

Handloom and Handicrafts: An Attitudinal Survey among the Youths of Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The handloom and handicrafts sector is one of the country's largest and oldest cottage industries. This sector is the largest job provider in the country after agriculture. It directly or indirectly provides more than 6 million employees across the country. This sector plays an important role in creating job opportunities for women, scheduled Tribes, scheduled castes, and other OBCs, thus promoting balanced regional development of the country. This sector is also important for promoting exports. India is one of the largest exporters of handlooms and handicrafts internationally. A country like India has a large proportion of youth. This helps the government produce more working people and contribute more to the economic development of the country; they have an important role to play in the promotion and preservation of handloom and handicraft practices. They are bridges that connect the older generation to the coming generation. Youths learn from the older generation and pass such knowledge to the coming generation. Thus it is important to study the different perspectives of our youths for the long-term development of the country.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The handloom and handicrafts sector is one of the country's largest and oldest cottage industries [1]. Handicrafts are anything that is either handmade or made with the minimum use of modern tools and technology [2]. Handloom is the weaving of clothes with the help of traditional weaving tools and techniques [3]. The handloom and handicrafts sector covers a large space in the country's economic sector [4]. It has been playing a significant role in the growth and development of the country's financial goals as well as the preservation of its unique

identities and vibrant culture. This sector provides either primary income or supplementary income to many artisans who practice it during leisure time to generate additional income [5], [6], [7]. Traditional handloom and handicraft products such as pots, leather products, furniture, papers, and stonework, and handloom products such as carpets, shawls, embroidered textiles, and rugs, etc [4]. Are still largely produced and traded in the market.

The handloom and handicrafts sector plays one of the key roles in generating employment opportunities in the country [8]. It is the largest job provider in the country

after agriculture. This sector directly or indirectly employs more than 68.06 lakh artisans in the country. Out of which 30.25 lakhs are male and 38.61 lakhs are female artisans. [Invest India] There is a large involvement of women, rural people, and a weaker section of people in the country in this sector. According to the Invest India website, this sector employs more than 43.31 lakh weavers directly or indirectly across the country, of which 77% are female. Thus, this sector plays a crucial role in bringing balanced regional development and reducing migration of employees by giving opportunities to women, rural people, and other weak sections [9], [10], [11].

At the larger level, this sector also plays a significant role in the promotion of exports [3], [12], [13]. India is one of the largest handloom and handicrafts exporters in the world [14]. As per IBEF, from April 2022 to February 2023, India has exported handicraft products worth US\$ 3 billion. Some of the handloom and handicraft products that are majorly exported are Shawls, Imitation jewelry, agarbattis and attars, embroidered, armmetal wares, wood wares, and carpets, etc [10], [15], [16], [17]. Traditional handloom and handicrafts products are in high demand in the international market, and some of the Indian handloom and handicrafts products importers are the USA, UK, LAC, Australia, and Canada [18], [19], [20].

According to the United Nations, youth are those people whose ages are between 15 to 25. The youth of a country plays an important role in the economic as well as social development of the country [15], [21], [22]. They are the assets of the country as they are the ones who play the role of protecting and preserving the rich inherited knowledge, culture, and skills. They are the learner who learns from their older generations, and they are also the bridges between the other two generations by passing the rich knowledge from the older to the coming generation [13], [19], [23], [24]. In Arunachal Pradesh, out of the total population i.e., 1,383,815 (2011 census). 279682 belong to the 15-24 age group, i.e.

20.79% of the population. This paper will be on how much importance the youth of Arunachal Pradesh give to the handloom and handicrafts of the state, and their attitude towards the protection of their rich handloom and handicraft skills [25], [26], [27].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

[6] Paper highlights the importance of the Indian handicrafts industry as a contributor to the Indian economy. It stated that the sector has huge potential due to abundant and cheap labor, low investment, and handmade which are unique and have low competitors, but such sector also poses weaknesses such as inconsistent quality, inadequate market study, capacity to handle limited orders and unawareness of international standard by many players in the market.

[17] The paper highlights the different kinds of problems that is observed by the handloom sector, such as lack of value addition, the threats from outside products, lack of sufficient help from the government, lack of advertisement, and lack of power looms. It suggests introducing GI marks, financial support from the government, stipend for trainees, product diversification, and focusing on promotion and advertising for the sustainability and growth of the handloom sector.

