

FROM CRAFTSMANSHIP TO ENTERPRISE: THE ROLE OF PRADHAN MANTRI VISHWAKARMA IN SHAPING ENTREPRENEURIAL FUTURES

Dr. M.N.Prakasha

Associate professor of commerce
GFGC MADIKERI

DOI: [10.5281/Armaa.15130897](https://doi.org/10.5281/Armaa.15130897)

INTRODUCTION

India's artisan sector is a living legacy of the nation's rich cultural heritage. For centuries, traditional craftspeople—carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, weavers, and potters, among others—have been the backbone of rural livelihoods and the custodians of local artistry. Their skills, often passed down through generations, represent not just craftsmanship but a deep bond with identity, community, and tradition. Yet in today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, this invaluable sector has come under considerable strain. Globalization, digital transformation, and shifting consumer preferences have reshaped markets in ways that often bypass the traditional artisan, leaving many in economic insecurity and fading relevance.

In response to these challenges, the Government of India introduced the **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** in 2023, a visionary initiative aimed at empowering and integrating artisans into the formal entrepreneurial ecosystem. With an ambitious financial commitment of ₹13,000 crore over five years, the scheme is designed not just to preserve traditional crafts, but to transform them into engines of sustainable income and innovation. By offering comprehensive support—ranging from skill enhancement and training in modern tools to collateral-free credit, brand-building assistance, and digital

KEYWORDS: craftsmen, Vishwakarma, entrepreneurial, skill,

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on artisan empowerment and entrepreneurship highlights several recurring themes:

Traditional Skill Erosion: Studies (Sharma, 2018; Dutta, 2020) indicate a steady decline in traditional crafts due to lack of market access, inadequate financial support, and diminishing intergenerational skill transfer.

Role of Government Schemes: Previous interventions like the Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme and PM SVANidhi have provided valuable lessons in integrating informal sector workers into formal economic frameworks (Kumar & Singh, 2021).

Entrepreneurship Development: Research by Banerjee (2019) underscores the importance of skill upgradation, access to credit, and digital literacy in transforming artisans into entrepreneurs.

Market Linkages and Branding: Studies (Gupta, 2022) have shown that branding, quality certification, and e-commerce access are critical for artisans to compete in both domestic and international markets.

Despite these insights, there remains a gap in literature on holistic, multi-pronged approaches that combine recognition, skill development, financial inclusion, and market integration—an area the PM Vishwakarma Scheme seeks to address.

SOCIOCULTURAL IDENTITY AND LIVELIHOODS

Scholars such as Mehta (2020) have emphasized the socio-cultural significance of artisanal practices, noting that crafts are not merely economic activities but also expressions of identity and heritage. The erosion of these traditions leads to a loss of community cohesion and cultural diversity. Literature suggests that empowering artisans is not just about financial upliftment, but about preserving intangible cultural assets.

▪ **Digital Empowerment and Technology Integration**

Emerging studies (Rao & Iyer, 2021) have begun to explore how digital tools can bridge the gap between artisans and markets. Mobile applications, digital payment systems, and online marketplaces are increasingly seen as key enablers. However, digital literacy remains a barrier for many, particularly women artisans and those in remote rural areas. Technology adoption must be paired with capacity-building measures to ensure meaningful participation.

▪ **Sustainable Entrepreneurship**

Contemporary literature (Sen, 2022; Chakraborty, 2023) points to the need for a sustainability lens in entrepreneurship development. Eco-friendly production methods, use of locally sourced materials, and circular

economy models are becoming essential to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. Such practices also help artisans diversify income streams and build resilience against market fluctuations.

- **Financial Inclusion and Credit Accessibility**

Research by Patnaik & Mukherjee (2022) highlights that traditional financial institutions often overlook informal workers due to lack of documentation and credit history. Government-backed schemes with collateral-free loans and simplified processes have shown promise, yet their reach and effectiveness require further study. Integrating microfinance, cooperative models, and fintech solutions could deepen financial inclusion.

