

Promoting Andhra Pradesh Tourism through Traditional Handicrafts: A Study of Tourist Preferences, Shopping Behaviour and Destination Image

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Abstract

Traditional handicrafts serve multiple functions within the tourism sector, acting simultaneously as expressions of cultural identity, authentic tourism souvenirs, distinctive shopping attractions, and important sources of livelihood for local artisans and craft communities. This research paper examines the role of traditional handicrafts in promoting tourism in Andhra Pradesh, with particular emphasis on tourist experiences, shopping behaviour, cultural identity, and destination image. It analyses tourists' awareness of traditional crafts, their purchasing preferences, and the influence of handicrafts on their perception of Andhra Pradesh as a cultural tourism destination. The study particularly focuses on the promotional role of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority (APTA), the Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (APHDC)–Lepakshi, handicraft exhibitions, and craft bazaars. By integrating craft heritage with tourism promotion, the study evaluates how traditional handicrafts can enhance destination attractiveness, create meaningful cultural experiences for visitors, support local artisans, and strengthen the overall tourism image of Andhra Pradesh.

The research paper is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 220 tourists through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from official sources, including the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Tourism, domestic and foreign tourist statistics published by the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority; Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (APHDC–Lepakshi) reports; Intellectual Property India reports; and One District One Product (ODOP) records. The statistical tools used for data analysis include percentage analysis, weighted mean, standard deviation, ranking, chi-square goodness-of-fit tests, one-sample proportion z-tests, annual growth rates, compound annual growth rate (CAGR), and spatial concentration measures.

The primary survey indicates high craft awareness, an 85.91% handicraft purchase rate, strong recognition of Kondapalli toys, Etikoppaka toys and Kalamkari, and an 85% willingness to recommend Andhra Pradesh for handicraft experiences. Price and uniqueness jointly recorded the highest purchase-factor mean (3.78), followed by authenticity (3.66). The findings show that the initiatives of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, Lepakshi's retail and marketing channels, handicraft exhibitions, craft bazaars, live demonstrations, and GI-based authenticity can transform traditional handicrafts from stand-alone products into experiential tourism assets. The paper recommends developing integrated craft circuits, strengthening destination-level souvenir retail, enhancing artisan–tourist interaction, improving GI-related

communication, promoting digital discovery, and establishing systematic mechanisms to measure handicraft sales and visitor engagement.

Keywords: Tourism, Handicrafts, Lepakshi, Tourist Shopping, Destination Image, Craft Bazaars, Andhra Pradesh Tourism, Craft circuits.

1. Introduction

Tourism destinations increasingly compete not only through monuments, landscapes and accommodation, but also through the experiences and objects that enable visitors to remember a place after the journey ends. Traditional handicrafts occupy a distinctive position at the intersection of culture, livelihood and tourism. Handicrafts reflect local history, traditional materials, artistic skills, cultural motifs and artisan identity. Tourists often purchase them as souvenirs, gifts, decorative items or useful products; however, their significance extends beyond the act of purchase. Handicrafts represent the cultural identity of a destination and create a meaningful connection between tourists, local communities and traditional craftsmanship.

When tourists encounter handicraft products at tourism destinations, exhibitions, craft bazaars or trusted emporiums, shopping becomes more than a commercial transaction. It becomes an integral part of the cultural travel experience, allowing visitors to engage with local traditions, craftsmanship and the cultural identity of the destination. Handicrafts Tourism research has long recognised souvenirs as material reminders of travel and as commodities that communicate meanings about the visited place (Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Authenticity, workmanship, uniqueness and cultural integrity have also been identified as important criteria through which tourists evaluate craft souvenirs (Littrell, Anderson, & Brown, 1993). Andhra Pradesh provides a strong setting for examining these relationships because the state possesses a geographically dispersed portfolio of craft traditions with clear tourism potential. The present study focuses on Kondapalli Bommalu, Etikoppaka Toys, Srikalahasthi Kalamkari, Machilipatnam Kalamkari, Andhra Pradesh Leather Puppetry, Budithi Bell and Brass Metal Craft, Bobbili Veena, Durgi Stone Carvings, Udayagiri Wooden Cutlery and Allagadda Stone Carving. These are recognised as registered Geographical Indications (GIs) associated with Andhra Pradesh, giving them both heritage value and an authenticity framework for destination marketing (Intellectual Property India, 2025).

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected tourism activity in 2020, followed by a strong recovery in domestic travel. According to official Ministry of Tourism data, Andhra Pradesh recorded 70.83 million domestic tourist visits in 2020, increasing to 93.28 million in 2021, 192.72 million in 2022, 254.71 million in 2023, 290.27 million in 2024 and 333.83 million in 2025. This expansion creates a substantial market in which handicrafts can enhance tourist expenditure, souvenir consumption, cultural interpretation and local livelihood generation. The tourism policy framework has also become more supportive of handicraft-based tourism. The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2020–2025 proposed experience centres focusing on arts and crafts, while the Tourism Policy 2024–2029 identifies arts and crafts tourism, workshops, craft villages, souvenir shops and craft bazaars as important instruments for tourism development (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2024).

This research paper examines tourist preferences, purchasing behaviour and perceptions of traditional handicrafts as an important component of Andhra Pradesh's destination image. It also evaluates the promotional roles of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, APHDC-Lepakshi, exhibitions and craft bazaars. The aim is not only to highlight the cultural importance of handicrafts but also to assess their

potential as organized tourism products with measurable visitor demand, economic value and policy relevance.

2. Review of Literature

Destination image is a central concept in tourism because travellers form cognitive and affective impressions of places from information, experiences and personal characteristics. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) demonstrated that destination image is shaped by both stimulus factors and tourist characteristics, implying that visible cultural symbols can influence the way visitors interpret and remember a destination. In the Andhra Pradesh context, distinctive craft forms can function as such symbols because they embody recognisable place associations: Kondapalli with wooden toys, Pedana/Machilipatnam and Srikalahasti with Kalamkari, Bobbili with the Veena, and Etikoppaka with lacquerware.

Souvenir studies show that tourists value products for memory, gifting, cultural meaning and identity. Swanson and Timothy (2012) describe souvenirs as both carriers of meaning and commercial products, and emphasise the relationship between tourism consumption and the commodification of local arts and crafts. Littrell et al. (1993) found that tourists' assessments of craft authenticity involve uniqueness, workmanship, aesthetics, use, cultural and historical integrity and genuineness. These dimensions closely match the factors measured in the present survey: quality, price, authenticity, cultural value, uniqueness, design and GI certification.

