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Research

Craft in the age of climate crisis

**Climate resilience through craft:
A path to sustainable fashion in India**

Stakeholder insights report

October 2023



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Climate change is impacting traditional crafts sector in unimaginable ways. In India thriving weaving sector be it in Assam, West Bengal, Gujarat Tamil Nadu, Kerala or elsewhere are predominantly placed in areas prone to natural calamities and have faced severe impact of floods and cyclones majorly in the past decade. The looming threat of the changing climate - erratic rainfall, cyclones and heatwave all impact various processes as well in the entire supply chain from fibre to preloom activities. The impact is such that many of the practices may become extinct if right intervention is not brought in.

- Alpi Boylla, Director, Save the Loom

Acknowledgements

As we pause to reflect upon the journey of developing the report 'Craft in the age of climate crisis', we feel overwhelmed with gratitude. Capturing roundtable dialogues in five cities, this report aims to unveil the intricate interplay between craft and climate crisis in the context of India's sustainable fashion industry. This exploration, deeply rooted in collaboration and unity, was enriched by the invaluable contributions of many.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the British Council team. Jonathan Kennedy and Devika Purandare whose faith in our vision and ability to bring this report to life was a tremendous source of encouragement. Delphine Pawlik and Aanchal Sodhani whose valuable advice helped us navigate this incredible project with ease. Alison whose steadfast support was a key contributor to our project's success.

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It is our aspiration and hope that the dialogues presented in this report serve as a catalyst, igniting meaningful conversations and propelling impactful actions on the ground. These collective efforts have set a powerful foundation for positive change, and for that, we are truly thankful.

**Shruti Singh, Country Head
Fashion Revolution India**

Foreword

From the British Council

In the face of an escalating global climate crisis, we stand at a historic crossroad. With this report 'Craft in the age of climate crisis: climate resilience through craft', the British Council together with our partner Fashion Revolution India, is honoured to present a beacon of hope amid the challenges we confront. The report delves into the intersection of climate change and the realm of craft – a space where tradition, culture, and climate resilience converge. It acknowledges the harsh reality of climate change that disproportionately impacts India, a nation renowned for its diverse tradition of craftsmanship.

However, this report is more than a compendium of challenges; it is a testament to human resilience and ingenuity. It unveils the effects of climate change on our artisans, whose lives are intricately woven with the natural world. Yet, amid adversity, a compelling narrative of opportunity emerges. This report reveals how craft can serve as a potent climate solution. Artisans, deeply rooted to their connection with the environment, have practised sustainability, circular economies, and environmental stewardship for generations. They transform natural materials into intricate works of art, reduce waste through ingenious techniques, and champion renewable resources. The report outlines critical areas for intervention needed for a sustainable craft ecosystem, offering a strategic roadmap for diverse stakeholders.

Furthermore, the report celebrates the best practices of Indian artisans and organisations already leading the way in sustainable crafts. These real-world examples demonstrate that a sustainable future is not a distant vision – it is already taking shape in the hands of artisans and creative practitioners. In conclusion, this report is a call to action. It urges us to recognise the inherent value of craft in the sustainability agenda. It beckons a movement that encourages innovation and technology while honouring our indigenous communities and our planet.

Our deepest gratitude is extended to all who contributed to this report. Their unwavering commitment to crafting a sustainable future is an inspiration to us all.

**Alison Barrett, Country Director India, and
Delphine Pawlik, Deputy Director Arts India
British Council**

From Fashion Revolution India

In the age of the climate crisis, where our planet faces unprecedented challenges, the role of traditional crafts in India takes on a new and profound significance. For centuries, Indian artisans have woven a rich tapestry of culture, heritage, and craftsmanship. Their creations have not only been objects of beauty but also repositories of sustainable practices, passed down through generations.

Today, as the spectre of climate change looms large, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. The urgent need for sustainable living and responsible consumption has never been more apparent. In this context, the world is turning towards traditional crafts as a beacon of hope. India, with its diverse and vibrant artisanal traditions, has a pivotal role to play in this global movement.

