

HANDICRAFTS SECTOR IN TAMIL NADU: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Dr.D.Dharmadhurai, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Hindustan College of Arts &Science, Hindustan College of Arts &Science, Padur, Kelambakkam, Chennai – 603 103.

2. Dr. K. Malarvizhi, Vice Principal (A&R) HOD PG Commerce &Research Hindustan College of Arts &Science, Padur, Kelambakkam, Chennai – 603 103.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the problems and prospects of the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu, focusing on both structural challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. The primary objectives are to analyze the issues faced by artisans and to examine the sector's future growth potential. A mixed-method research design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches was adopted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of artisans' socio-economic conditions. Primary data were collected through surveys and interviews, while secondary data were obtained from government reports and academic literature. The hypothesis tested whether demographic variables significantly influence artisans' challenges, with results confirming such associations. The findings reveal that artisans face major difficulties related to market access, financial constraints, and technological adaptation. However, emerging opportunities such as e-commerce, digital literacy, and eco-friendly production practices offer potential for sustainable growth. The study emphasizes the importance of government policy support, skill enhancement, and institutional collaboration in revitalizing the sector. Overall, it advocates for a holistic approach combining tradition, innovation, and sustainability to ensure the long-term prosperity of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts industry.

Keywords: Handicrafts Sector, Sustainable Development, Artisans and Innovation, Market Access and Financial Constraints and Government Policy and Skill Enhancement

INTRODUCTION

The handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu stands as a profound testament to the state's rich cultural legacy and artistic brilliance, reflecting the living traditions of creativity, heritage, and craftsmanship that have flourished for centuries (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019). This sector is not merely an economic activity but a cultural expression of Tamil identity, embodying the aesthetic sensibilities, social values, and spiritual beliefs of its people (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018). Each craft form—whether it be the intricate bronze idols of

Swamimalai, the vibrant handwoven textiles of Kanchipuram, the delicate palm-leaf art of Tirunelveli, or the exquisite stone sculptures of Mahabalipuram—serves as a tangible link between the past and the present, preserving ancient wisdom in material form (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). These works of art exemplify the remarkable skills and devotion of artisans who continue to sustain their crafts amidst changing times (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020).

Deeply rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of the region, the handicrafts tradition of Tamil Nadu has evolved over generations through the transmission of indigenous knowledge and technical expertise (Tiwari & Srinivasan, 2019). Many of these crafts originated in temple architecture and religious practices, where artisans were revered as custodians of divine art forms. Over time, these practices extended beyond the religious sphere, finding expression in household objects, decorative items, and modern artistic innovations (Krishnan & Singh, 2019). The sector today encompasses a broad spectrum of products including textiles, pottery, terracotta, metalwork, woodcraft, glasswork, and embroidery, each reflecting regional styles, natural resources, and historical influences (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018). Collectively, these crafts contribute to the distinct cultural identity of Tamil Nadu and play a vital role in sustaining rural livelihoods, particularly in economically marginalized communities (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020).

Despite its undeniable cultural and historical importance, the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu faces an array of challenges that threaten its sustainability and long-term survival (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019). The rise of industrialization and the mass production of goods have marginalized traditional artisans, who struggle to compete with machine-made products sold at lower prices (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). Moreover, shifting consumer preferences, urbanization, and the global dominance of commercial brands have reduced demand for handmade items. Many artisans also face structural barriers such as inadequate access to credit, limited marketing opportunities, and insufficient exposure to modern technology (Tiwari & Srinivasan, 2019). The younger generation, often drawn to urban employment opportunities, is gradually losing interest in pursuing traditional crafts, leading to the erosion of ancestral skills and declining artisan populations (Krishnan & Singh, 2019).

In addition to economic constraints, the lack of institutional support and market linkages has further compounded the challenges of the handicrafts sector. Although government bodies such as the Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation (Poompuhar) and various cooperative societies have implemented initiatives to promote artisan welfare, their reach and impact remain uneven (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). Technological advancements, while offering potential benefits, also pose a dilemma for traditional artisans who may lack the training or resources to integrate new methods into their production processes (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). The absence of structured training programs and modern design inputs restricts innovation, making it difficult for handicraft products to appeal to contemporary markets both within India and abroad (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018).

