



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Exploring the Dokra Craft of Dwariapur Village: Heritage Preservation, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Community-Based Tourism Opportunities in Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal

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Abstract

Dokra craft, a traditional metal craft form, is an integral part of Dwariapur's cultural heritage, contributing significantly to local livelihoods. This study explores the interplay between Dokra craft, heritage preservation, and community-based tourism (CBT) in Dwariapur village, Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal. The objective is to assess the potential of CBT in promoting Dokra craft, enhancing local livelihoods, and preserving cultural heritage. It also examines the challenges and opportunities for integrating Dokra craft with CBT initiatives. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, collecting primary data through surveys and interviews with Dokra artisans, and secondary data from literature reviews and government reports. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns and themes in the data. The findings highlight the relevance of CBT in promoting Dokra craft, generating income opportunities, and empowering local communities. By linking Dokra craft with CBT, this study offers insights for policymakers and stakeholders to develop sustainable tourism initiatives that preserve cultural heritage and support local artisans.

Keywords: Dokra Craft; Dwariapur; Cultural Heritage; Rural Livelihood; Metal Craftsmanship; Community-based tourism

1. Introduction

The Dokra craft of Dwariapur village, nestled in Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, is a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage (Saha, 2020). This traditional metalcraft form, also known as 'lost-wax casting,' has been an integral part of Bengal's artisanal tradition for centuries (Ghosh, 2018). Dwariapur's Dokra artisans have perfected this ancient technique, creating intricate objects like idols, ornaments, and decorative items (Bhattacharya, 2015). The craft of Dokra in Dwariapur dates back to the 13th century, with historical records suggesting its patronage by local rulers (Mukherjee, 2012). Dokra craft is an essential component of Bengal's cultural identity, reflecting the region's artistic ingenuity and craftsmanship (Chattopadhyay, 2016). As noted by Saha (2020), traditional crafts like Dokra hold immense potential for community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives. Dwariapur's Dokra craft is characterized by its unique designs, durability, and cultural significance, making it a valuable component of Bengal's artisanal heritage (Das, 2019). The craft's historical significance, combined with its aesthetic appeal, offers opportunities for CBT, enabling tourists to engage with local artisans and experience the craft-making process (Bose, 2017). By integrating Dokra craft with CBT, Dwariapur can create sustainable livelihood opportunities, promote cultural exchange, and preserve its rich heritage (Ghosh, 2018). The potential of Dokra craft to enhance CBT in Dwariapur is substantial, given the village's proximity to Kolkata and other tourist destinations (Mukherjee, 2012). As CBT initiatives gain momentum, Dwariapur's Dokra artisans can benefit from increased exposure, market access, and income opportunities (Saha, 2020). This synergy between Dokra craft and CBT can contribute to the preservation of Bengal's cultural heritage and the socio-

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economic development of rural communities (Bose, 2017). Dokra craft's relevance extends beyond its economic value, as it embodies the cultural traditions and artisanal skills of Bengal (Chattopadhyay, 2016). The craft's continued practice in Dwariapur is a testament to the resilience of traditional industries in the face of modernization (Das, 2019). By leveraging its cultural heritage, Dwariapur can position itself as a unique destination for craft enthusiasts, promoting sustainable tourism and preserving its Dokra legacy (Ghosh, 2018). Efforts to promote Dokra craft can also contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) (UNDP, 2015).

Objectives

- To assess the current state of Dokra craft in Dwariapur village, including its history, production processes, and market trends.
- To examine the potential of Dokra craft to contribute to sustainable livelihoods and community-based tourism (CBT) in Dwariapur village.
- To identify the challenges and opportunities for integrating Dokra craft with CBT initiatives in Dwariapur village.
- To explore the role of Dokra craft in preserving the cultural heritage of Dwariapur village and promoting cross-cultural exchange through tourism.

1.1. Location

Dwariapur village is located in the Ausgram I block of PurbaBardhaman district, West Bengal, India. It's situated at 23°27'51"N 87°42'02"E, and the PIN code is 713156. The village is part of the DignagarII gram panchayat and is known for its Dokra craft, a traditional metal craft. The nearest railway station is Guskara, approximately 10 km away. The distance from Burdwan town is around 37.7 km, with a travel time of about 1-1.25 hours.