As Shruti Singh explores the interplay between craft and climate in this report, we will journey through the stories of artisans who are adapting age-old techniques to modern challenges. We will witness the revival of dying crafts, the innovative use of renewable resources, and the fusion of traditional wisdom with contemporary design. These stories, from the heart of India's villages to the bustling metropolises, highlight the resilience of artisans and their commitment to crafting a sustainable future.

In a world threatened by environmental degradation, the preservation and promotion of India's craft heritage emerges as a powerful force for change. This report invites you to delve deep into this captivating world, where tradition meets innovation and the timeless artistry of Indian crafts offers a beacon of hope in the age of climate crisis. Within these pages, you will find inspiration, admiration, and a renewed appreciation for the profound wisdom and creativity embedded in the crafts of India, which are now more relevant than ever in our quest for a sustainable future. Let the journey begin.

**Suki Dusanj-Lenz, Founder
Fashion Revolution India**



Photo credit : Delphine Pawlik

Executive summary

We are living in an era of unprecedented climate change. The Earth recorded its hottest day ever in July 2023, underlining the urgent need to address this swift progression of global warming, or as the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres phrases it, 'global boiling.' The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹ report warns us about the reality of the escalating global climate crisis.

The rise in global temperatures, evident worldwide with increasing sea levels, sudden floods, droughts, heatwaves, and forest fires, has an astounding impact on our lives, communities, and the planet. The impacts are notably visible in India, a nation recognised for its diverse heritage of crafts that range from textiles and pottery to metalwork and woodcraft. India, with a 4.7° celsius projected temperature rise by 2100 according to Climate Action Tracker 2023² stands among the nations most susceptible to climate change.

Understanding the interplay of craft and climate crisis

Craftspeople worldwide, who have relied on natural resources - locally sourced materials, water bodies, farms and forests to create their craft products, now face of unpredictable weather patterns, resource scarcity, and escalating material costs. Their livelihoods are intrinsically linked to environmental health, and climate changes exert a deep, direct impact on their craft, tradition, and survival.

It is also important to note that craft communities, despite being among those who contribute least to climate change, are also the most vulnerable to its impacts. Many artisan communities reside in climate-vulnerable regions, increasing their exposure to climate-induced disasters. Women are on the frontlines of climate change, facing disproportionate impacts due to entrenched social, economic, and cultural inequities.³

An overwhelming number of craft workers in India, estimated at around 200 million⁴, with women comprising 56.13 per cent of this demographic⁵, face varying degrees of risk from climate change, directly or indirectly.

Craftspeople also stand at the forefront of crafting solutions that pave the way for sustainable and slow fashion systems. A study by the World Craft Council in 2022⁶ states that artisanal crafts promote circular economies. They use and reuse materials within a community, thereby reducing waste and transportation emissions, and fostering principles of the circular economy and environmental sustainability. The Crafts Council UK's report⁷ on the circular economy highlights the fact that the deep connection craftspeople have with past traditions and the legacy they leave for future generations inherently integrates the regeneration of natural systems within their craft.

Indigenous communities, both in India and worldwide have long demonstrated a deep understanding of their local ecosystems, using available resources judiciously. Their knowledge extends beyond simple utility to the intricate relationships between humans, their craft, and the environment.

Traditional crafts are an integral part of the fashion and textile industry, a sector which is one of the biggest contributors to climate change and accounts for about ten per cent of global carbon emissions⁸. The fashion industry has an extensive water footprint, chemical usage and waste generation. The rise of fast fashion has magnified the sector's environmental impact, with new collections being released almost weekly or monthly. Now, more than ever, there is an urgent need for sustainable living and mindful consumption. Traditional crafts and indigenous knowledge hold significant promise to provide a roadmap for sustainable fashion.