Shopping can also be a component of the destination experience rather than a secondary activity. Moscardo (2004), using a large visitor survey, showed that shopping can influence destination choice and tourist experience. Swanson and Horridge (2006) further demonstrated that travel motivations influence souvenir product choice and the importance tourists assign to product and retail attributes. These findings support the proposition that destination authorities should not treat handicraft marketing as separate from tourism planning. Retail location, storytelling, demonstration, packaging, trust and convenience all affect the visitor's ability to convert cultural interest into purchase.

The literature therefore suggests four mechanisms relevant to Andhra Pradesh. First, craft authenticity and uniqueness can create perceived cultural value. Second, accessible retail channels can translate that value into tourist spending. Third, exhibitions and demonstrations can increase involvement by allowing visitors to see and interact with the production process. Fourth, purchased crafts can continue to communicate destination identity after the trip, supporting memory and word-of-mouth. However, empirical work that simultaneously connects these mechanisms with Andhra Pradesh's state tourism growth, AP Tourism Authority policy, Lepakshi marketing and tourist survey evidence remains limited.

3. Research Gap

Previous studies provide strong conceptual insights into souvenir authenticity, tourist shopping behaviour and destination image; however, limited integrated empirical research has examined Andhra Pradesh's traditional handicrafts as an instrument of tourism development. Comprehensive annual data on handicraft sales, exhibition attendance and Lepakshi turnover are not consistently available for every year from 2020 to 2025. The present study addresses this gap by combining official tourism statistics and institutional evidence with a primary survey of 220 tourists. It analyses tourist preferences, purchasing behaviour and destination-image perceptions.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To analyse tourist awareness and familiarity with major traditional handicrafts of Andhra Pradesh.
- To examine tourist handicraft purchasing, expenditure, motivations and purchase-decision factors.
- To assess the perceived contribution of handicrafts, exhibitions and craft bazaars to tourist experience and destination image.
- To examine the role of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority and APHDC-Lepakshi in integrating handicrafts with tourism promotion during 2020-2025.
- To analyze trends in tourist footfall and handicraft exhibition in Andhra Pradesh and to propose an integrated craft-tourism promotion framework for the state.

5. Research Hypotheses

H01: The proportion of tourists who purchase traditional Andhra Pradesh handicrafts during their visit is not greater than 50%.

H11: The proportion of tourists who purchase traditional Andhra Pradesh handicrafts during their visit is greater than 50%.

H02: The proportion of tourists who agree or strongly agree that traditional handicrafts improve Andhra Pradesh's cultural destination image is not greater than 50%.

H12: The proportion of tourists who agree or strongly agree that traditional handicrafts improve Andhra Pradesh's cultural destination image is greater than 50%.

H03: The proportion of tourists who would definitely or probably recommend Andhra Pradesh as a destination for handicraft experiences is not greater than 50%.

H13: The proportion of tourists who would definitely or probably recommend Andhra Pradesh as a destination for handicraft experiences is greater than 50%.

H04: Tourist responses regarding the extent to which handicraft exhibitions, craft bazaars and live artisan demonstrations enhance the tourism experience are uniformly distributed across the response categories.

H14: Tourist responses regarding the extent to which handicraft exhibitions, craft bazaars and live artisan demonstrations enhance the tourism experience are not uniformly distributed across the response categories.

6. Research Methodology

Research design: The study adopts a descriptive and analytical design using mixed evidence from primary tourist responses and secondary administrative/policy sources. The empirical focus is the relationship between craft awareness, shopping behaviour, experience and destination image, together with the institutional mechanisms that promote handicrafts within tourism.

Study area: The geographical scope is Andhra Pradesh, with specific craft references to NTR, Anakapalli, Tirupati/Srikalahasthi, Krishna, Sri Sathya Sai, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Palnadu, SPS Nellore and Nandyal regions. The district tourism analysis uses the 26-district reporting structure introduced after the April 2022 bifurcation.

Primary data: The Primary data comprise 220 valid tourist responses collected through ten structured questions covering craft awareness, familiarity, purchasing behaviour, purchase motives, expenditure,

purchase-influencing factors, satisfaction, tourism-experience enhancement, destination image and recommendation intention.

Secondary data: The Secondary data were collected from official sources, including the Ministry of Tourism annual reports, Andhra Pradesh district-wise domestic and foreign tourist footfall data, Government of Andhra Pradesh tourism policy documents, Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (APHDC–Lepakshi) reports, Intellectual Property India records, GI records, One District One Product (ODOP) records, and Ministry of Tourism Utsav festival records.

Statistical tools: Frequency and Percentage Analysis; Weighted Mean; Standard Deviation; Ranking; Chi-Square Goodness-Of-Fit; One-Sample Proportion Z-Test; Annual Percentage Growth; Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR); And Concentration Share of Leading Districts. A 5% Level of Significance is Used for Hypothesis Testing.

7. Andhra Pradesh Tourism Trends, 2020-2025

Year	Domestic Tourist Visits	DTV growth	Foreign Tourist Visits	FTV growth
2020	70,828,590	-	67,591	-
2021	93,277,569	31.69%	27,551	-59.24%
2022	192,716,721	106.61%	165,845	501.96%
2023	254,706,328	32.17%	60,426	-63.56%
2024	290,266,452	13.96%	262,431	334.30%
2025	333,827,759	15.01%	226,311	-13.76%