2. Methodology

This mixed-methods study explores Dokra craft in Dwariapur village, West Bengal, focusing on heritage preservation, livelihoods, and community-based tourism (CBT). The case study design employs qualitative and quantitative methods, including primary data collection through semi-structured interviews surveys (n=80), and participant observation, as well as secondary data from literature review and government reports. Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. Purposive and snowball sampling will be used, with informed consent and confidentiality maintained. The study's small sample size and single village focus may limit generalizability.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. The Dokra Process

The Dokra-making process in Dwariapur village is a meticulous and labor-intensive craft that demands great concentration and skilled hands. Passed down through generations, this heritage art form involves the entire family - men, women, and children - each contributing their expertise. The multi-step process varies in duration, depending on the complexity of the piece being created.

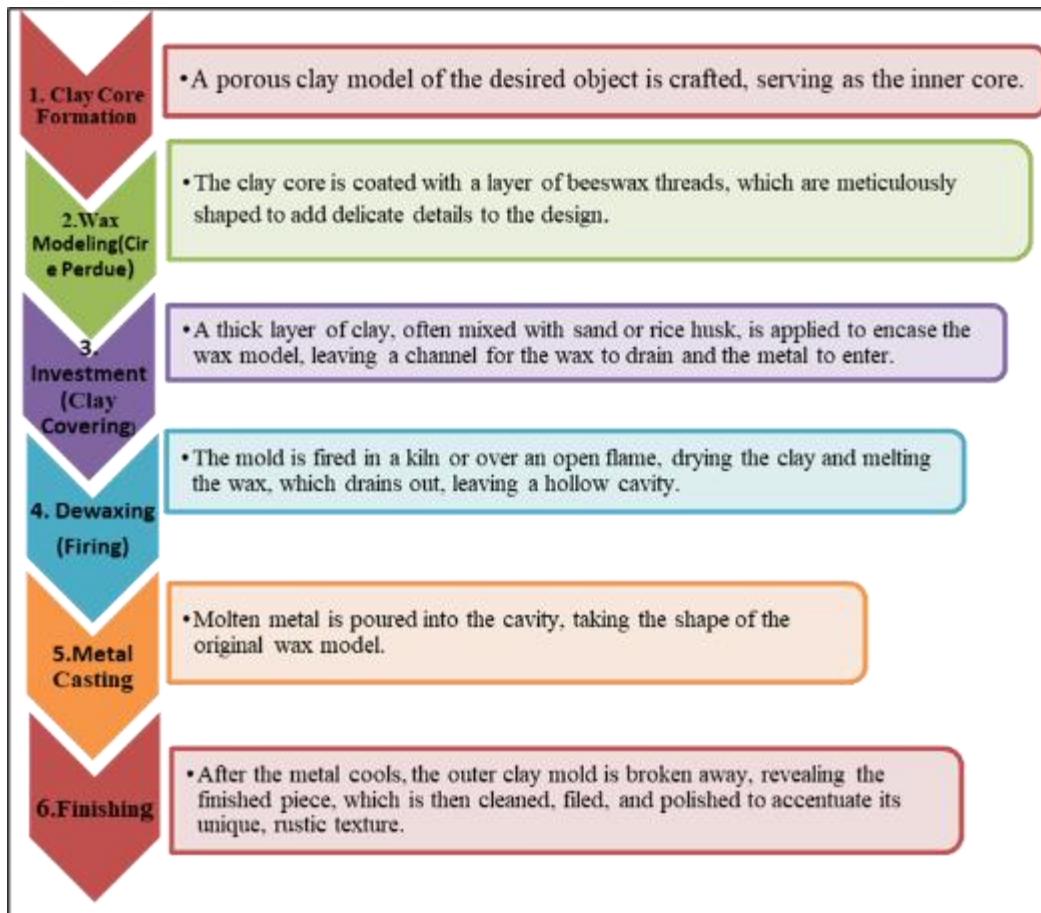


Figure 1 The Process of Dokra Craft

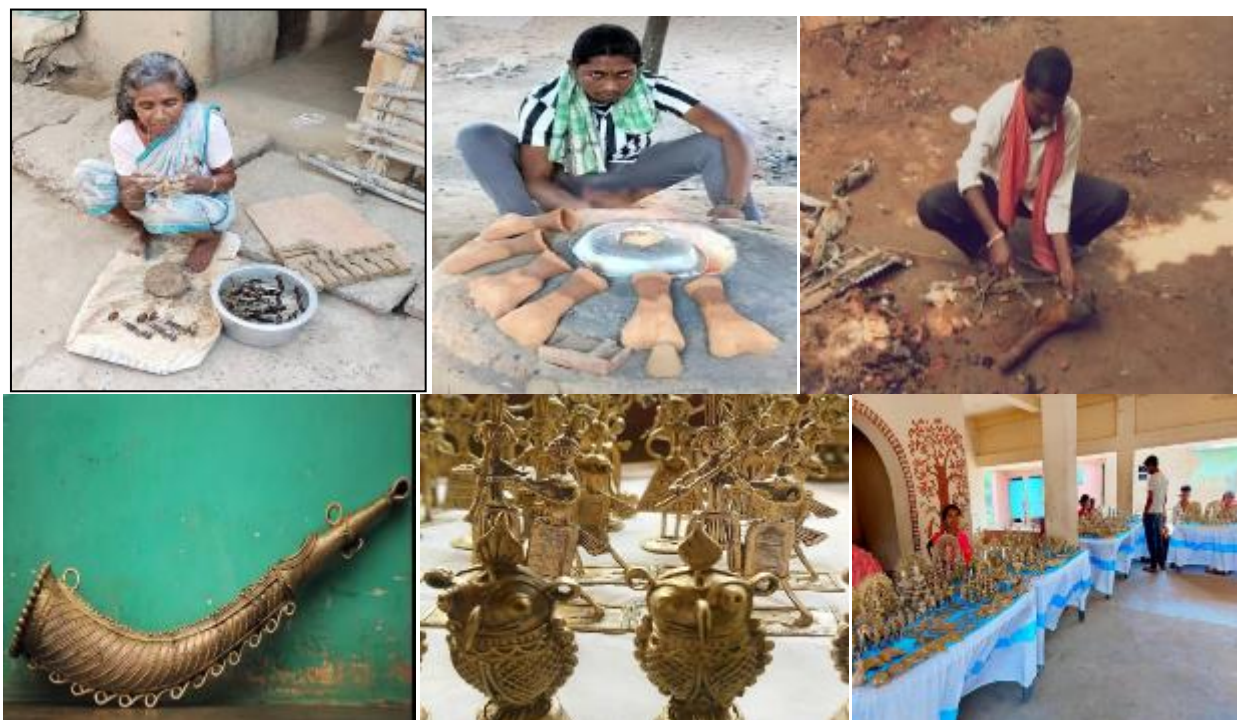


Figure 2 Various processes involved in the Dokra craft have been shown.

3.2. Artisanal Livelihood

3.2.1. Years of Involvement