These belief systems and practices promote sustainability, environmental stewardship, and the circular economy. Handloom fabrics have a low carbon footprint. It is estimated that for each piece of fabric crafted on a handloom, approximately one point one tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)⁹ emissions are averted as compared to those produced on a power loom. Traditional crafts frequently utilise natural and locally sourced materials. They incorporate plant-based dyes, hand-spun fabrics, and water-efficient, regenerative materials such as bamboo. Additionally, crafts champion zero waste pattern making techniques and less waste generation. In West Bengal, Kantha embroidery involves the use of upcycled fabrics and saris. Worn-out clothes are repurposed and given new life through intricate embroidery, thereby reducing waste and promoting circularity. Kalamkari artists of India use vegetable dyes for their intricate textile artwork, and the Khatri community in Bhuj, Gujarat, known for their Ajrakh print, a traditional block-printing technique, use natural dyes derived from indigo, madder, turmeric, and more. Their practices are not just artistic expressions. They narrate tales of conservation, biodiversity, and resilience, thus exemplifying the sustainable values inherent in their work. In this report, we seek answers to the pivotal question:

'Is there a role for our artisanal past in tackling the current environmental crisis in the fashion industry?'

1. Climate change 2023 (2023) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

2. India (2023) Climate Action Tracker

3. Brown, M.E. and Oudraat, C. de J. (2022) Gender, climate change, and security: Making the connections, Wilson Center

4. Krishnamoorthy, P. and Subramanyam, A. (2021) Understanding informality in India's Artisan Economy

5. Bernard, H. (2023) Addressing the instability of South Asian artisans, The Borgen Project

6. Craft Industry and the Circular Economy (2022) World Crafts Council

7. Circular Economy (2022) Crafts Council UK

8. UN Helps Fashion Industry Shift to Low Carbon (2018) United Nations Climate Change Charter

9. Anuprerna, T. (2022) Handloom, A Time Less Tradition and Its Positive Environmental Impact

Research purpose

The report seeks to address the following key areas:

- 1. impact of the climate on craft and artisans:** Understanding how climate change affects the craft sector and the livelihoods of skilled artisans
- 2. craft and slow fashion:** exploring how craft, with its natural sustainability and circular practices, can be a game-changer in fighting the environmental impacts of fast fashion
- 3. unearthing climate solutions:** mapping existing fashion and textile brands, innovations, and initiatives that are tackling climate issues through craft.
- 4. crafting a sustainable fashion future:** reimagining the role and potential of craft to unlock the goal of United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG 12), 'Responsible consumption and production'. Can it be a key player in meeting the demand for ethical and eco-friendly fashion production?

This report aims to underline this urgency and advocate for a renewed focus on the symbiotic relationship between crafts, artisans, environment and the potential for reframing the sustainable fashion agenda. The report's aim is to inspire action for a stronger craft ecosystem that can play a crucial role in mitigating the impacts of climate change and in promoting responsible fashion value chains.



Stakeholder roundtable in Mumbai

Photo credit : Fashion Revolution India

Research methodology

The research methodology includes industry stakeholder roundtable consultations, field visits, and one-on-one interviews.



Craft in the age of climate crisis industry round-table at Guwahati

Industry stakeholder round-table consultations:

Five stakeholder round-tables were organised, bringing together experts, stakeholders, academics, and practitioners from the craft and fashion industries. These round-tables were convened across the diverse geographical compass of India, spanning its northern, southern, eastern, and western regions - with sessions in New Delhi, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Guwahati, and Mumbai.

Field visits:

The research and project team conducted field visits to interact with craft clusters, artisan entrepreneurs, material innovators, and slow fashion businesses to gain a deeper understanding of the current landscape of climate impact on crafts through first-hand insights and identify best practices to highlight in the report.



Field visit at baghara traditional dress making cluster, Morigaon



Craft in the age of climate crisis industry round-table at Bangalore

One-on-one interviews:

While nationwide consultations formed the bedrock of our research, one-on-one interviews were conducted with select stakeholders to delve deeper into specific aspects of the study that required more in-depth information and insights.

