

## **A Study on the role of Tourism in promoting Arts and Crafts – A Case Study on Channapatna Toys**

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### ***Abstract***

*Handicraft was part of daily life and culture of India, and it also aimed at transforming purely functional works into sublime works of art. Indians have always crafted goods for utilitarian purposes, religious rituals and for beautifications. Starting from the crude wooden toys and carts excavated from the Indus Valley Civilization, to the modern fashion accessories, the saga of Indian handicrafts continue through the ages. Arts and crafts of Karnataka have been an inseparable part of people's life. Karnataka is among those states that still employ traditional methods for producing their arts and crafts. Channapatna, also known as Gombegala Ooru (toy-town) of Karnataka, is famous for its wooden toys. This traditional craft is protected as a geographical indication (GI) under the World Trade Organization, administered by the Government of Karnataka. This study aims to understand how tourism could be used to increase awareness among tourists, and to study the role of stakeholders in promoting Channapatna handicrafts, reviving it as the traditional craft of Karnataka. The scope of the study covers Bangalore, Mysore and Channapatna. The targeted respondents of the research survey are tourists visiting Bangalore and Mysore, artisans at Channapatna, and local inhabitants of Channapatna. The study relies mostly on field study based primary data. The findings of the study reveal that tourists are not well-informed about the Channapatna crafts, especially its quality and variety. The study suggests that stakeholders have to open more number of retails outlets across the city as there are only few outlets, and this will also improve the standard of living of the artisans and there by contribute to the sustainability of the art form.*

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**Keywords:** *Handicrafts, Arts, Tourism, Sustainable, Toy-town*

## **1. Introduction**

Handicraft was one of the major components of the Renaissance of Indian thought in the 19th and 20th centuries, as social reformers started promoting village based crafts for cultural and economic regeneration of India. Mahatma Gandhi's 'charka' symbolized this profound thought and became a mighty tool for the fight for India's independence. The long years of colonialism had successfully marginalized Indian traditional arts and crafts. Handicrafts have always been an integral part of life and culture of India. Handicraft, more precisely expressed as artisanal handicraft, sometimes also called artisanry, is a type of work where useful and decorative devices are made completely by hand or by using only simple tools. It is a traditional and main sector of craft. Usually the term is applied to traditional means of making goods. The individual artisanship of the items is a paramount criterion, such items often have cultural and/or religious significance.

Handicraft goods are generally considered more traditional work, in traditional non-industrial and transitional societies created as a somewhat more necessary part of daily life (in comparison to industrial societies), while *arts and crafts* implies more of a hobby pursuit and a demonstration/perfection of a creative technique.

Arts and crafts of Karnataka always have been an inseparable part of people's life. Karnataka is among those states that still employ traditional methods for producing their arts and crafts. Karnataka has been the hallmark of excellence in craftsmanship. This is evident from the numerous temples that are spread across in Karnataka. Mysore is renowned for its paintings and silk apparels, whereas Udupi is famous for its metal works. Many institutes have also started in Karnataka where in courses in different forms of arts and crafts impart knowledge to upcoming artisans.

Channapatna toys are a particular form of wooden toys (and dolls) that are manufactured in the town of Channapatna in the rural Bangalore district of Karnataka state. Traditionally, the work involved lacquering the wood of the *Wrightia tinctoria* tree, colloquially called *Aale mara* (ivory-wood). The origin of these toys can be traced to the reign of Tipu Sultan who invited artisans from Persia to train the local artisans in the making of wooden toys. For nearly two centuries, ivory-wood was the main wood used in the making of these toys, though rosewood and sandalwood were also occasionally used.

With no proper support in marketing, the Channapatna toy industry faced a financial crunch for more than a decade and was almost on the verge of dying out. However with the help of KHDC, the craft is slowly being revived and the artisans involved are being trained on changing trends in the industry, to help them keep abreast of the current scenario.

Tourism has emerged as a vital instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. Sustainable Tourism promotes and supports

the local handicraftsmen and cultural activities. Promotion of local products and enrichment of culture is one of the principles of sustainable tourism. This study aims to understand how tourism and increased awareness among tourists can improve the sales of the Channapatna handicrafts, reviving it as a traditional craft of Karnataka.

## **2. Review of Literature**

The repercussion that tourism development makes on developing economy could be analysed by looking on its linkage with other sectors of the economy as well as with the socio-cultural life of the destination. In the wake of the increased role of culturally themed programmes in the global tourism sector, tourism development in an individual destination has the potential to generate demand in the various objects and services, and one of which is local handicrafts. Throughout the world, crafts and traditional artefacts are objects of curiosity for contemporary tourists. While tourism-induced-consumption may create demand for the traditional craft sector, the repercussions are far reaching. The economic implications of tourism-craft linkage depends on the effectiveness of the sub-sectors of tourism such as retailing, leisure services etc., to effectively harness the locally produced crafts and artefacts into the tourism market (Saji & Narayanaswamy, 2011).