Table – 1: Andhra Pradesh Tourism Trends, 2020-2025

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2025

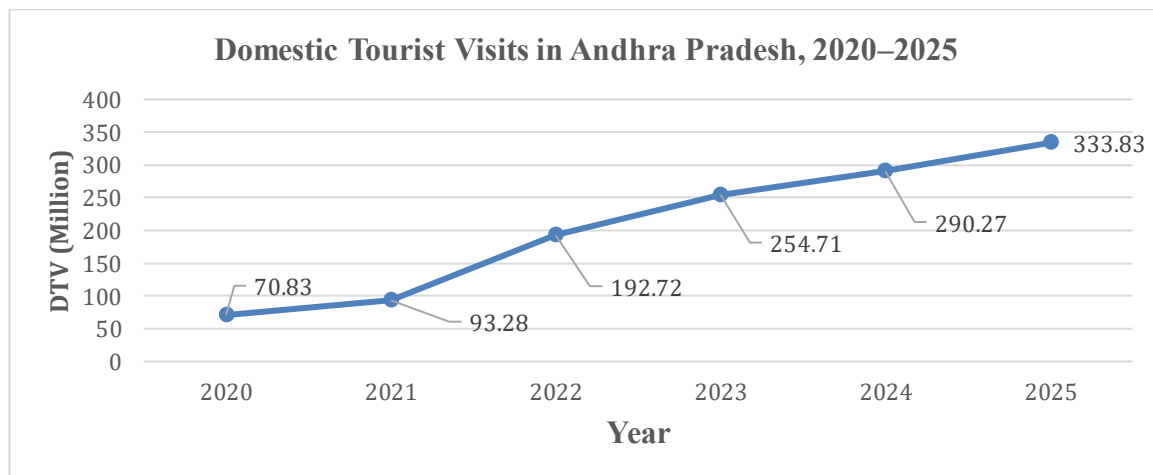


Figure 1. Andhra Pradesh domestic tourist visits, 2020-2025.

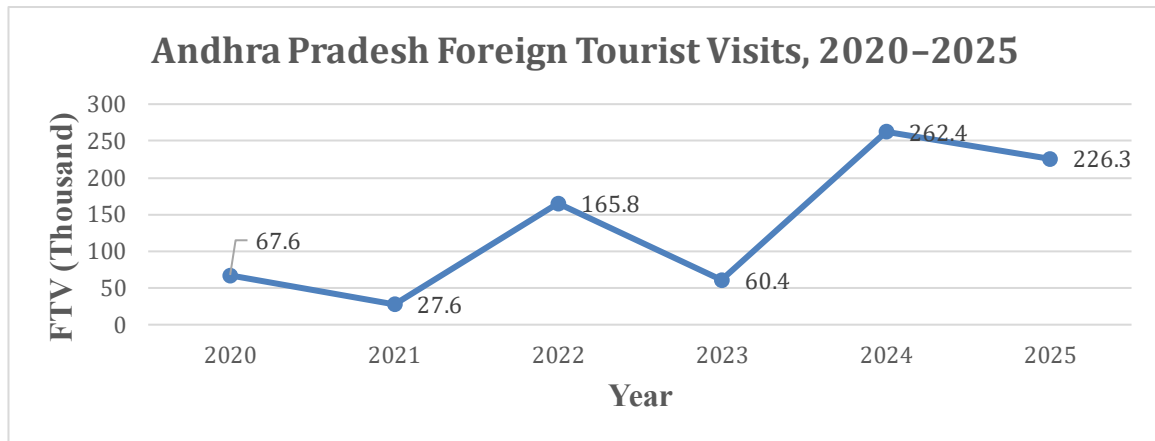


Figure 2. Andhra Pradesh foreign tourist visits, 2020-2025.

Interpretation: Domestic tourist visits in Andhra Pradesh increased substantially from 70.83 million in 2020 to 333.83 million in 2025, showing a strong post-pandemic recovery and continued growth. Foreign tourist visits showed greater fluctuations during the same period but remained higher in 2025 than in 2020. The overall growth in tourist arrivals indicates significant potential for promoting traditional handicrafts through souvenir sales, exhibitions, craft bazaars and other tourism-related activities.

8. Traditional Handicrafts of Andhra Pradesh and Tourism Linkages

Handicraft	Main location	Status	Tourism/market indicator
Kondapalli Bommalu	Kondapalli, NTR District	GI registered	~250 active artisans; CFC and toolkits support market-readiness.
Etikoppaka Toys	Etikoppaka, Anakapalli	GI registered	33 exhibition involvements; artisan financial/toolkit support.
Srialahasthi Kalamkari	Srialahasthi/Tirupati region	GI registered	Strong cultural narrative and visual souvenir potential.
Machilipatnam Kalamkari	Pedana/Machilipatnam	GI registered	Established producer/supplier base and destination identity.
AP Leather Puppetry	Nimmalakunta, Sri Sathya Sai	GI registered	~350 artisans, ~250 families; annual production around Rs.4 crore.
Budithi Bell & Brass Craft	Budithi, Srikakulam	GI registered	Metal-craft heritage suitable for premium souvenirs.
Bobbili Veena	Bobbili, Vizianagaram	GI registered	Musical heritage product; exhibition and live-demonstration value.
Durgi Stone Carvings	Durgi, Palnadu	GI registered	2022-23 sales Rs.55 lakh; 18,000 statues; exhibition-based branding.
Udayagiri Wooden Cutlery	Udayagiri, SPS Nellore	GI registered	Rs.10 lakh machinery grant in 2022; design/training support.
Allagadda Stone Carving	Allagadda, Nandyal	GI registered	Heritage stone craft with cultural-souvenir positioning.

Table – 2: Traditional Handicrafts of Andhra Pradesh and Tourism Linkages

The Handicrafts has three major strengths for tourism promotion. First, it provides geographic spread: crafts are located in coastal, central and Rayalaseema districts, allowing them to be connected with existing

temple, heritage, rural, beach and urban tourism flows. Second, GI registration offers a formal basis for authenticity communication, although the primary survey suggests that tourists currently attach less importance to GI certification than to price, uniqueness and authenticity itself. Third, several craft clusters already have institutional market-support evidence. NTR District reports about 250 active Kondapalli artisans and a Common Facility Centre; Anakapalli District reports 33 exhibition involvements for Etikoppaka along with financial and toolkit support; Sri Sathya Sai District records approximately 350 leather-puppetry artisans across about 250 families; Palnadu reports Rs.55 lakh sales and 18,000 Durgi stone statues in 2022-23; and SPS Nellore documents a Rs.10 lakh machinery grant for Udayagiri wooden cutlery in 2022.

9. Role of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority (APTA) serves as an important policy link between cultural resources and visitor experiences. The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2020–2025 proposed integrating local arts, crafts and cuisine with major tourism activities and envisaged experience centres at craft locations featuring display areas, experiential activities, souvenir shops and visitor amenities. This approach is significant because it moves handicrafts from a peripheral retail activity to an integral part of the tourism experience. It enables tourists to understand the history of a craft, observe or participate in the production process, interact with artisans and purchase authentic products at their place of origin.

