

# Role of E-Commerce in Promoting Handicrafts of Odisha



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## Abstract

Arts crafts are popular items purchased by tourists as souvenirs or gifts. The emergence of e-commerce is causing substantial changes in business. Customers can shop at any moment, at any time, and can always enjoy almost all their leisure anywhere, at any time and always enjoy the same services at the same level. All buyers comfort can be done electronically, SMEs seem to have difficulty developing a sophisticated website, lack of experience and funds, they need e-commerce to advance and survive. In this document, we want to emphasize the important role of marketing electronically in the development of craftsmanship, illustrating some contributions by governmental and international non-governmental agencies, groups and the artisans through electronic commerce. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges that rural artisans adopting e-commerce will also face in this document.

**Keywords:** Handicrafts, E-Commerce, Artisans.

## Introduction

Handicrafts are popular items purchased by tourists as souvenirs or gifts. The emergence of e-commerce is creating fundamental changes to the way that business is conducted. Customer can shop around comprehensively at their leisure anywhere, at any time and always enjoy the same level of services at virtually no costs. Apparently, with paperless transaction, buyers are no longer required to fill in order forms or visit a business premise to place their order. Everything can be done electronically at buyers' convenience. According to Edim (2000), even though SMEs might have a difficulty to develop a sophisticated web due to lack of expertise and fund, but they still need e-commerce to prosper and for on-going survival. Handicraft industry uses conventional manual methods instead of advanced technology for making various items. It is an unorganized, decentralized, labour intensive cottage industry. Though handicraft industry employs millions of artisans, It is still miniscule with respect to the global industry. This scenario is changing with the advent of E-commerce initiatives at government as well as at private or individual level.

India is a country of great cultural heritage and the Indian handicrafts have a prosperous history of several centuries. History testifies the fact that the artisans of India were known worldwide for their skill and craftsmanship. The carvings on the temples provide the proof of the skills, knowledge and involvement of handicraft artisans in their art. Exports of Indian hand crafted goods have taken place from time immemorial. This sector, which forms a major part of this rich cultural heritage of the country, utilizes the traditional skill of artisans in various crafts such as wooden ware, metal ware, textile weaving & printing, marble & stone crafts, leather works, jewellery etc. This skill is handed down from generation to generation in the form of family tradition. True to its name, the "Handicraft" (crafts made by hands) industry uses conventional manual methods instead of advanced technology for making various items. It is an unorganized, decentralized, labour intensive cottage industry. India's cultural diversity provides plenty of remarkable art and craft products. Indian handicraft industry is labour intensive and is generally decentralized and spread all over the country. Though handicraft industry employs millions of artisans, it is still miniscule with respect to the global industry. This scenario is changing with the advent of many websites promoting the E-commerce of Indian handicraft industry. Government has also initiated various efforts to provide market opportunities to the artisans doing business in unorganized sector.

Handicraft reflects the culture and skill of local population and hence the country. India is one of the most sought after destinations for handicraft due to variation in culture and people who produce varied kinds of handicraft. Different places in India are famous for different handicrafts like Rajasthan for Jaipuri quilts, Gujarat for embroidered stuff, Punjab for Phulkari, Jodhpur for wrought iron products, Kashmir for woollen products, etc. Handicraft industry is one of the biggest employers in rural India. Many artisans work on full time and many on part time basis to produce these goods with hands. Low initial investment, potential for export and foreign earning are few of the factors which are helping this industry to grow further.

Industry experts believe that global trade now depends upon more on E-commerce along with traditional medium for trading. Though there is no standard definition of Ecommerce but the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) defines E-commerce transactions as the sale or purchase of goods or services, whether between businesses, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private organisations, conducted over computer-mediated networks. The goods and services are ordered over those networks, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the good or service may be conducted on or off-line. India is one of the largest users of Internet across the world and expected to cross US in the coming years. Hence Ecommerce has huge hidden and untapped opportunities for the businesses as well as local artisans. It has changed the way business is done and transacted by providing a global marketplace. E-commerce presents a great marketing platform to the domestically produced products. It also provides scope for the expansion to the exporters. The much widened gap between artisanal clusters in India and the potential market is covered by E-commerce activities.