Nevertheless, these challenges also open avenues for transformation and sustainable growth (Tiwari & Srinivasan, 2019). The emergence of digital marketplaces, eco-friendly design

trends, and growing global appreciation for handmade and ethically produced goods provide new opportunities for Tamil Nadu's artisans to expand their reach (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). By adapting to changing consumer behaviors and integrating sustainable practices, the sector can revitalize its traditional strengths while embracing modernity (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). Furthermore, strategic collaborations among artisans, designers, government agencies, and private enterprises can help bridge gaps in skill, marketing, and technology, enabling inclusive development (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019).

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the multifaceted dimensions of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts industry—analyzing the complex interplay between tradition and innovation, culture and commerce, and art and sustainability. It examines both the persistent challenges that hinder the sector's growth and the emerging opportunities that hold promise for its rejuvenation. Through an in-depth analysis of artisans' experiences, policy interventions, and market trends, the research aims to formulate a strategic roadmap for sustainable development. Ultimately, the study underscores the need to preserve Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage while empowering its artisans economically, ensuring that this timeless craft tradition continues to thrive in the modern era (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018; Pandian & Raghavan, 2020).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it provides an in-depth understanding of the challenges and prospects of the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu, a vital contributor to the state's cultural and economic landscape (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018). It highlights how educational qualifications influence artisans' ability to adapt to market and technological changes, offering a new perspective for policy and training interventions (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019). The findings serve as a valuable reference for government agencies, NGOs, and development organizations to formulate inclusive programs that enhance artisans' skills and financial access (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). The study also contributes to existing literature by connecting traditional craftsmanship with sustainable development goals (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of digital empowerment and eco-friendly practices in promoting global competitiveness (Tiwari & Srinivasan, 2019). Overall, this research bridges theoretical understanding and practical application, helping preserve Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage while fostering socio-economic growth (Krishnan & Singh, 2019).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Sundaram and Balasubramanian (2018) analyzed the marketing strategies and growth prospects of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts, emphasizing their cultural and economic contributions. Their study revealed that although handicrafts enhance heritage tourism and export potential, the absence of systematic branding and promotional activities limits artisans' income. The authors highlighted the need for modern marketing mechanisms and digital promotion to ensure sustainable growth, but they did not explore how these strategies could integrate with traditional artisan networks.

2. Chidambaram and Rajendran (2019) conducted an empirical investigation into the challenges and opportunities of Tamil Nadu's handicraft sector. They found that artisans face

structural barriers such as limited access to financial institutions, outdated tools, and weak market linkages. Their findings underscored the importance of government support for improving infrastructure and financial literacy. However, the study lacked a comprehensive discussion on how technological innovations could address these persistent issues.

3. Krishnan and Singh (2019) explored the functioning of artisan cooperatives in Tamil Nadu, focusing on their role in promoting local crafts. The study identified that many cooperatives struggle with poor management, inadequate funding, and lack of access to national and global markets. It emphasized the necessity of capacity-building and entrepreneurship training among artisans. Nevertheless, their analysis did not fully address regional disparities or provide a comparative framework for different craft clusters across Tamil Nadu.

4. Tiwari and Srinivasan (2019) investigated the role of skill development and artisan empowerment in promoting sustainable handicraft practices. They reported a sharp decline in youth participation in traditional crafts, attributing it to low income and social prestige. The authors emphasized the urgency of introducing vocational programs and entrepreneurship models to rejuvenate artisan communities. Nonetheless, the study did not extend to analyzing the long-term socio-economic implications of declining generational engagement.

5. Gupta and Murugesan (2020) studied innovation and new product development in the handicrafts sector of Tamil Nadu. They observed that artisans rarely experiment with modern designs or adopt technology due to limited exposure and training opportunities. Their work suggested that integrating design schools, technology institutions, and craft clusters could foster creativity and competitiveness. However, the study did not address how such innovation could balance tradition with modernization in a sustainable manner.