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024–2029 further strengthens this approach by explicitly recognizing Arts and Crafts Tourism as a development area. The policy proposes workshops and exhibitions featuring crafts such as Kondapalli toys, Kalamkari and Etikoppaka products, along with craft villages and art spaces that enable direct interaction between tourists and artisans. It also encourages souvenir shops at APTDC outlets and star-category hotels, as well as craft bazaars and competitions. These measures respond to key issues identified in the survey by improving access to handicrafts, reinforcing perceptions of authenticity, increasing the availability of affordable products, and integrating craft shopping into the overall tourism experience.

APTA's role is therefore strategic rather than merely promotional. It can link major handicraft clusters with high-footfall tourism destinations, establish retail and authenticity standards, integrate craft-based experiences into destination development plans, promote festival-based markets, coordinate with APHDC and district administrations, and monitor tourist participation and spending. The 2023 Lepakshi Festival provides a useful example, where heritage visitation was combined with an exhibition-cum-sales platform featuring Etikoppaka toys, Kalamkari, handloom products and wood carvings. Such integrated events encourage cross-selling across heritage attractions, cultural performances, local cuisine and handicraft shopping, thereby enriching the overall visitor experience (Ministry of Tourism–Utsav, 2023)

10. Role of APHDC-Lepakshi in Promoting Handicrafts

The Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (APHDC), operating through the Lepakshi Handicrafts brand, is a key state-level institution for the development and marketing of handicrafts. Its objectives include promoting traditional crafts, marketing handicraft products, establishing showrooms, organizing exhibitions, generating publicity and supporting artisan welfare. Its marketing network includes Lepakshi retail outlets, craft bazaars, exhibitions, craft melas, expos and domestic and international trade fairs (APHDC–Lepakshi, 2025).

From a tourism perspective, Lepakshi performs four important functions. First, it provides tourists with a trusted retail channel for purchasing authentic and quality handicrafts. Second, exhibitions and craft bazaars create experiential shopping opportunities through product variety and direct interaction with artisans. Third, APHDC strengthens market linkages for craft clusters through sales support, training and participation in exhibitions. Finally, the Lepakshi brand serves as a common cultural identity that brings together diverse regional crafts under a recognizable Andhra Pradesh souvenir platform.

The Lepakshi Gandhi Shilp Bazaar held in Vijayawada from 1–9 November 2023 demonstrates the experiential role of handicraft exhibitions in tourism, with nearly 100 stalls displaying Kondapalli toys, Etikoppaka toys and other traditional handicraft products. In 2024, APHDC also organized thematic exhibitions at showroom locations in Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Vijayawada, Guntur, Kurnool, Anantapuramu, Kadapa and Hyderabad. These decentralized exhibitions enhance tourist access to traditional handicrafts, improve product visibility and expand the market reach of craft products beyond their original production centres.

Lepakshi also plays an important role in upgrading and modernizing traditional crafts. In Udayagiri, APHDC provides training and sales support through Lepakshi outlets. In Etikoppaka, Lepakshi QR-code initiatives have been introduced to improve product promotion and market visibility. For Durgi stone carving, APHDC supports exhibitions, buyer–seller linkages and artisan training programmes. These interventions are significant because tourism demand depends not only on cultural and heritage value but also on product design, portability, packaging, affordability and ease of purchase.

11. Role of Handicraft Exhibitions, Craft Bazaars and Live Demonstrations

Handicraft exhibitions and craft bazaars are important tourism-promotion instruments because they combine market access with cultural interpretation and direct artisan–visitor interaction. The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) plays a major role in supporting such marketing events, particularly in fairs, festivals, heritage locations and tourist-interest areas. During 2023–24, the domestic marketing calendar included a District Gandhi Shilp Bazaar at Rajahmundry and related events in Guntur, Tirupati, Visakhapatnam and other locations, while the 2023 Lepakshi Gandhi Shilp Bazaar in Vijayawada provided a major direct-shopping platform with nearly 100 stalls. In 2024, the NTR District (One District One Product) ODOP record listed 11 APHDC thematic-exhibition entries; however, one Vijayawada entry repeated the same dates, indicating at least 10 distinct exhibition instances. In December 2025, APHDC organised National Handicrafts Week activities across several districts, including exhibitions, live demonstrations where feasible and promotional discounts of up to 30%.

For tourism, the value of these events is not measured only by sales. They increase visibility, allow comparison across products, provide opportunities for live storytelling, reduce authenticity uncertainty and can encourage impulse purchases. The primary survey supports this experience role: 75.91% of respondents said exhibitions, craft bazaars and demonstrations enhance tourism experience to at least a moderate extent, and 45.46% reported a high or very high extent.

12. Primary Data Analysis and Interpretation

12.1 Awareness and Craft Familiarity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
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Highly aware	122	55.45%
Aware	73	33.18%
Somewhat aware	25	11.36%

Table - 3: Awareness of Handicrafts

Interpretation: Awareness is high: 55.45% were highly aware and another 33.18% were aware of Andhra Pradesh handicrafts. The chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic for the three awareness categories is 64.15 (df=2, $p < 0.001$), and 25 (11.36%) were somewhat aware of Andhra Pradesh's traditional handicrafts. On a three-point index where 1 = somewhat aware, 2 = aware and 3 = highly aware, the mean awareness score is 2.44 (SD = 0.69), indicating that the distribution is concentrated toward the upper end of the scale.

Rank	Handicraft	Frequency	Percentage
1	Kondapalli Bommalu	197	89.5%
2	Etikoppaka Toys	186	84.5%
3	Srikalahasthi Kalamkari	169	76.8%
4	Machilipatnam Kalamkari	165	75.0%
5	Bobbili Veena	157	71.4%
6	Leather Puppetry	142	64.5%
7	Budithi Bell & Brass	136	61.8%
8	Udayagiri Wooden Cutlery	96	43.6%
9	Durgi Stone Carvings	92	41.8%
10	Allagadda Stone Carving	87	39.5%

Table - 4: Tourist familiarity with selected handicrafts (multiple responses allowed; n = 220).