#### **Review of Literature**

Perogianni, M. (2003), examined key external factors affecting the adoption included limited Internet Service Providers (ISP), lack of online payment process, pricing structures, and limited availability of online banking services, power failure, and low competition in the industry. George N. Lodoros (2006), examined attitude and behaviour of the consumers in the online commodities market. "E-Commerce", "E-Marketing", "Internet marketing" and "on-line shopping" are in the current era frequently used by business officials and shoppers all over the world. Also they recognize that the environment is highly suitable for such a potential business. Overall the level of usage of the internet across the globe is continuously increasing. The gigantic world-wide market has driven a lot of business entrepreneurs to take much interest in e-marketing of their products and services.

Stokes & Blake (2008), stated that with the introduction of internet the people have got connected and the world has come closer. Further with the invention and introduction of internet the old media like the radio sets, TV, magazine, newspapers are

being less utilized. People prefer to go over the internet instead of using these traditional media. Success of the e-marketing entirely depends on the organization approaches the market and taps the customers. According to Mansor, N., & Abidin (2010), e-commerce application is highly relevant for the survival and meeting the challenges of borderless economy. The process of acquiring knowledge and understanding the environment, coping with changes, and speeding up the business decision, able to further enhance the competitive advantage of the SMEs. Selected variables were significant towards enhancing the application of e-commerce and thus maintaining competitive advantage in the industry.

Lalwani & Singh (2012), explained how e-business should use the most advanced technology in web hosting and maintaining to establish a good relation with customers and to promote their loyalty. The term e-Commerce, which is frequently mixed up with the term e-business, although, only covers one aspect of e-Business, i.e. the use of an online support for the relationship building between a company and clients. Further the author states that e-business has also lead to an improved communication among various stakeholders. Taylor & Owusu (2012) examines the factors that affect Internet and E-commerce adoption among small exporting handicraft firms in Ghana. Using interviewing, the study presents an in-depth analysis of the cases of two major Ghanaian Handicraft Exporters that have been using the internet in their business operations. The findings indicate that the internal factors that affected internet and e-commerce adoption of the firms were perceived benefits of the technology from owner/manager characteristics, lack of qualified staff to develop and support e-commerce website from firm characteristics, and limited resources from cost and return on investment.

Al-Weshah, G. A. (2013), analyzed the role of e banking in continuous improvement from managers' perspective in Jordanian banks. More specifically, the study explores how Jordanian banks can utilise the e-banking in continuous improvement areas and identifies challenges of using e-banking in different components of continuous improvement. Srivastava & Singh (2013), focused on scope and challenges for e-business in the Indian scenario. The author mentions that, "E-business" is a wider arena and this term is mistakenly substituted for e-commerce. In fact- commerce covers only one aspect of it, ie building up a relationship between a seller and the buyer using the electronic media support. Electronic approaches enable enterprises to bring about extreme efficiency in correlating and joining the activities of their data processing, both internal and external. This approach helps to address the needs and expectations of the customer.

Kiba-Janiak, M., Cheba, K., & Kolakowski, T. (2015), use multiple correspondence analyses of customer preferences at the m-commerce market. The authors have focused on customer preferences in relation to the use of mobile phones while shopping. Consumer segments were selected in terms of behaviour regarding the possibilities and ways of

using mobile phones while shopping. Shah, A., & Patel, R. (2016) analyzed Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats faced or to be faced by rural handicraft artisans adopting E commerce. The author further states that the level of online purchasing pattern has been seen to increase as compared to the earlier years. The author has further provided the theory of planned behaviour. Secondly the author mentions that, due to some serious concerns, the customers resist to go for online purchases. They are- whether we will get adequate privacy for the items and prices in an on line shop. Online shopping is safe, especially for wireless cash transactions. Mogindol (2016) says handicrafts are popular items purchased by tourists as souvenirs or gifts. Tourists as souvenir consumer are plentiful; however studies focusing on tourists' perceptions about an appealing handicraft during their travels are limited. It explores tourists' perceptions about an appealing handicraft and whether differences in perceptions between local and foreign tourists' exist. A survey questionnaire was designed and conducted with tourists visiting the state of Sabah, Malaysia.