The data reveals that the majority of respondents (25%) have been involved in the Dokra craft for 11-20 years, indicating a moderate level of experience. This is followed by 22.5% of respondents who have been involved for 5-10 years, suggesting a relatively new entrant to the craft. Interestingly, 18.8% of respondents have been involved in the craft for more than 30 years, indicating a strong traditional knowledge and expertise. The data also shows that 15% of respondents have been involved in the craft for less than 5 years, which may indicate a recent interest in the craft. Overall, the distribution suggests a mix of experienced and new artisans, highlighting the need for capacity-building programs to enhance skills and promote sustainability.

Table 1 Years of involvement

Years of Involvement	Frequency(N=80)	Percentage(%)
Less than 5 years	12	15.0
5-10 years	18	22.5
11-20 years	20	25.0
21-30 years	15	18.8
More than 30 years	15	18.8

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

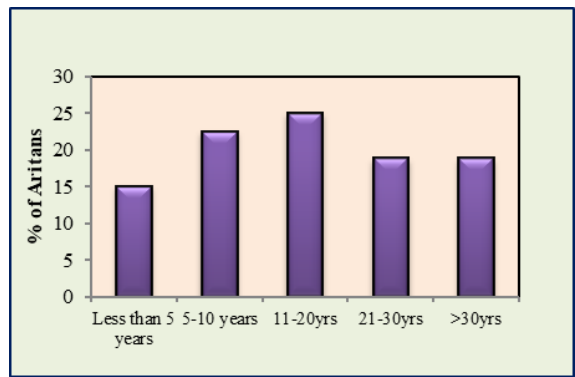


Figure 3 Years of Involvement

3.2.2. Motivation

The data reveals that the primary motivation for taking up Dokra craft is family tradition (43.8%), indicating a strong cultural and heritage-driven influence. Economic benefits (25%) and interest in art and craft (18.8%) are also significant motivators, suggesting that respondents are drawn to the craft for both financial and personal fulfillment reasons. The data suggests that Dokra craft is deeply rooted in tradition, with many respondents carrying on a family legacy. The relatively low percentage of respondents citing social status (6.3%) or other reasons (6.3%) implies that these factors are less influential in motivating individuals to take up the craft.

