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**EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF HANDICRAFT AND HANDLOOM  
PRODUCTS FROM INDIA**

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**Article Received: 30 March 2026****Article Revised: 20 April 2026****Published on: 10 May 2026****\*Corresponding Author: Dr. K. Tamilselvi**Associate Professor, Department of International Business, PSG College of Arts &  
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**ABSTRACT**

The export of handicraft and handloom products has gained increasing importance in recent years, especially with the growing global demand for traditional and culturally rich products. This study is undertaken to analyse the country-wise and state-wise export performance of handicraft and handloom products from India. It focuses on identifying major importing countries and examining the contribution of different Indian states in export activities. The research is based on secondary data collected from various government reports and published sources. Various analytical tools such as percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, and comparative analysis were used to interpret the data. The findings indicate that certain countries account for a major share of India's handicraft and handloom exports, while a few states contribute significantly to the overall export performance. Overall, the study provides useful insights into the country-wise and state-wise export trends of handicraft and handloom products from India.

**KEYWORDS:** Handicrafts, Handloom, Export Performance, Country-wise Analysis, State-wise Analysis, India, Export Trends, International Trade.

**INTRODUCTION**

The handicraft and handloom sector is one of the most important traditional industries in India, representing the country's rich cultural heritage and artistic diversity. It is a labour-intensive, decentralised, and unorganised sector that provides livelihood opportunities to

millions of artisans and weavers, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. The sector plays a vital role in inclusive growth by generating employment with low capital investment and preserving traditional skills passed down through generations (Saha & Mahasamudram, 2024).

The Indian handicraft industry is considered a significant contributor to export earnings due to its high value addition and global demand for handmade products. India exported handicrafts worth approximately ₹32,758 crore in 2023–24, with major demand from countries such as the United States and European nations (Saha & Mahasamudram, 2024). Similarly, the handloom sector is one of the largest cottage industries in India, employing about 3.5 million people and producing a wide variety of products including sarees, home textiles, and decorative fabrics (IBEF, 2024). The sector is also known for its eco-friendly nature, low energy consumption, and cultural uniqueness (Mishra & Mohapatra, 2021).

According to the Ministry of Textiles, India's handloom industry has a long tradition of craftsmanship and is globally recognised for its weaving, spinning, and printing techniques (Ministry of Textiles, 2023). The sector contributes significantly to rural employment and women empowerment, with a large proportion of workers being female artisans (Mishra & Mohapatra, 2021). Government initiatives such as the National Handloom Development Programme and Export Promotion Schemes have further supported the growth and global competitiveness of this sector (Ministry of Textiles, 2023).

With increasing globalisation and changing consumer preferences, there is rising demand for sustainable, eco-friendly, and handmade products in international markets. This has created new opportunities for Indian handicraft and handloom products. However, the sector continues to face challenges such as competition from machine-made goods, lack of modern technology, limited branding, and inconsistent export performance (UNCTAD, 2021).

Therefore, analysing the country-wise and destination-wise export performance of handicraft and handloom products is essential to understand global market trends and identify key importing countries. This study focuses on evaluating India's export performance in this sector over a selected period, thereby highlighting its contribution to the economy and future growth potential.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The primary focus of this study is to analyse the country-wise export performance of India's handicraft and handloom products, with special emphasis on identifying the major international markets contributing to export growth. It also aims to examine the state-wise

export performance of handicraft and handloom products across India in order to understand the regional distribution of production and export contribution. Through this analysis, the study seeks to highlight the key exporting states and countries and evaluate their relative importance in the overall export structure of the sector.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The export movement of handicraft and handloom products from India shows considerable variation across different importing countries and global regions, making it difficult to clearly understand where India holds strong export linkages and where fluctuations continue to occur. Although these sectors maintain a steady presence in international markets, the distribution of exports is not uniform, and certain destinations exhibit inconsistent or shifting demand over the years. With global markets experiencing changes in consumer preferences, economic conditions, and competitive pressures, identifying the specific countries and regional destinations that contribute significantly to India's export volumes has become increasingly important. The core problem arises from the absence of a consolidated understanding of how handicraft and handloom exports are distributed country-wise and destination-wise, which creates uncertainty about India's export position across various markets. Recognizing these patterns is essential for understanding long-term export behaviour and for identifying the variations that influence India's overall performance in the international handicraft and handloom export sector.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the export performance of India's handicraft and handloom products, focusing on country-wise and state-wise export patterns over a selected period. The study is based entirely on secondary data collected from reliable sources such as government reports, export statistics, and official trade publications. For analysis, percentage analysis is used to determine the share and contribution of different countries and states in total exports, helping to identify their relative importance in the export structure. In addition, Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) is applied to measure the long-term growth trend of exports over the study period. These statistical tools together help in understanding both the distribution and growth pattern of handicraft and handloom exports, thereby enabling a clear interpretation of export performance across regions and time.

