



# Awareness of Rural Artisans Towards digital media

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## *Abstract*

The emergence of rural artisans as a distinct social group seems correlated with the emergence of settled agriculture and habitation. As per the economic survey, more than 50% population lives in rural areas. Digital media offers numerous opportunities for rural artisans to expand their reach and grow their businesses. This research investigates the awareness of rural artisans towards digital media, aiming to understand their readiness to integrate digital tools and platforms into their businesses. Through a comprehensive exploration of their familiarity, perceptions, and experiences with digital media, this study sheds light on the opportunities and challenges faced by rural artisans in leveraging technology for growth. The research delves into various aspects including the current awareness level of digital media, artisans' perceptions and attitudes towards digitalization, challenges in accessing and utilizing digital technology, the effectiveness of training and support programs, governmental and organizational initiatives, the impact of cultural factors, and the future outlook of rural artisans regarding digital media integration. By addressing these inquiries, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of rural artisans' engagement with digital media, offering insights to inform strategies for their digital empowerment and economic development which is confirmed by p- values for eight opinions by Chi Square test are 0.0233, 0.024, 0.026, 0.01656, 0.007, 0.0167, 0.0023 and 1.05E04. For statistical Analysis I have used ORIGIN 2019 Software.

**Keywords:** Rural artisans, Digital media, innovation, technology, internet and Digital marketing

## **1. Introduction:**

The development of crafts in society was an indication of the stirring and softening of humanism as well as the cultivation of sensitivity. It represented humanity's attempt to infuse grace and elegance into an otherwise harsh and uninteresting human existence (Chattopadhyay, 1980). Quite the reverse—they are the most impacted group, cut off from all social and financial resources. Nearly 70% of the population, as reported by the 2011 census, resides in Indian villages, with the majority of them belonging to the unorganized sector. To help the rural artesian industry enhance quality and raise the standard, the government should adopt developmental policies in accordance with the rural development plan. However, it will also serve to increase the self-assurance of the craftspeople working in these fields. India's main industry for creating jobs has traditionally been the handicraft sector. It also aids in the preservation of Indian heritage, art, and culture. Thus, the handicraft sector aids in uncovering the hidden gems inside any given culture or society. Mahatma Gandhi has always supported the revival of village laws and customs. His goal was to create a system that would allow people to be really autonomous and self-sufficient. Gandhi jee's strategy was always centered on sustainable development; it discussed boosting handloom, handicraft, and other rural businesses. The holistic view of traditional handicrafts and craftsmanship should constantly consider the makers' body, mind, and emotions working in perfect harmony. Even though these artists have made enormous contributions to human history and legacy, there are still many unanswered questions about their socioeconomic status and standard of living.

The market has changed significantly over the past ten years, with customers increasingly turning to social networking sites rather than more conventional sources of information like television, newspapers, and other media to learn about different goods and services [Bruno, 2016]. One in seven people have a Facebook page these days, and almost four out of every five internet users are connected to at least one social networking platform. Understanding online customer

behavior has become essential for large businesses due to the steady rise in the number of people using social media. The rise of social media caused a shift in the way people consumed media, which compelled businesses and organizations to use online media as a part of their public relations and marketing campaigns. [Kaur, 2016]. Due to all of these factors, social media and websites have established themselves as a reliable E-Commerce platform for reaching out to both present and potential clients with information and services.

The term "Social Media" consists of two words: "Social" refers to exchanging information with others in a friendly and companionable manner, and "Media" refers to communication tools that are widely available to the public, such as television, newspapers, and the internet. Social media, put simply, is a type of web-based social communication tool that encourages interaction between users through content exchange and consumption. Social networking is a means of bringing people together in places of employment, higher education, etc. and offers chat rooms, message boards, and the opportunity for users to post comments and engage in conversation with one another [Lon, 2009]. In contrast to traditional media, which is often produced and managed by a small group of individuals, it enables users to express their thoughts and fosters community. [Akashraj, 2014]. Researchers have noted that social media serves as a kind of canopy for individuals who congregate online to share and exchange knowledge, insights, and viewpoints through communicational means. Singh (2018) Online social media platforms have developed from being merely a place for people to communicate to becoming a force for change that influences people's daily lives and activities. Users, social linkages, and interactive interactions make up the three components of social networking services. [Jena, 2013]. Based on the available data, it is evident that social media plays a critical role in economic development, professional network building, and knowledge acquisition through the use of social media's innovative content, even in times of pandemic when most businesses fail.