Table 2 Motivation

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Family Tradition	35	43.8
Economic Benefits	20	25
Interest in Art and Craft	15	18.8
Social Status	5	6.3
Other	5	6.3

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

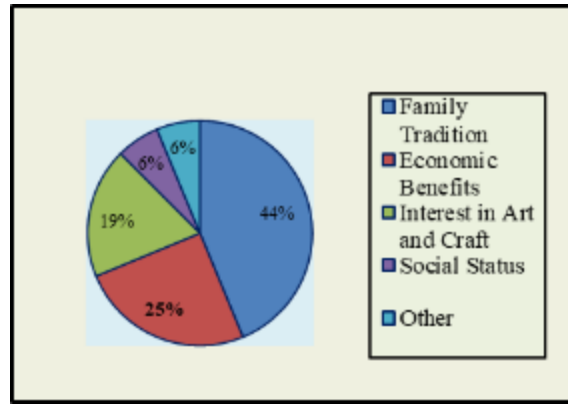


Figure 4 Motivation For Taking up Dokra Craft

3.2.3. Major Challenges in Production Process

The data reveals that sourcing raw materials (37.5%) is the major challenge faced by Dokra artisans, indicating difficulties in accessing quality clay, wax, and metal. Maintaining quality control (25%) is another significant challenge, suggesting that artisans struggle to ensure consistency in their products. Meeting market demand (18.8%) and managing production costs (12.5%) are also notable challenges, implying that artisans face difficulties in scaling up production and balancing costs with revenue. The relatively low percentage of respondents citing "other" challenges (6.3%) suggests that these four options capture the most significant production-related hurdles. The findings highlight the need for support in raw material sourcing and quality control, potentially through collective procurement initiatives or training programs. Addressing these challenges can help Dokra artisans improve productivity and competitiveness in the market.

Table 3 Challenges faced by Artisans

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Sourcing raw materials (Clay, wax, metal)	30	37.5
Maintaining quality control	20	25
Meeting market demand	15	18.8
Managing production costs	10	12.5
Other	5	6.3

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

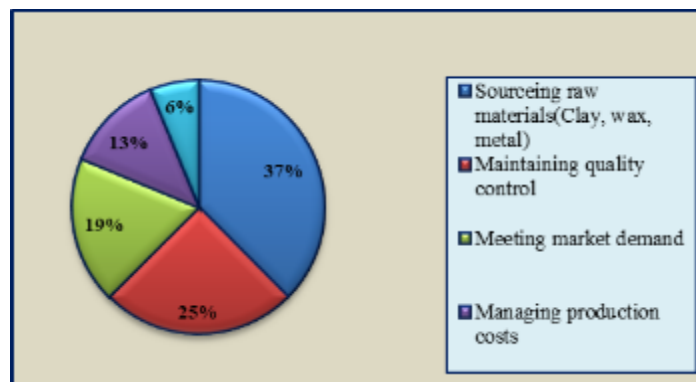


Figure 5 Major Challenges in Dokra Craft Production

3.2.4. Economic Aspect & Market Trends

The data reveals that the majority of Dokra products (31.3%) fall within the price range of 500-1000, indicating a moderate pricing strategy. A significant portion (25%) of products are priced below 500, suggesting a focus on affordability. The data also shows a gradual decline in frequency as the price range increases, with 18.8% of products priced between 1001-2000 and 12.5% priced between 2001-5000. Interestingly, 12.5% of products are priced above 5000, indicating a niche market for high-end Dokra products. Overall, the findings suggest that Dokra artisans cater to a diverse market, offering products at various price points to suit different customer segments. The moderate pricing strategy may be a response to competition from other craft products and the need to balance.

