

# Analyzing Indigenous Craft as Transformative Tools in Achieving SDG'S in India

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**Abstract:** The key components of sustainable principles include local manufacturing, recycling, and reuse. These ideas are fundamental to Indigenous traditional crafts. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the connections between crafts and the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The article includes examples of traditional crafts that assist people in transitioning to a more resilient and sustainable way of life. The approaches for preserving the intangible cultural legacy of Banjara embroidery are explained in the study, and they can help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study is qualitative in nature and will utilize a case study of Indian Banjara embroidery as a sample because it's a craft that needs government support to be preserved. Major findings will be analyzed to determine a solution. The construction of a framework for indigenous crafts that will serve as revolutionary tools for achieving India's Sustainable Development Goals is the paper's output.

**Keywords:** Arts and crafts, handicrafts, United Nations, Sustainable development goals, Intangible Heritage, Indigenous Crafts

## 1. Introduction:

The subject of SDG is primarily dealt with by agencies subordinate to the UN. One of them is UNESCO, an institution responsible primarily for culture and education. This agency puts the whole culture at the heart of SDG; protection of its heritage and its use by subsequent generations is certainly an end in itself. The craft of indigenous nature presents an intangible heritage component. At the same time, however, it is culture that can directly influence the goals of SDG, such as decent work, reducing social inequalities, and access to education. The SDG is an important component for the protection of cultural heritage and education.

Indigenous craft can potentially serve as a transformative tool in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in India. Indigenous craft, with its deep connection to cultural heritage and sustainable practices, has the potential to promote inclusive and equitable quality education by providing opportunities for Indigenous communities to acquire knowledge and skills related to sustainable development. Moreover, promoting Indigenous craft can contribute to sustainable economic growth by creating jobs and supporting local artisans. Additionally, it can help reduce inequality by empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of Indigenous communities in India. Furthermore, Indigenous craft can also contribute to promoting responsible consumption and production by showcasing sustainable and traditional production methods that prioritize environmental stewardship and minimize waste and resource depletion. Furthermore, the preservation and promotion of Indigenous craft can also contribute to the conservation of biodiversity as it often involves using natural materials and traditional techniques that are environmentally sustainable.

## 2. Unsustainable Development Goals

**Table-1 SDG goals which can be achieved by developing and Preserving Indigenous Craft; Source: Gudowska, B. (2020). Arts and crafts and UN sustainable development goals. International Journal of New Economics and Social Sciences (IJNESS), 11(1), 277-288.**

SL. NO	SDG	GOAL EXPLANATION
1.	No Poverty	Eliminate poverty worldwide in all of its manifestations.
2.	Good Health and Well-being	Make sure everyone lives healthily and is happy at all ages.

3.	Quality Education	Make sure everyone has access to high-quality, inclusive education, and encourage lifelong learning opportunities.
4.	Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
5.	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Encourage full and productive employment, equitable and sustainable economic growth, and decent work for all.
6.	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Create a robust infrastructure, encourage equitable and sustainable industrialization, and support innovation.
7.	Reduced Inequality	Lessen inequality both inside and across nations
8.	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Make human settlements and cities robust, safe, inclusive, and sustainable.
9.	Responsible Consumption and Production	Make sure patterns of consumption and production are sustainable.
10.	Climate Action	Act quickly to mitigate the effects of climate change.

### 3. Case Study: Banjara Community in India

Banjara, also known as Lambadi or Lambada, are a historically nomadic trading tribe who reside in South, West & Central India and with a language of their own called Gar Boli. In the Mughal era, the community was engaged in transporting provisions and trading goods. Their habit of living in isolated groups, away from others, still persists and they live in settlements on the fringes of towns. Banjaras are very aesthetic people, and their entire life's philosophy of being carefree and happy is reflected in their dresses and ornaments[1]. The term costume did not only mean the dress but it was a collective word which was derived from the word customs and includes the dress as a whole with jewellery, hairstyles, headdresses, footwear, and other accessories. The costume of Banjara women is embroidered with bright rainbow-colored fabrics covered with a mosaic of patchwork and mirrors. The colour and embellishment of these embroidered textiles reflects their love of life evolved across the centuries to suit local climatic, social, and cultural conditions. Traditionally, this embroidery is done elaborately on personal items of girls to be married, on different household accessories, and also for adornment of domesticated animals.[2]

