

# Innovations

## Crafting a Brand: Marketing Handicrafts in the Modern Age

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**Abstract :** *In an era where cultural heritage intersects with economic opportunity, the handicraft industry stands at a pivotal juncture. This research paper delves into the intricate relationship between marketing and this vibrant sector, unveiling the art of effectively showcasing its unique value proposition on the global stage. Amidst a growing consumer demand for authenticity and personalization, the paper explores how strategic marketing can empower artisans to overcome challenges, bridge the gap between tradition and technology, and connect with international audiences. Key findings reveal a dynamic landscape where limited resources, lack of marketing expertise, and fierce competition pose hurdles for artisans. However, the paper identifies promising opportunities through the power of storytelling, digital platforms, strategic collaborations, and a focus on niche markets. By embracing sustainable practices and leveraging innovation, the handicraft industry can weave a tapestry of success, preserving cultural heritage while ensuring the economic empowerment of artisans and contributing to a more vibrant global marketplace.*

**Keywords:** *Handicraft product, marketing, marketing strategies, challenges*

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**Introduction:** The handicraft industry, a vibrant tapestry woven with tradition, skill, and cultural heritage, faces a unique challenge: bridging the gap between age-old artistry and the ever-evolving landscape of marketing. From intricate pottery to woven tapestries, each piece embodies a narrative, carrying whispers of the artisan's passion and cultural touch. Yet, navigating the complexities of modern marketing can feel like traversing uncharted territory for these often-small-scale businesses.

This research paper explores the world of marketing for the handicraft industry, highlighting its significance, key challenges, and promising opportunities. We'll explore the growing consumer demand for authenticity and personalization, fuelled by a desire to move beyond mass-produced goods. The paper also sheds light on the distinct challenges faced by artisans, such as limited resources, lack of marketing expertise, and fierce competition.

However, the outlook is not without optimism. Technological advancements offer exciting possibilities, from e-commerce platforms to social media, opening doors to wider audiences and global markets. Understanding these trends and leveraging the power of storytelling to showcase the craftsmanship and cultural significance of each piece becomes crucial.

The demand for handmade products is in high demand. But the question is, is the demand for handicraft products fulfilled? Probably the answer to this question is a bit difficult to answer but not at all impossible. This research paper gives some insights into the role of marketing in the field of handicraft industry.

### **What is handicraft?**

Handicrafts are goods predominantly made by hand even though some tools or machinery may also be used in the process; such goods are graced with visual appeal like ornamentation of in-lay work or some similar work of a substantial nature; possess distinctive features, which can be aesthetic, artistic, ethnic or culturally attached and are amply different from mechanically produced goods of similar utility (as per GST Council).

### **What is marketing?**

The father of modern marketing Dr. Philip Kotler defines marketing as “the science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures, and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services”.

### **The role of marketing in the handicraft industry.**

Handicraft products that showcase the heritage of Indian culture. These products preserve traditional crafts, support local artisans, and contribute to sustainable practices. The artistic qualities in these unique products add aesthetic value to the community and the country in turn. To reach out this product to the end users marketing is a must and should way. As marketing strategies are improving from time to time, the implementation of these strategies in the handicraft industry is a need of the hour.

