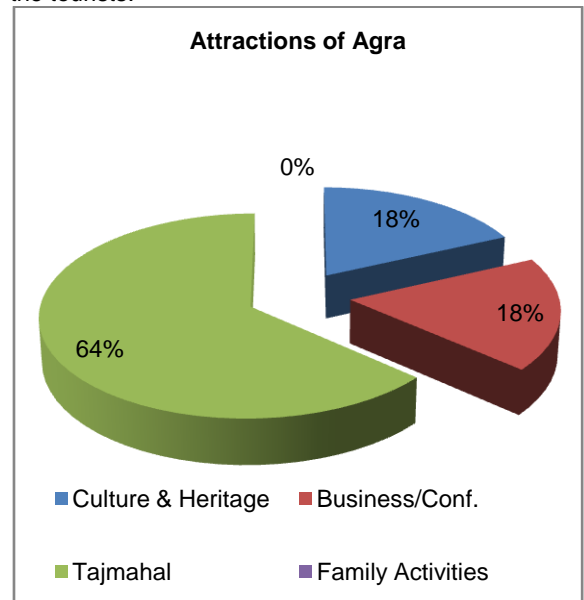


From the above figure it is clear that 59% of the tourist are visiting Agra during their vacation and only 14% visit the various tourist places when they come to Agra for a business trip. 18% of the tourists are coming when they are coming to visit their friends and relatives and only 9% are coming here for some other purposes like marriage, any family functions etc.

**Tourist Attraction at Agra**

The aim of this question was to analyse what attracts the tourists most in Agra. The researcher wanted to find out whether the people are aware of the culture and heritage of Agra or not.

The table exhibits the various reasons why a tourist can be attracted to Agra and the responses of the tourists.



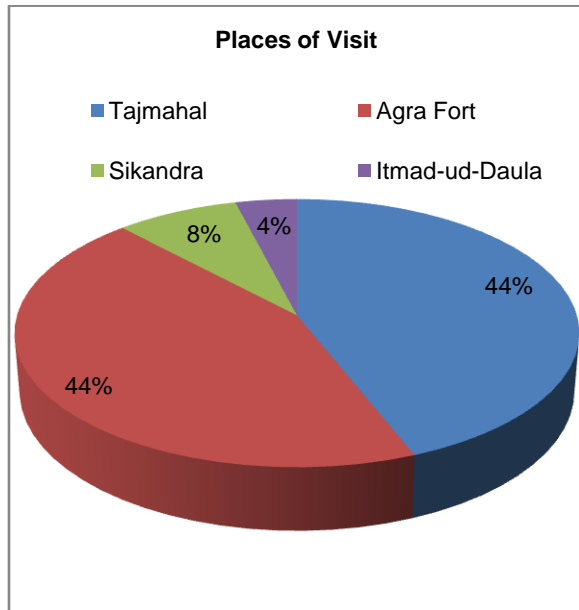
From the above figure it can be analysed that 64% of the tourist are attracted to Agra because of Tajmahal. Only 18% of the tourists come to the city due to its culture and heritage whereas 18% are here due to some business work.

**Monuments Visited**

The aim of this question was to find out how many tourists are aware of all the monuments situated at Agra and how many of them they have visited.

The table shows the different popular monuments of Agra and the responses of tourists regarding the number of monuments they have visited during their visit to the city.

| Places of Visit | Taj Mahal | Agra Fort | Sikandra | Itmad-ud-Daula |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|
|                 | 100.00    | 100.00    | 18.18    | 9.09           |