[5] stated that the handicrafts sector will help in poverty alleviation by creating job opportunities and income generation. The paper has highlighted that such a sector has huge potential in the export market and the tourism market.

[10] Paper suggests that policymakers should focus on the growth and development of high valued-added crafts, strengthen the link between crafts production and sales and the tourism industry, encourage the development of trade associations of handicrafts and promote handicrafts exports and quality control to promote employment and preserve cultural heritage embodied in handicrafts.

[1] This study has focused on analyzing the youth's perception of the

impact of the handicraft industry on sustainability and assessing the awareness of Indian handicrafts. This study attempts to analyze the challenges faced by the handicraft industry from the consumer's point of view. It concludes that youths are highly aware of handicrafts and their benefits towards sustainability.

[28] This paper attempts to study the youth handloom weavers of Udayanarayanpur of West Bengal. It focused on the literacy level of weavers, sources of their income, the distribution channel, and the role of middlemen.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the awareness and perception of youth in Arunachal Pradesh toward handloom and handicraft skills.
- To explore how influencing factors can guide promotional strategies to increase youth engagement with handloom and handicraft skills
- To analyze the key factors influencing youth purchasing behaviour on handloom and handicrafts products.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study, and the primary data is collected using a simple random sampling technique. Data is being collected from the scholars and students of Rajiv Gandhi University (2025) through Google Forms and questionnaires with a sample size of 100. Secondary data is collected from different sources such as books, magazines, government reports and websites, etc.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Possession of Skills

figure 1 illustrates that over 57% of respondents possess skills in traditional handloom and handicraft techniques, indicating that these skills play a significant role among the youth of Arunachal Pradesh. As shown in Figure 2, out of skilled respondent, 34% are skilled in weaving, 27% in bamboo craft, 9% in woodcrafts, 12% in paper making and 18% in others, which it includes carpet making, shoe making, knitting and leather crafts etc. the data suggest that the weaving and bamboo crafts are particularly prevalent in Arunachal Pradesh.