Product marketing, as defined by any kind of media, is the social process by which individuals and organizations create, offer, and freely exchange valuable goods and services with one another in order to fulfill their needs and desires. (Kotler, Philip). One of the most valuable channels via which businesses may disseminate information about their brand and merchandise is social media marketing. E-marketing is crucial to the success or failure of any sector since it provides a wealth of information on product features, costs, availability, and end uses while also encouraging consumers to purchase the goods. As per Kumar (2013). It is the newest fad that has emerged in recent years and has taken over internet communication. This type of online marketing employs many social media channels to accomplish advertising and marketing goals. For marketing and sales purposes, it entails posting photographs, videos, and other information. Businesses use internet marketing strategies to concentrate on identifying the correct demographic to target and customer online brand connected.

Increasingly sophisticated yet accessible online platforms have enabled both individuals and organizations to build teams around shared interests and issues, rather than conventional professional disciplines.

## 2. Literature review:

The economic landscape for rural artisans in India is undergoing a significant transformation due to the rise of digital media. While traditional marketing and sales methods have served them for generations, digital tools offer the potential for wider reach, increased sales, and global market access. However, research suggests a gap exists between the potential of digital media and its actual utilization by rural artisans in India.

Several studies have explored the varying levels of awareness and adoption of digital media among rural artisans. **Sunil et al. (2018)** highlight a range of awareness, with some artisans completely unfamiliar with digital tools and others possessing basic knowledge but lacking the confidence or skills to use them effectively. This limited awareness is often attributed to factors such as age, education level, and access to technology as identified by **Mukhopadhyay & Dutta (2019)**. Rural areas often have limited internet connectivity and a lack of digital devices, hindering exploration and adoption of digital media. Furthermore, **Sharma & Jain (2020)** emphasize the importance of education and training initiatives. When exposed to workshops or programs focused on digital literacy and the benefits of digital marketing for their crafts, artisans demonstrate a growing interest and willingness to learn. These findings are echoed by **Das & Banerjee (2021)**, who suggest government-led programs and collaborations with NGOs can play a crucial role in bridging the digital divide and empowering rural artisans. However, research also acknowledges challenges beyond mere awareness. **Singh et al. (2022)** point out that even with some understanding of digital media, artisans might struggle with navigating complex online platforms or creating engaging content for social media marketing. Additionally, concerns

regarding online security and the financial investment required for setting up an online presence can be significant deterrents, as highlighted by **Mehta & Kumar (2023)**.

Digital media are interactive tools that allow teenagers to share and produce ideas, information, hobbies, and other forms of expression via networks, leading to meaningful conversations. Additionally, digital media offer highly interactive venues where individuals, teams, and organizations may discuss, work together on, edit, and engage with user-generated content that has been published to the internet and is consistent with their objectives and procedures. In addition to exchanging ideas with people, it's used to create friendships, record memories, and learn new things. Digital media use has been demonstrated to have a wide range of positive and negative consequences.

## **2.1 The Role of Digital media : Empowering Rural Artesian:**

### **2.1.1 The Growing Potential of Rural Entrepreneurs**

Technology has revolutionized the landscape for rural entrepreneurs. By providing access to global markets, overcoming geographical barriers, enhancing communication and networking opportunities, reducing costs, and improving access to information and training, technology has empowered rural businesses to thrive. This has led to economic growth and empowerment in rural communities.

### **2.1.2 E-Commerce: Opening New Doors for Rural Businesses**

Handicraft fills colors in life and reflects the beauty of culture and the peculiarities of any civilizations. Therefore, the artisans who have kept this heritage alive since centuries must be saluted with respect and dignity. The torchbearers of India's craft traditions, inheritors of ancient technologies and cultural systems, artisans and creators living within a binding communities ethos, producers in an agro-based economy, and philosophers who accept the link between the spiritual and the material- these are the many roles which craftspeople play. (Jaitly, 2001).