Table 4 Price range of Dokra products

Price Range (Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
<500	20	25
500-1000	25	31.3
1001-2000	15	18.8
2001-5000	10	12.5
>5000	10	12.5

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

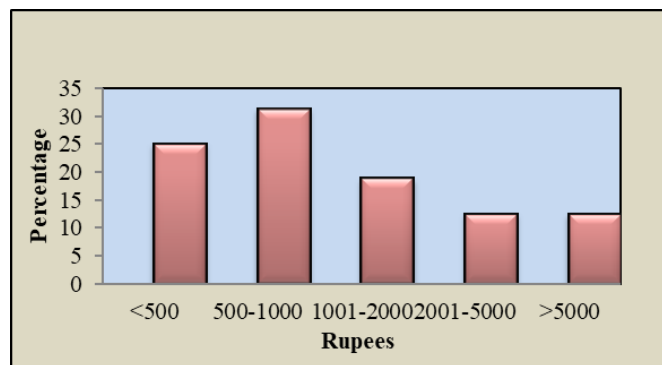


Figure 6 Average Price Range For Dokra Product

3.2.5. Marketing

The data reveals that local markets (43.8%) are the primary marketing channel for Dokra products, indicating a strong reliance on traditional sales channels. Online platforms (25%) are the second most popular channel, suggesting a growing recognition of digital marketing's potential. Craft fairs/exhibitions (12.5%) and middlemen/traders (12.5%) are used equally, implying a balanced approach to reaching customers through both direct and indirect channels. The low percentage of respondents using "other" channels (6.3%) suggests that these four options capture the main marketing strategies.

Table 5 Marketing Channel

Marketing Channel	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Local Markets	35	43.8
Online Platforms	20	25
Craft fairs/ exhibitions	10	12.5
Middlemen/ traders	10	12.5
Others	5	6.3

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

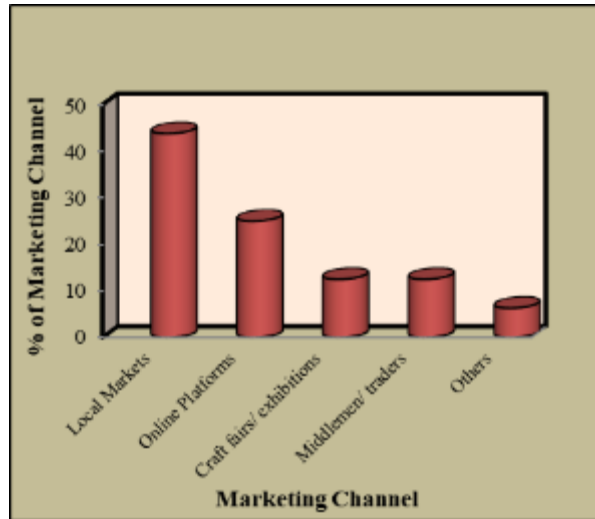


Figure 7 Marketing Channel of Dokra Craft

3.2.6. Government Support Needed

The data reveals that financial assistance (40%) is the most common type of government support, indicating artisans' need for funding to sustain their craft. Training/raw material support (32%) is also significant, suggesting efforts to enhance skills and productivity. Marketing assistance (16%) and infrastructure support (12%) are less prominent, implying gaps in promoting Dokra products and developing craft-related infrastructure. With only 25 respondents receiving support, these findings highlight opportunities for more targeted and comprehensive government interventions.

Table 6 Govt. Support Needed

Type of support	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Financial assistance	10	40
Training/raw material support	8	32
Marketing assistance	4	16
Infrastructure support	3	12

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

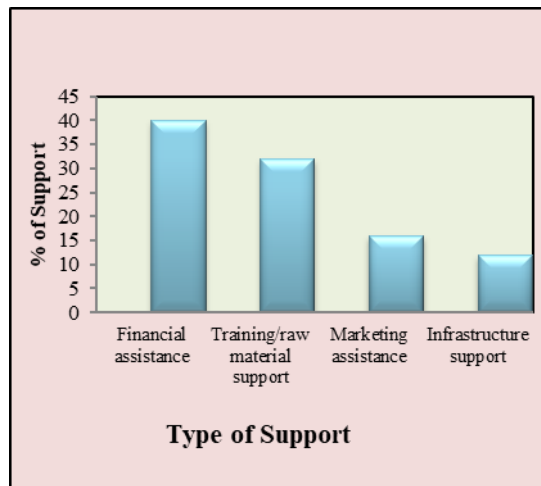


Figure 8 Types of Government Support Needed

3.3. Community Based Tourism(CBT) Potential in Dwariapur Village based on Dokra craft

3.3.1. Experience offered to the Tourist (CBT)

The data reveals that workshop participation (31.3%) is the most popular experience type, indicating artisans' enthusiasm for hands-on engagement. Demonstration of technique (25%) is also highly valued, suggesting tourists' interest in learning traditional skills. Guided village tours (18.8%) and interaction with artisans (12.5%) are less prominent, but still significant, highlighting the importance of cultural immersion. The 12.5% "other" responses may indicate opportunities for innovative experiences, such as homestays or craft-pairing activities. Overall, artisans prioritize experiential

