

# Digital Marketing in Handloom/ Handicrafts Sector

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**Abstract:** Handloom and handicrafts is another crucial sector of cultural heritage and economic growth especially in other areas like Jaipur. This paper will explore how the digital marketing can help reshape the traditional marketing in the handicrafts sector. Authors use quantitative survey data and qualitative information from interviews & case studies in their mixed-method study approach. With 62% of participants using e-commerce presently, up from 15% in 2016, and 78% using social media, up from 28%, the data demonstrate a massive increase in the usage of digital platforms. Sales performance and brand recognition are both improved by adopting digital marketing methods and techniques where social media (such as Instagram) play an increasingly vital role as mediums of communicating with consumers through visual content. Despite these positives, challenges still exist (e.g., insufficient digital skillsets, and inadequate resources), as traditional forms of advertising continue to decline while word-of-mouth advertising is still valued/valid. The main emphasis of this research is to illustrate how digital advertising provides more accessible means of marketing [i.e., improving market penetration, market competitiveness, and market sustainability] to those working within India's handloom and handicraft sectors.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Handloom Industry, Handicrafts Sector, E-commerce, Social Media Marketing, Artisan Empowerment, Online Marketing, Brand Awareness

## INTRODUCTION

India is a country full of the world's oldest cottage industries with an established significance to both economical development, job creation and preservation of culture through handloom & handicrafts. Silk and silk-related products are also part of its wide product line, and they have been successful in the local and foreign markets because of their quality, complex craftsmanship, and special artistic merit. In comparison to the machine-made textiles, the handloom products are characterized by the old-fashioned methods, traditional processes, and professional craftsmanship, which guarantee exclusiveness and authenticity [1,2]. Silk sarees, and other products are particularly appreciated due to their refined finishing and cultural status and consequently, they are very competitive even when big mill and factory production is present.

The Indian handloom industry has managed to maintain its relevance with time by its capacity to maintain traditional patterns and as well as fulfill changing customer preferences [3]. The industry however has several challenges like competition by synthetic substitutes, reliance on availability of raw materials, and limitations of prices which is affected by imports of major

silk producing countries like China, Brazil and Korea. There is also the constraint of productivity and availability of resources which limit the ability of the sector to satisfy the increasing domestic and international demand.

Over the past few years, the advent of digital marketing has presented the handloom and handicrafts industry with novel opportunities to break the traditional barriers associated with market access and information asymmetry. Consumer trust in handicraft products has been historically influenced by the information asymmetry where the buyer does not have the full information as to the quality of the product as compared to the seller. Digital marketing, such as e-commerce and social media, can fill this gap since it offers in-depth product details, customer-reviews, and visuals, allowing informed buying choices [4,5].

The artisans and companies can interact directly with consumers using Digital marketing tools. Additionally, Digital marketing enables artisans and companies to connect to international markets while at the same time cutting back on the use of intermediaries. Handicraft businesses can display their product authenticity through storytelling about their culture online and build branding for themselves and their products. This, in turn, will not only result in increased visibility and sales, but it will also contribute to the sustainability and continued growth of the traditional craft industry through Digital marketing in the handloom and handicraft sectors [6].

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To examine how the handloom & handicrafts industry uses digital marketing techniques including social media and e-commerce.
- To assess how digital marketing affects revenues, brand recognition, and conventional marketing strategies.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

With an emphasis on businesses in Jaipur, this article used a mixed-method research strategy that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to investigate the function of internet marketing in the handloom & handicrafts sector [7].

## **Research Design**

To understand the trends in adoption of digital marketing, how it affects sales and brand awareness, and the alterations in traditional marketing practices, a descriptive and analytical research design was utilized.

## **Data Collection**

### **Primary Data**

The following methods were used to collect primary data:

- Questionnaires (survey) in a structured format were distributed to the owners of business enterprise, artisans and entrepreneurs of the handicraft business.
- Semi-structured interviews that were carried out on a few chosen participants to learn more.

### **Secondary Data**

Secondary data were collected using:

- Research papers
- Industry reports
- Government publications, concerning handicrafts and digital marketing.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Method**

- The sample of 50 100 handicraft businesses (number can be changed in case of necessity) was chosen.
- Convenience and purposive sampling: The businesses that are actively engaged in handicrafts and digital platforms were targeted.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

### **Quantitative Analysis:**

Survey Data were analyzed with:

- Descriptive statistics (percentages, tables, graphs).
- Comparison (2016 vs 2021 trends)

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Interpretations of the interview responses were based on thematic analysis.