Key insights

- 1 Impact of climate change on craft ecosystems:** Climate change is exerting multifaceted pressures on artisans, disrupting production cycles through events like floods and excessive rainfall. This leads to disruption in supply chains, and reduced access to raw materials, triggering a shift to synthetic alternatives driven by natural resource uncertainties and production demands. The resulting escalation in raw material costs, variable material quality, detrimental effects on artisan well-being, and displacement due to extreme weather events further compound the challenges faced by artisans. A few examples to consider:
 - In 2018, the devastating Kerala floods severely impacted Chendamangalam weavers, causing losses estimated at Rs. 15 crores or 1.4 million GBP. This includes damage to 273 looms and significant losses to yarn banks.
 - The handloom weavers of Varanasi and Madhya Pradesh, are impacted by the erratic rainfall patterns on cotton crops, leading to a scarcity of raw materials and spiralling costs.
 - Rising temperatures adversely affect the fate of the 'Muga' silk produced in Assam, which depends on the muga silkworm (*Antheraea assamensis*), a species highly sensitive to temperature and humidity changes.
- 2 Indigenous wisdom, local ecosystems, and climate sense:** Indigenous communities play a pivotal role in preserving our planet. Representing just 5% of the world's population, they protect 22% of the Earth's surface and safeguard 80% of its biodiversity. Many traditional crafts rely on a deep understanding of local ecosystems. Craftspeople often know the best times to harvest materials to ensure regrowth, how to use every part of a resource to minimise waste, and how to use natural materials in a way that conserves the environment and promotes sustainability. Indigenous knowledge and practices offer systems for sustainable production.
- 3 Shift in consumption patterns and an opportunity for craft:** Growing environmental and social concerns about fast production and mass consumption have given rise to a new eco-conscious movement. This shift from 'fast' to 'slow' prioritises quality over quantity, and sustainability over speed. Propelled by Gen Z, the ascent of direct-to-consumer (D2C) models, and regulatory impetus for sustainable practices, consumers are actively seeking enterprises that embody sustainability values. Craft-centric brands are stepping up to meet this growing demand.

- 4 Role of women:** Women are not only significant contributors to the craft industry but also its resilience in the face of environmental challenges. They often form the backbone of craft production, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. Women's empowerment and their active involvement in craft-based climate initiatives are key pathways to fostering sustainability. Through inclusivity and gender-sensitive approaches, the craft sector can contribute to reducing inequalities while catalysing broader socio-economic transformations.
- 5 Craft's climate advantage:** Craft production tends to have a lower environmental impact as compared to fast production supply chains. It usually involves the use of renewable materials, produces less waste, utilises less energy, and has a smaller carbon footprint due to local sourcing and hand-making processes. Certain crafts can also aid in carbon sequestration.



- 6 Craft brands' role in contributing to UN SDGs:** Crafts and artisanal work play a significant role in the achievement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



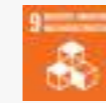
SDG 1: No poverty



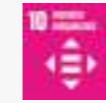
SDG 5: Gender equality



SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth



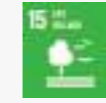
SDG 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure



SDG 10: Reduced inequalities



SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production



SDG 15: Life on land

- 7 Design-driven craftsmanship:** The role of design interventions can be harnessed through strategic product and system-level innovations while appreciating the inherent traditional wisdom and creative dexterity of artisans. Design interventions at the system level are crucial for crafting a more sustainable and fair craft sector. Introducing circular economy principles can minimise waste and encourage the reuse of resources, reducing environmental impact and creating additional income opportunities. Digital technology can further augment these design interventions.