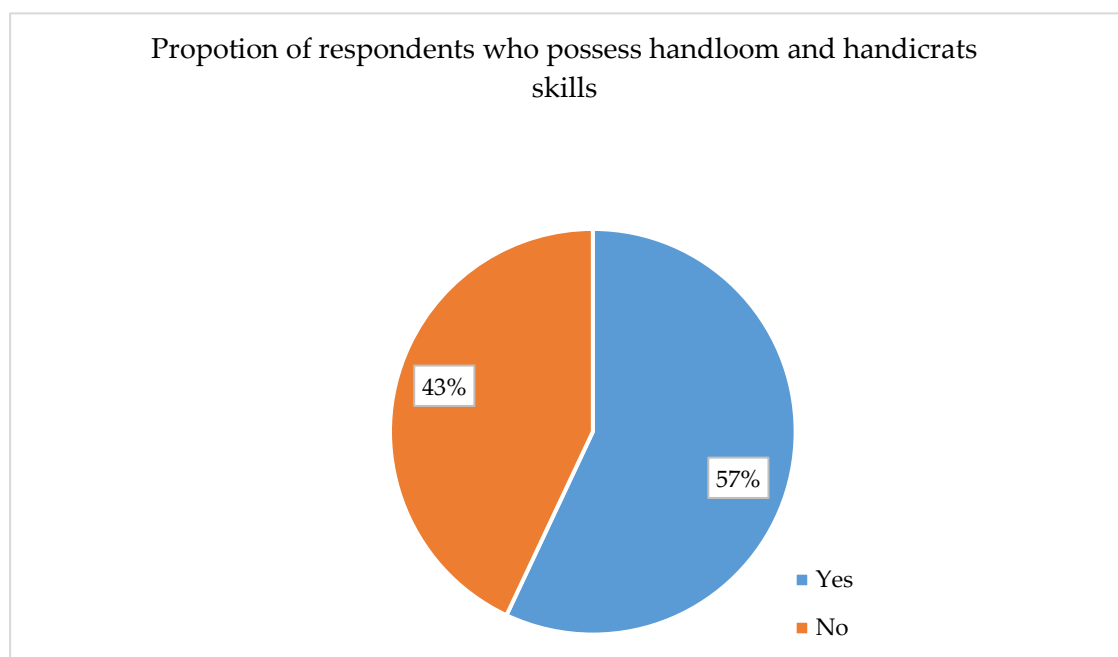


Figure 1. Proportion of Respondents Who Possess Handloom and Handcrafts Skills

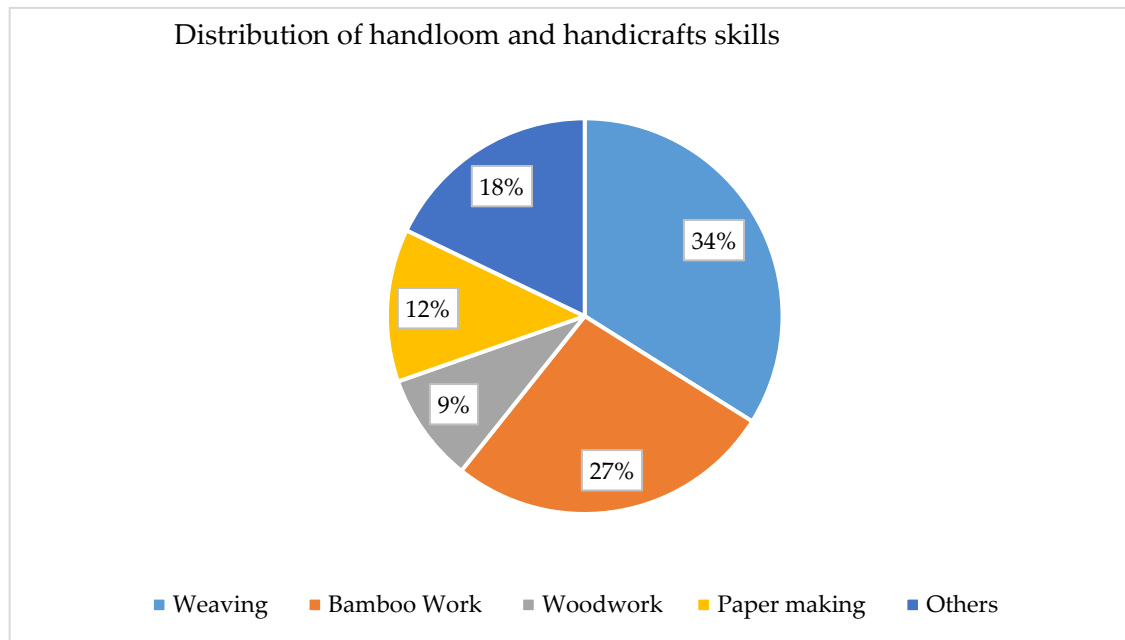


Figure 2. Distribution of Handloom and Handicrafts Skills

4.2 Gender Distribution

Out of 100 respondents, 50% are female and 50% are male. The distribution of skills among males and females is shown in Table 1. The data indicate that women play an equal role in handloom and handicraft skills, where out of the total female respondents, 27 respondents are skilled in handloom and handicrafts, which account for 54% of female respondents. The total number of skilled male respondents is 30, which is 60% of the total male respondents. Women are particularly skilled in weaving (17 out of 27), followed by paper making (4 out of 27) and other activities,

including carpet making and pottery (6 out of 27). Where males are more proficient in Bamboo crafts (15 out of 30), followed by wood crafts (5 out of 30), paper making (4 out of 30), and others, such as pottery (4 out of 30). The data show that bamboo crafts are more prevalent among males, and weaving is less common among them, as only 2 males report this skill. Overall, both genders have a similar level of skills ownership, certain skills tend to be gender-specific, with females favoring weaving and males excelling in bamboo crafts and wood crafts.

Table 1. Gender Distribution in Different Types of Crafts

Row Labels	Don't have the skills	Bamboo Crafts	Papermaking	Weaving	Wood Crafts	Others	Grand Total
Female	23	0	4	17	0	6	50
Male	20	15	4	2	5	4	50
Grand Total	43	15	8	19	5	10	100

4.3 Sources of Skills

Figure 3 illustrates the different sources of handlooms and handicraft skills among respondents.