Abisuga & Fillis (2017) says that India will be the most potential e- market and to maintain the supremacy, we should use the state of the art networking technology to establish and maintain a more transparent, safe and secure e-business platform.. Although the percentage of the usage of e-business in India is comparatively low, however based on the latest trends and future scenarios there is a tremendous scope for the growth of e-business in India. Yadav, R., & Mahara, T. (2018), explained that usage of the internet is more in the group of the people who are graduates and post graduates in comparison to the users who are matriculate. Further internet usage is most done for checking emails then for downloading movies and songs, than for reading news. The education system in India is so developed that computer education a part of their syllabus and curriculum and each and every product of an Indian school/ college has a minimum knowledge in computer usage. In India still the usage of e-commerce is not very much utilized.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

In this paper, an attempt is made to focus mainly on the following objectives: To explain the concept of Rural Artisans and Rural Handicraft; To highlight the role of E-commerce in the development of rural artisans; To illustrate some efforts of Government and Non-Government agencies, Groups and Individuals in uplifting the socio-economic standard of the rural artisans through E-commerce; To analyze Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats faced or to be faced by rural handicraft artisans adopting E-commerce.

#### **Rural Artisans**

An artisan is a skilled manual worker who crafts items that may be functional or decorative in nature. The use of hands and hand tools impart individuality and uniqueness to each item. The artisans are an important section of our society by providing us beautifully crafted products, they enhance our aesthetic life. Besides, they are

significant contributor to our national economy. Our handicrafts have carved out a special niche in both developed and developing countries. The term 'artisan' is used to refer to those people who work with ordinary or simple tools to make things of basic need. They mainly use the locally available resources and make valuable products without the aid of machine. Thus artisans may be called as skilled manual workers who imagine, plan and build things with their hands as per the demands mostly of the local people. The artisans are heir to the people's traditions and weave them into their craft making it into an art. Most craftsmen have learned their skills from their fathers or mothers since caste and family affiliations. The following definitions were developed by participants during a workshop organized by SRUTI (Society for Rural Urban and Tribal Initiative) (1987): An artisan is a producer of a product that is handmade and involves a skill that is not part of a mechanical chain of production. An artisan is a skilled producer working primarily with his/her hands to make articles of daily use. Artisans are people who craft items or products or provide services, of both utilitarian and decorative value using their hands and traditional implements or tools. An artisan is a person who works with his/her hands to make products of utilitarian value from locally available natural resources.

#### **Handicraft**

The term 'Handicraft' encompasses a wide range of artifacts. The informal sector, which includes handicrafts has been described by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a part of economic activity characterized by certain features like reliance on local available resources and skills, family ownership, small scale operations, labour intensity, traditional technology, skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated and competitive markets. One of the best definitions of handicrafts adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization /Information Technology Community (UNESCO) and the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/ WTO (ITC) during an International Symposium on "Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codification" at Manila, Philippines on 6-8 October, 1997 is: "Artisanal products are those produced by artisans, either completely by hand or with the help of hand tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. The special nature of artisanal products derived from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant." The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) offered a workable definition in the Eighth Plan: "Items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and generally artistic and/or traditional in nature. They include objects of utility and objects of decoration". (Report of Development Commissioner -Handicrafts in 1989) As per the survey conducted by NCAER during 1995-96, the figure of total artisans was 47, 61,186. The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Govt. Of

India, estimated 64, 21,000 artisans during 1995-96. According to Report of the Steering Committee On Handlooms and Handicrafts Constituted for the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012 – 2017), employment in

handicraft sector has risen from 65.72 lac in 2005-06 to 68.86 lac crafts persons in 2011-12. This figure is estimated to cross the limit of 70 lac in 2015-16.