- 8 Strengthening the craft ecosystem, enterprises, and entrepreneurs:** To harness the socio-economic potential of the craft sector in the slow fashion movement, it is vital to integrate new business strategies and models with traditional craftsmanship. By bolstering the flow of resources within the craft ecosystem, and empowering entrepreneurs with access to capital, mentorship, and market linkages, we can ensure the sector's pivotal role in a sustainable and culturally rich future.
- 9 Indigenous materials and innovation:** The evolving landscape of slow fashion and craft is underpinned by a renewed emphasis on indigenous practices, revival of indigenous materials, and material innovation with a positive climate impact. While indigenous materials have long been at the heart of craft traditions, there's a fresh momentum towards reintroducing native crops, focussing on regenerative materials and ingeniously repurposing waste into the craft repertoire. Solutions such as "Golden Feather" and "Fleather" exemplify this shift by building inventive ways to upcycle discarded resources into valuable craft materials.



Swatches of naturally dyed fabrics at 11.11 studio

10 Role of technology: The integration of technology into the craft sector has brought new possibilities and dimensions of how one sees the potential of craft. Craft entrepreneurs are utilising advanced technologies, such as blockchain and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), to ensure that every product has a story which can be traced back to its origin, from raw material to finished goods. Digital platforms and e-commerce websites cater to a global audience, bridging the gap between artisans in remote areas and a worldwide customer base. Utilising big data and machine learning algorithms, artisans can predict market demands, helping them produce crafts that are in demand, reducing waste, and ensuring efficient use of resources. With the rise of social media and content platforms, artisans and craft-based enterprises are showcasing their processes, telling their stories, and building brand identities. Technology streamlines the supply chains of the craft sector and fosters an environment of trust, appreciation, and understanding between artisans and consumers. It is paving the way for a more connected, transparent, and sustainable craft industry.

11 Global language of sustainability and traditional craft: In the global conversations dominated by sustainable development and climate change, the invaluable contribution of traditional craft systems often falls under the radar. From locally sourced materials to low-carbon production, the principles embodied by craft practices align significantly with global sustainability goals. Yet, there exist substantial barriers to connecting craft to the universal language of sustainability and effectively communicating their intrinsic value to a broader audience. Even though traditional crafts and global sustainability speak to the same principles of creation, they often exist in separate conversations. In India, craft products are often undervalued, and perceived as less trendy or attractive compared to mass-manufactured goods. Recognising the manifold value of craft in sustainability is vital to acknowledge its role in cultural preservation, local economic strengthening, biodiversity endorsement, and advocacy for fair trade and responsible production.

12 Building mechanisms for tracking and enhancing sustainability in craft: The craft sector needs mechanisms to track, measure, and report on sustainability indicators, and the global impact measurement systems also need to take into account the distinctive cultural and structural aspects of the craft sector. Failing to do this may impede the craft sector's capacity to merge into the global value chains for two reasons. First, the craft sector's inherent value isn't confined to its environmental impact. Secondly, the craft sector confronts unique systemic challenges that should be factored into sustainability indicators.

13 Bridging the data gap: The craft sector in India, despite its significant socio-economic and cultural importance, remains largely under-documented and lacks comprehensive data. Bridging this data gap is critical for the sustainable growth and development of the industry. Currently, there's a notable absence of data concerning the climate's influence on craft, the environmental implications of craft supply chains, the requirements of craft brands, and innovations in craft materials. There is a pressing need to map indigenous knowledge and climate wisdom, along with understanding the role of craft in the global sustainability and slow fashion sectors. The need of the hour is to undertake comprehensive studies that can fill this data void.

14 Climate investment: Crafts offer solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation yet do not feature as a category for climate financing in most Climate Funds which heavily focus on technological solutions. To tackle global crises, financial support for nature-based solutions needs to increase significantly. The crux lies in crafting a compelling narrative that binds traditional crafts with climate goals, particularly adaptation and mitigation.