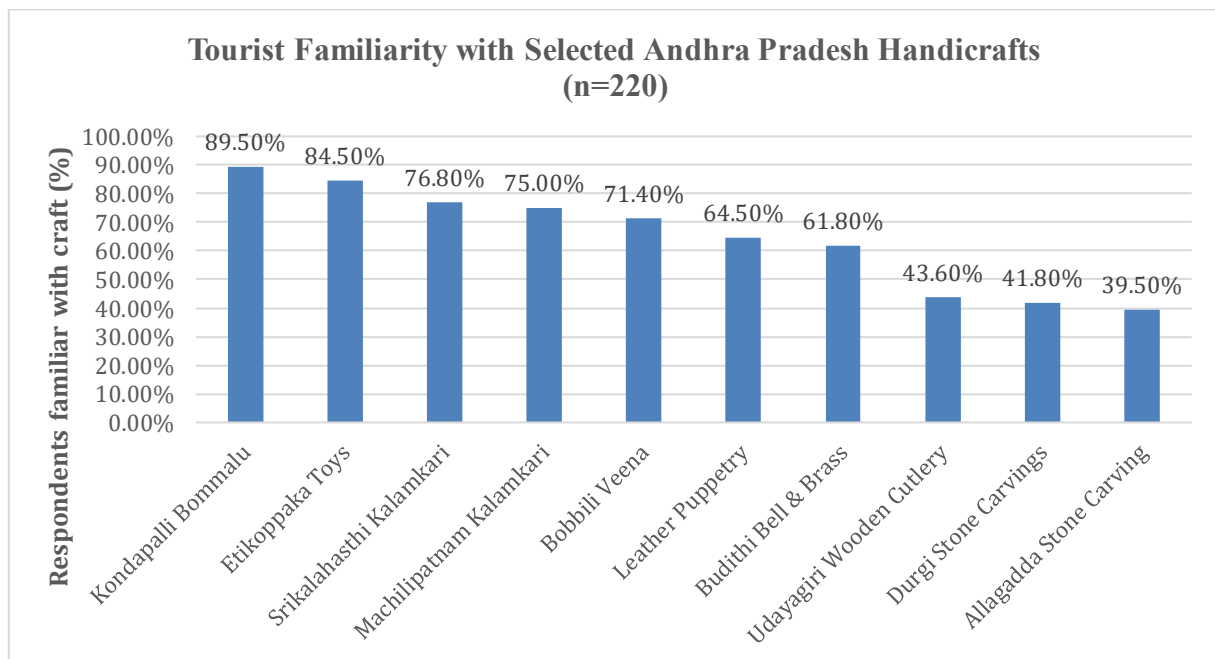


Figure 3. Tourist familiarity with selected Andhra Pradesh handicrafts.

Interpretation: Kondapalli Bommalu (89.5%) and Etikoppaka Toys (84.5%) are the most widely recognised crafts, followed by Srikalahasthi Kalamkari (76.8%), Machilipatnam Kalamkari (75.0%) and Bobbili Veena (71.4%). In contrast, Udayagiri Wooden Cutlery (43.6%), Durgi Stone Carvings (41.8%) and Allagadda Stone Carving (39.5%) have substantially lower familiarity. The findings reveal a clear

promotional imbalance in Andhra Pradesh's handicraft tourism. Although the state possesses a diverse range of traditional crafts, tourist awareness is concentrated mainly on a limited number of well-known products. This suggests that destination marketing should continue to promote flagship crafts while also giving greater visibility to lesser-known craft clusters. Such a balanced approach can broaden tourist interest, distribute benefits across artisan communities and strengthen the overall handicraft-based destination image of Andhra Pradesh.

12.2 Purchased Traditional Handicrafts

Purchased Traditional Handicrafts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	189	85.91%
No	31	14.09%

Table - 5: Purchase of Traditional Handicraft Products by Tourists

Interpretation: A substantial 189 respondents (85.91%) reported purchasing traditional handicrafts during their visit to Andhra Pradesh, compared with 31 respondents (14.09%) who did not. A one-sample proportion z-test against the 50% benchmark yielded $z = 10.65$, $p < 0.001$. Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is supported, indicating that the proportion of tourists purchasing traditional Andhra Pradesh handicrafts is significantly greater than 50%. The finding demonstrates that handicraft purchasing constitutes an important component of the tourism experience among the surveyed visitors.

12.3 Purchase Motivation and Expenditure

Main purchase reason	Frequency	Percentage
Souvenir/memory	59	26.82%
Gift for family/friends	51	23.18%
Cultural uniqueness	42	19.09%
Decorative purpose	38	17.27%
Support local artisans	30	13.64%

Table - 6: Main Purpose Reason

Interpretation: Souvenir memory and gifting together account for 50.00% of the main purchase reasons, showing that craft products are strongly connected with post-trip memory and social exchange. Cultural uniqueness is the third most cited reason. The motive distribution is statistically non-uniform ($\chi^2 = 11.59$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.021$), suggesting meaningful differences in motivation rather than an equal spread across categories.

Approximate handicraft spends	Frequency	Percentage
Below Rs.500	61	27.73%
Rs.501-Rs.1,000	57	25.91%

Rs.1,001-Rs.2,500	45	20.45%
Rs.2,501-Rs.5,000	42	19.09%
Above Rs.5,000	15	6.82%

Table - 7: Approximate handicraft spends

Interpretation: The expenditure profile is concentrated in accessible price bands. About 53.64% spent up to Rs.1,000 and 74.09% spent up to Rs.2,500. Only 6.82% spent above Rs.5,000. This distribution supports a tiered souvenir strategy: small portable products at entry prices, mid-value authentic craft pieces, and a smaller premium segment for collectors or culturally motivated visitors. Retail outlets at tourism nodes should therefore avoid equating authenticity with high price; the survey shows that affordability is itself a major purchase determinant.

12.4 Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

(Rating Scale: 1 = Not Important, 2 = Slightly Important, 3 = Moderately Important, 4 = Important, 5 = Very Important.)

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	Weighted Score	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Product Quality	3	45	47	64	61	795	3.61	1.14	5	Important
Price	12	21	46	65	76	832	3.78	1.18	1	Important
Authenticity	14	25	43	78	60	805	3.66	1.18	3	Important
Cultural Value	17	25	45	68	65	799	3.63	1.23	4	Important
Uniqueness	9	19	51	74	67	831	3.78	1.10	2	Important
Design and Appearance	17	23	57	80	43	769	3.50	1.15	7	Important
GI Certification	24	27	50	52	67	771	3.50	1.33	6	Important

Table - 8: Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

Interpretation: The table analysis shows that Price is the most influential factor affecting handicraft purchase decisions, with the highest weighted score of 832 and a mean score of 3.78, followed very closely by Uniqueness (weighted score = 831; mean = 3.78). Authenticity ranks third with a mean of 3.66, followed by Cultural Value (3.63) and Product Quality (3.61). These results indicate that tourists attach considerable importance to affordability, distinctiveness, authenticity, cultural significance and product quality when purchasing handicrafts. GI Certification weighted score of 771, a mean of 3.50 and a sample standard deviation of 1.33. Based on the unrounded mean value (3.5045), it ranks sixth, marginally above Design and Appearance (unrounded mean = 3.4955), which ranks seventh.