6. Pandian and Raghavan (2020) examined the impact of government policies and schemes aimed at reviving the handicrafts sector. Their research indicated that while various interventions—such as subsidies, craft fairs, and training programs—exist, their implementation is inconsistent and their outcomes often remain unevaluated. They advocated for better coordination among state agencies and industry bodies to enhance artisans' livelihoods. Yet, the study did not investigate how such policy frameworks could be aligned with sustainability and digital innovation goals.

RESEARCH GAP

Existing studies on Tamil Nadu's handicrafts sector have primarily emphasized its cultural and economic significance but provide limited understanding of the relationship between traditional craftsmanship, modern market dynamics, and sustainable development (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018). Research has inadequately addressed the challenges faced by artisans in accessing finance, technology, and structured marketing systems (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019), while most available studies focus on national trends rather than region-specific analyses of Tamil Nadu's artisan clusters (Krishnan & Singh, 2019). Furthermore, there is insufficient evaluation of government initiatives and their actual effectiveness in improving artisans' livelihoods (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). Limited attention has also been given to how innovation and digital literacy can be integrated into traditional crafts without compromising cultural authenticity (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). Additionally, the socio-economic consequences of declining youth participation in the handicrafts profession remain

underexplored (Tiwari & Srinivasan, 2019). Hence, this study seeks to bridge these gaps by offering a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and sustainable prospects for the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu, linking traditional practices with innovation and long-term development strategies (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu, while culturally rich and economically vital, faces several structural and developmental barriers that hinder sustainable growth (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018). Most artisans function within unorganized frameworks, with limited access to financial resources, technological support, and marketing infrastructure, which restricts their competitiveness in domestic and global markets (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019). Market access continues to be a pressing concern due to inadequate promotional strategies and low levels of digital literacy among artisans (Krishnan & Singh, 2019). Financial constraints, including difficulties in obtaining formal credit, further impede production efficiency and expansion (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). The lack of skill enhancement and innovation has resulted in diminishing interest among younger generations, thereby threatening the continuity of traditional crafts (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). Moreover, competition from mass-produced and low-cost industrial goods has marginalized handmade products, reducing their market share (Tiwari & Srinivasan, 2019). The gradual erosion of indigenous knowledge and declining artisan communities have also weakened the sector's cultural foundation (Chidambaram & Rajendran, 2019). Nevertheless, emerging opportunities such as e-commerce platforms, eco-friendly consumer trends, and supportive government policies offer renewed potential for growth (Pandian & Raghavan, 2020). Strengthening skill development initiatives and integrating technology can significantly improve artisans' productivity and market competitiveness (Gupta & Murugesan, 2020). Therefore, a holistic and sustainable approach that blends innovation, skill enhancement, and cultural preservation is essential to revitalize the handicrafts sector and secure its contribution to Tamil Nadu's economy and heritage (Sundaram & Balasubramanian, 2018).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and analyse the problems of the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu.
2. To study on the prospects of the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significance difference between demographic variables and problems of handicrafts sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a **mixed-method research design**, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu. This combination was chosen to ensure a balanced analysis that captures not only numerical trends but also the lived experiences and perceptions of artisans. A **convenience**

sampling technique was employed to select respondents from various handicraft clusters across the state, enabling the inclusion of artisans, craft producers, and industry professionals actively engaged in the sector.

Primary data were collected through well-structured **questionnaires and in-depth interviews**, which provided valuable insights into the socio-economic conditions, challenges, and opportunities faced by artisans. These instruments facilitated both descriptive and interpretive analysis of the sector's dynamics. **Secondary data** were obtained from credible sources such as government publications, annual reports of the Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation, academic journals, and previous research studies related to artisan development and sustainable crafts.

To ensure accuracy and reliability, the collected data were systematically organized and analyzed using both **content analysis** for qualitative information and **statistical techniques** for quantitative responses. The mixed-method framework thus enabled triangulation of findings, enhancing the validity of the study and ensuring that the results reflect both the measurable patterns and the contextual realities of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts industry.

PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The present study used both primary and secondary data for analysis. Primary data were collected from the sample respondents in the study period from July 2025 to October 2025. Secondary data have been collected from the various journals and Ministry of Textiles annual reports from 2023 to 2024.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The handicrafts sector in Tamil Nadu possesses immense potential for achieving **sustainable and inclusive development** through strategic initiatives that merge traditional artistry with modern innovation. This potential lies not only in the preservation of cultural heritage but also in transforming the sector into a viable, competitive, and environmentally responsible industry. As global and domestic markets increasingly value sustainability, authenticity, and ethical production, the handicrafts of Tamil Nadu are uniquely positioned to capitalize on these evolving trends. The following dimensions highlight the key opportunities available for strengthening the sector's resilience and long-term growth.

1. E-Commerce and Digital Market Access:

The rise of digital technologies has revolutionized the way traditional products are marketed and consumed. For Tamil Nadu's artisans—many of whom are located in remote or rural areas—**e-commerce platforms** offer a transformative opportunity to reach national and international buyers without relying solely on intermediaries. Online marketplaces such as Amazon Karigar, Flipkart Samarth, and government-supported portals like India Handloom Brand have already begun connecting artisans with global audiences. By utilizing digital platforms, artisans can showcase their crafts through virtual exhibitions, engage in direct-to-

consumer sales, and build brand recognition for region-specific products such as Kanchipuram silk, Swamimalai bronze idols, and Thanjavur paintings. Additionally, social media marketing enables artisans to establish personal connections with customers, share stories of craftsmanship, and build trust that enhances the perceived value of handmade goods. However, to fully realize this potential, **digital literacy training and technological support** must be provided to artisans, ensuring equitable participation in the global digital economy.

2. Skill Development and Capacity Building:

Sustained competitiveness in the handicrafts industry depends heavily on **continuous skill enhancement** and innovation. The traditional artisan community, while rich in cultural knowledge, often lacks exposure to modern design trends, quality improvement techniques, and market-driven production methods. Implementing structured **training and capacity-building programs** can empower artisans to integrate contemporary design principles with traditional aesthetics. Such programs should include modules on product diversification, modern finishing techniques, color theory, digital design, and business management. Partnerships between government training institutes, design schools, and private enterprises can further enhance artisans' creativity and technical proficiency. Moreover, the inclusion of younger generations through vocational education and entrepreneurship programs can rejuvenate declining craft clusters, ensuring **intergenerational continuity** and innovation in traditional crafts. By fostering design-thinking skills and encouraging experimentation, artisans can adapt to global consumer trends without diluting the authenticity of their craft traditions.

3. Government Intervention and Policy Support:

Effective **policy intervention** plays a critical role in strengthening the economic base of the handicrafts sector. Government initiatives such as financial assistance schemes, raw material banks, and infrastructure development projects can create a supportive ecosystem for artisans. Strengthened collaboration between artisans, cooperatives, and government agencies—such as the Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation (Poompuhar)—can enhance the efficiency of resource distribution, marketing, and export promotion. The introduction of microfinance schemes, simplified loan approvals, and subsidies for eco-friendly production methods can encourage artisans to modernize their practices. Additionally, the organization of **trade fairs, cultural exhibitions, and buyer-seller meets** can boost visibility and connect artisans to domestic and international markets. To ensure long-term effectiveness, these policies must also include mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating their impact on artisan livelihoods, sustainability, and gender inclusivity.

4. Promotion of Sustainable and Ethical Production:

In the context of growing global awareness about environmental sustainability, Tamil Nadu's handicrafts have a competitive advantage due to their reliance on **natural, locally sourced materials** and **low-carbon production processes**. Encouraging artisans to adopt eco-friendly techniques—such as natural dyeing, waste recycling, and energy-efficient production—can further align the sector with international sustainability standards. Ethical practices, including fair wages, safe working conditions, and community-based production, can enhance the sector's reputation in ethical consumer markets. Moreover, incorporating **eco-certification**

and fair-trade labeling can improve export potential and consumer confidence. The emphasis on sustainability not only protects the environment but also reinforces the authenticity and long-term cultural value of handicrafts, making them more attractive to conscious consumers globally.