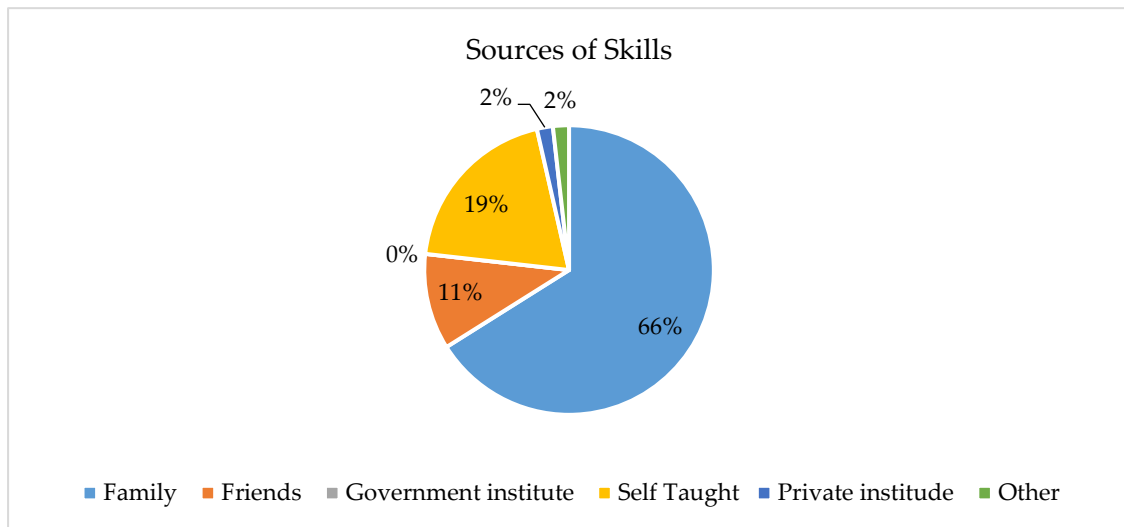


Figure 3. Sources of Skills

Notably, 66% of the skilled respondents learned their skills from their families, 11 % learned from friends, and 19% were self-taught. The data further reveal that only 2% of skilled respondents have acquired such skills from private institutions, and none of the skilled respondents acquired such skills from government training institutions.

4.4 Barriers For Youth in Participating in Handloom and Handicrafts Practices and Possible Solutions

Figure 4, illustrates the key factors behind the declining interest of youth in practicing handloom and

handicrafts. According to the data, lack of interest was the most prominent factor, accounting for 34% of the responses. Following that, insufficient training opportunities come as the second most significant issue, representing 24%. Limited market opportunities (15%) and the difficulty in modernizing traditional techniques (13%) are also notable barriers. In contrast, lack of financial support (12%) and others such as being busy with others' occupations (2%) are less frequently cited but still contribute to the challenges faced.