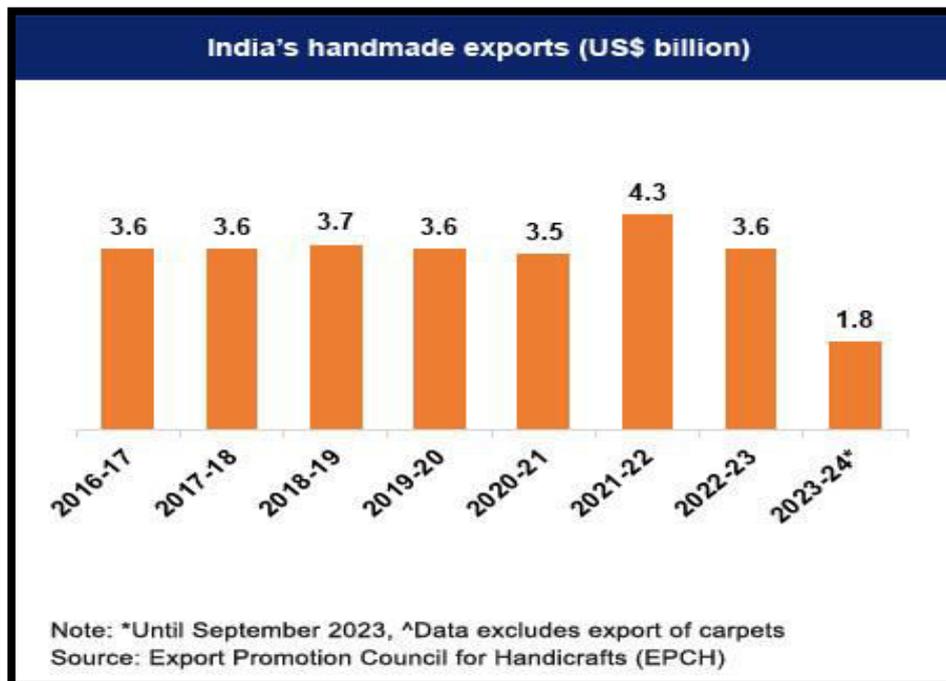
Today's consumers yearn for authenticity and personalization, seeking products that tell a story and reflect their values. This trend presents a golden opportunity for the handicraft industry, where each piece embodies a unique narrative, carrying the artisan's cultural heritage and passion. Effective marketing capitalizes on this shift by highlighting the stories behind the craft, showcasing the intricate details and cultural richness embedded in each product.

### **Expansion of the Indian handicraft market across the globe**

The Indian handicraft industry stands at a pivotal juncture, poised to expand its global footprint. By capitalizing on the growing demand for authenticity, harnessing the power of digitalization, and addressing existing challenges, this sector can weave a tapestry of success, preserving cultural heritage while empowering artisans and connecting them with the world. Through continued

innovation, collaboration, and strategic marketing efforts, the Indian handicraft industry can embark on a sustainable journey of global expansion, sharing its cultural richness and artistic legacy with the world.

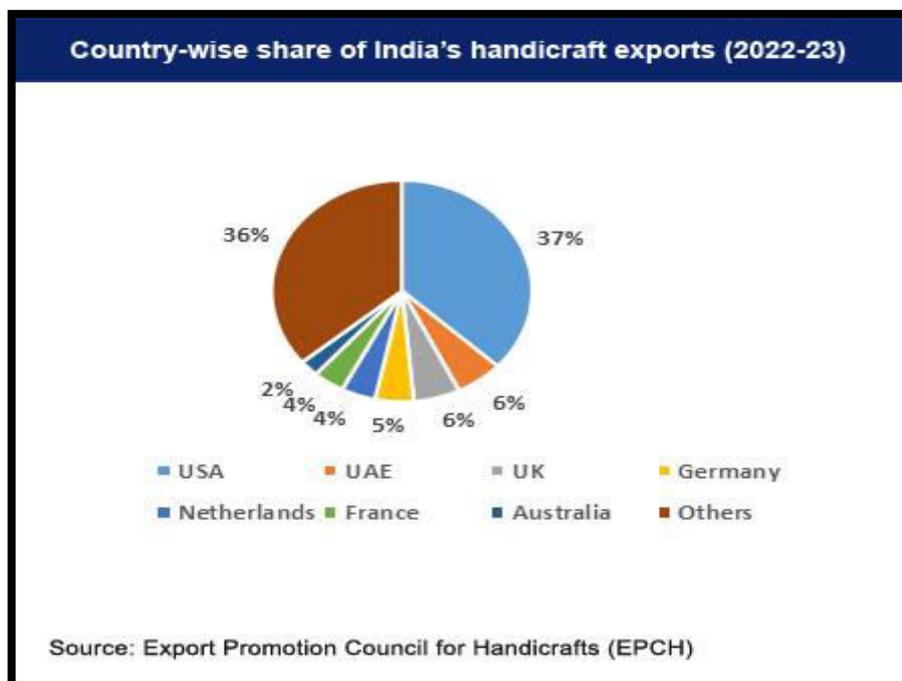
India reigns supreme in the global handicraft market, holding the title of one of the largest exporters and a clear leader in the homemade carpet segment, dominating both volume and value. This dominance is underscored by impressive figures: in the first half of FY23 (April-September), handicraft exports soared to Rs. 14,791 crore (US\$ 1.77 billion), reaching Rs. 30,019 crore (US\$ 3.60 billion) for the entire FY23. This robust growth reflects a 25.7% increase from the previous year, with total exports in 2021-22 reaching US\$ 4.35 billion. Notably, handmade goods, particularly carpets, have witnessed consistent growth over the past three years, with India capturing roughly 40% of the global market share for handmade carpets. India's carpet exports in FY23 stood at US\$ 1.36 billion, demonstrating a slight decrease from the previous year's US\$ 1.79 billion but surpassing the US\$ 1.37 billion recorded in FY20.



