

# Digital Inclusion and Empowerment of Artisans Through E-Commerce in Coimbatore City

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## Abstract

The swift development of online technologies and e-commerce has provided new chances to artisans. This paper explores the effects of e-commerce-based artisan digital empowerment in Coimbatore City, based on the areas of digital awareness, online platform use, socio-economic outcomes, and issues. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data on 120 artisans and tools like frequency analysis, ANOVA, chi-square and rank analysis were used. The authors report that although artisans are aware of the advantages of e-commerce, such obstacles as low digital literacy, inappropriate infrastructure, and lack of trust toward online purchases still exist. This study concludes that better digital skills, infrastructure and policy support are needed to participate effectively in the digital economy.

*Key words: Artisans, Online marketing, Digital empowerment, Online platform.*

## INTRODUCTION

The fast process of digitalization and development of e-commerce has altered the traditional business format and provided new opportunities to artisans. Previously, artisans relied on the local markets, exhibitions, and middlemen, which restricted their revenues and their markets. Recently, the online stores, social media and electronic payment system have made artisans reach customers directly, accessing national and international markets and getting a better price on their products. Not only does this change their economic opportunities, but also makes them maintain traditional crafts, by matching them with the demand of the modern consumers. The current research is based on artisans in Coimbatore City, which is a region with an industrial and cultural background. Although digital tools have the potential to improve the practice of artisans, low digital literacy, poor awareness, poor infrastructure, and threat by mass-produced products are the main challenges to this practice. Thus, the research highlights the necessity to evaluate the degree of digital enablement of artisans and the advantages of such enablement, as well as the issues influencing the sustainable implementation of e-commerce.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the major challenges faced by artisans in accessing and using e-commerce platforms effectively.
- To provide suggestions and policy recommendations to strengthen digital empowerment initiatives for artisans in Coimbatore.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The fast growth of e-commerce has turned the conventional artisan businesses in an entirely new opportunity. Once restricted to local market, exhibition, and middle men, which decreased revenues and sales, artisans have turned to online stores, social media, and electronic payments to get in touch with national and global buyers, higher prices, increased income, and sustenance of traditional crafts in the face of modern trends. This paper reviews artisans in Coimbatore, a center of industrial and cultural growth. Digital tools have their advantages, but such issues as low digital literacy, low understanding of platforms, lack of infrastructure, and rivalry with

mass-produced products remain. The research evaluates the digital empowerment rates and benefits acquired, and obstacles to sustainable e-commerce adoption.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to the statement of the problem, the artisans in Coimbatore City are very important in preserving the local culture and contributing to the local economy but the artisans are struggling with some challenges that include lack of access to the market, low level of income and over dependence on middlemen. These problems curtail their economic prospects and endanger the existence of the traditional crafts in the market which is dominated by the mass production of goods. However, many artisans cannot enjoy the fruits of digitalization and the new opportunities provided by digital platforms and e-commerce because of their inability to be digitally literate, be aware, under-train, or have poor infrastructure. The issue also highlights the fact that there is inadequate research on the real situation of how digital empowerment is affecting artisans in Coimbatore. The knowledge gap is whether the e-commerce is really enhancing the income, competitiveness and sustainability of the artisan. Thus, the research aims to evaluate the level of digital awareness of artisans, their online shopping and social media utilization, the economic benefit of online tools, and the significant challenges that they experience when going online.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- The study will be conducted using questionnaires, which can be biased or incorrect.
- The limitation in time and resources by the nature of the studies did not allow the thoroughness of data collection and analysis, and the lasting effects of digital empowerment were not evaluated.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Das, Animesh and Rai, Rakesh (2025)** studied the roles played by digital literacy and the new media on artisan women in Eastern India. The qualitative narrative analysis and in-depth interviews with six women artisans of Santhal, Sabar, and Patachitra communities in the Purulia district, West Bengal revealed that social media platform applications, including Facebook and YouTube, enhanced market access, visibility, and economic empowerment in a significant manner. The study also puts emphasis on the importance of the digital platforms in conserving and passing the cultural knowledge between generations. Nevertheless, low internet access and low digital skills are also obstacles. The paper suggests specific digital education and infrastructure enhancement to resolve the digital gap and concludes that digital media has turned indigenous women artisans to traditional crafters into cultural entrepreneurs.

**Yusrijal, Aliyan and Rina (2025)** investigated the effects that digitalization had on traditional handicraft markets among the Toraja community in South Sulawesi Indonesia. Based on a qualitative design and semi-structured interviews and participant observation of 15 artisans, the study discovered that digital tools such as Instagram and Tokopedia increased access to the market, income, and linked the artisans to both domestic and foreign consumers. Nonetheless, such issues as digital illiteracy, uneven distribution of resources and alteration of traditional designs were pointed out. The article has made special attention to the conflict between the economic benefits and cultural authenticity and suggested specific digital literacy training, infrastructure assistance, and ethical market practices as a means of ensuring the balanced digital integration.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design embraced in the paper is descriptive research design in order to study the empowerment of artisans in Coimbatore City by e-commerce sites.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

**Primary data:** The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire that was given through Google Forms

**Secondary data:** secondary data were obtained through journals, articles, websites and previous study.

**SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Simple random sampling method was employed in choosing 120 artisan respondents in Coimbatore City.

**TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS**

- Frequency
- Anova

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION****FREQUENCY**

TABLE NO -1

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS		FREQUENCY	PERCENT
AGE	Below 20	25	20.8
	21-30	26	21.7
	31-40	22	18.3
	41-50	22	18.3
	Above 50	25	20.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
GENDER	Male	62	51.7
	Female	58	48.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
EDUCATION	Higher secondary	30	25.0
	Under graduate	70	58.3
	Post graduate	20	16.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
MONTHLY INCOME	Below ₹10,000	18	15.0
	₹10,001-₹20,001	30	25.0
	₹20,001-₹30,001	32	26.7
	₹30,001-₹40,001	21	17.5
	Above ₹ 50000	19	15.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
TYPE OF ARTISANAL WORK	Wood working	37	30.8
	Metal working	33	27.5
	Ceramic	25	20.8
	Glass blowing	25	20.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

**INTERPRETATION**

Frequency analysis indicates that the majority of the respondents fall in the middle-income category, 26.7% had an indication of earning 30,001-40,000 and 25 earned between 20,001- 30,000. Age distribution is quite equal, as the largest percentage of 21.7 is found within the 21-30 years' category. The sample is nearly balanced in terms of gender, with 51.7 percent of the sample being males, and 48.3 percent being females. On the whole, the demographic distribution is equal, which gives a solid foundation to be used in further analysis.

**ANOVA**

**H<sub>0</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between Gender and awareness of digital tools and practices.

**H<sub>1</sub>**: There is a significant relationship between Gender and awareness of digital tools and practices.

Table no – 3 Age and awareness of digital tools and practices

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Using whatsapp for business communication</b>	Between Groups	16.873	4	4.218	2.092	<b>.086</b>
	Within Groups	231.919	115	2.017		
	Total	248.792	119			
<b>Using social media platforms (Facebook ,Instagram) for product programs</b>	Between Groups	21.944	4	5.486	2.719	<b>.033</b>
	Within Groups	232.048	115	2.018		
	Total	253.992	119			
<b>Online payment apps (Googlepay,paytm,phone pe)</b>	Between Groups	17.778	4	4.444	2.164	<b>.077</b>
	Within Groups	236.189	115	2.054		
	Total	253.967	119			
<b>Online banking services(NEFT/UPI/IMP S)</b>	Between Groups	13.554	4	3.389	2.011	<b>.098</b>
	Within Groups	193.771	115	1.685		
	Total	207.325	119			
<b>Creating and using email accounts</b>	Between Groups	22.144	4	5.536	3.224	<b>.015</b>
	Within Groups	197.448	115	1.717		
	Total	219.592	119			
<b>Online safety practices (password production, OTP use)</b>	Between Groups	11.689	4	2.922	2.261	<b>.067</b>
	Within Groups	148.636	115	1.292		
	Total	160.325	119			

Source: Primary Data

### INTERPRETATION

ANOVA was used to test the difference in age groups in terms of the use and awareness of the digital tools (significance level = 0.05). Findings of each tool WhatsApp business communication:  $F=2.092$ ,  $p=0.086$  ( $>0.05$ ). None of the age groups are significantly different. Social media promotion of the products (Facebook, Instagram):  $p=0.083$  ( $>0.05$ ).

The use is not significantly dependent on age. Online payment apps (Google Pay, Paytm, PhonePe):  $p=0.077$  ( $>0.05$ ). No significant age differences. Online banking services (NEFT, UPI, IMPS):  $p=0.098$  ( $>0.05$ ).

No age difference. Online email usage:  $p=0.015$  ( $<0.05$ ). There is a significant disparity, which suggests that the usage of emails differs significantly depending on age. Online safety (the use of passwords, OTPs):  $p=0.067$  ( $>0.05$ ). No any notable differences between groups.

### FINDINGS:

- Most (26.7%) of the respondents are belongs to ₹20001-₹30001 of monthly income
- Most (21.7%) of the respondents are belongs to 21-30 of age
- Majority (51.7%) of the respondents are belongs to Male of gender
- There is a significant relationship between Gender and awareness of digital tools and practices.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

- Organize frequent digital literacy training sessions to enable the artisans to operate smart phones, social media and e-commerce sites effectively.
- Enhance internet accessibility and avail low cost digital computer to facilitate business activities online.
- Build awareness and offer guidelines on registration, marketing, and selling of products via e-commerce sites.
- Encourage safe online payment methods and train the craftsmen on how to perform safe online financial dealings.
- Enhance institutional and governmental support by training, subsidies and digital marketing support.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research indicates that majority of the artisans are left in the low- to middle-income bracket and are struggling to embrace digital tools because of lack of awareness, skills and infrastructure. E-commerce has enormous potential of enhancing access to market, increased revenue, and maintaining the traditional crafts, but the benefits are not being adequately achieved. Thus, it is important to enhance digital literacy, technological assistance, and policy-level interventions to obtain sustainable digital empowerment of artisans.

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