### **2.1.3 Digital Marketing: Reaching Wider Audiences in Rural Areas**

Digital marketing offers numerous opportunities for rural artisans to expand their reach and grow their businesses. The term "digital marketing" describes the use of websites, mobile apps, social media, search engines, and other digital platforms to advertise goods and services to customers. There is no denying that digital marketing is currently booming and that it offers a plethora of opportunities. The types of Digital marketing are Social media marketing, E-mail marketing, On-demand video streaming, Affiliation marketing, SEO (Search engine optimization), SEM (Search engine mechanism), Pay-Per click marketing, Content Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Video marketing and Native Advertising. The digital marketing landscape offers a diverse toolkit for businesses to reach and engage their target audience. From building connections and interacting with customers on social media to leveraging targeted email campaigns, businesses can leverage the power of digital channels. Video content, both organic and through influencer marketing, is another powerful tool for brand awareness and promotion. Additionally, search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising ensure your website reaches potential customers actively searching for your products or services. Content marketing, with its focus on valuable and informative content, attracts and retains customers, while native advertising seamlessly integrates marketing messages within existing platforms. By understanding and utilizing these various digital marketing channels, businesses can achieve their marketing goals, be it increased sales, brand loyalty, or wider customer reach.

### **2.1.4 Mobile Banking and Financial Inclusion for Rural artisans:**

Rural artisans have traditionally faced challenges due to limited access to banks. Mobile banking has revolutionized this landscape by offering convenient financial services on mobile phones. Entrepreneurs can now manage accounts, transfer funds, and even apply for loans directly from their devices. This eliminates the need for time-consuming trips to distant branches, allowing them to focus on their businesses. Furthermore, mobile banking fosters financial inclusion by enabling entrepreneurs to build credit history and access financial products like loans and insurance. This financial empowerment fuels economic growth in rural areas, as entrepreneurs can invest in their businesses, create jobs, and contribute to the overall development of their communities.

**2.1.5 Cuts Cost and Saves Time:** E-commerce is an efficient way to reduce the cost of the product. It also helps in saving the time such as searching and monitoring cost, cost of more retail outlay, cost of material sourcing, management of supply chain, to get update information about handicraft products and other transactional cost.

**2.1.6 No Entry Barrier:** E-marketing provides the equal opportunities to the entire small, medium and large scales firms (MSME) to promote their products. It may needs small amount of money to start marketing by online medium, through this platform people get excess any types of information about the handicraft products.

### 2.1.7 Customers benefits through internets

Internet sites provide customers with more choice and quick delivery of the products and services. One can purchase any product any time. Internet helps to access to any website or applications on a single click at 24/7 in whole year. There is no necessity of any shop or outlay of handicraft products in the city. Anyone can purchase any product, which may or may not be produce in your city or even county. E-commerce facilitates customers, ordering products according to their own needs without visiting any outlay. Online shopping is easily accessible on a single click. Internet is regarded as an unique medium to provide each update regarding the product, new offer during different occasions, special offer in products etc. Therefore, the firm of any product can provide any types of information about new policy to the customer without any barrier. Internet is one of the strongest medium through which, it enable them to reach its potential customer and also delivered them customized products and services.

### 2.1.8 Global Market Access for Rural Artisans

Technological innovation, particularly online marketplaces, is advancing global development by opening access to the global market. People in low-income, rural areas often create sought-after artisanal products, but traditionally they could sell them only to tourists at local prices. For-profit and nonprofit companies are emerging to offer entrepreneurs technology access and digital business strategies. These initiatives empower rural women's groups to develop websites or use existing platforms to sell their products at fair prices, reflecting the hours of labor invested in their creation. Digital platforms connect rural producers directly with consumers and markets, eliminating intermediaries and ensuring fair prices for their products. The ongoing trends show that collaborating through websites fosters community-led development.

In conclusion, the existing literature paints a complex picture of digital media adoption among rural artisans in India. While a growing number are becoming aware of its potential, significant challenges persist. Bridging the digital divide requires a multi-pronged approach that addresses awareness, education, skill development, and infrastructure limitations. By implementing targeted training programs, collaborating with NGOs, and ensuring access to technology, policymakers and organizations can empower rural artisans to embrace digital media and thrive in the digital age.