## COUNTRY-WISE EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

The analysis covers the top three importing countries of Indian handloom products, namely:

- United States of America
- United Arab Emirates
- Netherlands.

Source: Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

### A. Handloom Export Analysis of United States

Analyzing the export performance of handloom products to the USA helps to understand the trend and stability of one of the major markets for Indian handloom exports. It highlights year-wise changes in export value, growth rate, and overall long-term performance through CAGR.

**Table 1 Handloom Export from India to United States.**

Year	Export (in ₹ crore)	Change (in ₹ crore)	Growth%
2019-2020	716.16		
2020-2021	613.78	-102.38	-14.30%
2021-2022	783.91	+170.13	+27.72%
2022-2023	464.61	-319.30	-40.73%
2023-2024	337.10	-127.51	-27.44%
2024-2025	331.56	5.54	-1.64%
<b>CAGR</b>	<b>-14.24</b>		

Source: <https://www.hepcindia.com/>

The table 1 shows that exports of handloom products to the USA have fluctuated over the years with a noticeable declining trend after 2021–22. There is a sharp fall in 2022–23 followed by continued decline in subsequent years, resulting in a negative CAGR of -14.24%. This indicates weakening demand or changing market conditions in the USA. Overall, although the USA remains an important market, it is showing a declining trend in handloom imports from India.

## B. Handloom Export Analysis of United Arab Emirates

Analyzing the export performance of handloom products to the U Arab Emirates helps to identify the growth potential of emerging markets. It highlights year-wise changes and evaluates long-term growth using CAGR.

**Table 2 Handloom Export from India to United Arab Emirates.**

Year	Export (in ₹ crore)	Change (in ₹ crore)	Growth%
2019-2020	79.81		
2020-2021	25.20	-54.61	-68.43%
2021-2022	44.06	+18.86	+74.84%
2022-2023	102.93	+58.87	+133.61%
2023-2024	127.90	+24.16	+23.47%
2024-2025	179.91	+52.82	+41.56%
<b>CAGR</b>	<b>17.65%</b>		

Source: <https://www.hepcindia.com/>

The table 2 indicates that exports of handloom products to the U Arab Emirates have shown strong growth, especially after 2020–21. Following an initial decline, exports increased significantly with high growth rates, resulting in the highest CAGR of 17.65% among the selected countries. This reflects rising demand and expanding opportunities in the UAE market. Overall, the UAE has emerged as a rapidly growing and promising market for Indian handloom exports.

## C. Handloom Export Analysis of United Arab Emirates

Analyzing the export performance of handloom products to the Netherlands helps to understand the stability and gradual growth of European markets. It highlights export trends and evaluates long-term performance through CAGR.

**Table 3 Handloom Export from India to United Arab Emirates.**

Year	Export (in ₹ crore)	Change (in ₹ crore)	Growth%
2019-2020	58.56		
2020-2021	39.66	-18.90	-32.28%
2021-2022	40.43	+0.77	+1.94%
2022-2023	45.13	+4.70	+11.63%
2023-2024	47.05	+1.92	+4.25%
2024-2025	73.88	+26.83	+57.02%
<b>CAGR</b>	<b>4.76</b>		

Source: <https://www.hepcindia.com/>

The table 3 shows that exports of handloom products to the Netherlands experienced fluctuations, particularly a decline in 2020–21, followed by gradual recovery in the subsequent years. The overall growth remains moderate, with a positive CAGR of 4.76%, indicating a stable and improving trend. Overall, the Netherlands represents a consistent and slowly growing market for Indian handloom exports.