#### Banjara Lambadi Embroidery

The Banjara women make symmetrical embroidery by lifting the warp thread of the fabric with a fine needle and making triangles, diamonds and lozenges, parallel to the weft thread, giving the effect of an extra weft weave. They specialize in making borders of long skirts that are part of their traditional costume. [3].

The Banjara embroidery involves needle work on small pieces of cloth which are later joined together to make the finished products. As mentioned earlier, the Banjara females alone are practicing this craft and they are engaged in this work in their leisure time after finishing their household chores. Their work is sought after for using the unusual technique of sewing hundreds of small mirrors into the compositions. Each embroidered piece depicts an aspect of the Banjara myths and stories. [4]

Embroidery is intrinsic to the traditional costumes of the nomadic Banjara community. The base cloth is usually handwoven, over which embroidery is done in yellow, green, red, off-white and black. The embroidery is truly unique in its style, and the matchless quality is achieved with a combination of brightness and originality. The colorful threads used in the embroidery are largely symbolic of the vibrant lifestyle of Banjaras. For embellishing an article, they also employ beads, shells, and mirrors. The sunlight which is reflected through the

colourful mirrors accentuates the splendid beauty of this work. Mirrors are used widely in Banjara Embroidery, marking a distinctive feature [5].



Figure-1 Indigenous Craft as Banjara Embroidery [Source: <https://maiwa.com/pages/banjara-embroidery>]



Figure-2 Banjara Women Identity and culture [Source: <https://maiwa.com/pages/banjara-embroidery>]

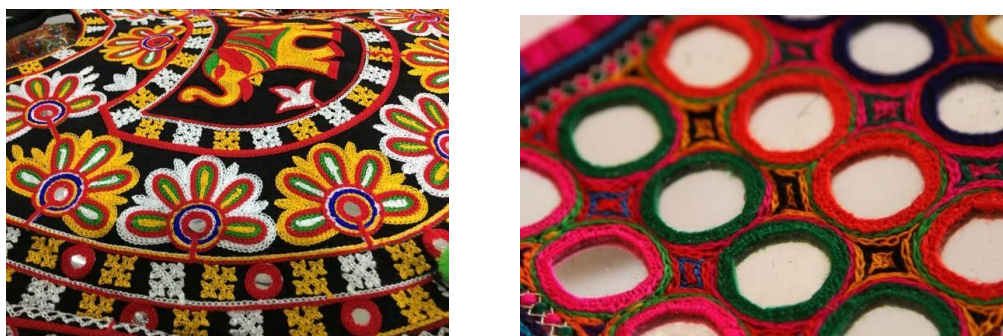
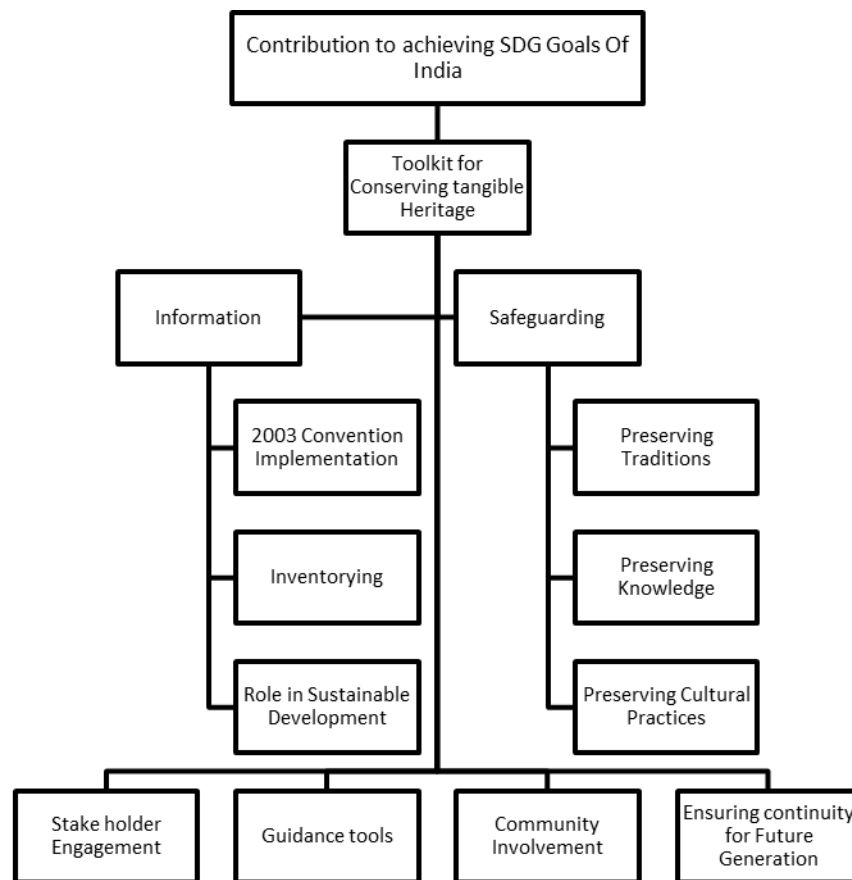