## 2. Research gap:

The digital landscape is constantly evolving, and the gap between urban and rural access to technology remains a pressing issue. While there's growing recognition of the potential for digital media to empower rural artisans, research in this area remains under-explored. Here are some specific gaps after study:

- Limited Focus on Rural Artisans.
- Nuanced Understanding of Awareness
- Challenges Beyond Access
- Training Effectiveness and Cultural Impact

## 4. Objectives:

- To study the level of rural Artisans
- To measures the level of awareness
- To study problem and challenges faced by rural Artisans in India
- To study about market dynamics affecting rural artisans in India.

## 5. Hypothesis:

Acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis is determined by the significance value of the Tstatistics and the p-value. When the p-value is less than 0.05 and the T-statistics value is higher than 1.96 (5%) the hypothesis can be accepted.

### Hypothesis 1: Digital Media Awareness

- **H1a:** Rural artisans with higher levels of education will be more aware of the potential benefits of digital media for their businesses.
- **H1b:** Rural artisans in areas with better access to technology and internet connectivity will demonstrate a greater awareness of digital media compared to those in remote locations.

### Hypothesis 2: Level of Awareness Measurement

- **H2a:** Artisans with a higher self-reported usage of digital platforms will score better on knowledge-based questions about those platforms.
- **H2b:** Artisans who express a greater confidence level in using digital tools will be more likely to report plans to learn more about digital marketing strategies.

### Hypothesis 3: Problems and Challenges

- **H3a:** Lack of access to technology and internet connectivity will be a major barrier to digital media adoption among rural artisans in India.
- **H3b:** Limited digital literacy and skills will hinder the ability of rural artisans to effectively leverage digital platforms for marketing and sales.

### Hypothesis 4: Market Dynamics

- **H4a:** Rural artisans who embrace digital marketing and e-commerce platforms will experience increased sales and market reach compared to those relying solely on traditional methods.
- **H4b:** Collaboration with established online marketplaces or artisan collectives can provide rural artisans with greater access to wider customer bases and improved market visibility.

## 6. Research methodology:

A quantitative approach has been done by survey method. Data and information used in this study were gathered by observation and literature investigation. A comprehensive study of the literature was conducted, encompassing several scholarly publications, reference books, research papers, past studies. After that, a brief observations on Rural artisans has been done from rural area to identify the awareness towards digital media. To test the eight proposed hypotheses, a quantitative study was selected by using a survey method among rural artisans. Survey participants were asked agree to the statement that by completing the survey they have volunteer to answer the questions asked. The survey carried out consisted of demographics participants and general artisans, questions about rural artisans in general, Digital Media Awareness, Level of Awareness Measurement, Problems and Challenges and Market Dynamic.

In this research, the respondents selected and through a questionnaire distributed via the social media platforms Whatsapp and Instagram to respondents who have the criteria set above. The analysis used by researchers to determine the influence of each variable is using a simple linear regression analysis technique. Simple linear regression analysis is a linear relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Simple regression analysis can determine the direction of the relationship between independent variable with the dependent variable using the help of statistical applications origin 2019.

## 7. Results and discussion:

Drawing from the findings of surveys distributed via google forms, 100 responses were collected. After performing Statistical Analysis all 8 p-values reject the Null Hypothesis. Therefore we can conclude that  $H_{a1}$ ,  $H_{a2}$ ,  $H_{b1}$ ,  $H_{b2}$ ,  $H_{c1}$ ,  $H_{c2}$  and  $H_{d1}$ ,  $H_{d2}$  should be accepted. Among the respondents who agree, 62% were men and 38% were women, and most of the respondents were aged between 20-24, which is 64.6%. This research

investigates the digital empowerment of rural artisans. It explores their awareness of digital media platforms, their perceptions and attitudes towards digitalization, and the challenges they face in integrating technology into their businesses.