Key themes identified:

- Issues in digital adoption.
- Marketing strategies
- Customer engagement practices

### **Statistical analysis**

Both Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets were used in order to accomplish the task of collecting and tabulating data. A visual representation of the data was achieved via the use of both charts and graphs. Utilising percentage analysis allowed us to have a better understanding of the trends.

## **RESULTS**

In order to analyse the quantitative data obtained from the survey, inferential as well as descriptive statistics were used. In order to discover significant patterns and significant insights within qualitative information that was gathered via interviews and case studies, thematic analysis was used.

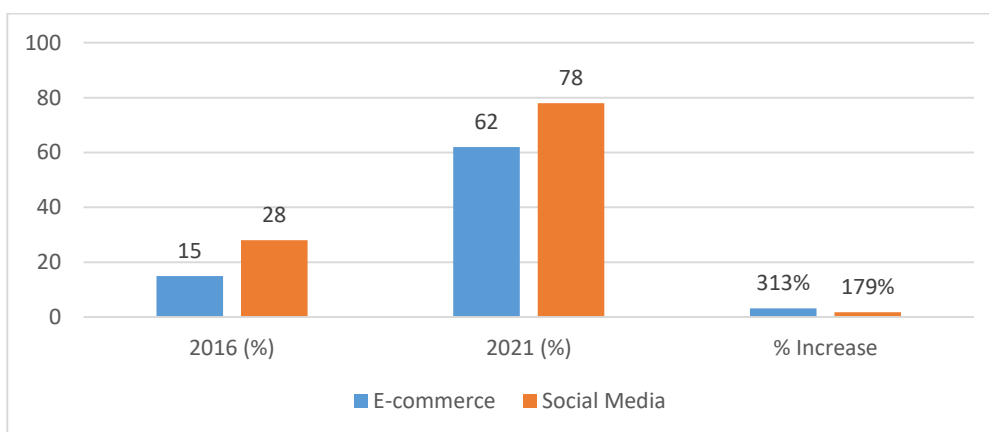
### **Adoption of Social Media and E-Commerce**

With regard to Jaipur's handicraft businesses, the research [8–10] indicates that the use of social media and online purchasing has been more common over the course of the last five years.

**Table 1: Digital Platform Adoption by Handicraft Companies**

Platform Type	2016 (%)	2021 (%)	% Increase
E-commerce	15	62	313%
Social Media	28	78	179%

The data show that the use of digital platforms among the handicraft businesses in Jaipur increased substantially during 2016-21. The use of e-commerce has grown by 313 per cent as the percentage use of e-commerce grew by 15 to 62, and social media has grown by 28 per cent to 78 per cent, 179 per cent. This trend also reflects a significant tendency towards digitalization, and companies are starting to use online platforms more and more to increase their market reach and enhance competitiveness [11].



**Figure 1: Digital Platform Adoption by Handicraft Companies**

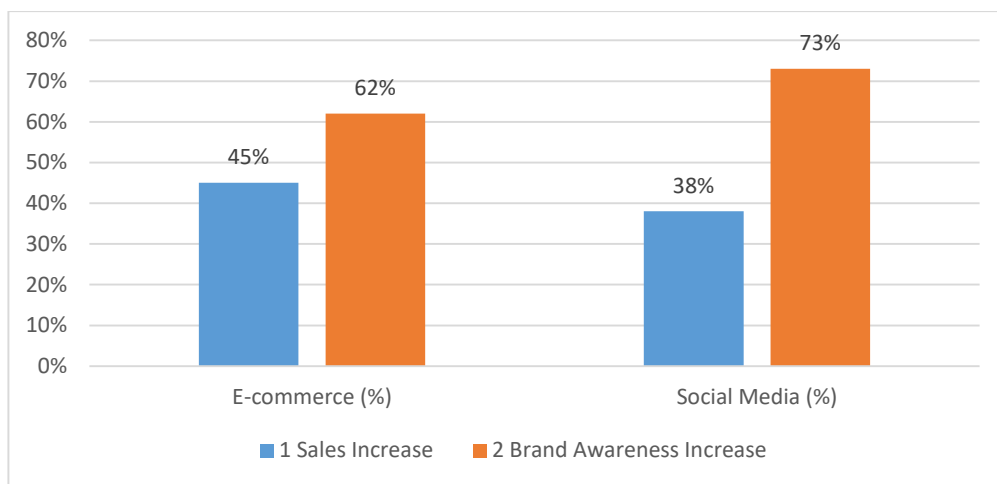
### Effects on Brand Awareness and Sales