Driven by their inherent beauty and unique character, Indian handicraft products continue to witness a surge in demand across international markets. The United States stands as the leading importer, absorbing a staggering 37% of India's total handicraft exports during 2022-23. Other key destinations include the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and France, highlighting the widespread appeal of Indian craftsmanship.

Similarly, India's exquisite carpets have found homes in over 70 countries worldwide. The United States remains the primary importer, followed by Australia and various European nations like the UAE, the UK, and Germany.

Notably, these top four destinations collectively account for almost half of India's total carpet exports, emphasizing the country's dominant position in this segment.



### Review of Literature

The study (Indrajit Ghosal, 2020) describes the challenges that are faced by the handicraft industry, and the way to the solution is been briefly described with the help of marketing especially with e-commerce. The growth of handicraft units will also lead to the growth of RURBAN centers. The role of web-based advertising is to attract more people to the handicraft products of the country. The reach out of handicraft products is the most required for the growth of the handicraft sector. The study is explained through the Ishikawa diagram which explains the problem and solution through the fishbone diagram.

Marketing plays a pivotal role in the handicraft sector. Though the country is rich in cultural heritage and produces a variety of handmade products that are very popular worldwide faces the major hurdle of the marketing aspect. The study provides the view of problems that are faced by the handicraft units in selling out the product or reaching the customers. The author(Megha, 2019) has provided a SWOT analysis of the handicraft sector in particular with the marketing aspect. Based on the problems some of the suggestions have been provided to overcome the threats and weaknesses.

The research paper (Kumari, 2016) speaks about the various government schemes that encourage the marketing of handicraftproducts in India. The schemes aim at "Make in India" and provide the various schemes and eligibility criteria for handicrafts products to avail the services. Customer-oriented market is needed to improve the marketing sector of handicraft products. Awareness of

marketing support that is already available to artisans should be done to improve the outreach of handicraft products.

Highlighting the importance of the Indian handicraft industry in the Indian Economy through the marketing aspects by the author (Hashmi, 2012). Handicrafts are been categorized into articles of everyday use and decorative items in the paper. Country-wise export is been considered for the analysis of the contribution of handicrafts in the country's economy. The USA is the top country to export, followed by the UK, Germany and many more. SWOT analysis of the Indian handicraft industry provides in-depth detail about the areas of improvement needed to contribute more to the country's economy.

(Prasad & Ghosal, 2019) stretches information about the online mode of advertising and its effect on the marketing of handicraft products. Offline advertising is sufficient for local customers but to expand the customer's flow to the business over and above the local customers, one has to go with online marketing techniques. The online portal market acts as a catalyst for changing customers' buying patterns and also accelerates customer awareness.

(Kumar & PV, 2013) states that Internet marketing of Handicraft products is a new strategic approach to improve the sales of the handicraft industry. The number of internet users is on an upward trend which automatically leads to an increase in the viewers of the advertisement broadcast. In comparison with the traditional way of advertising, internet marketing is taking over the eyes of the consumers and prospective consumers.

## **Objectives**

1. To study and analyse the promotional and marketing techniques employed and efficiency in enhancing the outreach and visibility of handicraft units
2. To study the challenges faced in promoting and marketing handicraft products
3. To study the awareness level and availing the promotional and marketing support provided by government and non-government institutions.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Type of Research**

The type of research used in this research paper is Descriptive, Exploratory, and Analytical research.

**Descriptive Research:** Describes the marketing influence in the handicraft industry. The paper describes the role of marketing in the handicraft industry and its importance—the efficiency of various marketing strategies and the visibility of handmade products.