Figure-3 Types of Banjara Embroidery Pattern [Source: <https://maiwa.com/pages/banjara-embroidery>]



## Toolkit for Conserving Intangible Heritage like Indigenous Craft of Banjara Community Embroidery



**Figure-4 Toolkit for conserving Intangible Heritage [Source: Created by Author]**

According to UNESCO, the kit created to protect intangible cultural assets also has a sustainability component, which is crucial for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper's toolkit highlights the significance of community involvement and engagement in the preservation process, acknowledging the dynamic and living nature of intangible cultural property. Stakeholders and communities can contribute to Goal 4, Goal 8, Goal 11, Goal 16, and Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals by using the toolkit for safeguarding intangible heritage to ensure the sustainable preservation and transmission of their cultural heritage. This comprehensive guide for preserving India's intangible cultural heritage is a useful tool for Preserving and defending customs, knowledge, and cultural practices. The toolkit derived is based on sustainable development, Gender, Education, community development, indigenous communities and people. Crafts and 2030 sustainable development goals, which were set by the un, are related to each other.

### 4. Inclusive Social Development

#### Educational content:

1. Intangible cultural heritage provides living examples of how communities systematize and transmit knowledge, life skills, and competencies to future generations.
2. Even with formal education systems, traditional knowledge transmission methods remain active today.

#### Strengthening social cohesion and inclusion:

1. Social practices, rituals, and festive events structure the lives of communities and strengthen the social fabric inclusively.
2. These activities bring together people from all social strata for shared experiences.

### Creating and transmitting gender roles:

1. Intangible cultural heritage shapes and transmit gender roles and identities within communities.
2. Gender norms often define who can participate in certain traditions (e.g., traditional crafts production).
3. Gender roles adapt to social and environmental changes, fostering opportunities for greater gender equality.
4. It plays a key role in building confidence and fostering dialogue in multicultural communities to overcome gender-based discrimination.

### 5. Environmental Sustainability

Traditional knowledge, values and practices accumulated and renewed across generations as part of intangible cultural heritage have guided human societies in their interactions with the surrounding natural environment for millennia.

#### Contribution to environmental sustainability

1. Intangible cultural heritage can help promote environmental sustainability by preserving eco-friendly practices.
2. While global human activities often consume natural resources at unsustainable rates, local communities have developed practices linked to nature.
3. These practices reflect respect for the environment.