**Figure 1: Consumer Purchasing Process through e-commerce**



**Role of E-Commerce in the Development of Rural Handicraft Artisans**

Indian cultural diversity provides remarkable art and craft products. Carpets, wood ware, bamboo products, marble sculpture, bronze sculpture, leather products, paintings, zari goods, embroidered goods and jewellery are few of the most desired handicraft products from India. Rising demand of Indian handicrafts in US, Britain, Canada, Germany, Italy, etc. provide great opportunity. Each industry need handicraft such as fashion industry, real estate, home decor etc. For Internet tech savvy buyers online is the easiest way to find and shop for various handicrafts. Also E-commerce is one of the most promising channels in today’s marketing scenario for selling handicrafts. It makes sure easy availability of goods at global level.

E-commerce (Electronic Commerce or EC) is the buying and selling of goods and services, or the transmitting of funds or data, over an electronic network, primarily the Internet. These business transactions are categorized into Business to Business (B2B), Business to Consumer (B2C), Consumer to Consumer (C2C), Consumer to Business (C2B). Now new E-governance concepts have also been evolved, i.e., Business to Government (B2G), Government to Business (G2B), Consumer to Government (C2G), Government to Consumer (G2C) and Government to Government (G2G). E-commerce processes are conducted using applications, such as E-mails, Fax, Online Catalogues and Shopping Carts, File Transfer Protocol, Electronic Data Interchange, Web Services, etc. Like any digital technology or consumer-based purchasing market, E-commerce has evolved over the years. As mobile devices became more popular, mobile commerce has become its own market. With the rise of sites like Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, social media has become an

important driver of E-commerce. India has experienced remarkable growth in information technology and E-commerce. The online market is offering different goods and service ranging from tour and travels, movies, hotel reservation, matrimonial service, electronic gadget, fashion accessories and groceries.

According to the ebay census guide 2011, India is home to 3311 E-commerce hubs, 1267 rural hubs, 391 export hubs and 2217 import hubs. The emergence of Information Technology in the last century as a prime driver and facilitator of change in the socio-economic development of the people has revolutionized lives across the globe. With the advent of Internet, international boundaries have melted away and the dream of a global village is eventually becoming a reality. Electronic Commerce or E-commerce is becoming a very attractive proposition for any entrepreneur including the rural poor, as internet offers the equal growth opportunities to small and big businesses. The advantages of conducting business over the web are many. The ones that specifically appeal to the problem domain at hand are outlined below: The major advantage that the Internet offers for a business is its global availability. Even a little known enterprise can realize the vision of expanding its market reach beyond geographic boundaries and local customer segments.

Global and local E-commerce participants have launched websites that offer Indian consumers a range of products. The Internet allows an enterprise to conduct its business at a very low cost. The cost for operating and service support can be reduced greatly through the use of internet. It facilitates greater visibility; once the enterprise and its products are better known, more business flows in. Consumers are more willing to experiment with new forms of retail purchase and feel confident to search for and buy goods online. Internet penetration, the use of