The response distribution, 34.55% of respondents rated Price as Very Important, while 30.45% rated Uniqueness as Very Important. For Authenticity, 35.45% of respondents rated it as Important, whereas 36.36% considered Design and Appearance Important. In the case of GI Certification, the largest proportion of respondents (30.45%) rated it as Very Important. However, GI Certification also received comparatively higher responses across the lower rating categories, resulting in greater variability in responses, as reflected by its relatively higher standard deviation (SD = 1.33).

Overall, the findings indicate that Price, Uniqueness, Authenticity, Cultural Value and Product Quality are the strongest factors influencing tourists' handicraft purchase decisions. GI Certification and Design and Appearance also contribute to purchase decisions; however, their mean scores are comparatively lower than those of the leading factors.

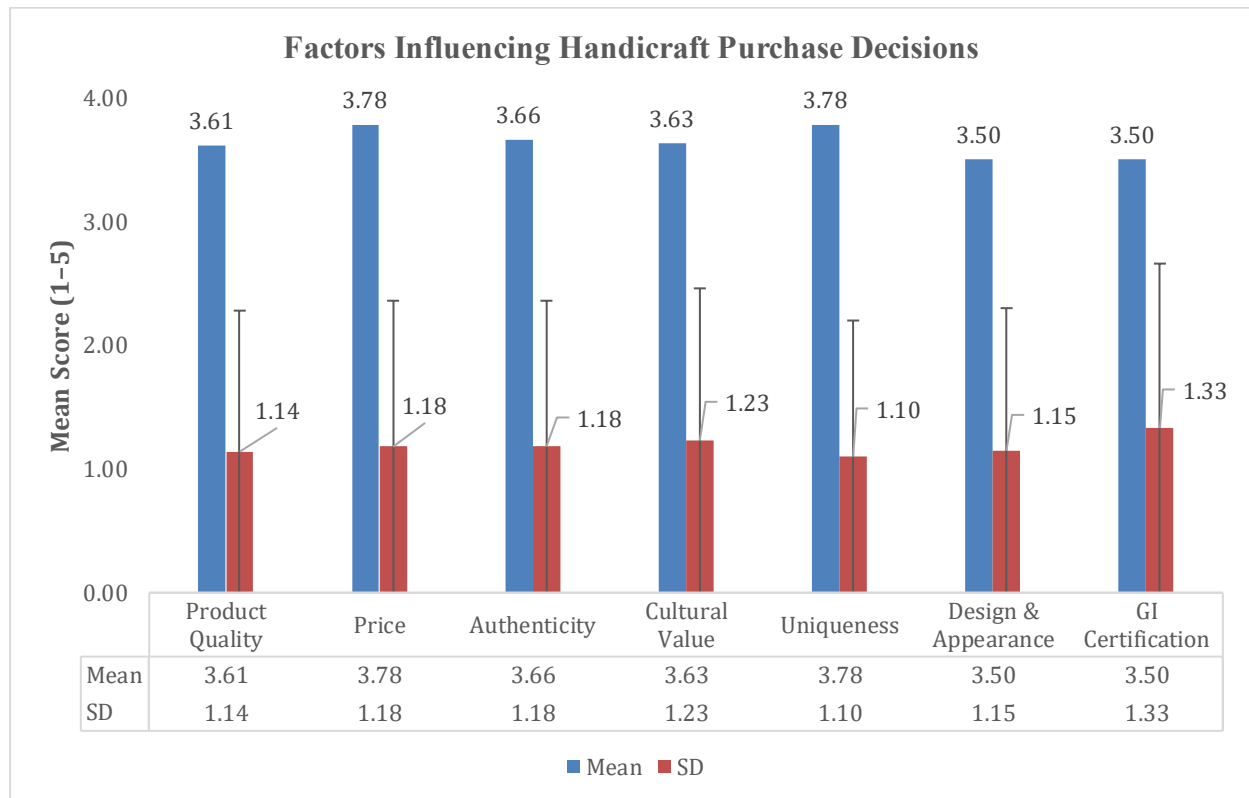


Figure 4. Mean importance and standard deviation of handicraft purchase factors.

12.5 Satisfaction, Exhibition Experience, Destination Image and Recommendation

Overall satisfaction is favourable: 32.73% were highly satisfied and 27.73% satisfied, giving a combined positive share of 60.46%. A one-sample proportion test against 50% gives $z=3.10$, $p=0.001$, indicating that the positive satisfaction share is significantly above half in the sample. For exhibitions, bazaars and live demonstrations, 16.82% reported a very high contribution to the tourism experience, 28.64% high and 30.45% moderate. The chi-square statistic is 37.18 ($df=4$, $p<0.001$), rejecting H_{04} 's uniform-distribution null and showing concentration in moderate-to-high responses.

Destination-image results are similarly positive. A total of 60.45% agreed or strongly agreed that handicrafts improve the cultural image and attractiveness of Andhra Pradesh. The proportion z-test gives $z=3.10$, $p=0.001$, so H_{02} is rejected in favour of a positive-majority result. Recommendation intention is even stronger: 53.18% would definitely recommend Andhra Pradesh for experiencing and purchasing handicrafts and 31.82% would probably recommend it. The combined 85.00% positive share yields $z=10.38$, $p<0.001$; H_{03} is therefore rejected. These results position handicrafts as both a shopping product and a destination-image asset.