- **Globalization and Export Potential**

Global demand for authentic, handmade products continues to rise. Literature by Desai (2021) argues that with the right support structures—such as trade facilitation, export subsidies, and compliance training—Indian artisans could significantly expand their international footprint. However, language barriers, regulatory complexity, and lack of branding often hamper global competitiveness.

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme, by addressing many of these interconnected issues, represents a potential breakthrough. Its multi-pronged approach aligns with contemporary literature on inclusive growth, suggesting a path forward that honors tradition while fostering innovation.

OBJECTIVES

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the features and implementation framework of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.
- To assess the scheme's effectiveness in transforming artisans into entrepreneurs.
- To analyze the challenges and opportunities faced by artisans under the scheme.
- To evaluate the integration of traditional crafts with modern market mechanisms.

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING

Primary Data

Structured interviews and surveys were conducted with 120 artisans across four culturally rich and economically diverse district: Kodagu (carpenters and weavers), Mysore (potters and leatherworkers), Chamarajanagara (bell metal workers and coconut husk fiber artisans), and Hassan (goldsmiths and sculptors). The focus was on artisans actively participating in the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

Secondary Data

Supplementary data included:

- Government reports such as PIB releases and the Ministry of Skill Development updates
- PM Vishwakarma scheme guidelines
- Peer-reviewed articles from journals on rural entrepreneurship and craft revitalization

Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling technique targeted artisans across rural and urban belts, aiming to include diverse trades (e.g., blacksmithing, tailoring, and cobblery). This enriched representation ensures insights across geographies and craft clusters.

Research Tool and Reliability

A structured questionnaire was developed with five key sections:

1. **Demographics** (age, gender, location, trade type, years in craft)
2. **Scheme Awareness & Participation**
3. **Access to Credit, Tools, and Training**
4. **Perceived Impact on Income, Skills, Market Access**
5. **Challenges Faced**

Reliability was tested using **Cronbach's Alpha**, yielding a high value ($\alpha = 0.82$), indicating consistent responses across items. This reliability metric adds validity to the conclusions drawn.

Indicator	Result	Interpretation
Scheme awareness	87%	High visibility of the scheme; potential success in outreach
Credit support Revised	65%	Majority accessed funding, though over one-third still face barriers
Toolkit incentives used	72%	Indicates strong uptake, with tools seen as central to craft improvement
Training participation	78%	Training modules are well-attended, hinting at demand

		for skill enhancement
Technical skill improvement	64%	Training has measurable outcomes in craftsmanship quality
New market Access	58%	Over half experienced market expansion, but scope for deeper integration remains

Key Findings and Expanded Interpretations

▪ Enhanced Recognition

The provision of formal IDs and certification helped legitimize artisans in institutional spaces. Many reported greater respect from vendors and customers, and smoother entry into exhibitions and events.

▪ Financial Inclusion

Credit access—especially the ₹1 lakh loan with a 5% interest subsidy—enabled investment in raw materials and quality tools. Some artisans pooled resources to form informal cooperatives, increasing bargaining power.

▪ Skill Upgradation

The dual emphasis on traditional craft techniques and modern business practices led to stronger product innovation. For example:

- Woodcarvers in Kodagu introduced CNC technology for precision
- Weavers in Mysore adopted color-fast organic dyes due to training
- Market Integration

Digital access has opened doors:

- Some artisans now sell through **GeM (Government e-Marketplace)**
 - WhatsApp and Instagram emerged as popular platforms for showcasing work
- However, only 58% accessed these new channels—implying a need for digital inclusion training.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

Artisans reported a shift in identity—from laborer to entrepreneur. 41% expressed intent to hire assistants or expand operations within two years. There's growing interest in registering as MSMEs and participating in startup incubators.

Persistent Challenges

- **Bureaucratic Bottlenecks:** Delay in loan approval due to verification lapses
- **Digital Literacy Gaps:** Especially among senior artisans and rural women
- **Inadequate Local Demand:** Despite national markets, regional uptake remains patchy
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Lack of craft clusters, shared workspaces, and logistics support

CONCLUSION

The **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** marks a significant turning point in India's strategy for uplifting its vast artisan population—a demographic that has long remained on the fringes of economic policy despite their vital cultural contributions. By weaving together multiple dimensions—formal recognition, financial inclusion, advanced training, and strategic market access—the scheme transcends traditional welfare models and ventures boldly into the territory of entrepreneurial transformation.