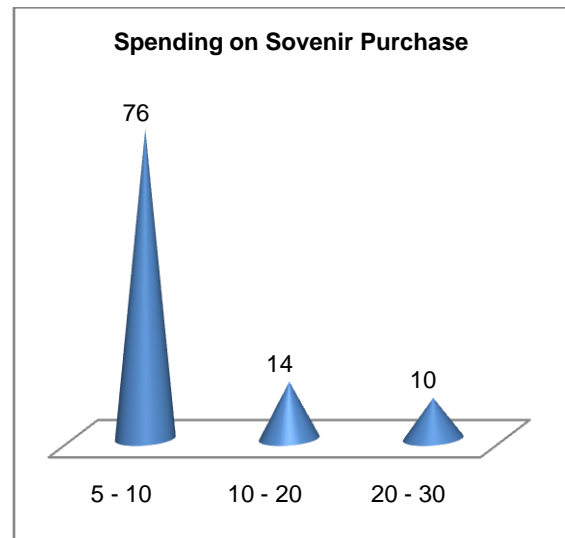
The percentage of the tourists visiting Tajmahal and Agra Fort is approximately 44% each . Only 8% of the tourist visit Sikandra whereas Itmad-ud-Daula is visited by only 4% of the tourists.

**Percentage of Vacation Budget on Sovenir Purchase**

This question was put to find out how much spending is usually done by the tourists in purchase of the sovenirs/ handicrafts of the place.

The table below shows the probable percentage of spending and the responses of the tourists.

| Percentage of Budget for Souvenir Purchase | 5 - 10 | 10 - 20 | 20 - 30 |
|--|--------|---------|---------|
|  | 50.00  | 9.09    | 9.09    |

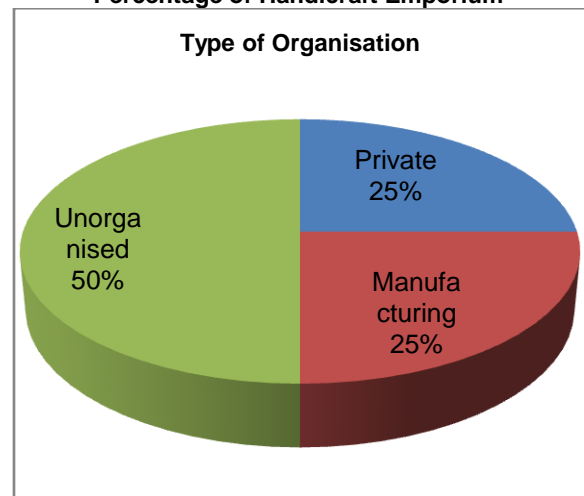


50% of the tourists spend only 5-10 percent on the sovenir purchase while 9 % have a little larger budget for spending on sovenir purchase i.e.; 10-20. 20-30 percent spending is being done by 9 % of the tourists.

**Type of Handicraft Emporium**

The aim of the researcher is to find out the type of handicraft emporiums of different sectors at Agra.

**Fig 8.1**  
**Percentage of Handicraft Emporium**

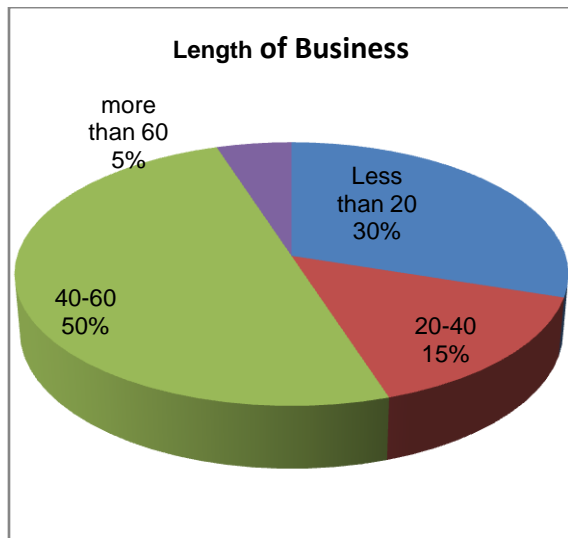


From the Above Analysis It Can Be Enumerated That 50% of the Handicraft Outlets are in The Unorganised Setor. 25% of The Stores are only Retailers Whereas 25% are into manufacturing as well.