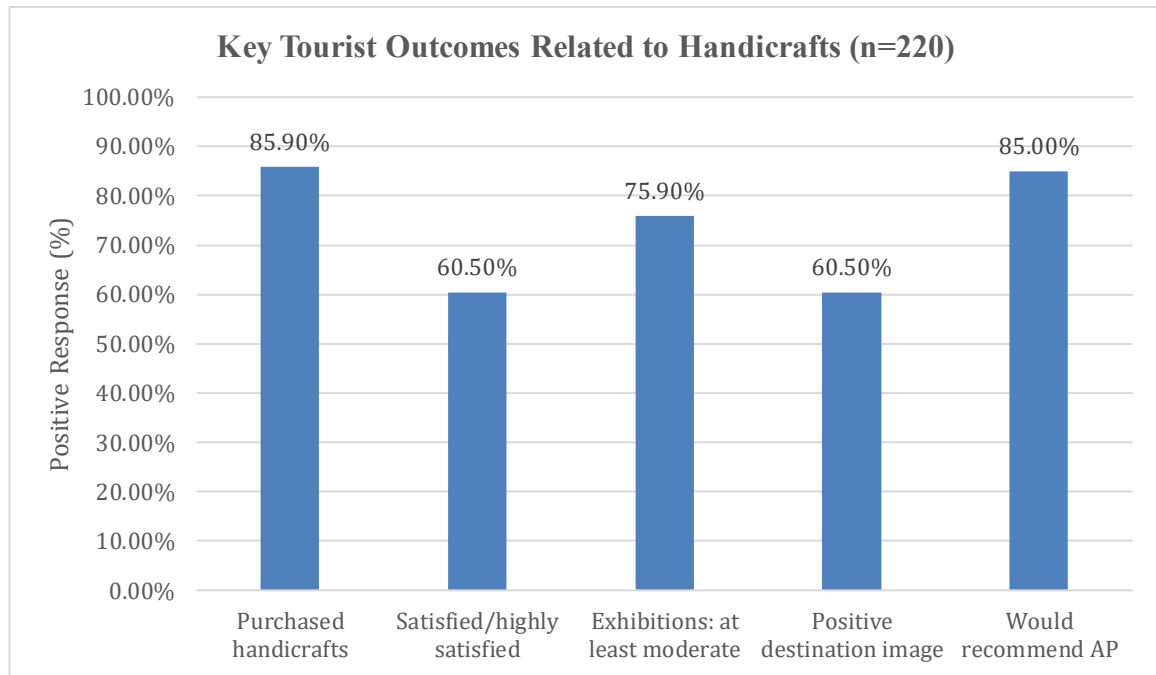


Figure 5. Key positive tourist outcomes associated with handicrafts.

12.6 Hypothesis Test Summary

Hypothesis	Null / Alternative Proposition	Statistic	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
H01	The proportion of tourists purchasing traditional Andhra Pradesh handicrafts does not exceed 50%.	$z = 10.65$	$p < 0.001$	Reject H₀₁	Purchase proportion is significantly above 50%.
H11	The proportion of tourists purchasing traditional Andhra Pradesh handicrafts is greater than 50%.	—	—	Supported	The survey shows that 85.91% purchased handicrafts.
H02	The proportion of tourists who agree/strongly agree that handicrafts improve Andhra Pradesh's destination image does not exceed 50%.	$z = 3.10$	$p = 0.001$	Reject H₀₂	Positive destination-image perception is significantly above 50%.
H12	The proportion of tourists with a positive destination-image perception is greater than 50%.	—	—	Supported	60.45% reported a positive perception.
H03	The proportion of tourists who would definitely/probably recommend Andhra Pradesh for handicraft experiences does not exceed 50%.	$z = 10.38$	$p < 0.001$	Reject H₀₃	Positive recommendation intention is significantly above 50%.
H13	The proportion of tourists who would definitely/probably	—	—	Supported	85.00% expressed positive

	recommend Andhra Pradesh is greater than 50%.				recommendation intention.
H04	Tourist responses regarding the contribution of exhibitions, craft bazaars and live demonstrations are uniformly distributed across the five response categories.	$\chi^2 = 37.18$, df = 4	$p < 0.001$	Reject H₀4	Responses are not uniformly distributed.
H14	Tourist responses regarding the contribution of exhibitions, craft bazaars and live demonstrations are not uniformly distributed across the response categories.	—	—	Supported	Responses show a statistically significant concentration in particular categories.

Table - 9: Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

Interpretation: Overall, the hypothesis testing provides strong statistical support for the role of traditional handicrafts in Andhra Pradesh tourism. H01, H02, H03 and H04 were rejected, while the corresponding alternative hypotheses H11, H12, H13 and H14 were supported. The results show that handicraft purchasing, positive destination-image perception and recommendation intention are all significantly above the 50% benchmark. The exhibition-experience responses were also significantly non-uniform, with greater concentration in the moderate-to-high categories. These findings confirm that handicrafts, exhibitions and craft bazaars make a meaningful contribution to tourist experience and destination promotion in Andhra Pradesh.

13. District-Level Tourism Concentration and Craft-Market Opportunity

The district-wise tourism data for 2024 record approximately 290.53 million domestic and foreign tourist visits across Andhra Pradesh's 26 districts. The ten highest-footfall districts are led by Tirupati (34.42 million), NTR (28.28 million), Guntur (20.72 million), Visakhapatnam (20.00 million), and Alluri Seetarama Raju (18.19 million). Together, the top five districts account for about 41.86% of the total tourist footfall, indicating a considerable concentration of visitors in a limited number of destinations. This concentration creates an opportunity to use high-footfall destinations as gateway markets for handicrafts produced both locally and in other parts of the state. A hub-and-spoke strategy would therefore be appropriate. Major tourism hubs such as Tirupati, Vijayawada/NTR, Guntur and Visakhapatnam can accommodate permanent Lepakshi or souvenir outlets, rotating craft demonstrations and curated GI-certified handicraft collections. At the same time, tourism itineraries and digital promotion can direct interested visitors to production clusters such as Kondapalli, Etikoppaka, Pedana, Durgi, Udayagiri and Nimmalakunta. This approach can generate immediate sales in gateway cities while also encouraging deeper cultural engagement and wider distribution of tourism expenditure to artisan communities.