**Exploratory Research:** research aimed at exploring the issue concerning marketing support that is available and the artisans availing those services to increase the widespread

**Analytical Research:** Based on the hypotheses tested we evaluated the variable/facts and figures representing their perspective on marketing in the handicraft sector.

### **Type of Data**

The type of data used in this research paper is Quantitative data.

Quantitative data describes data collected from the respondents through a systematic questionnaire. The data collected is analyzed with the use of statistical tools in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Based on the variables considered it has fulfilled the objectives in this research paper. The output that we have got from SPSS gives accurate information related to the data collected. The information is further considered for analysis.

### **Sampling**

The data is collected by surveying through a methodical questionnaire and the area of survey is Bengaluru city. The sample size is 453. The sampling method used is a simple random sampling technique.

### **Data collection**

A theoretical framework was developed from secondary data consisting of published articles, journals, and websites. In line with the research objective, primary data was collected through a systematic questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **Table 1: Table and chart representing the promotional and marketing techniques employed and the efficacy of marketing platforms in enhancing the outreach and visibility of institutions by handicraft units**

The handicraft industry employs various promotional and marketing techniques to showcase its unique, handmade products. Craft fairs and exhibitions serve as platforms for artisans to display their creations, attracting potential customers and fostering direct connections. Social media plays a crucial role, allowing artisans to share their work globally, engage with a broader audience, and build a brand presence. Collaborations with influencers and bloggers can amplify visibility. Additionally, targeted email campaigns, online marketplaces, and partnerships with local stores contribute to reaching diverse consumer bases. Utilizing storytelling in promotional materials enhances the emotional connection, emphasizing handmade items' craftsmanship and cultural significance, differentiating them in the market.

As the rich cultural tapestry of India weaves through its handicraft products, the marketing landscape becomes intricate and nuanced. This research delves into the importance of evaluating the efficacy of measurement techniques employed by handicraft institutions. By meticulously examining how these institutions gauge their marketing strategies, the research paper aims to uncover insights into the enhancement of outreach and visibility. This exploration is not only a testament to the vibrancy of Indian handicrafts but also a strategic endeavor to optimize

marketing practices for sustained impact in a diverse and competitive market. The marketing strategies are analyzed through a 5-point Likert scale.

The various marketing platforms included social media marketing, E-commerce platforms, Crafts, fairs & exhibitions, Collaborations with retailers, Traditional marketing, Online advertising, Influencer partnerships, and Workshops and training programs.

Sl. No.	Promotional & Marketing Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
1	Collaborations with retailers	272	60.00%
2	Influencer partnerships	241	53.20%
3	Craft fairs and exhibitions	240	53.00%
4	Workshops and training programs	216	47.70%
5	Online advertising	114	25.20%
6	Social media marketing	90	19.90%
7	E-commerce platforms	77	17.00%
8	Traditional advertising	10	2.20%
9	Others	9	2.00%

**Interpretation:** Out of 453 respondents, most agreed that collaborations with retailers are the best practice for promoting and marketing handicraft products. Followed by Influencer partnerships and craft fairs and exhibitions which is 53% each of the respondents. Traditional advertising takes the least form of marketing techniques. Online advertising, social media marketing, and e-commerce platforms are almost on the same level which is not so effectively utilized by the handicraft units.



Promotional Marketing Techniques	&	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not much effective	Not at all effective	Total
Collaborations with retailers	F	41	224	5	2	0	272
	%	15.07	82.35	1.84	0.74	0.00	
Influencer Partnerships	F	90	143	8	0	0	241
	%	37.34	59.34	3.32	0.00	0.00	
Craft fairs and exhibitions	F	108	128	2	2	0	240
	%	45.00	53.33	0.83	0.83	0.00	
Workshops and training programs	F	31	178	5	2	0	216
	%	14.35	82.41	2.31	0.93	0.00	
Online advertising	F	63	47	4	0	0	114
	%	55.26	41.23	3.51	0.00	0.00	
Social media marketing	F	18	64	8	0	0	90
	%	20.00	71.11	8.89	0.00	0.00	
E-commerce platforms	F	10	59	8	0	0	77
	%	12.99	76.62	10.39	0.00	0.00	
Traditional advertising	F	4	4	2	0	0	10
	%	40.00	40.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	

Source: Primary data

The table represents the effectiveness of various promotional and marketing techniques which are adopted by the handicraft industry. 272 (60%) of the respondents out of 453 respondents have collaborated with retailers to sell their products out of which 224 of them have agreed that it is an effective way to sell their products and 41 of them said it is a very effective way of marketing. 90 and 143 respondents out of 241 respondents are promoting their products through influencer marketing and find it a very effective and effective way to reach customers.