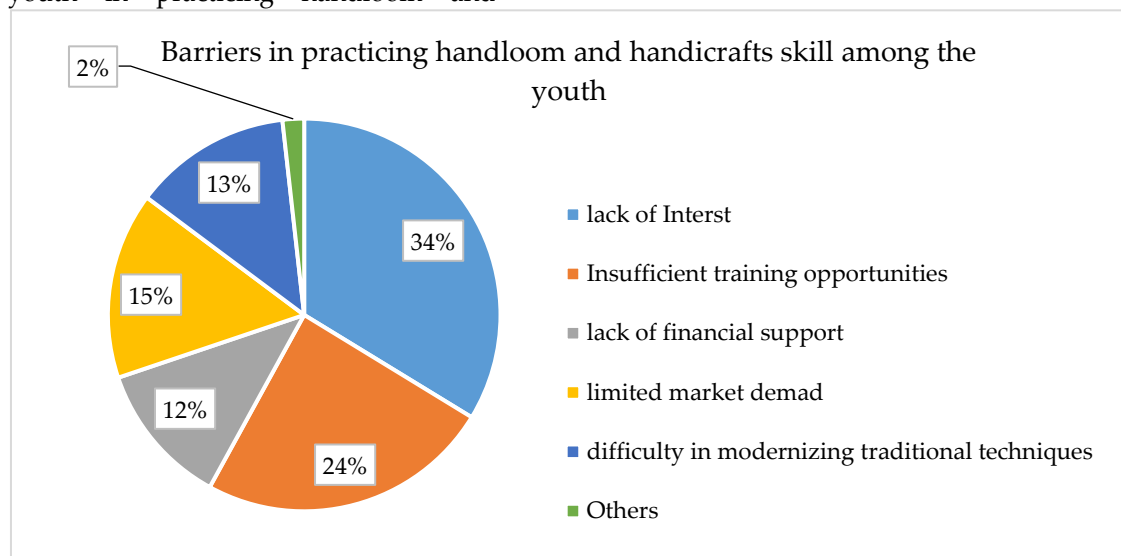


Figure 4. Barriers in Practicing Handloom and handicrafts Skill Among the Youth

Figure 5, identifies the possible solutions to promote and protect handloom and handicrafts practices among the youth of Arunachal Pradesh. According to the data, the most effective solution is directly teaching skills among the youth, supported 17% of total scores, this is closely followed by supporting young artisans through government programs and integrating handloom and handicrafts education into youth

programs, each receiving 16% of total scores. Other suggested solutions include creating youth-focused market opportunities (15%), organizing workshops and awareness programs for youth (14%), collaborating with young designers and artisans (11%), and promoting youth involvement in handloom and handicrafts through social media (11%).

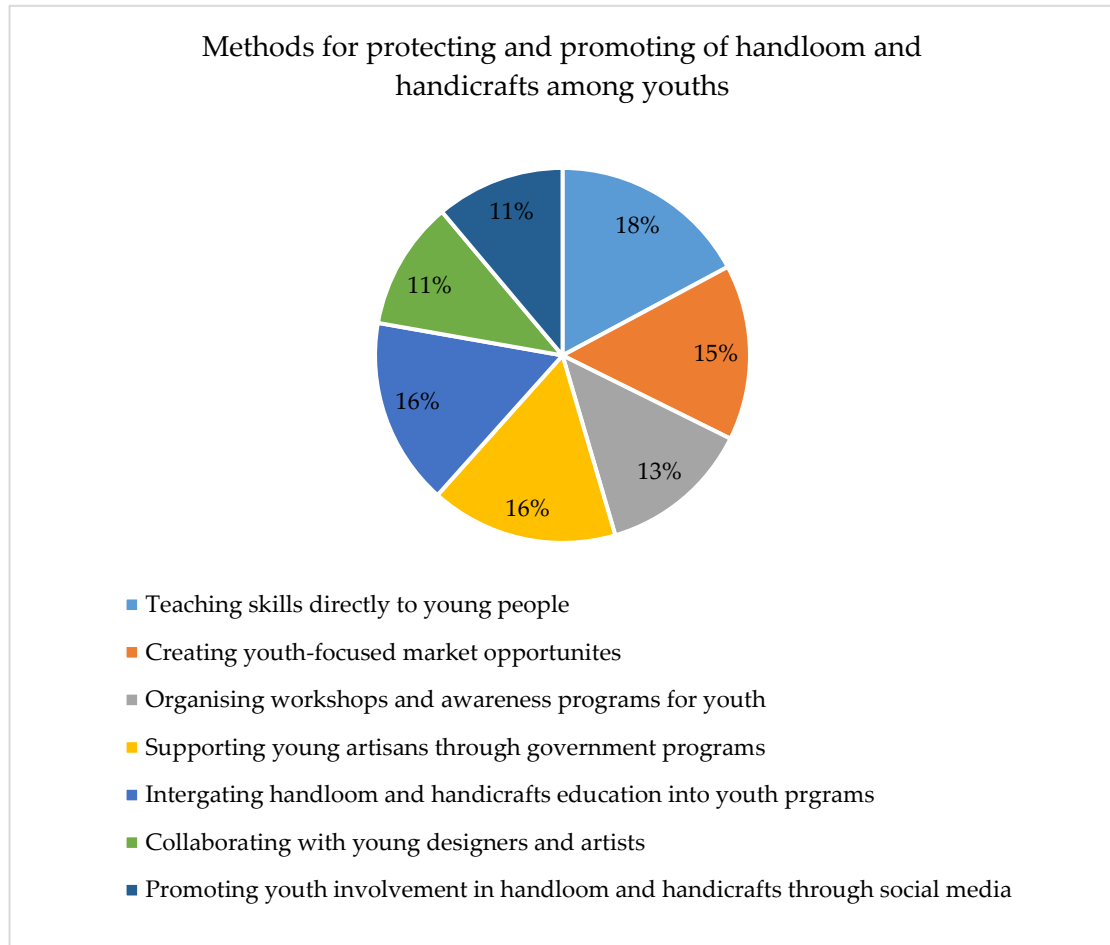


Figure 5. Methods for Protecting and Promoting of Handloom and Handicrafts Among Youths