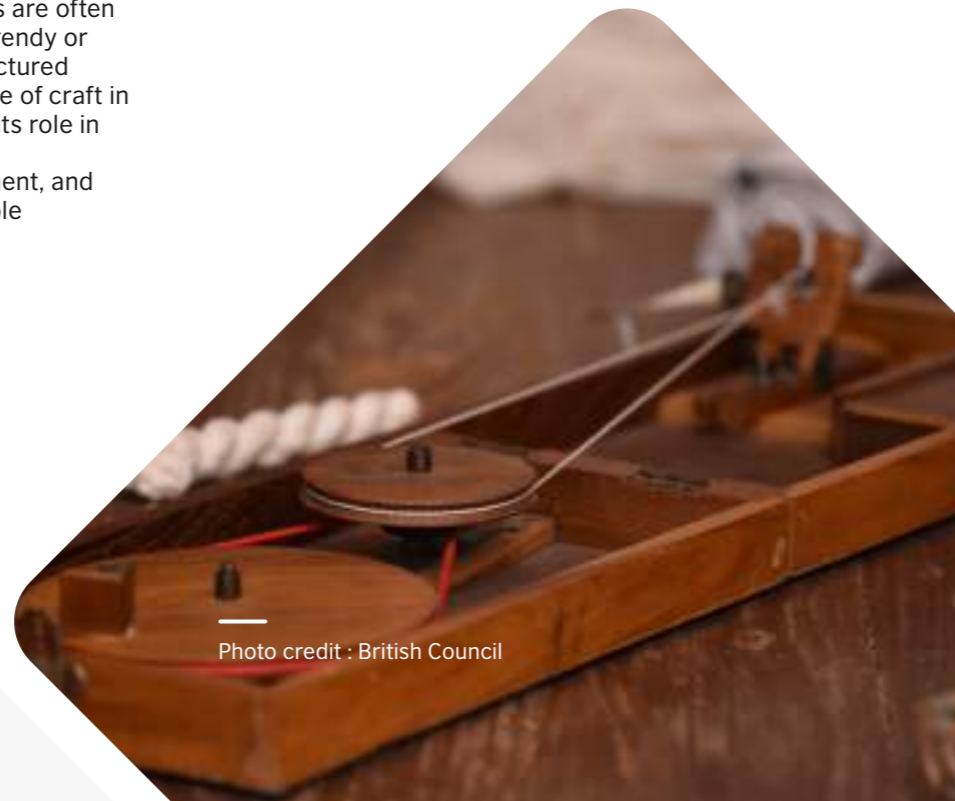


Photo credit : British Council

The THREAD framework

The THREAD framework has been proposed to map key intervention areas and highlight existing best practices that offer pathways to sustainable fashion.

Key areas of intervention and best practices

T	Technology and innovation	Harnessing technology as a catalyst for sustainable craftsmanship, market access, and ecological impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigette Singh - Craft and sustainable water management with nature-based solution • 11.11 - Harnessing RFID and NFC for transparent craft supply chain management • Doodlage - Combating Plastic Pollution through Innovative Packaging Solutions
H	Heritage materials and innovation	Reviving heritage materials and natural fibres offers an eco-friendly alternative to fast fashion's environmental toll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khamir - Reviving indigenous kala cotton and Desi Oon (indigenous wool fibre) • Golden Feathers - Innovative fabric creation from chicken feathers • Iro Iro - Weaving new fabrics from upcycled waste
R	Research	Bridge data gaps, facilitate sustainability assessment, and integrate the sector into global frameworks effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 Million Artisans - Bridging data gaps in India's craft sector
E	Ecosystem for craftspeople and craft led-enterprises	Ecosystem for craftspeople and craft led-enterprises to unlock their full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chizami Weaves Initiative - Empowering women through ancestral weaving techniques • Rangrez - Reviving leheriya craft through design innovation
A	Advocacy and policy	Connecting traditional crafts to global sustainability goals and strategic policies	
D	Development funds and investment	Climate-focused investments and aligning with nature-based solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearth Ventures - Investment in India's craft and circular economy

Key recommendations

Here are strategic recommendations for ecosystem actors to unlock the craft sector's potential for responding to the climate crisis.