In online advertising, the majority of the respondents who are into online marketing find it very effective compared to other forms.

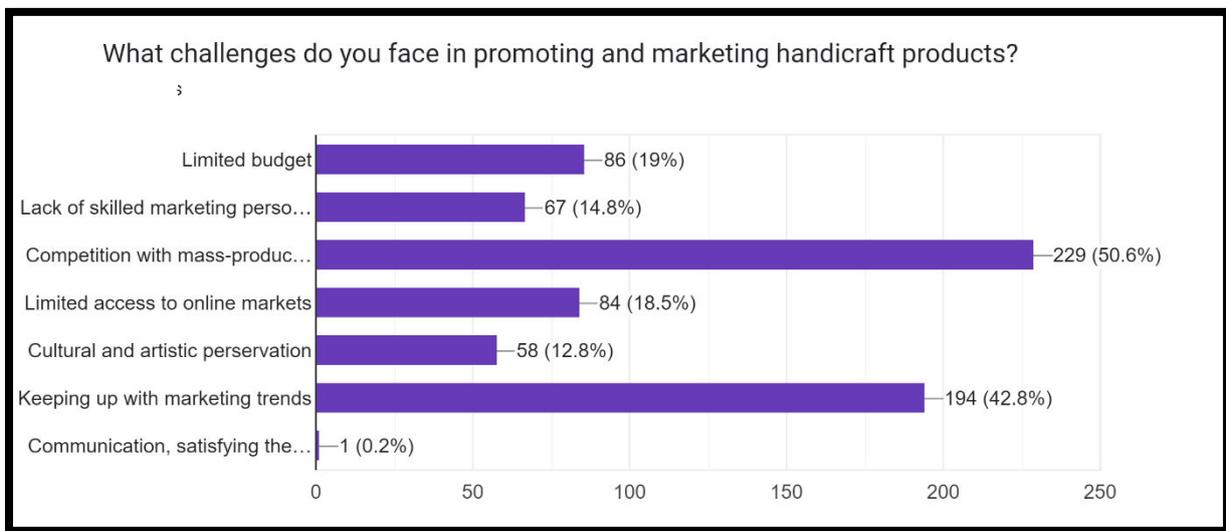
**Table 2: Challenges faced by handicraft units in promoting and marketing**

The handicraft industry, a vibrant tapestry woven with tradition, cultural heritage, and skilled artistry, faces an uphill battle in promoting and marketing its unique products. While these creations hold immense value, both aesthetically and economically, navigating the modern marketplace presents a distinct set of challenges. This research paper delves into the intricacies of this struggle,

examining the various roadblocks that hinder the growth and sustainability of the handicraft sector.

This research paper aims to shed light on these multifaceted challenges, analyzing their impact on the handicraft industry. By understanding the complexities involved, we can pave the way for solutions that empower artisans, revitalize this valuable sector, and ensure the continued heritage cultural heritage through exquisite craft traditions.

The various challenges faced by artisans in promoting and marketing handicraft products have been categorized into Limited budget, Lack of skilled marketing personnel, Competition with mass-produced goods, Limited access to online markets, Cultural and artistic preservation, Keeping up with marketing trends, and other



Source: Primary data

Sl. No.	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
1	Competition with mass-produced goods	229	55.60%
2	Keeping up with marketing trends	194	42.80%
3	Limited budget	86	19.00%
4	Limited access to online markets	84	18.50%
5	Lack of skilled marketing personnel	67	14.80%
6	Cultural and artistic preservation	58	12.80%
7	Others	1	0.20%

**Interpretation:** The table represents the results of a survey of 453 people about the challenges they face in promoting and marketing handicraft products. The most common challenge, cited by 50.6% of respondents, is competition with mass-produced goods. Other challenges include keeping up with marketing trends (42.8%), a limited budget (19%), limited access to online markets (18.5%), a lack of skilled marketing personnel (14.8%), and cultural and artistic preservation (12.8%)

**Table 3: Awareness of the promotional and marketing support and the benefits received**

Research suggests that awareness about government and non-government (NGO) support for promoting and marketing handicraft products remains limited among artisans, particularly in rural areas. This lack of awareness hinders their ability to access valuable resources and expand their reach.