4.5 Market Analysis for Handloom and Handicrafts

Arunachal Pradesh has good marketing prospects in the handloom and handicrafts sector. Following Figure 6, show the data on how frequently the youths of Arunachal Pradesh purchase handloom and handicrafts products.

From the following, 6% of the respondents strongly agree that they often purchase handloom and handicrafts products, 35% agree that said statement, and only 4% of the respondents strongly disagree that they do not often purchase such products.

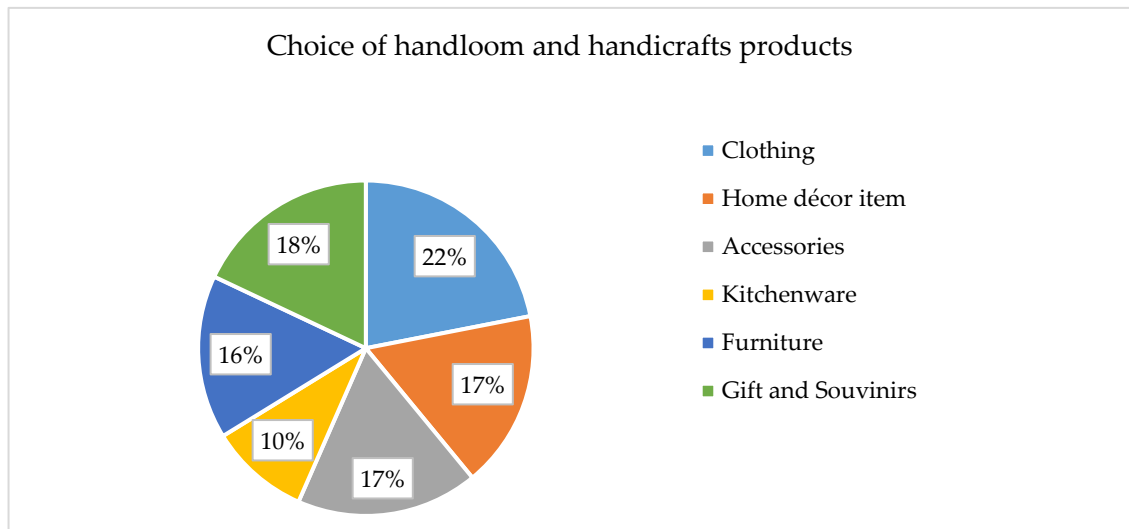


Figure 6. Choice of Handloom and Handicrafts Products

Out of the handloom and handicrafts products, youth are mostly preferred to textile clothing. Figure 7, shows the information on the preference of handloom and handicrafts products for the youths of Arunachal Pradesh. From the following information, it is observed that 22% of respondents often purchase

clothing, 18% purchase gift and souvenirs products, 17% purchase home décor item such as rugs, woodcrafts and wall hanging etc. and accessories such as bags, jewellery, 16% often purchase furniture and 10% of respondent prefer to buy kitchenware including wooden spoons ceramics pots etc.