1. National strategic framework for evolution of craft sector to global demands

- A. National craft sustainability strategy:** Constitute a working group to formulate a strategic, long-term plan for transforming the craft sector into a global hub for responsible manufacturing. This blueprint should be developed with the collaboration of a broad spectrum of stakeholders including government agencies, NGOs, academia, and businesses. It should include a roadmap for building craft sector resilience to climate change.
- B. Metrics for sustainability evaluation:** Conduct a systematic mapping and analysis of data specific to the craft ecosystem to assess its contribution to GDP, livelihood generation, and sustainability impact. Create well-defined metrics and evaluation criteria to measure the environmental impact of craft projects. Data-driven insights would be instrumental in the planning and implementation of sustainable strategies for the craft sector.
- C. Integrated craft industry support portal:** Create a centralised platform consolidating offerings from various government entities to establish a single access point for the craft industry. This portal would ease the process of accessing schemes, benefits, and information, thereby improving the efficiency of craft businesses.

2. Craft sector ecosystem, enterprises and entrepreneurship

- A. Recognition and visibility of sustainable practices in craft:** Develop initiatives such as craft awards, green craft tourism, and craft ambassador programmes to highlight and amplify best practices like innovative material usage, waste reduction, and energy-efficient production. Launch public campaigns to highlight the significance of sustainable crafts in mitigating climate change. Improve the visibility of craft as a priority.
- B. Craft based slow fashion entrepreneurship:** Develop comprehensive capacity-building programmes, such as workshops, training, and technical assistance, to equip craft communities with skills and knowledge to adopt and maintain sustainable practices. Given that many crafters are already practising tenets of slow fashion, it is crucial to provide them with the resources, training, and market access they need to champion artisans as leaders in the sustainable fashion sphere.

- C. Craft business incubators, accelerators and research grants:** Establish robust support systems to provide essential resources, expert guidance, and financial backing for up-and-coming craft enterprises. Facilitate grants and funding for research and innovation in sustainable craft practices. Encourage institutions to conduct research studies to bridge the existing knowledge gaps in the sector.
- D. Common facility centers (CFCs):** Invest in the development of CFCs, to incorporate sustainable skills training, promote the use of recycled materials, and establish a supportive system to connect artisans with markets and financial aid for sustainable practices.

3. Innovation and technology advancements

- A. Access to indigenous materials:** Facilitate the availability and affordability of traditional and locally sourced materials like bamboo, jute, coir, and khadi. The government can support this by reducing tax implications, streamlining distribution systems, and encouraging state-level artisan communities to collaborate. Facilitate the creation of seed banks for the conservation and propagation of indigenous plant species integral to craft production, thereby ensuring a reliable supply of natural fibres and dyes.
- B. Material innovation:** Allocate resources towards research into innovative and eco-friendly materials that could be utilised in craft production, sparking both material sustainability and innovative growth within the craft sector. Incentivise businesses, and innovators creating new materials.
- C. Technology integration:** Advocate for the integration of eco-friendly technologies, such as energy-efficient equipment and renewable energy sources, within the craft sector. Support advancement of new technology solutions to enhance artisans' work, facilitate seamless access to global markets, streamline business operations, and provide transparency and traceability throughout the craft value chain. This integrated technological approach will not only drive sustainability but also foster growth and trust in the industry.

4. Education and research

- A. Interdisciplinary collaboration, research and innovation platforms:** Foster collaborative projects and initiatives between various academic departments, such as environmental science, business, engineering, and arts, to combine diverse skill sets and insights. Undertake research that intersects crafts, climate change, and sustainable development. Establish knowledge sharing platform where researchers, academics, and craft practitioners can exchange knowledge and best practices related to sustainable crafts.
- B. Academia-artisan alliances:** Facilitate partnerships between academia and craft communities. Such collaborations enable context-specific research that addresses the unique challenges, needs, and opportunities for sustainable growth in the craft sector.
- C. Sustainability-focused education in schools and universities:** Integrate sustainability modules into a broad range of curricula, including design, arts, and anthropology. Introduce field trips to craft clusters to provide them with a unique opportunity to connect with our rich cultural heritage and gain awareness about the skilled artisans who bring life to their clothes and products.