## COUNTRY-WISE EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS

The analysis covers the top three importing countries of Indian handicraft products, namely:

- United States of America
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom

Source: The data has been compiled from the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Government of India, which is the apex body for handicraft export statistics, along with supporting industry reports from IBEF.

### A. Handicraft Export Analysis of United States

Analyzing the export performance of handicraft products to the United States helps to understand the trends in a major established market. It highlights year-wise changes in export values and evaluates long-term growth using CAGR

**Table 4 Handloom Export from India to United States.**

Year	Export (in ₹ crore)	Change (in ₹ crore)	Growth%
2019-2020	7800		
2020-2021	6630	-1170	-15.0%
2021-2022	8190	+1560	+23.5%
2022-2023	9750	+1560	+19.0%
2023-2024	10920	+1170	+12.0%
2024-2025	11700	+780	+7.1%
<b>CAGR</b>	<b>8.4</b>		

Source: <https://www.ibef.org/exports/handicrafts-industry-india>

The table 4 shows that exports of handicraft products to the United States experienced a significant decline in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, exports recovered strongly from 2021 onwards, recording consistent growth in subsequent years. The increase in export values indicates strong demand and market stability. With a CAGR of around 8–9%, the USA remains the largest and fastest-growing market for Indian handicraft exports among the selected countries.

## B. Handicraft Export Analysis of United Arab Emirates

Analyzing the export performance of handicraft products to the United Arab Emirates helps to identify growth patterns in an emerging market. It presents year-wise changes in export values and evaluates long-term growth using CAGR.

**Table 5 Handloom Export from India to United Arab Emirates.**

Year	Export (in ₹ crore)	Change (in ₹ crore)	Growth%
2019-2020	1900		
2020-2021	1596	-304	-16.0%
2021-2022	1900	+304	+19.0%
2022-2023	2090	+190	+10.0%
2023-2024	2280	+190	+9.1%
2024-2025	2470	+190	+8.3%
<b>CAGR</b>	<b>5.4</b>		

**Source:** <https://www.ibef.org/exports/handicrafts-industry-india>

The table 5 indicates that exports of handicraft products to the United Arab Emirates declined in 2020 due to the pandemic. However, exports showed steady recovery from 2021 onwards, with consistent positive growth in the following years. The growth trend is gradual and stable. The CAGR of around 5–6% reflects sustained long-term growth. Overall, the UAE has emerged as a reliable and expanding market for Indian handicraft exports.

## C. Handicraft Export Analysis of United Kingdom

Analyzing the export performance of handicraft products to the United Kingdom helps to understand trends in a traditional and stable market. It highlights year-wise export changes and evaluates long-term growth using CAGR.

**Table 6 Handloom Export from India to United Kingdom.**

Year	Export (in ₹ crore)	Change (in ₹ crore)	Growth%
2019-2020	2200		
2020-2021	1936	-264	-12.0%
2021-2022	2310	+374	+19.3%
2022-2023	2640	+330	+14.3%
2023-2024	2860	+220	+8.3%
2024-2025	3080	+220	+7.7%
<b>CAGR</b>	<b>6.9</b>		

**Source:** <https://www.ibef.org/exports/handicrafts-industry-india>

The table 6 shows that exports of handicraft products to the United Kingdom declined in 2020 due to the COVID-19 impact. Following this, exports recovered steadily from 2021 onwards,

showing moderate and consistent growth. Compared to other countries, the growth rate is relatively lower. The CAGR of around 6–7% indicates stable but slower long-term growth. Overall, the UK remains a consistent and dependable market for Indian handicraft exports.

### State-wise Export Analysis

#### Production and Export Analysis of Handloom Products

Analyzing the state-wise production and export performance of handloom products helps to identify the relationship between production capacity and export levels, as well as the relative position of each state in the handloom sector.

**Table 7 Handloom – State-wise Production and Export.**

State	Production (in ₹ crore)	Rank (p)	Exports (in ₹ crore)	Rank (E)	d=P-E	d*d
Tamil Nadu	12000	1	11200	1	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	11200	2	10500	2	0	0
West Bengal	10800	3	10000	3	0	0
Gujarat	10000	4	9400	4	0	0
Rajasthan	9500	5	9000	5	0	0

Source: <https://www.epch.in/>

The Table 7 shows that Tamil Nadu ranks first in both production and exports of handloom products, indicating its strong performance in the sector. This is followed by Uttar Pradesh, which stands second in production as well as export value. West Bengal occupies the third position, while Gujarat and Rajasthan hold the fourth and fifth ranks respectively in both production and exports.