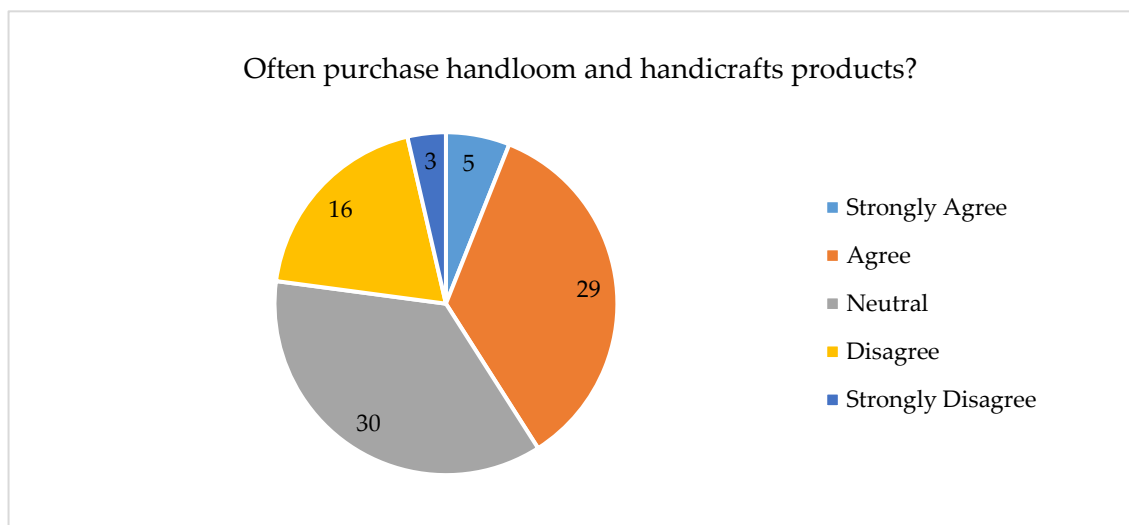


Figure 7. Often Purchase Handloom and Handicrafts Products

4.6 Factors For Choosing or Rejecting the Local Handloom and Handicraft Products

Table 2 presents a weighted average score of the factors influencing the youth in Arunachal Pradesh when choosing or rejecting handloom products over alternative products. This data were assessed using a Likert scale, where

respondents rated each factor on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data were then used to calculate weighted average scores, reflecting the relative importance of each factor in influencing consumer behaviour.

The findings indicate that several key factors impact the purchasing decisions of young consumers in the region. Cultural significance emerges as the most influential factor with 4.52, indicating younger consumers' efforts to preserve their own culture. This is closely followed by local support (4.35), quality (4.22), eco-friendliness (4.21), uniqueness (4.15), and lastly emotional attachment to

handloom and handicrafts products (4.04). The data shows that the whole identified factor plays a relatively significant role in shaping the buying decisions of the customer. Artisans should aim to attract consumers by focusing on creating products that resonate with cultural values and emphasize quality and sustainability.

Table 2. Key Factors Impact the Purchasing Decisions of Young Consumers in The Region

Factor (Choosing)	Weighted Average Score	Factors (Rejecting)	Weighted Average Score
quality	4.22	Price	4.27
Emotional attachment	4.04	Lack of Promotion	3.67
Eco-friendly Product	4.21	Better Substitute Goods	3.82
local support	4.35	Inconvenience in Purchase	3.92
Uniqueness	4.15	Lack of Awareness	3.83
Cultural Significance	4.52		

In contrast, factors influencing product rejection were found to be more price-sensitive. The consumers are mainly influenced by the price of the product, with a 4.27, indicating that many reject such a products due to the high price of the handloom and handicrafts products. This was followed by inconvenience while purchasing, such as lack of market (3.92), lack of awareness (3.83), better substitution goods (3.82), and lastly, poor promotion (3.67).

From the above data, it can be understood that, to reduce the rejection, artisans must focus on competitive pricing, streamline the purchasing experience, increase awareness through effective marketing, and consider the availability of substitute products in the market.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Youth play an important role in the protection and preservation of the handloom and handicrafts. Youth are the receivers of

their senior citizen, and they are also the senders to the new generation. In a nutshell, youth are the bridge between the other two citizens. The study, concludes that the youth of Arunachal Pradesh is highly engaged with handloom and handicrafts, as out of 100 respondents, 57% have at least one handloom and handicraft skill.

The study has also identified several solutions for the promotion and preservation of handloom and handicraft skills, such as teaching directly to young students and supporting young artisans through government programs.

The paper has attempted to identify several reasons for the customer (youth) for preferring or rejecting handloom and handicrafts products over other substitute goods.

Based on the study, it is recommended that policymakers strengthen and promote handloom and handicrafts among the youth of Arunachal Pradesh by teaching such skills from the school level, providing support to young artisans by the government or integrating handloom and handicrafts education into youth programs.

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