Table 7 Tourist Experience Types (CBT)

Experience Type	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Workshop participation	25	31.3
Demonstration of technique	20	25
Guided tour of the village	15	18.8
Interaction with artisans	10	12.5
Other	10	12.5

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

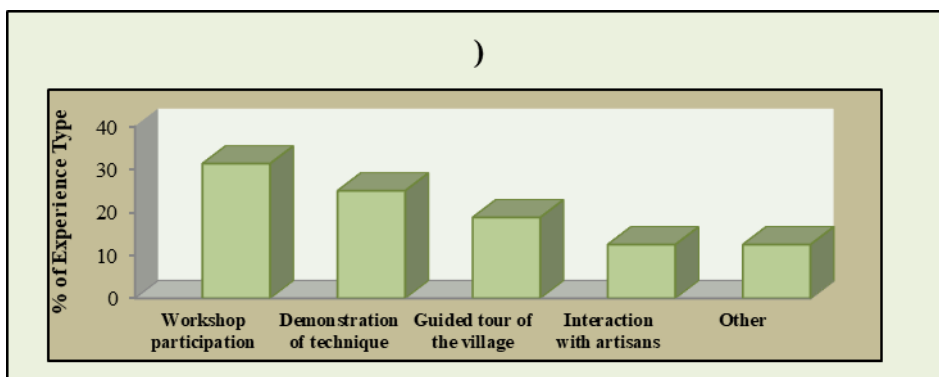


Figure 9 Experience s Offered to Tourists (CBT)

3.3.2. Infrastructure/ Facility Needed for Community based Tourism

The data reveals that accommodation for tourists (37.5%) is the top priority, indicating a need for suitable lodging options. Food and beverage services (25%) are also crucial, suggesting tourists' basic needs must be met. Local guides (18.8%) are valued, highlighting the importance of knowledgeable guides for immersive experiences. Transportation facilities (12.5%) are less prominent, possibly due to the village's compact nature. The low "other" responses (6.3%) suggest these four options capture key infrastructure needs. Overall, investing in accommodation and food services can lay the groundwork for community-based tourism, enhancing the village's capacity to host visitors.

Table 8 Infrastructural Demand Priority of Tourist (CBT)

Infrastructure/ Facility	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Accommodation for tourists	30	37.5
Food and beverage services	20	25
Local guides	15	18.8
Transportation facilities	10	12.5
Other	5	6.3

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

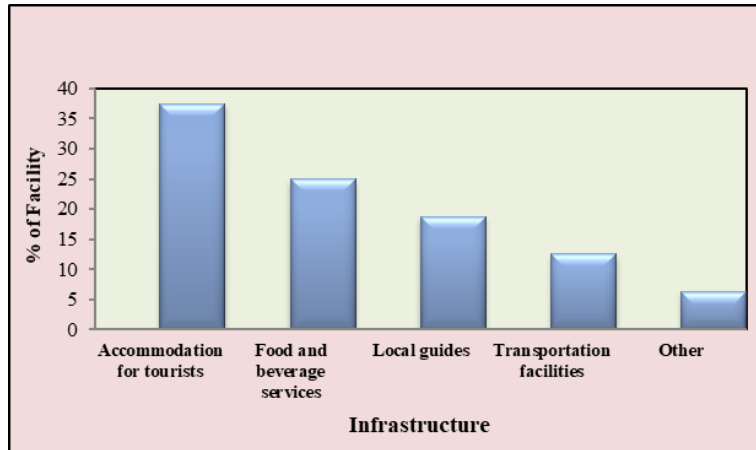


Figure 10 Facility Needed for Community Based Tourism

3.3.3. Marketing and Promotion of CBT

The data reveals that social media is the most popular marketing channel (50%), indicating a strong online presence is crucial for promoting the Dokra craft village. Local tour operators (25%) and word of mouth (12.5%) also play significant roles, highlighting the importance of building relationships and encouraging visitor engagement.