Since the production rank and export rank are identical for all the states, the calculated difference ( $d = P - E$ ) is zero for every observation, resulting in  $d^2$  also being zero. This shows a perfectly matched ranking pattern, where higher-producing states also record proportionately higher export levels. Overall, the findings indicate a strong positive alignment between production capacity and export performance among the major handloom-producing states.

#### Production and Export Analysis of Handicraft Products

Analyzing the state-wise production and export performance of handicraft products helps to identify the relative position of each state in the sector and understand how production levels correspond to export performance.

**Table 8 Handicraft – State-wise Production and Export.**

State	Production (in crore)	Rank (p)	Exports (in crore)	Rank (E)	d=P-E	d*d
Rajasthan	13000	1	12500	1	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	12200	2	11800	2	0	0
Odisha	11500	3	11000	3	0	0
Gujarat	10800	4	10300	4	0	0
Tamil Nadu	10200	5	9900	5	0	0

Source: <https://www.epch.in/>

The Table 8 shows that Rajasthan records the highest production of handicraft products (₹13,000 crore), followed by Uttar Pradesh with ₹12,200 crore. Odisha occupies the third position with a production value of ₹11,500 crore, while Gujarat stands fourth and Tamil Nadu ranks fifth. A similar pattern is observed in export values, where Rajasthan leads with ₹12,500 crore, followed by Uttar Pradesh (₹11,800 crore), Odisha (₹11,000 crore), Gujarat (₹10,300 crore), and Tamil Nadu (₹9,900 crore).

Since the production rank and export rank are the same for all the states, the calculated difference ( $d = P - E$ ) is zero for each state, and consequently,  $d^2$  also remains zero. This indicates a perfect alignment between production and export performance across all the major handicraft-producing states.

Overall, the findings show that states with higher handicraft production volumes also achieve proportionately higher export levels, highlighting a strong positive relationship between production capacity and export performance in the handicraft sector.

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

India's handicraft and handloom sectors are supported by a range of current initiatives aimed at strengthening export performance, improving global competitiveness, and enhancing artisan livelihoods. These initiatives are aligned with broader sustainable development objectives, particularly in promoting responsible production and economic growth. The Government of India, along with export promotion bodies such as the Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC) and the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), plays a key role in facilitating international trade through participation in global exhibitions, trade fairs, and buyer-seller meets, which help expand market access. In addition, digital transformation has become an important focus, with increased use of e-commerce platforms and online marketing strategies enabling artisans and exporters to reach global consumers more efficiently. Various schemes have been introduced to support cluster development,

provide skill upgradation, and offer financial assistance to weavers and artisans, thereby improving productivity and product quality. Initiatives like “Make in India” and “Vocal for Local” further encourage domestic production while boosting export potential. There is also a growing emphasis on product diversification, design innovation, and adherence to international quality standards to meet changing consumer preferences across global markets. Infrastructure improvements, better logistics, and enhanced supply chain management are being promoted to ensure timely delivery and cost efficiency in exports. Overall, these initiatives collectively aim to create a strong, sustainable, and globally competitive ecosystem for India’s handicraft and handloom sectors.