broadband, etc. are making it easy for consumer to shop online. Accuracy, speed, convenience and availability have remained prominent characteristics of the various elements of IT and Internet framework. According to the website [www.internetlivestats.com](http://www.internetlivestats.com), the number of internet users in the world is estimated as 3,424.97 Million in 2017 among which 462.12 Million are Indian. Hence, with proportion to the population data, the penetration is 34.8% in 2016. It means that about 35 people among 100 are internet users in India. This penetration has been recorded as 12.6% in 2012, 15.1% in 2013, 18% in 2014 and 27% in 2015. Thus, it is very clear that the usage of internet has been increasing day by day in India. The fast growing internet population of 158.96 Million in the year 2012 has increased to 462.12 Millions till June 2016 (Report of Internet and Mobile Association of India). It is an indicator of the E-commerce sector's huge growth potential in India. It is further noticeable that out of total 462 Million internet users in India, 371 Million are mobile internet users among which 109 are rural users and 262 are urban mobile internet users in 2016. Hence, the proportion is 29% and 71% respectively. This proportion was 8% and 92% in 2012. Hence, it shows the penetration of mobile internet in rural India.

In coming years, as Internet presence increases in rural areas, rural India will yield more E-commerce business. Internet usage has boomed in the last couple of years with the active Internet users expected to reach 500 million by the end of the year 2017. This situation can be viewed as positive environment providing e-commerce opportunities to the rural handicrafts artisans. E-commerce is one of the most promising channels in today's marketing scenario for selling handicrafts .

#### **Governmental and Non-Governmental Efforts**

A majority of our country's population lives in the rural areas and any development efforts made in the rural areas significantly impacts the country's development. Various governmental and non-governmental agencies have contributed significantly to improve the lot of the Indian rural poor and with good results. These efforts have attempted to address different needs of the rural poor. The current marketing scenario indicates that many of the marketing issues such as demand assessment, brand identification, quality consciousness, product promotions etc. have not been extended up to the desired attention. However, a few attempts have been made which merit attention. According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) online retailing is just 8% of India's total Ecommerce market but it is developing very quickly. Soon it will attain a very big status in India.

Consumers get cheap and attractive deals. They can compare various products online. Increasing broadband and 3G Internet, increasing standard of living, changing lifestyle, and more online market places are giving boost to online handicraft industry in India. Central Cottage Industries Emporium: The Office of Development Commissioner Handicrafts (D.C.H.) is currently the nodal agency for the implementation of all the Central Government

schemes on handicrafts. D.C.H is expected to assist the Government in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at the development of crafts in the country. Its other functions are to identify the new lesser known languishing handicrafts, to identify the problems related to crafts men, to participate in the market promotional events and to provide marketing assistance. It has been entrusted with promoting the marketing of handicrafts through different market developmental programmes viz: craft bazaars, market meets and product promotion programmes. Supplying paper designs, arranging training programmes, arranging credit, assisting the artisans in forming co-operatives and attending the trade enquiries from exporters are the main aims of D.C.H. It provides online marketing of handicraft products through its e-marketing link to Central Cottage Industries Emporium. It is the single largest emporium of the country, which is the perfect showcase of the traditional Indian art and crafts. It is unique in the sense that each and every foreign dignitary visiting India makes it a point to visit the Cottage Emporium. .

The Cottage Emporium is the leading source for Indian handicrafts created by skilled Indian artists & masters of crafts. Artist made- handicrafts, furnishings, jewellery & accessories, art objects & accents are available on line from this website now. Rural Bazar: National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India is committed to strengthen the efforts of other groups and agencies working for the benefit of rural poor and to that end , offers a solution in terms of an IT based marketing infrastructure to provide better visibility & sale of products produced by rural artisans. NIC addresses the problem by adopting the E-commerce approach, through its product Rural Bazar.

Rural Bazar is a web store that allows customers to carry out the complete business transaction starting from browsing the products to paying for the chosen products. It offers several services to its users who may be broadly classified as the producer, the content manager, the business manager, the technical manager and the customer. In order to handle the problem of unemployment effectively, priority has been given to make the development of cottage and village industries more employment oriented than today with a view to ensure employment to total rural youths because more employment opportunities are being created with less capital in cottage and rural industries. Industrial Extension-Cottage has been created to provide information and guidance & organising cottage & rural industrial sector as a catalyst. 2229 handicraft products of various categories such as applique, tie & dye, hand printing, embroidery, hand-loom weaving, coir, metal/stone craft, leather, bamboo craft, bead work, woodenware, puppetries, etc. are available for sale online, whereas 602 artisans are also registered. Such initiative provides a self identity and platform to artisans. Under its various schemes of training and design development, thousands of handicraft/handloom artisans have been covered and

their hand crafted products are demanded not only in the country but also in overseas countries.