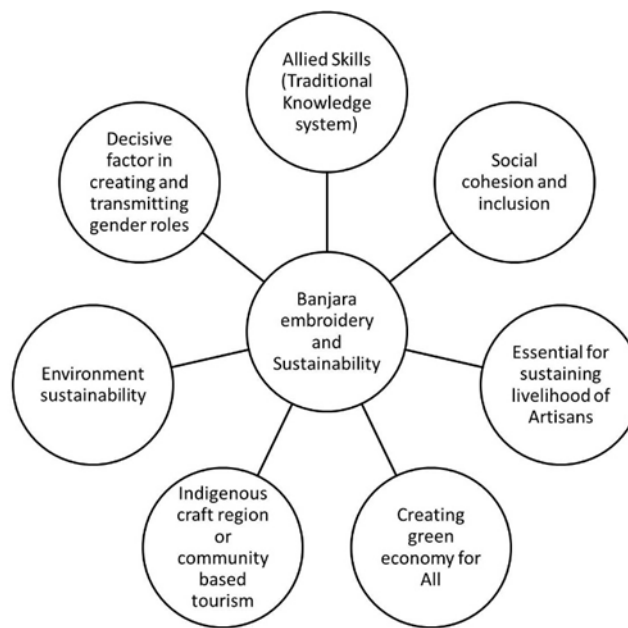
### 6. Inclusive Economic Development

Inclusive economic development does not focus only on those identified as poor, but also on vulnerable people in precarious livelihoods and others who are excluded from full participation in economic activity. This requires productive and decent employment, reduction of poverty and inequalities, low carbon as well as resource-efficient economic growth, and welfare protection. Intangible cultural heritage constitutes an important asset for this transformative change. It constitutes a driving force for economic development, encompassing a diversity of productive activities, with both monetary and non-monetary value, and contributes in particular to strengthening local economies.

**Table 2: Inclusive Economic Development [Source: Gudowska, B. (2020). Arts and crafts and UN sustainable development goals. International journal of new economics and social sciences (IJNESS), 11(1), 277-288]**

SR. NO	KEY ASPECT	DETAILS
1	Sustaining livelihoods	Local knowledge, skills, and practices passed through generations provide subsistence livelihoods for many groups and communities.
2	Generating revenue and work	Intangible cultural heritage creates income and decent work for various individuals, including the poor and vulnerable.
3	Traditional craftsmanship	A main source of income for groups and individuals, contributing to cash or barter exchange, benefiting not just craftspeople but also others in the value chain like transporters and raw material producers.
4	Source of innovation for development	Communities constantly innovate, and intangible cultural heritage serves as a resource for transformative development at both local and global levels.

### 7. Conserving The Intangible Heritage OF Banjara Embroidery have Contributed to the Accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS)



**Figure-5 Contribution of craft like Banjara embroidery for Sustainability [Source : Figure by Author]**

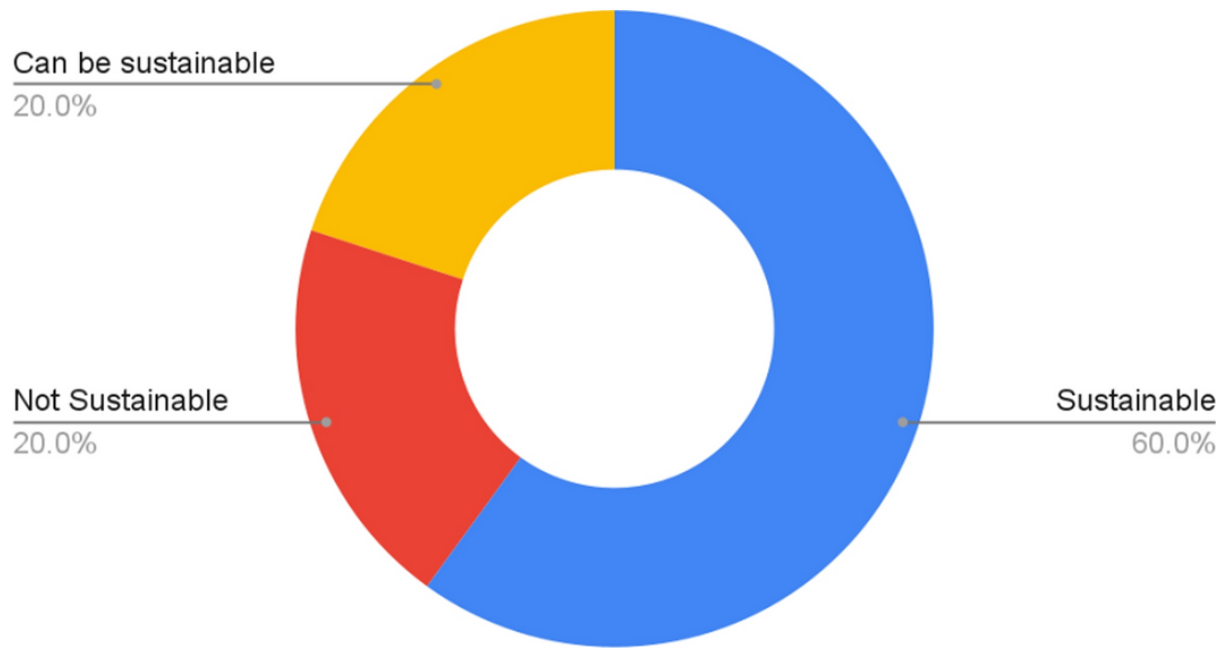
### **8. Banjara Lambani Needlework Tradition Was Created, Improved, And Passed Down Generation to Help Women Get Back on Their Feet.**