Table 9 Marketing and Promotion of CBT

Marketing Channel	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media	40	50
Local tour operators	20	25
Word of mouth	10	12.5
Online travel agencies	5	6.3
Other (print media, etc.)	5	6.3

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

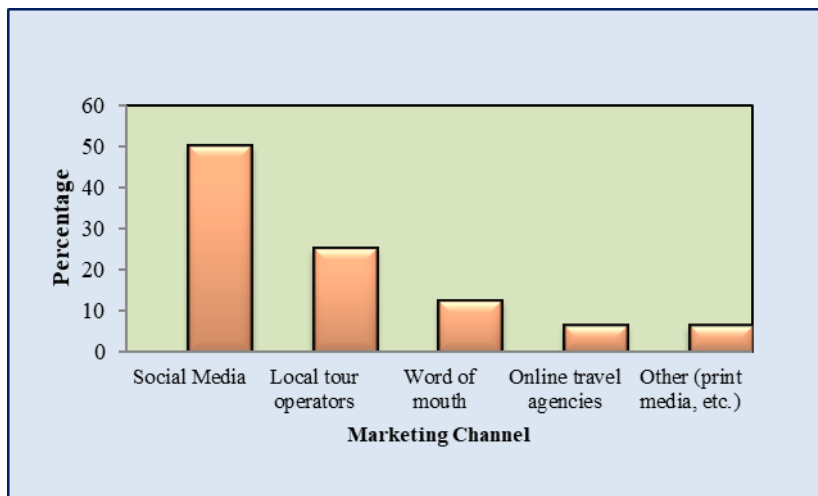


Figure 11 Marketing and Promotion CBT

3.3.4. Sustainability and Impact of CBT

The data underscores environmental impact (37.5%) and economic benefits (31.3%) as key concerns, suggesting CBT initiatives must balance eco-friendly practices and fair economic distribution to ensure sustainable development and community benefits.

Table 10 Sustainability and Impact of CBT

Sustainability Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Environmental impact	30	37.5
Economic benefits	25	31.3
Social benefits	15	18.8
Cultural preservation	10	12.5
Other (community development, etc.)	0	0

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

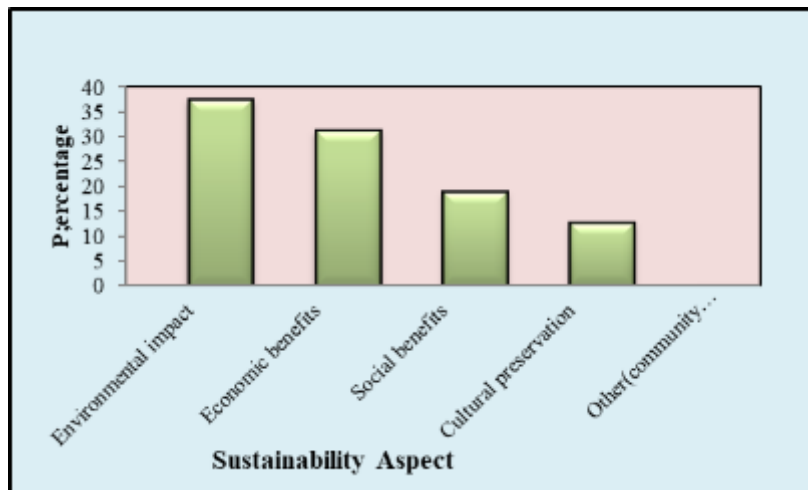


Figure 12 Sustainability and Impact of CBT

3.3.5. Challenge/Risk of CBT

The data highlights limited infrastructure (50%) and lack of marketing (25%) as significant hurdles, indicating CBT initiatives must prioritize these areas to thrive. Addressing these challenges can unlock the village's potential, ensuring CBT benefits the local community and preserves the Dokra craft heritage

Table 11 Challenges and Risk of CBT

Challenge/Risk	Frequency	Percentage
Limited infrastructure	40	50
Lack of marketing	20	25
Environmental degradation	10	12.5
Cultural homogenization	5	6.3
Other (seasonal fluctuations, etc.)	5	6.3