**Length of Business**

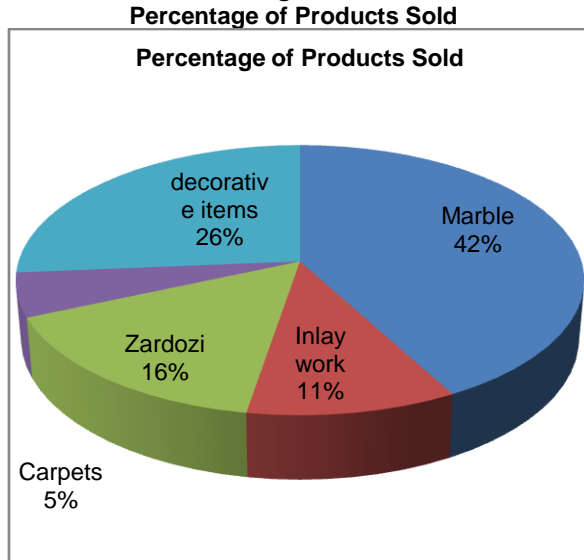
The aim of the researcher is to identify the time span the store is into business.

**Fig 8.2**  
**Percentage of Stores in different time span**



From the data it can be analysed less than 5% of the emporiums are in the business for last 60 years while 50 % of the stores are in business for 20 to 60 years. It was observed that only 15% of the stores have been in the business for 20 to 40years. 30% of the emporiums are in business for less than 20% indicating that they are new to the business comparatively.

**Different Type of Products Dealt by Emporiums**  
**Fig 8.3**

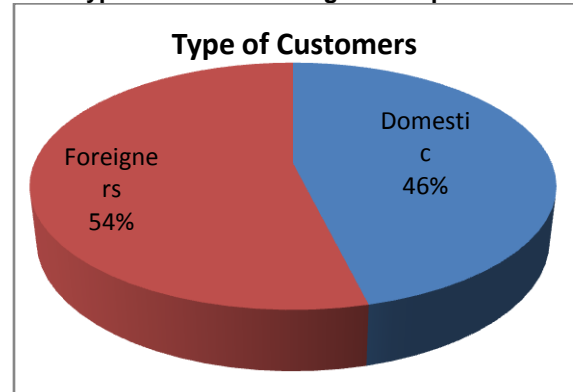


From the above table and figure we can say that almost 57% of the emporiums are dealing with Marble products and only 7.14% stores are having carpets. Zardozi and Inlay work are dealt by 21.43% and 14.29% of the emporiums respectively. Decorative items are also very common as around 35.71% of the emporiums and unorganized sector are having this product.

**Type of Customers**

The aim of this question was to find out which type of tourists mostly visited the emporiums.

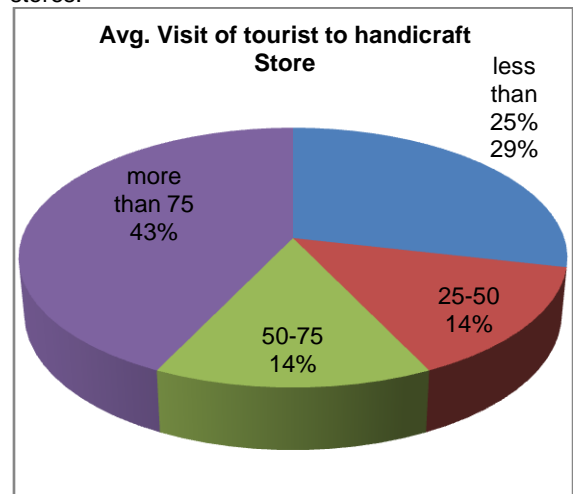
**Fig 8.4**  
**Type of Tourist Visiting The Emporiums**



The above exhibit shows that the percentage of tourist visiting the emporiums have almost 54% of foreign tourists and 46% of domestic tourist. With this we can say that the visit of domestic tourists are approximately equal. There is only a difference of 8% between the two type of tourists.