5. Integration of Innovation and Cultural Preservation:

Balancing **innovation with cultural preservation** is essential to ensure that modernization does not erode the traditional identity of Tamil Nadu's crafts. Collaborative projects between artisans and designers can generate hybrid products that appeal to modern consumers while maintaining traditional motifs and craftsmanship. Research institutions and universities can play a significant role by documenting traditional techniques, developing new product lines inspired by heritage art forms, and facilitating design innovation workshops. Such initiatives can help position Tamil Nadu's handicrafts as both contemporary lifestyle products and cultural artifacts of historical importance.

6. Global Branding and Market Positioning:

To enhance international visibility, there is a need to develop strong **regional branding strategies** that highlight the unique cultural identity of Tamil Nadu's crafts. Establishing geographical indication (GI) tags for more traditional products, along with branding initiatives like "Made in Tamil Nadu," can differentiate authentic handmade goods from imitations. Collaboration with tourism departments can further integrate handicrafts into cultural tourism circuits, allowing visitors to experience production processes firsthand and purchase directly from artisans. This form of experiential marketing not only strengthens local economies but also fosters cultural appreciation and sustainable livelihood development.

In conclusion, the future of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts sector lies in its ability **to adapt, innovate, and sustain** while remaining true to its traditional roots. A holistic development framework that emphasizes **digital transformation, skill enhancement, institutional collaboration, eco-friendly practices, and global branding** can create a vibrant, self-reliant, and globally competitive handicraft industry. By embracing these opportunities, Tamil Nadu can ensure that its centuries-old artistic legacy continues to thrive in a rapidly changing world, contributing both to cultural preservation and sustainable economic growth.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

TABLE 1
One way ANOVA for Educational and Qualification and Problems of Handicrafts sector

Variables	Educational Qualification	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	F	Sig.
Market Access and Promotion	Up to 8 th std	218	3.504	1.270	1.270	1.649	0.001*
	SSLC	90	3.411	1.373	1.373		
	ITI / Diploma	78	3.833	1.323	1.323		
	Graduate	14	3.500	1.400	1.400		
	Total	400	3.547	1.312	1.312		
Financial Constraints	Up to 8 th std	218	3.247	1.338	1.338	4.490	0.004*

	SSLC	90	3.688	1.337	1.337		
	ITI / Diploma	78	3.717	1.308	1.308		
	Graduate	14	4.000	1.240	1.240		
	Total	400	3.465	1.346	1.346		
Skill Upgradation and Innovation	Up to 8 th std	218	3.656	1.454	1.454	2.965	0.032*
	SSLC	90	3.144	1.525	1.525		
	ITI / Diploma	78	3.371	1.495	1.495		
	Graduate	14	3.142	1.292	1.292		
	Total	400	3.467	1.484	1.484		
Competition from Mass-Produced Goods	Up to 8 th std	218	3.454	1.123	1.123	4.946	0.002*
	SSLC	90	2.911	1.205	1.205		
	ITI / Diploma	78	3.359	1.056	1.056		
	Graduate	14	3.285	1.204	1.204		
	Total	400	3.307	1.149	1.149		

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

The table presents the relationship between **educational qualification** and various **problems faced by handicraft artisans** in Tamil Nadu. The variables analyzed include *Market Access and Promotion*, *Financial Constraints*, *Skill Upgradation and Innovation*, and *Competition from Mass-Produced Goods*. For **Market Access and Promotion**, the mean scores indicate that respondents with **ITI/Diploma qualifications (Mean = 3.833)** experience slightly higher challenges compared to those with lower educational levels. This suggests that artisans with technical training may be more aware of marketing limitations and competitive disadvantages in reaching wider markets. In terms of **Financial Constraints**, artisans with **Graduate qualifications (Mean = 4.000)** reported facing greater financial challenges compared to other groups. This could be attributed to their higher expectations for capital investment and expansion, which may not be adequately supported by existing financial systems. Regarding **Skill Upgradation and Innovation**, respondents educated up to the **8th standard (Mean = 3.656)** appear to encounter more difficulties in acquiring new skills and adopting modern technologies. This highlights a significant gap in training access and technological exposure among less-educated artisans. For **Competition from Mass-Produced Goods**, artisans with education **up to 8th standard (Mean = 3.454)** reported stronger concerns compared to other groups, indicating that less-educated artisans are more vulnerable to the market dominance of cheaper, machine-made alternatives. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study, though insightful, is confined to selected districts of Tamil Nadu and may not fully represent all handicraft clusters in the state.
- The use of convenience sampling may have introduced respondent bias due to limited random selection.
- The study did not compare variations among different types of crafts, and the short data collection period restricted analysis of seasonal or long-term trends.