In our country, 40 per cent to 70 per cent people are living under poor economic conditions. Out of them, 70 per cent of 80 per cent of people of Banjara community live under poor economic conditions. It shows that their primary needs are not fulfilled. Being a characteristic lifestyle, though the present picture is clear of the community, there is no clarity about their history. In Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, 2 crore Banjara people have been settled down. Banjara is a very backward community that is socially, politically, educationally, and especially economically [6].

A sector issue is non-availability of data. This craft is still being practiced as a household art and there have been practically no efforts to bring it to the mainstream. Moreover, currently the textile and craft sector carry the stigma of inferiority and backwardness, and is viewed as decorative, peripheral and elitist. This is compounded by the Government's treatment of crafts as a sunset industry, which has resulted in a lack of well-developed policies and programs to protect and strengthen the ecosystem for artisans. [7]

The reason specific to Banjara embroidery is further compounded by the lack of cohesiveness amongst the artisans, who tend to live in secluded pockets and resist any offer of assistance from an outside agency. All the artisans living in the tandas belong to the unorganized sector as they do not have a common channel or place to buy their raw material, to showcase their products and also to discuss their potential problems. On the positive side, the artisans of the tandas have heroically always held on to their ancient beliefs and practices which give them strength and identity and a sense of pride and have not lost their skill of specialized art. But on the other side, it is essential to propagate this art with the objective of preserving this exquisite craft. [8]