The procedure of displaying the products on the Haat is very simple, transparent and easy to follow. Depending upon the prescribed criteria, an in-house committee selects the products/services for display. No registration fee is being charged from the vendor thereafter nominal fee would be charged. There are 16 categories of products displayed on the portal and a services section too. Thus, it is a direct online marketing platform and Mahila Ehaat just acts as a facilitator between seller and buyer. Handicraft E-commerce in India has been growing steadily in recent years, with numerous start ups and some established players, capitalizing on the appeal of traditional Indian arts while making a difference to artisans' lives. According to Ankit Nagori, Senior Vice President of Flipkart, the local artisans and entrepreneurs deserve a much larger platform than what is available to them today. Therefore Flipkart is now working towards creating a marketplace ecosystem that makes it conducive for them to grow and develop going from local to national players in their categories. Flipkart has tied up with multiple government ministries to help artisans shift towards online sales. It has created an exclusive store for Banarasi weaved sarees, as has Snap deal partnered with India Post to enable Varanasi artisans to sell their work on the online platform. Running closely along these catchall platforms, a clutch of start ups have set up innovative business models to help rural artisans reach wider audiences development, thousands of handicraft/handloom artisans have been covered and their hand crafted products are demanded not only in the country but also in overseas countries.

The corporation markets the products of such artisans through its chain of emporia. This is an effective endeavour providing market opportunities to vivacious and vibrant group of thousands of artisans and weavers engaged in various handicrafts such as embroidery stuff, bead work products, wood crafts, printed and woven clothes, pottery and tribal crafts, etc.

Mahila E-Haat is an online marketing platform for meeting aspirations and needs of women entrepreneurs by showcasing their products and services and strengthening their inclusion in the economy. The main objective of this online marketing platform is to facilitate direct contact between the vendor and buyer. It is easy to access as the entire business of E-haat can be handled through a mobile too. This unique e-platform will empower women economically as well as socially. The procedure of displaying the products on the Haat is very simple, transparent and early to follow. Depending upon the prescribed criteria, an in-house committee selects the services for display. Thus, it is a direct online marketing platform and Mahila Ehaat just acts as a facilitator between seller and buyer. Other Efforts: Handicraft E-commerce in India has been growing steadily in recent years, with numerous start ups and some established players, capitalizing on the appeal of traditional Indian arts while making a difference to artisans' lives. According to Ankit Nagori, Senior Vice

President of Flipkart, the local artisans and entrepreneurs deserve a much larger platform than what is available to them today. Therefore Flipkart is now working towards creating a marketplace ecosystem that makes it conducive for them to grow and develop going from local to national players in their categories. Flipkart has tied up with multiple government ministries to help artisans shift towards online sales. It has created an exclusive store for Banarasi weaved sarees, as has Snapdeal partnered with India Post to enable Varanasi artisans to sell their work on the online platform. Running closely along these catchall platforms, a clutch of start ups have set up innovative business models to help rural artisans reach wider audiences.