There was a considerable increase in revenue and brand recognition for companies who used social media and e-commerce [12].

**Table 2: Effects of Online Marketplaces on Product Recognition and Purchase Intention**

S. No.	Parameter	E-commerce (%)	Social Media (%)
1	Sales Increase	45%	38%
2	Brand Awareness Increase	62%	73%

According to the findings, the company's performance has been positively affected by both e-commerce and social media. E-commerce has a more significant influence on the increase in sales (45) than social media (38%). Social media, however, is much more important in increasing brand awareness (73%) than e-commerce (62%). This implies that e-commerce is directly transactional, whereas social media is more efficient in establishing the customer engagement and brand visibility.



**Figure 2: Effects of Online Marketplaces on Product Recognition and Purchase Intention**

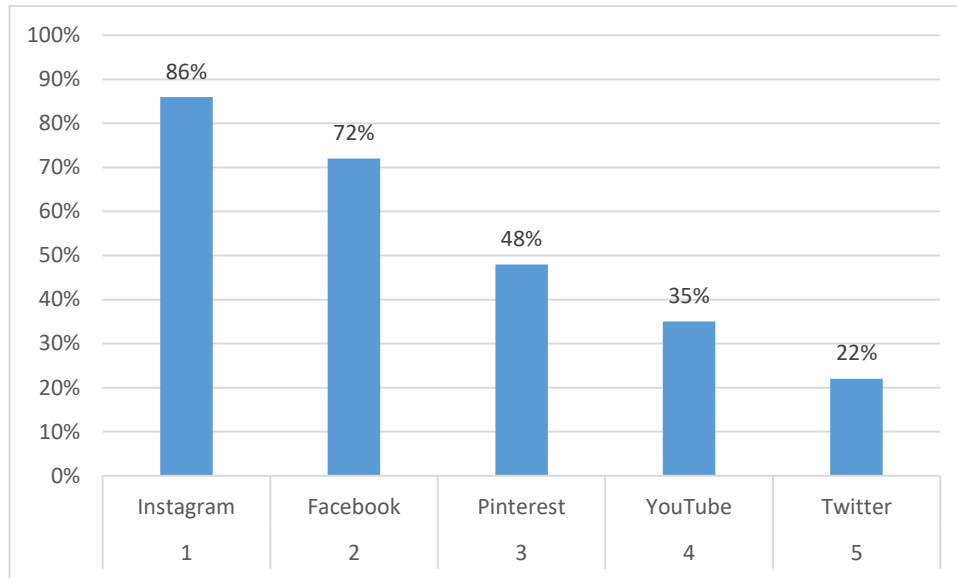
### Social Media Platform of Choice

The findings of the study led the researchers to the conclusion that the majority of Jaipur's handicraft companies market their products on the social media sites listed below.

**Table 3: The Best Social Media Network for Handicraft Promotion**

S. No.	Platform	Usage Percentage (%)
1	Instagram	86%
2	Facebook	72%
3	Pinterest	48%
4	YouTube	35%
5	Twitter	22%

The results indicate that Instagram is the most popular platform (86) used by handicraft businesses with Facebook being the next popular at 72 percent and Pinterest, YouTube and Twitter at 48, 35, and 22 percent respectively. This means that the preference is highly on visual oriented platforms which would enable the business to easily demonstrate aesthetic appeal and craftsmanship of its products hence attracting the potential customers [13].



**Figure 3: Social Media Platform Of Choice for Handicraft Marketing**

### **E-Commerce Strategies**

The following is a list of the most essential internet sales strategies that successful craft firms utilise, as determined by the results of the study:

- Customers are given the opportunity to have their purchases adapted to their own preferences via the process of customisation of the merchandise.
- The promise of augmented reality, namely virtual try-on settings, for jewellery and accessories.
- The method of drawing clients by emphasising the historical and cultural relevance of goods via the telling of their stories.
- With a multi-channel presence, you may sell your products or services by using both your own websites and well-established e-commerce platforms [14].