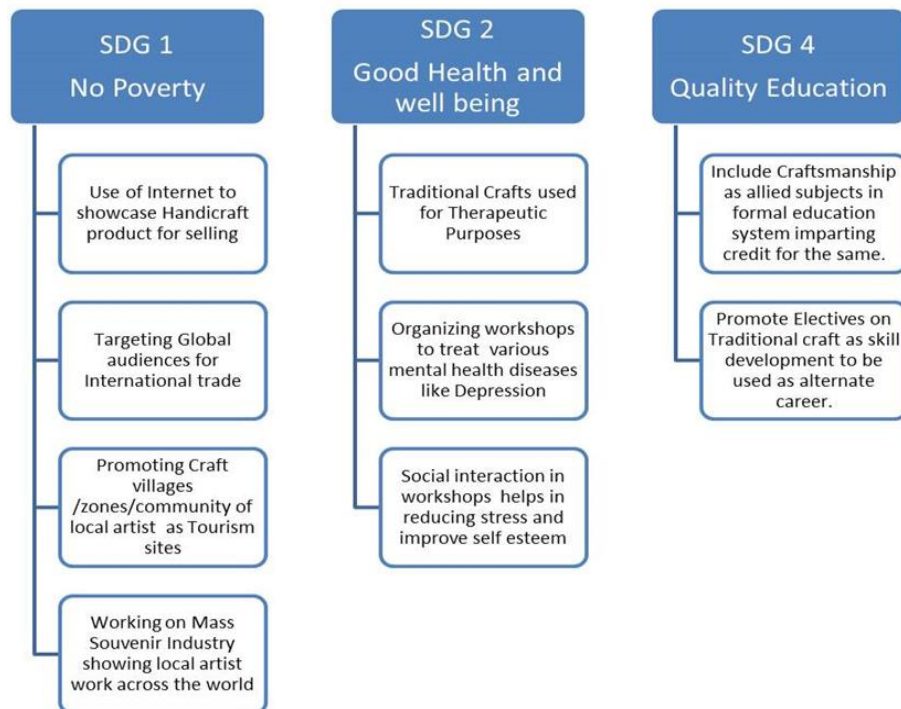
Though Banjara lambani needlework tradition is improved with time and various new methods of needlework are also incorporated in banjara embroidery. Banjara needle work does help in curbing the migration problems within the community. Most of the women earn about INR 5,000-8000 per month. The work opportunity has curbed the migration of Lambadis considerably. Those who own land have plots measuring less than three acres. With unpredictable monsoons, farming became an unsustainable livelihood, forcing the villagers to migrate. The need of the hour is to recognize and incorporate ways of overcoming various inherent limitations of raw materials, material sourcing, design and product interpretation capabilities, processes and skills, thus aiming towards achieving a more sustainable channel. This craft needs intervention on a large scale as it will not only provide employment to artisans of Banjara crafts, but people from non-craft bases also earn their livelihood by associating themselves with this craft.



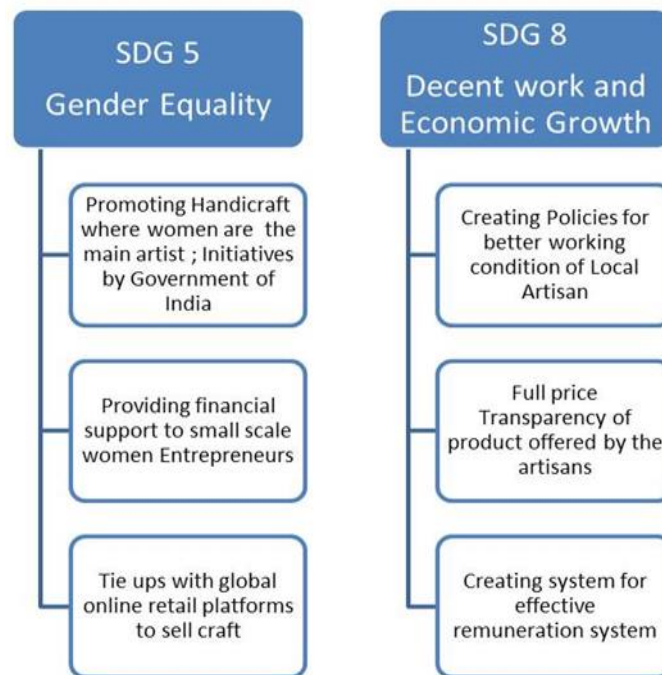
**Figure-6 Craft is a sustainable business in India, Source: Khan, F.B. Can the Arts and Crafts Sector in India be Sustainable: A Grounded Theory Approach to Mapping Challenges and Proposing Solutions. JGBC 17 (Supple 1), 46–55 (2022).**

### 9. Framework For Indigenous Crafts That Will Act as Transformational Instruments for Accomplishing India's Sustainable Development Goals