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

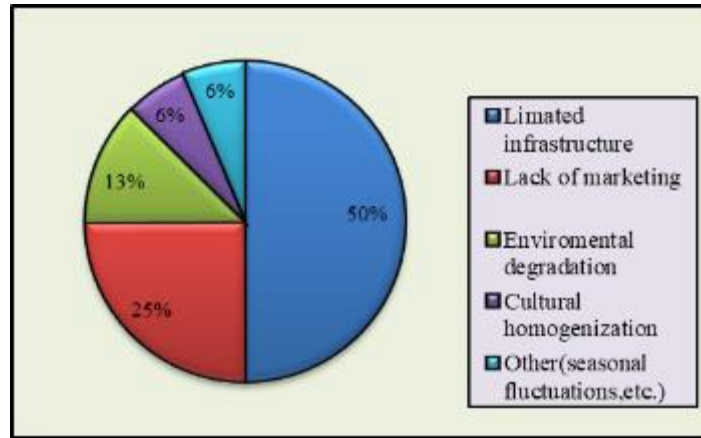


Figure 13 Challenge/ Risk of CBT

3.4. SWOT Analysis

Table 12 SWOT analysis for promotion of Community based tourism at Dwariapur

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1. Rich cultural heritage of Dokra craft	1. Limited infrastructure (accommodation, food, transportation)	1. Increasing demand for sustainable and cultural tourism	1. Environmental degradation and sustainability concerns
2. Unique, traditional craftsmanship	2. Lack of effective marketing and promotion	2. Growing interest in handicrafts and traditional arts	2. Competition from other craft villages or destinations
3. Strong community involvement and participation	3. Limited access to technology and digital platforms	3. Potential for partnerships with local businesses and organizations	3. Economic leakage and unequal distribution of benefits
4. Potential for immersive, experiential tourism	4. Dependence on traditional techniques and methods	4. Government initiatives supporting rural tourism and craft development	4. Limited government support and resources
5. Growing interest in sustainable tourism	5. Limited skilled workforce and training opportunities	5. Opportunities for homestays and community-based accommodations	5. Changing consumer preferences and market trends

Source: Field Survey, Dwariapur, 2025-2026

4. Major Findings & Suggestions

- Artisanal Livelihood: The majority of respondents (25%) have been involved in Dokra craft for 11-20 years, indicating a moderate level of experience.
- Motivation: Family tradition (43.8%) is the primary motivator for taking up Dokra craft, followed by economic benefits (25%) and interest in art and craft (18.8%).
- Challenges: Sourcing raw materials (37.5%) and maintaining quality control (25%) are the major challenges faced by Dokra artisans.
- Economic Aspect: The majority of Dokra products (31.3%) fall within the price range of 500-1000, indicating a moderate pricing strategy.
- Marketing: Local markets (43.8%) are the primary marketing channel for Dokra products, followed by online platforms (25%).
- Government Support: Financial assistance (40%) is the most common type of government support needed by Dokra artisans.

- Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Potential: Workshop participation (31.3%) is the most popular experience type, indicating artisans' enthusiasm for hands-on engagement.
- Infrastructure/Facility Needed for CBT: Accommodation for tourists (37.5%) is the top priority, indicating a need for suitable lodging options.
- **Suggestions for Development:**
- Capacity Building: Provide training and capacity-building programs for Dokra artisans to enhance their skills and productivity.
- Raw Material Sourcing: Establish collective procurement initiatives or partnerships with suppliers to ensure access to quality raw materials.
- Marketing Support: Develop and promote online platforms, social media, and local tour operators to increase market reach.
- Infrastructure Development: Invest in accommodation, food and beverage services, and local guides to support CBT initiatives.
- Government Support: Provide financial assistance, training, and marketing support to Dokra artisans to sustain their craft.
- Product Diversification: Encourage Dokra artisans to diversify their product range to cater to changing market trends and consumer preferences, such as creating modern designs, home decor items, or eco-friendly products.
- Community Engagement: Foster community engagement and participation in CBT initiatives by involving local residents, schools, and community groups in Dokra craft-related activities, promoting cultural exchange and socio-economic benefits.

5. Conclusion

The Dokra craft of Dwariapur village holds immense potential for promoting sustainable livelihoods, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering community-based tourism. The study highlights the challenges faced by Dokra artisans, including sourcing raw materials, maintaining quality control, and marketing their products. However, with the right support and infrastructure, Dokra craft can become a significant contributor to the local economy and a unique selling point for tourism in West Bengal. The study suggests that capacity-building programs, collective procurement initiatives, and marketing support can help Dokra artisans overcome their challenges and thrive. By leveraging CBT initiatives, Dwariapur village can showcase its rich cultural heritage, promote cross-cultural exchange, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Dokra craft.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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