5. Impact investment and partnerships:

- A. Green financing and investment:** Develop craft-specific financing and investment options that prioritise projects integrating sustainable materials and practices. Align these financing strategies with 'Responsible consumption and production' (SDG 12).
- B. Impact investment funds and platforms:** Establish dedicated funds and platforms for impact investments that support sustainable craft enterprises. These initiatives will attract investors seeking both financial returns and positive environmental impact.
- C. Investor-artisan-entrepreneur networks:** Facilitate the establishment of robust networks between investors, craft enterprises, and artisans to support eco-friendly initiatives. Develop networks that support sustainable craft entrepreneurship, facilitating knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and market access for artisans. This would also involve expanding artisans' market reach by connecting them with potential buyers, retailers, and distributors.



'Every artisan is a climate activist. Not because of the statements they make or the marches they join but because of the way they live their lives, the manner in which they produce, and how they conduct their business.'

Tacit, wordless, unspoken, inherent and deep rooted in their tenets of artisanship are the practices of circular economy, repurposing, recycling, repair, low energy use, minimum waste and producing consciously. The awareness, adaptation and concern for nature and others, are their everyday contributions to a sustainable world.

The future is truly artisanal - we need to recognise, learn and practise it'.

**- Dr Ritu Sethi
Chairperson, Craft Revival Trust**



Photo credit : Delphine Pawlik



Conclusion

For India, the UK, and globally - craft and indigenous knowledge will play a crucial role in responding to the climate crisis. These are time-honoured practices passed down through generations, prioritising sustainability and resourcefulness. Handmade products with locally-sourced materials reduce carbon footprints and promote eco-friendly alternatives, fostering responsible production. The roundtable discussions revealed stories of resilience, nature-based solutions, and models integrating gender, livelihoods, climate, and slow fashion. It also confirmed that artisan communities, owing to their close ties with the environment and reliance on natural resources, are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change and we need a roadmap to build resilient communities.

The craft sector can positively contribute to climate resilience and sustainability. It should be integrated into broader climate action plans, globally. The ecosystem requires a multifaceted approach, including the promotion of nature-based solutions, support for craft entrepreneurs, scaling earth-centred solutions, and reforming education. Governments dedicated to addressing climate change must prioritise this sector and restructure climate finance to support its growth.

It is time for a craft revolution - to bring artisans of change to the forefront and shape a future that honours both indigenous communities and our planet.



Photo credit : Delphine Pawlik

Partners

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About Fashion Revolution India

[Fashion Revolution India](http://www.fashionrevolution.org) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to advocating for a clean, safe, fair, transparent, and accountable fashion industry. As part of the global [Fashion Revolution](http://www.fashionrevolution.org) movement spanning over 75 countries, Fashion Revolution India envisions a fashion industry that prioritises the conservation and restoration of the environment while valuing the well-being of people over growth and profit. Fashion Revolution was founded in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 and has grown into the world's largest fashion activism movement uniting citizens, industry stakeholders, and policymakers. Our organisation drives change through education, research, and advocacy work.

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About Crafting Futures

The British Council's Crafting Futures programme in India brings together Indian and UK partners to collaborate on projects which explore new futures for crafts. Since 2019, Crafting Futures has supported nine groundbreaking collaborations across the two nations' industry and academia, to explore different possible directions for artisan economies. In 2022/ 23 British Council commissioned Crafting Connections – a series of consultations with stakeholders across the value chain of craft, in collaboration with Fashion Revolution India, to bring light to the connection between crafts, climate crisis and the potential to inspire a climate positive fashion and textile industry.



Photo credit : Shruti Singh

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