**Average Visit of Tourist to Handicraft Store**

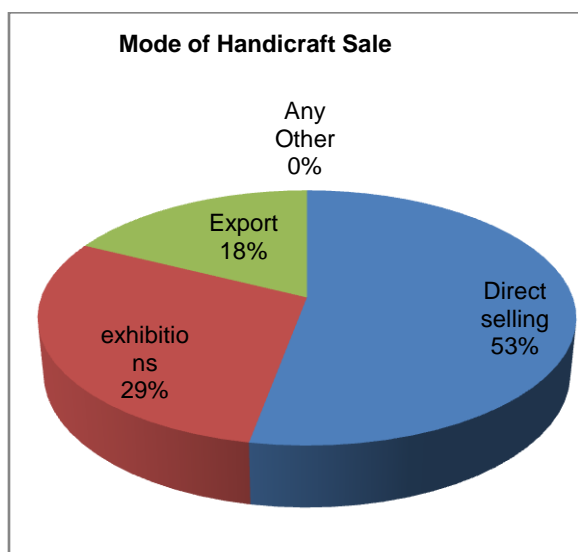
The aim of this question was to find out the average tourists who mostly visited the handicraft stores.



The above exhibits shows that the almost 43% of the tourists visited the

**Mode of Handicraft Sale**

The intention of this question is to find out the method through which the sale of the handicraft items mostly take place .



From the above exhibit it is clear that 53% of the sale is from direct selling and only 18% of the sales come from export. 29% of the sale is from exhibitions organised at different places. It can be inferred that most of the sale comes from the tourists visiting the emporiums. The percentage of sale from exports is very low.

**Analysis of the Length of Visit to the Handicraft Purchase of the Tourist**

| Length of Visit                            | Day Trip | Overnight Visit | 1 – 3 days | 3 – 7 days   |
|--|----------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
|  | 45.45    | 0.00            | 27.27      | 27.27        |
| Percentage of Budget for Souvenir Purchase | 5 - 10   | 10 - 20         | 20 - 30    | More than 30 |
|  | 50       | 9.09            | 9.09       |              |

The researcher has tried to find whether the length of visit has a correlation with the percentage of budget for souvenir purchase. The researcher has used Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient to find this. The analysis has been given below:

| x                | Y                | dx                | dy                | dx <sup>2</sup>        | dy <sup>2</sup>        | dx dy                  | r=0.73682 |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| 45.45            | 50               | 20.4545           | 32.955            | 418.3866               | 1086.032025            | 674.0780475            |           |
| 0                | 9.09             | -24.9975          | -7.955            | 624.875                | 63.282025              | 198.8551125            |           |
| 27.27            | 9.09             | 2.2725            | -7.955            | 5.164256               | 63.282025              | -18.0777375            |           |
| 27.27            | 0                | 2.2725            | -17.045           | 5.164256               | 290.532025             | -38.7347625            |           |
| $\Sigma x=99.99$ | $\Sigma y=68.18$ | $\Sigma dx=99.99$ | $\Sigma dy=99.99$ | $\Sigma dx^2=1053.508$ | $\Sigma dy^2=1503.128$ | $\Sigma dx dy=816.054$ |           |

From the above table  $r=0.736$  which shows that the tourist visit and the budget for the souvenir purchase are positively correlated. The r value shows a very high correlation between the two variables as it

is near to value 1. This correlation shows that if the length of visit of the tourist to Agra is increased then there will be an increase in the budget of the souvenir expenditure.

|                   | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Carpets</b>    | 4199    | 3929    | 3565    | 3482    | 4718    |
| <b>Handicraft</b> | 1982    | 2046    | 1384    | 1067    | 1171    |
| <b>Total</b>      | 6181    | 5975    | 4949    | 4549    | 5889    |
| <b>FTAs</b>       | 5280    | 5170    | 5580    | 5890    | 5570    |

| x                | Y                | dx                 | dy                 | dx <sup>2</sup>           | dy <sup>2</sup>       | dx dy                     | r=0.5668 |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| 6181             | 5280             | -704.75            | 1592.5             | 496672.5625               | 2536056.25            | -1122314.375              |          |
| 5975             | 5170             | -910.75            | -1702.5            | 829465.5625               | 2898506.25            | 1550551.875               |          |
| 4949             | 5580             | -1936.75           | -1292.5            | 3751000.563               | 1670556.25            | 2503249.375               |          |
| 4549             | 5890             | -2336.75           | -982.5             | 5460400.563               | 965306.25             | 2295856.875               |          |
| $\Sigma x=27543$ | $\Sigma y=27490$ | $\Sigma dx= -5889$ | $\Sigma dy= -2385$ | $\Sigma dx^2=10537539.25$ | $\Sigma dy^2=8070425$ | $\Sigma dx dy=5227343.75$ |          |