**Table 1: List of handicraft e-commerce sites**

E- Commerce sites for handicraft	<a href="http://www.utkalika.com">www.utkalika.com</a>
	<a href="http://www.sanskarindia.com">www.sanskarindia.com</a>
	<a href="http://www.itshandmade.in">www.itshandmade.in</a>
	<a href="http://www.spectrahut.com">www.spectrahut.com</a>
	<a href="http://www.indiahatt.in">www.indiahatt.in</a>
	<a href="http://www.villcart.com">www.villcart.com</a>
	<a href="http://www.handicraftshop.in">www.handicraftshop.in</a>
	<a href="http://www.indiamart.com">www.indiamart.com</a>
	<a href="http://www.amazon.co.in">www.amazon.co.in</a>
	<a href="http://www.vyomsho.com">www.vyomsho.com</a>

**SWOT Analysis of Rural Handicraft Artisans Adopting E-Commerce in India**

**S- Strengths**

Unique local raw materials e.g. natural fibers, bamboo, cane, horn, jute, leather, etc. are abundantly available in India, which can be used in a creative and productive way; Indian villages have rich and diversified culture producing wide range of unique and exclusive handicrafts; Strong existing pool of skilled artisans; Increasing knowledge about consumer preference and demand pattern for handicraft items; Increased spread of technology and E-commerce attitude among young artisans; Positive attitude of artisans towards the promotional efforts of governmental and nongovernmental agencies; Less intervention of intermediaries due to e-commerce resulting in to low distribution cost.

**Weaknesses**

Limited E-commerce competence among producer groups; Lack of adequate infrastructure and devices; Lack of awareness about new designs, latest trends and fashions, innovation and technology up gradation; Highly fragmented industry; Unstructured and individualized production systems; Lack of strong umbrella sector organizations, groups or clusters; Limited capital and low investment capacity of artisans; Insufficient market information on export trends, opportunities and prices; Limited access to credit and limited resources for production, distribution and marketing.

**Opportunities**

Global identity of art, artisan and business and broader customer base due to E-commerce; Rising appreciation and demand from consumers in domestic & foreign markets; Government and NGOs' support and interest in preserving the craft and online/offline marketing support; Direct contact of customers and identity of self; Less intervention of

intermediaries can make them fetch good price of the products in the market collaboration with cyber intermediaries on reasonable terms and condition; SHGs collectively can join hands together and can establish common clusters for online marketing.

#### Threats

Low Infrastructural facilities, issues of logistics and network connectivity; Handicrafts sector is not mainstreamed in planning priorities of many State Governments; Languishing crafts due to lack of recognition, proper processes and systems for identification, documentation and mapping of crafts and clusters; The lack of adequate and authentic data on artisans, including their socio-economic status, livelihood conditions and family details is a major bottleneck which adversely affects planning and policy making for this sector; Improper implementation of schemes by government which fails to work in targeted manner and desired outcomes are not achieved; Increasing competition from factory made products and also from foreign players; Decreasing supply of good quality raw material; Better quality components and packaging are expected by other countries; Increasing consumer sophistication and expectations; Absence of institutional support and poor implementation of government programmes encouraging E-commerce activities of rural artisans; Globalization of art but not of artisans; Threats of exploitation by Cyber intermediaries

#### Conclusion

Indian economy mostly depends on agriculture, as millions of people are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture. Besides agriculture, rural arts and crafts give a gainful occupation to a large number of rural populations. They also serve as subsidiary occupation to agriculture and increase their rural income substantially. Major population of our country belongs to rural areas. Any strategy for national development must be associated with the development of its rural areas. Indian villages are full of handicraft artists, as each and every community and region possesses unique characteristics which can be shaped in to small scale or cottage industries. The following efforts can push the growth of such artisans. Individual level efforts: An individual handicraft artisan can develop his/her own website or with the help of cyber mediaries, they can start e-commerce activity; Group level efforts: At village level artisans can organize themselves in to clusters, Co-operatives or Self-Help Groups and start e-commerce activities collectively; NGO and other private institutions can help handicraft artisans to market their products online; Government level efforts: There must be an effective and efficient implementation of various programmes and schemes boosting e-commerce activities for handicraft artisans; Corporate level efforts: Under the head of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), companies can focus on providing e-commerce platform to rural handicraft artisans; Thus, e-commerce can provide such artisans an opportunity to reap the advantage of widened markets beyond the limits of geographical boundaries.

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