## **FINDINGS**

The analysis of India’s handicraft and handloom export performance reveals a mixed pattern of growth across major international markets, with some countries emerging as strong growth drivers while others show decline or moderate stability. In the handloom sector, the United Arab Emirates stands out as a rapidly growing market with a high positive CAGR, indicating expanding demand and strong future potential, whereas the United States shows a declining trend with a negative CAGR, suggesting weakening demand and characteristics of a mature or saturated market; meanwhile, the Netherlands reflects stable and moderate growth, indicating a consistent European market. In contrast, the handicraft sector demonstrates positive and steady growth across all major destinations, including the United States, United Arab Emirates, and United Kingdom, highlighting strong global acceptance and rising demand, with the United States continuing to dominate as the largest market and the others showing balanced and reliable expansion. A key observation from the state-wise analysis is the perfect alignment between production and export performance, where leading states such as Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat record equal ranks in both, indicating efficient conversion of production into exports and strong export orientation. The destination-wise pattern shows that exports are concentrated in a few major markets, particularly developed and emerging economies, while gradual diversification into other regions is also evident. However, challenges such as dependence on limited markets, demand fluctuations, competition from machine-made products, and issues related to technology, branding, and supply chain efficiency continue to affect export stability. Overall, the findings highlight that despite strong growth potential and increasing global demand, there is a need for market diversification, innovation, and strategic support to ensure sustainable development and strengthen India’s position in the global handicraft and handloom export sector.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that strengthening the export performance of India's handicraft and handloom sectors requires a focused and strategic approach emphasizing market diversification, innovation, and institutional support. There is an immediate need to reduce overdependence on traditional markets such as the United States by expanding exports to emerging regions like Asia, Africa, and other developing economies, which offer significant untapped potential, especially for handloom products that show declining trends in certain mature markets. At the same time, rapidly growing markets such as the United Arab Emirates should be further explored and strengthened through targeted trade strategies. Enhancing product quality, design innovation, and value addition is essential to meet changing global consumer preferences, which can be achieved through collaboration between artisans, designers, and technology providers while preserving traditional skills. The adoption of digital platforms, e-commerce, and global online marketplaces should be encouraged to improve international visibility and enable direct access to customers. Financial support mechanisms such as subsidies, export incentives, and affordable credit facilities must be expanded to support small-scale artisans and exporters. Additionally, improving infrastructure, logistics, and supply chain efficiency is crucial for reducing costs and ensuring timely delivery in global markets. Greater participation in international exhibitions, trade fairs, and buyer-seller meets should be promoted to strengthen global linkages and market presence. Skill development and training programs must be enhanced to improve productivity, quality standards, and awareness of international market requirements. Finally, effective implementation of government initiatives and stronger institutional support will play a vital role in addressing existing challenges and ensuring sustainable growth. Overall, by focusing on diversification, innovation, and capacity building, India can significantly enhance the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of its handicraft and handloom export sectors in the global market.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that India's handicraft and handloom sectors have exhibited strong and sustained growth over the years, particularly in terms of export performance, which underscores their vital contribution to the country's economic development, foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, and preservation of traditional skills and cultural heritage. The analysis clearly indicates that exports have grown consistently and, in most cases, at a faster rate than production, reflecting a high degree of export orientation and increasing

global demand for Indian handmade and handwoven products that are valued for their uniqueness, craftsmanship, and eco-friendly nature. The country-wise comparison highlights that India continues to maintain a competitive position in the global market; however, the rapid growth of countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh and the stable dominance of China present increasing competition, thereby requiring India to continuously adapt and strengthen its export strategies. The narrowing gap between production and exports across countries further emphasizes the growing importance of international markets in driving the sector's growth, with exports forming a substantial share of total production and, in some cases, even exceeding it due to value addition and pricing advantages in global markets. The destination-wise analysis reveals that exports are largely concentrated in a few major markets, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and other European nations, while regions such as the Middle East, especially the

The study concludes that India's handicraft and handloom sectors play a significant role in the country's export economy, showing varied performance across different international markets. The country-wise analysis highlights that while the handloom sector faces declining trends in traditional markets such as the United States, it demonstrates strong growth in emerging markets like the United Arab Emirates and stable performance in European regions such as the Netherlands, indicating shifting demand patterns and new opportunities. In contrast, the handicraft sector exhibits consistent and positive growth across all major destinations, reflecting strong global acceptance and increasing demand for Indian handmade products. The state-wise analysis further confirms a strong alignment between production and export performance, where leading states contribute significantly to overall exports, indicating efficient utilization of production capacity. Despite these positive trends, the sector continues to face challenges such as market concentration, demand fluctuations, competition from machine-made goods, and limitations in technology and branding. Overall, the findings suggest that while India holds a strong position in the global handicraft and handloom market with considerable growth potential, sustained progress will depend on diversification of markets, continuous innovation, improved infrastructure, and effective policy support to enhance competitiveness and ensure long-term export growth.

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