Factors contributing to low awareness are the information dissemination gap, language barrier, complexity of the application process, and many more.

The handicraft industry in Karnataka is a vibrant sector, employing a significant number of artisans and contributing to the state's cultural heritage. To support and promote this industry, several government and non-government institutions offer various promotional and marketing initiatives. Here's a list of some of these programs:

**Government Initiatives in Karnataka**

- Department of Handloom, Sericulture and Crafts (DHSC)
- Karnataka Handloom Development Corporation (KHDC)
- Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC)

**Non-Government Initiatives**

- The Karnataka Craft Council (KCC)
- The Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD)
- Self Help Groups (SHGs)

The table represents the number of artisans who are aware of the promotional and marketing support that is already available and the number of artisans who have availed of the services of the support. The table indicates that 304 respondents out of 453 respondents are aware of the available marketing support. But only 105 respondents out of 304 have availed of the benefit, which means only 35% of respondents who are aware of the services have utilized the support, the rest others have clearly said that due to huge procedures, they haven't opted for the benefit. 149 respondents out of 453, are not at all aware of the support that is provided by government or non-government institutions.

<b>Awareness about promotional and marketing support provided by government and non-governmental institutions for promoting handicraft products * Received any governmental or non-governmental support for promoting your handicraft products?</b>				
		Received any governmental or non-governmental support for promoting your handicraft products?		Total
		Yes	No	
Awareness about promotional	Yes	105	199	304

and marketing support provided by government and non-governmental agencies for promoting handicraft products	No	0	149	149
Total		105	348	453

105 respondents out of 453 respondents are the beneficiaries of marketing support from government and non-government institutions. Though 304 respondents are aware of marketing support that is available through various sources, only 105 of the respondents have made use of it. Left out 199 of them said due to a huge procedure they have not availed the support. 149 respondents said they are not aware of the promotional and marketing support that is available which ends up with not taking the benefit of the marketing support that is already available.

**Hypothesis**

H0	There exists a negative relationship between awareness level and availing the benefit of marketing support	Failed to accept
H1	There exists a positive relationship between awareness level and availing the benefit of marketing support	Accept

<b>Correlations</b>				
			Awareness about promotional and marketing support provided by government and non-governmental agencies for promoting handicraft products	Received any governmental or non-governmental support for promoting your handicraft products?
Awareness about promotional and marketing support provided by government and non-governmental agencies for promoting handicraft products	Pearson Correlation		1	.385**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		453	453
Received any governmental or non-	Pearson Correlation		.385**	1

governmental support for promoting your handicraft products?	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	453	453
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Correlation is the degree of relationship between the variables represented by the correlation coefficient. The two variables i.e., Awareness about promotional and marketing support provided by the government and non-government institutions for promoting handicraft products and receiving any governmental or non-governmental support for promoting your handicraft product. From the above table, it is observed the significance level is 0.000 which is  $< 0.05$ . Therefore, the Null hypothesis failed to be accepted. That means, “There exists a positive relationship between awareness level and availing the benefit of marketing support”.

**Conclusion**

As we conclude our exploration of the intricate relationship between marketing and the handicraft industry, it becomes evident that this vibrant sector stands at a crossroads. The demand for authenticity and cultural expression fuels a golden opportunity, yet challenges like limited resources and fierce competition persist. However, this journey need not be one of struggle, but rather one of transformation.

The handicraft industry has the potential to not only thrive but also flourish in the years to come. By harnessing the power of marketing, embracing technological advancements, and addressing existing challenges, artisans can share their cultural heritage with the world while ensuring the sustainability of their practices. This requires continued collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to showcasing the art form's intrinsic value.

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