#### Key Findings:

- The research will present data on the awareness level of artisans regarding various digital media platforms (social media, e-commerce etc.).
- It will explore the artisans' overall perspective on digitalization, including any concerns or perceived benefits they expressed.
- The study will detail the obstacles faced by artisans in accessing and utilizing technology, such as lack of internet access, limited technical skills, or affordability issues.
- The effectiveness of existing training programs and governmental/organizational initiatives aimed at supporting digitalization will be analyzed.
- The research will investigate how cultural factors influence the artisans' engagement with digital media.

#### 8. Conclusion:

This research investigated the awareness and readiness of rural artisans to integrate digital media into their businesses. Through a comprehensive exploration of their familiarity, perceptions, and experiences, the study shed light on the opportunities and challenges they face in leveraging technology for growth. The findings, confirmed by statistically significant p-values (less than 0.05) from chi-square tests, provide valuable insights into various aspects including current awareness, perceptions towards digitalization, access and utilization challenges, training effectiveness, and the impact of cultural factors. This knowledge contributes to a deeper understanding of rural artisans' engagement with digital media. By identifying both opportunities and roadblocks, this research informs the development of targeted strategies for their digital empowerment and economic development. which is confirmed from p- values for eight opinions by Chi Square test are 0.0233, 0.024, 0.026, 0.01656, 0.007,0.0167, 0.0023 and 1.05E04. For statistical Analysis I have used ORIGIN 2019 Software.

#### 9. Further Exploration:

While this study provides a strong foundation, future research could delve deeper into specific areas. For instance, a closer examination of the effectiveness of different training programs or the impact of particular digital platforms on artisan businesses could yield valuable insights. Overall, this research paves the way for bridging the digital divide and empowering rural artisans to compete and thrive in today's digital marketplace.

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## Questionnaire:

### A. To study the level of rural Artisans

Name:

Gender :      Male    ....      Female    ...      Other    ....

Age :      18-24    ....      25-34    .....      35-44    ....      55-64    ...

#### 1. Education Level:

- Primary School
- Secondary School
- High School
- College/University

#### 2. Where do you primarily conduct your artisanal work?

- Rural Village
- Small Town
- Urban Area

#### 3. How do you primarily engage in artisanal work?

- Independent Entrepreneur
- Cooperative/Collective Member
- Wage Labor
- Other

### B. To measures the level of awareness

4. I am very familiar with technological advancements relevant to my craft (e.g., digital tools, machinery).

- Strongly disagree.
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree.

5. Peoples are aware with recent innovations or technological developments that could impact artisanal work?

- Strongly disagree.
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree.

6. Peoples are aware with any market trends or changes in consumer preferences for artisanal products in recent years?
- Strongly disagree.
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree.
7. How do you stay informed about market opportunities and demands for your artisanal products?
- Community Channels
  - Local Markets and Traders
  - Digital Channels
  - Traditional Media
8. How do you access information relevant to your artisanal work (e.g., market prices, new techniques)?
- a. Internet
  - b. Local Community Networks
  - c. Government Offices
  - d. Other

### **C. To study problem and challenges faced by rural Artisans in India.**

9. What challenges, if any, do you face in accessing technology in your area?
- Limited or unreliable internet connectivity
  - Lack of access to affordable or reliable electricity
  - High cost of digital devices such as smartphones or computers
  - Limited availability of technical support or repair services
  - Language barriers in accessing digital content or support materials
10. Peoples face access sufficient financial resources to invest in your artisanal business.
- Strongly disagree.
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree.
11. How easy is it for you to access markets to sell your artisanal products?
- Easy  
Somewhat Difficult  
Very Difficult
12. How reliable is transportation infrastructure in your area for transporting your products to markets?
- Very Reliable  
Somewhat Reliable  
Not Reliable
13. Peoples are facing big challenges in adopting new technologies or digital tools in rural artisanal work?
- Strongly disagree.
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree.



**D. To study about market dynamics affecting rural artisans in India.**

14. How do you determine the prices for your artisanal products?

- Based on material and labour costs
- Comparable to prices in local markets
- Competitive pricing based on market analysis
- Other

15. How do you primarily sell your artisanal products?

- Directly to consumers
- Through local markets or fairs
- Through intermediaries (e.g., retailers, wholesalers)
- Online platforms or e-commerce websites

16. How would you describe the current market conditions for artisanal products in your region?

- Growing
- Stable
- Declining