FINDINGS

- The analysis reveals a **significant relationship** between the educational qualification of artisans and the various problems they face in the handicrafts sector of Tamil Nadu.
- The study focuses on four key variables — **Market Access and Promotion, Financial Constraints, Skill Upgradation and Innovation, and Competition from Mass-Produced Goods.**
- The findings show that artisans with **ITI/Diploma qualifications (Mean = 3.833)** face greater challenges in market access and promotion, indicating that technically trained artisans are more aware of marketing and competitive limitations.
- In terms of **financial constraints**, artisans with **graduate-level education (Mean = 4.000)** experience more financial difficulties, possibly due to higher expectations for capital investment and limited institutional financial support.
- Regarding **skill upgradation and innovation**, artisans educated up to the **8th standard (Mean = 3.656)** face more obstacles in learning new techniques and adapting to modern technologies, highlighting a lack of access to training opportunities.
- For **competition from mass-produced goods**, artisans with **lower educational levels (Mean = 3.454)** are more affected by the dominance of machine-made products, which are cheaper and more readily available in the market.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Enhance Digital Literacy and E-Commerce Access:

Special training programs should be organized to educate artisans on the use of e-commerce platforms, digital payments, and online marketing tools. This will enable them to reach a wider global audience, reduce dependence on intermediaries, and increase income stability.

2. Strengthen Skill Development and Design Innovation:

Continuous training and capacity-building workshops must be conducted in collaboration with design institutes and craft development centers. These programs should emphasize innovation, quality improvement, and market-driven product diversification while preserving traditional art forms.

3. Increase Financial Support and Access to Credit:

The government and financial institutions should introduce flexible microfinance schemes, low-interest loans, and simplified procedures for artisans. Such support can help artisans expand production, upgrade equipment, and adopt sustainable technologies.

4. Promote Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Production:

Artisans should be encouraged to use natural dyes, recycled materials, and energy-efficient production techniques. Introducing eco-certification and fair-trade labeling can enhance the market value and export potential of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts.

5. Policy Integration and Institutional Collaboration:

A coordinated policy framework involving the Ministry of Textiles, Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation (Poompuhar), and local cooperatives is essential.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of existing schemes should be carried out to ensure transparency and long-term effectiveness.

6. Youth Engagement and Entrepreneurship Promotion:

Special initiatives must be taken to attract younger generations into the handicrafts sector through vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and startup grants. This will ensure the continuity of traditional crafts while introducing new ideas and innovations.

7. Global Branding and Market Positioning:

Efforts should be made to establish a strong brand identity for Tamil Nadu's handicrafts through geographical indication (GI) tags, trade fairs, tourism collaborations, and "Made in Tamil Nadu" branding. Such initiatives will increase international visibility and market competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that educational qualification significantly influences the challenges faced by handicraft artisans in Tamil Nadu, particularly in areas such as market access, financial support, skill development, and competition from mass-produced goods. Artisans with higher education levels show greater awareness of business and financial issues, while those with lower education levels struggle with modern techniques and innovation. To strengthen the sector, there is a pressing need for skill enhancement, digital literacy, and financial inclusion among artisans. The adoption of sustainable practices and stronger government policy support can further promote growth and resilience. By integrating e-commerce, eco-friendly production, and youth participation, the sector can achieve global recognition. A holistic approach combining education, innovation, and sustainability is essential for the long-term prosperity of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts industry.

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