The International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts, held in Tehran from May 13 to 15, 2006, was a first for UNWTO, and in all probability also the first international conference ever held with specific focus on the linkage between tourism and handicrafts. Tourism is the 21st century's number one industry, and handicraft is one of the fastest growing activities. Together they make a logical and powerful combination. The conference was supported by UNESCO, which is in charge for the promotion of cultural and socio-economic role of crafts in general and in particular, for the recognition of the added value of crafts in tourism development. It was indeed very appropriate that UNWTO's first conference with this theme was held in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The country has one of the richest, oldest and most diverse handicraft traditions in the world. Skills have been passed on for generations, stretching way back into ancient Persian history, with some artefacts having been found dating back to 5 B.C. Ceramics, metallurgy, glass, wood, architecture, carpets, tapestries – in all these areas, the artisans of Iran are justifiably world famous. A good quality handicraft taken home from an enjoyable holiday has continuing power to evoke wonderful memories, and indeed to arouse interests of others who see it. It also encourages them to visit the destination for more. But the linkage between tourism and handicrafts has not yet been fully explored, understood or developed, with a resultant loss of valuable revenue and job creation opportunities. In response to this, UNWTO decided that, although there have been many conferences on tourism and many on handicrafts, there was now a pressing need for a

conference to develop the synergy between the two and to raise awareness about the importance of handicrafts for tourism and vice-versa (UNWTO, 2008).

The First International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts was held from 13 to 15 May 2006 in the Seminar Hall of Iranian National Broadcast Centre in Tehran. The conference was organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) to discuss the role of handicrafts in promoting tourism industry, which would result in job creation and earning more currency through attracting more number of tourists (International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, 2006).

Channapatna, the toy town of Karnataka famous for its wooden toys for ages was reeling under severe financial crunch for more than a decade and the craftsmen community involved in the manufacturing of the same reached near starvation a few years back. Even today, it is the major source of livelihood for majority of people of this town. For setbacks in the past, it was not just the lack of marketing skills that were responsible, but the core issue was that the entire industry did not keep pace with the rapid changing scenario that the world was demanding. Today, the craftsmen involved in the manufacture process have braced themselves by opening new vistas into the current trend, with drastic changes in their thinking and attitude by producing products according to present market demands (Shariff, 2005).

This paper (presented at the workshop on promotion of craft village-based tourism along West-East corridor, co-organised by Vietnam National Administration for Tourism; ASIA Seed Institute and JODC (Japan) May, 2005) explained the strength of handicraft and tourism development in the scheme of the socio economic approach, and discussed the overall strategy of implementing the tourism and handicraft development project in Vietnam. Approach towards the topic was from both, the macro perspectives as political level and micro perspective as village activities (Ngo, 2005).

The Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Government of India assigned National Productivity Council (NPC) to carry out a Survey of Foreign Tourists' Expenses on Handicrafts in India. The main objective of the survey was to find out how much the visiting foreign tourists spend on handicrafts (total & item-wise) during their stay in India. The ultimate aim of this task was to construct the Craft/ Tourism Index (defined as tourist per day expenditure on handicrafts) for India as suggested by UNESCO. The field level survey was launched by NPC from September to October, 2002 in six major cities of India, namely New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad. These cities act as the major arrival and exit points for an overwhelming majority of the foreign tourists visiting India (Government of India, 2002).

### **3. Objectives**

- To identify the role of tourism in promoting handicrafts and creating awareness among tourists
- To analyse the role of stakeholders in promoting handicrafts

### **3.1 Scope of the Study**

The focus of the study is on Channapatna toys. The study will cover tourists visiting Bangalore and Mysore, artisans at Channapatna and local inhabitants of Channapatna. The scope of the study will be restricted to regions of Bangalore, Mysore and Channapatna. The study was carried out for a period of two months.

### **3.2 Need for the Study**

India being a country rich in culture, it is of highest importance to preserve its myriad kinds of crafts and other wares. Now, with technology and globalisation, people are offered cheaper and often poorer quality mechanised products, leaving the craftsmen struggling to make ends meet. Channapatna artisans are no different. It is the only work they know, and the only way to lead their lives. As tourists often like to take home souvenirs that represent the culture of the places they visit, the craft of Channapatna toys can be revived only through better promotional programs.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

The sample size of 100 has been taken from among residents of Bangalore.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

Convenient sampling technique: Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Convenience sampling was used because it is more convenient to select subjects for the study and the researcher did not consider selecting subjects that are representative of the entire population. It is also useful for detecting relationships among different phenomena. Tourists were chosen based on convenience.