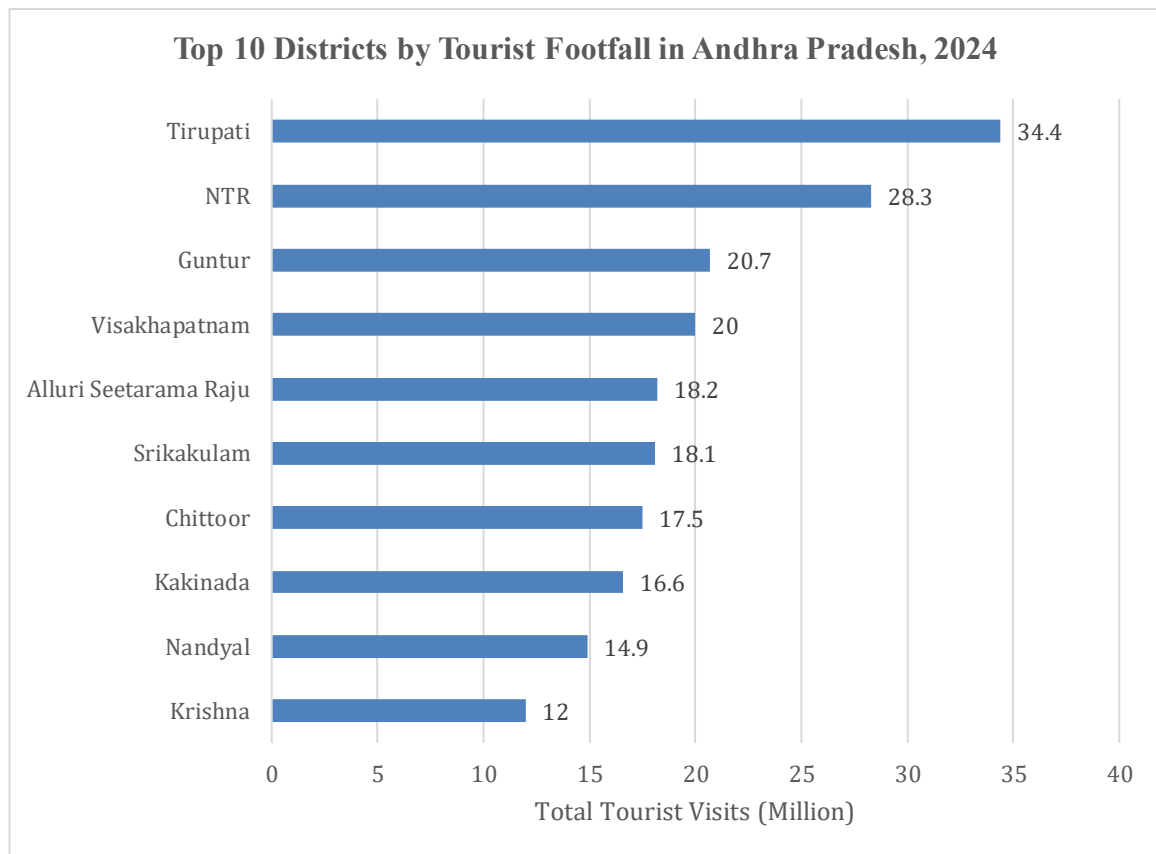


Figure 6. Top 10 districts by total tourist footfall in 2024.

Source: Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority

14. Major Findings

- Andhra Pradesh has a large and rapidly expanding domestic tourism market, with domestic tourist visits increasing from 70.83 million in 2020 to 333.83 million in 2025, according to Ministry of Tourism data.
- Tourist awareness of traditional handicrafts is high, but familiarity is concentrated in a few well-known products; several GI crafts remain under-recognised.
- Handicraft purchasing is strong: 85.91% of surveyed tourists reported a purchase during their visit.
- Souvenir/memory and gifting are the leading purchase motives, confirming handicrafts as carriers of travel memory and social exchange.
- Tourist expenditure is concentrated in low-to-moderate price bands; 74.09% spent up to Rs.2,500.
- Price, Uniqueness, Authenticity, Cultural Value and Product Quality are the strongest factors influencing tourists' handicraft purchase decisions. GI Certification and Design and Appearance also contribute to purchase decisions; however, their mean scores are comparatively lower than those of the leading factors.
- Exhibitions, craft bazaars and live demonstrations have experiential value: 75.91% reported at least a moderate positive contribution.
- Handicrafts strengthen destination image: 60.45% agreed/strongly agreed that crafts improve Andhra Pradesh's cultural attractiveness.

- Recommendation intention is high at 85%, indicating strong word-of-mouth potential for handicraft-related tourism.
- APTA policy, APHDC-Lepakshi retail/marketing, GI recognition, One District One Product (ODOP) support, exhibitions and craft festivals already provide an institutional base that can be integrated more systematically with tourism flows.

15. Suggestions and Recommendations

- Create an Andhra Pradesh “Craft Tourism Network” linking high-footfall gateways with production villages through themed day trips, maps, digital itineraries and bookable workshops.
- Establish curated souvenir corners at APTDC hotels, transport gateways and major attractions, with product ranges at entry, mid and premium price points reflecting the survey expenditure profile.
- Use Lepakshi as the state authenticity umbrella while retaining the individual identity of each GI craft. Labels should explain origin, artisan/cluster, technique, GI status, care instructions and a QR-linked story.
- Convert exhibitions from sales-only events into tourism experiences by scheduling live demonstrations, short workshops, storytelling sessions, artisan interactions and destination-information counters.
- Prioritise lesser-known crafts such as Udayagiri wooden cutlery, Durgi stone carving and Allagadda stone carving in rotating displays at Tirupati, Vijayawada/NTR, Guntur and Visakhapatnam.
- Integrate craft promotion into AP Tourism Authority destination campaigns, festival calendars and social media; use short videos showing the making process rather than only finished products.
- Encourage hotel and tour-operator partnerships for craft demonstrations and verified shopping stops, with transparent pricing and artisan-benefit guidelines.

16. Conclusion

Traditional handicrafts can play a larger role in Andhra Pradesh tourism when they are treated as experiences, destination symbols and livelihood-linked products rather than as isolated retail items. The primary survey shows strong demand conditions: high awareness, high purchase incidence, meaningful expenditure, positive satisfaction, a favourable contribution to destination image and strong recommendation intention. At the same time, the primary data survey identifies practical priorities: tourists are sensitive to price and uniqueness, value authenticity and cultural meaning, and respond positively to exhibitions and demonstrations.

The secondary evidence shows that APTA's tourism policies explicitly support craft experiences, villages, workshops, souvenir shops and bazaars. APHDC-Lepakshi provides a trusted marketing platform and connects artisans to showrooms, exhibitions and training. GI registration offers an authenticity base, while district ODOP programmes supply cluster-level support and measurable craft indicators. The most effective strategy is therefore integration: connect tourism footfall with craft access, connect products with stories and demonstrations, and connect visitor spending with sustainable artisan livelihoods. Done

systematically, handicrafts can strengthen Andhra Pradesh's cultural differentiation while increasing local economic retention from tourism.

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