This analysis shows a relationship between the total craft sale including carpets and the inflow of tourist in India. The researcher has shown this relation with the help of Karl Pearson's correlation. The value of r is 0.5668. According to this correlation the closer the value to r, stronger is the relationship. This value can be interpreted as there is positive relation between the two variables. The visit of foreign tourists is dependent on the export of handicrafts. The higher will be the flow tourists more will be the export of handicrafts.

| Type of cluster      | No. of units | Sales Turnover (in Cr.) | Export (In Cr.) | Employment (No. of persons) |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Carpet               | 90           | 400                     | 100             | 75000                       |
| Marble & Stone Craft | 2500         | 200                     | 100             | 30000                       |
| Zardozi              | 680          | 120                     | 100             | 30000                       |

From the above exhibit it is very clear that although Agra district has very high number of registered units but they are providing employment to only 30000 people and same is the case with zardozi as well whereas carpet units are providing high employability. Sales over wise also carpet has the maximum and zardozi is at the lowest.

**Findings**

1. The researcher has studied the impact of tourism on handicraft industry. It was observed that tourism industry has paved the way to other related industries in the locality such as hotel, railways & tourism etc. Agra is one of the favorite destinations for the tourist all over the world. As 54% of the tourists who are coming to Agra are travelling by train and 68 % of the tourists is staying in hotels only.
2. The above data also shows that Agra is more popular for TajMahal giving less importance to its culture and heritage. Therefore, implying that culture and heritage of Agra is not being given due importance.
3. To understand the dynamics of the tourism industry and its related industries it was found that 30% of the shopkeepers have opened their shops recently which means that they are in this business for less than 10yrs. The opening of new shops in an unorganized sector has a clear indication that new employment opportunities have been generated to fulfill the demand for the handicrafts being created by the tourist arrivals.
4. Most of the handicraft emporiums of Agra are in the unorganized sector. 50% of the handicraft emporium of the organized sector is into business for more than 40yrs.
5. The opening of new stores and emporiums has also a linkage with the inflow of foreign tourists which has shown a growth of about 7% in last 5yrs. It was also noticed that only 27% of the tourist stay for more than a day in Agra but the percentage sale of handicrafts by direct sale is approximately 50%.
6. It was also observed that the export units and handicraft stores are separate. 25% of the emporiums are manufacturing units which are directly into exports. Only 5% out of these have both type of business. These units are mainly in the carpet sector and marble inlay work. Price was found to be an important factor for lower sale of these products directly to the visiting tourists.
7. The tourist coming to Agra is mostly interested in purchasing small gift items made out of marble. While conducting the survey 70% of the tourist felt that marble signifies Agra as the place is famous for Taj Mahal which is made from the same material. Only 14% of the tourist purchased the products of inlay work whereas zardozi is preferred by 21% of the tourist coming to Agra. The total sale of the inlay work and carpets came from the export of the product.
8. It was also found that the stores which are into export as well as direct sale has 53% sale to the tourist visiting the stores while only 18% sale comes from export. The sale through exhibitions is also very less approximately 29%.

9. Out of all the tourists visiting the stores 54% are foreigners and 46% are domestic tourists. It has also been evidenced that most of the domestic tourists purchase from the unorganized sector.

**Conclusion – A Road Map to Opportunities**

After the study, it is understood that Agra has great potential in tourism industry and above all the rich heritage can promote its handicrafts industry as well. There is lot of prospects in the handicraft industry, only requirement is to motivate and provide facilities to ensure this good work going. We have to ensure that the handicraft stores give more emphasis on the products of Agra and its surroundings rather than promoting the products of different states of our country. The products should be made more affordable and convenient to the national tourists also.

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