Early indicators reflect a compelling narrative of progress: artisans who were once constrained by limited resources and fading visibility are now emerging as self-directed entrepreneurs. The provision of ID cards and certification is not merely symbolic—it affirms their economic and social legitimacy. Financial tools such as collateral-free loans and toolkit incentives have enabled strategic investments in materials, equipment, and workspace enhancement. Skill development modules tailored to both heritage preservation and innovation have elevated the quality and appeal of products, encouraging artisans to experiment and differentiate in competitive markets.

Perhaps most notably, the infusion of digital platforms and branding support has unlocked new sales avenues—especially for younger, tech-savvy artisans—while fostering cross-border appeal for India's rich craft traditions. The psychological shift from subsistence-based craftsmanship to confident entrepreneurship is palpable, with artisans expressing ambitions to hire, scale, and formalize their operations.

However, the journey is far from complete. Persistent challenges such as procedural delays, uneven digital literacy, and market infrastructure gaps must be addressed to fully realize the scheme's transformative potential. Long-term success will depend on sustained outreach, collaborative governance, localized support systems, and iterative improvements based on ground-level feedback.

Ultimately, the PM Vishwakarma Scheme is not just a policy intervention—it is a **nation-building exercise** that affirms the value of tradition while steering it toward innovation. In empowering artisans, India is cultivating a future where culture and commerce converge—sparking inclusive growth, fostering pride in heritage, and positioning the artisan economy as a resilient pillar of India's entrepreneurial journey.

REFERENCES

1. Sharma, R. (2018). The Decline of Traditional Handicrafts in India: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Rural Development*, 37(2), 112-129.
2. Dutta, S. (2020). Skill Transmission and the Future of Indian Artisans. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(10), 45-53.
3. Kumar, P., & Singh, A. (2021). Government Schemes and Informal Sector Integration: A Case Study of Handloom Weavers. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 82(4), 389-405.
4. Banerjee, M. (2019). Entrepreneurship and the Indian Artisan: Pathways and Policies. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 8(1), 23-35.
5. Gupta, V. (2022). Branding and Market Access for Indian Handicrafts: The Role of Digital Platforms. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 14(3), 78-91.
6. Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of India. (2023). PM Vishwakarma Scheme Guidelines. Retrieved from <https://msme.gov.in>
7. Union Budget 2023-24, Government of India. (2023). Budget Speech and Documents. Retrieved from <https://indiabudget.gov.in>
8. Singh, R. (2024). *PM Vishwakarma: At 68%, Women Beneficiaries Outshine Men in Skill Training*. Business Standard. Retrieved from [Business Standard article](#)
9. Rawat, R. (2024). *PM Vishwakarma Scheme 2023—Empowering India's Artisans and Craftspeople*. IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute. Retrieved from [IMPRI India](#)
10. Invest India. (2023). *PM Vishwakarma Scheme: Empowering Artisans*. Retrieved from [Invest India Blog](#)
11. Drishti IAS. (2025). *PM Vishwakarma Scheme Overview*. Retrieved from [Drishti IAS](#)
12. Press Information Bureau. (2023). *Salient Features and Guidelines of PM Vishwakarma Scheme*. Retrieved from [PIB Release](#)
13. Wikipedia Contributors. (2025). *PM Vishwakarma Scheme*. Retrieved from [Wikipedia](#)
14. Yadav, U. S., Tripathi, R., & Kumar, P. (2023). *Strategies for Channelizing Women Artisans as Entrepreneurs and Marketing of Handicraft Products: An Empirical Study*. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 53(11), 45–62. Retrieved from [Indian Journal of Finance](#)
15. Agrawal, A., & Chanana, B. (2021). *Handloom and Handicraft Sector in India: A Review of Literature*. *International Journal of Education, Modern Management, Applied Science & Social Science*, 3(2), 203–208. Retrieved from INSPIRA journal