- Reaching a larger audience with delivery alternatives that save time is the fifth benefit of international shipping.

### **Marketing Methods For Social Media**

The following tactics were found to be effective in the field of social media advertising:

- To market items, one strategy is to team up with influential people in the leisure and travel business.
- One way to develop user-generated content is to ask satisfied customers to submit photos of their items together with genuine reviews [15–17].
- Throughout live demonstrations, showcasing all kinds of crafting processes and product attributes as they happen.
- Giving customers a look into the artisans' lives and showing them the processes they use to make the products may go a long way toward building trust in the brand.

The term "Social Commerce" describes the process of selling products and services via the use of social media applications.

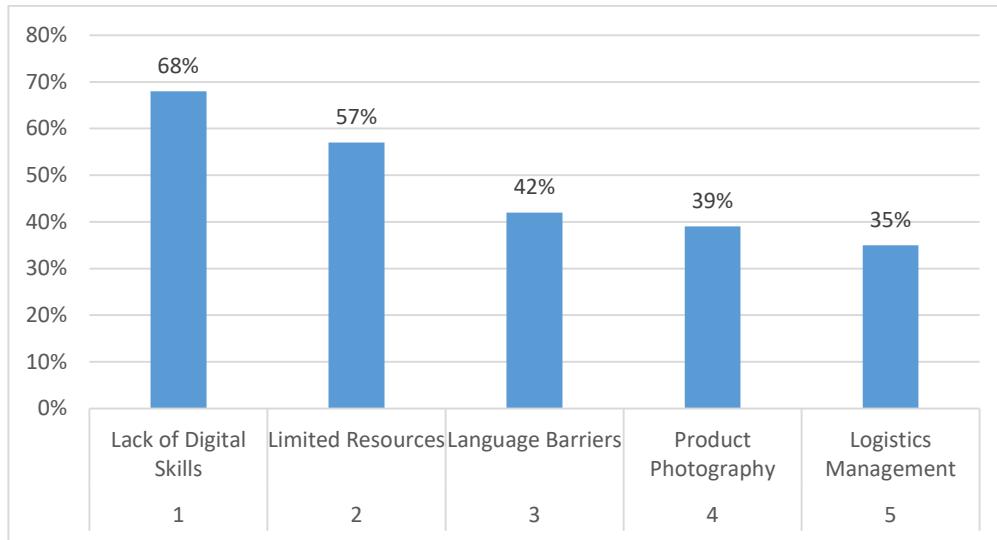
### **Challenges in Digital Adoption**

The usage of social media and online purchasing both offer a number of benefits, but there are also a few drawbacks associated with their broad adoption:

**Table 4: Difficulties in Using Social Media and E-Commerce**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Lack of Digital Skills	68%
2	Limited Resources	57%
3	Language Barriers	42%
4	Product Photography	39%
5	Logistics Management	35%

The table also indicates that the most important challenge encountered by the handicraft businesses is lack of digital skills (68%), then secondly, is lack of resources (57%). The other obstacles are language problems (42%), product photography (39), and logistics management (35). These conclusions indicate that even with the advantages of digital marketing, the lack of skills and resource limitations are significant barriers to successful use [18].