### **3.5 Methods of Data Collection**

Data was collected from 100 respondents from among residents of Bangalore through questionnaire method.

Questionnaires were prepared in a structured style, using Likert Scale.

Questionnaires were validated, following which the Pilot Study was conducted. 30 valid questionnaires (Pilot Study) were used to test for reliability of the questionnaire. The responses were coded and then subjected to Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test. A score of 0.864 was obtained for the questionnaire.

### **Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.864	30

After conducting the Reliability Test, 70 more questionnaires were administered.

### 3.6 Various Techniques Used in Analysis of Data

The Hypothesis was then tested using the Chi-square test. The Variables of the questionnaires were then analyzed using descriptive statistics tools.

### 3.7 HYPOTHESIS TEST

The Null hypothesis was tested through Chi-Square test, a non-parametric test.

**Null Hypothesis:** The awareness of Channapatna handicrafts does not depend on its revival.

**Alternate Hypothesis:** The awareness of Channapatna handicrafts depend on its revival.

**Test Statistics**

	var6	var19	var21
Chi-Square	20.160	50.780	41.420
df	3	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000
CRITICAL VALUE	7.82	5.99	5.99

Since the calculated value is higher than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which is, ‘the awareness of Channapatna handicrafts does depend on its revival’.

## 4. Findings

The Null hypothesis “The awareness of Channapatna handicrafts does not depend on its revival” was tested and was rejected, implying that there is a dependence on the awareness of Channapatna handicrafts and its revival. The more that people get to know about it, the more it will be known as a traditional handicraft of Karnataka.

Majority of the respondents were in the Age group 20-30 years (63%) and 30-40 years (30%). Also, the male respondents were 65% and the female respondents were 35%.

19% of respondents always buy souvenirs at the end of their tour, 29% often buy and 52% sometimes buy.

58% of the respondents believe that handicrafts are very important in symbolizing a region’s culture, 26% say it is important and 16% say that it of little importance. This gives scope for the craft of Channapatna to re-develop itself as a traditional craft of Karnataka. This

is also proved in the study when all 100% of the respondents agree that Channapatna can be an ideal craft centre of Karnataka.

57% of respondents sometimes purchase handicrafts as souvenir, 30% often purchase and 10% always do so. Up to 94% of the respondents have purchased Channapatna crafts at some point of time, only 6% have never purchased them.

While 26% of the respondents like the quality of Channapatna crafts to a great extent, only 58% somewhat like them and 16% do not like the quality much. This implies that there is scope for enhancing the quality of the Channapatna craft products.

While 50% of the respondents disagree that there is not enough variety in Channapatna crafts, 50% say that the variety is good enough.

Only 25% of the respondents believe that handicrafts are easily available for tourists to purchase in the region of their production, while the remaining 75% either disagree (72%) or strongly disagree (3%) to the statement

Only 14% of respondents always buy handicrafts from original manufacturing units, 20% often buy and 66% sometimes buy from original units. All respondents agree (64% strongly Agree and 36% agree) that handicrafts should be made available at more retail outlets around cities near to regions of production.

97% of the respondents believe that retail outlets will increase sales of these handicrafts. 100% of the respondents agree (63% strongly agree) that there is scope for retail outlets to increase sales of handicrafts.

Up to 97% respondents either agree (61%) or strongly agree (36%) that retail outlets will help increase awareness of Channapatna handicrafts.

97% of the respondents believe that increased sales will improve livelihood of artisans.

48% of the respondents strongly agree and 49% agree that increased tourism can revive handicrafts such as Channapatna toys. Only 9% disagree to the statement that they would not visit Channapatna as part of handicraft tourism, while remaining 91% are willing to visit Channapatna as a handicrafts tourism destination.

## **5. Suggestions**

After the study, it was understood that many tourists were not well-informed about the Channapatna crafts, its quality and its variety. They are still hesitant to make a purchase of the crafts. Often they do not know where to make the purchase as there are very few or no retail outlets. They would have to visit the few government shops or exhibitions in the city, or would have to visit the manufacturing unit at Channapatna itself. This deters their decision to make a purchase.

### **5.1 Implications**

The study has implied that there is scope for retail outlets to be opened across the city. This would also help increase sales of these crafts. This increased sale will help artisans at Channapatna earn a better income to maintain their livelihood.

It was also found that most of the respondents identify handicrafts as an important part of a region's culture and are willing to improve the conditions of dying handicrafts such as those in Channapatna if they are made more aware about them and can easily avail them.

## **5.2 Scope for Future Study**

The scope for future study could involve conducting the study outside Bangalore, in other regions of Karnataka as well as other states of India. It could also cover government policies that are in place to help and support rural artisans. There is also scope to extend the study to include popular gift houses and their willingness to act as retail agents for these handicrafts.

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