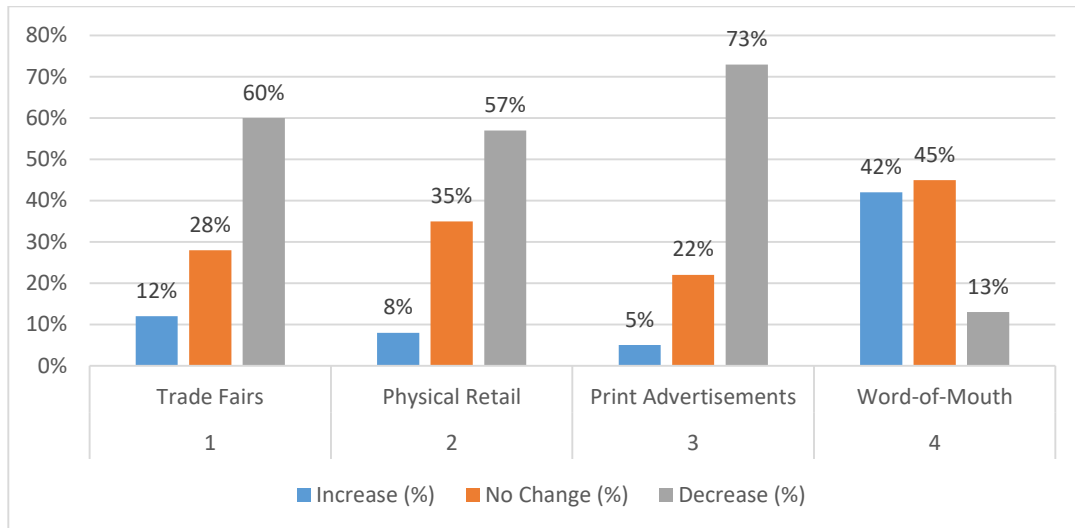
**Figure 4: Difficulties in Using Social Media and E-Commerce**

**Effects on Traditional Marketing Channels**

The study additionally looked at how the development of digital platforms had changed traditional forms of advertising:

**Table 5: Effects on Conventional Marketing Channels**

S. No.	Marketing Channel	Increase (%)	No Change (%)	Decrease (%)
1	Trade Fairs	12%	28%	60%
2	Physical Retail	8%	35%	57%
3	Print Advertisements	5%	22%	73%
4	Word-of-Mouth	42%	45%	13%



**Figure 5: Impact on Traditional Marketing Channels**

Based on the findings, it can be argued that there is a tangible reduction in the traditional marketing channels such as the trade fairs (60 percent), physical retail (57 percent) and the print adverts (73 percent) [19,20]. Word-of-mouth marketing on the other hand has experienced a 42 percent growth with only 13 percent of the respondents having indicated that they have reduced their efforts. This means that although digital marketing is taking over most of the conventional strategies, human communication is still assuming a significant role. This is likely to make interpersonal communication an essential component, which may be supported by digital platforms that can enhance consumer recommendations.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the research point to the evident change of the marketing environment of the handloom and handicrafts industry due to the increased use of digital technologies. The dramatic rise in the consumption of e-commerce and social media sites is indicative of a shift in the traditional and location-specific marketing activities to more vibrant and globalized digital platforms. Such a change has helped the artisans and business to increase their customer base, visibility, and performance in sales. The social media, more so the visually oriented ones, have been very effective in creating brand awareness and connecting with customers using interactive and content oriented approach.

The ongoing use of word-of-mouth as a form of marketing indicates that consumers still value personal trust and credibility as important factors in their purchasing decisions, and this is often leveraged through digital amplification. However, the study findings also indicate that

the principal barriers to the potential of digital adoption include a lack of digital literacy, technical skills, and resources. Furthermore, the declining use of traditional marketing channels – such as trade shows and print advertising – suggests that consumers’ behaviour is evolving and businesses’ practices are undergoing a shift. Overall, despite numerous growth opportunities in both the digital marketplace and sustainable growth opportunities for digital marketing, specific support will be required in the form of training, infrastructure, policy intervention to enable the handicraft industry to effectively participate in and transition to a digitally enabled environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

Digital marketing has transformed the way that handloom and handicraft products are marketed, with significant increases in market penetration, sales, and brand awareness for both businesses and artisans. There has also been a growing trend toward e-commerce and the use of social media platforms as alternate marketing channels, replacing more conventional means and moving toward innovative and cutting-edge marketing strategies. Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook have proven to be effective marketing tools for promoting handmade items because they are both visual and allow for interaction between the manufacturer and consumer. There has been a downward trend in the use of conventional channels (i.e., trade shows and newspaper advertising), but word-of-mouth continues to be a viable complementary channel of advertising. However, there are still many barriers that the industry faces to adopting digital marketing (i.e., lack of digital literacy and lack of funding), and establishing training, infrastructure, and policy support would result in greater integration of digital marketing. Finally, as noted in the investigation, the handloom industry and handicrafts industry must adopt digital strategies to attain sustainability and competitive advantage internationally.

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