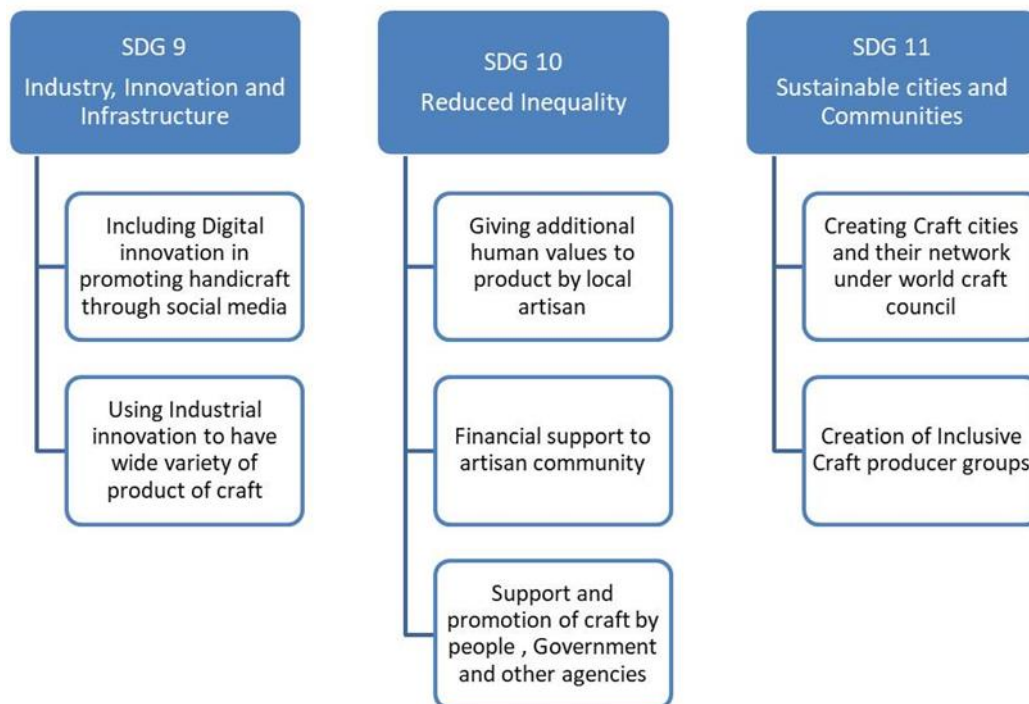
To uplift Banjara embroidery craft and achieve Sustainable development goals, a framework is created where different methods are discussed. The steps under each SDG goals can be a deciding factor to achieving sustainability.



**Figure-7 Framework for Sustainable development Goals 1,2 and 4 [Source: Flow chart by Author]**

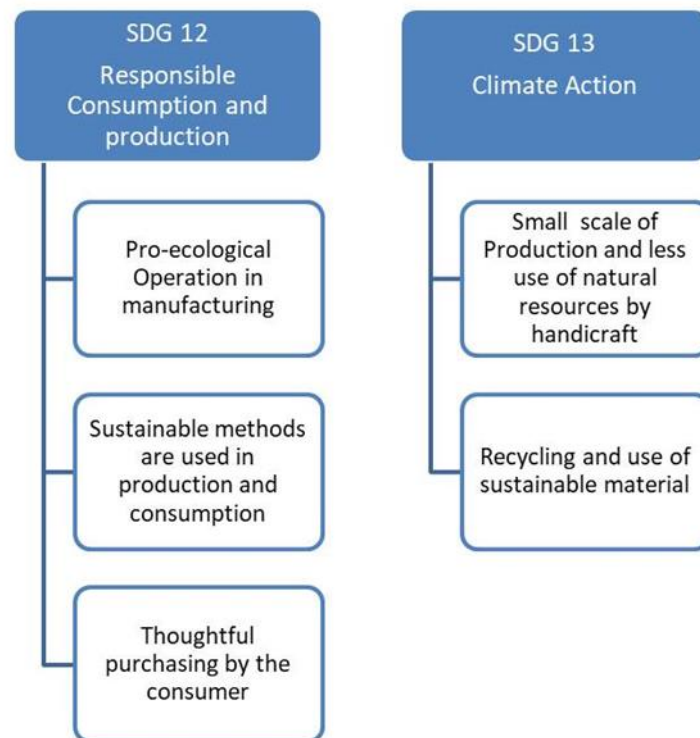


**Figure-8 Framework for Sustainable development Goals 5 and 8 [Source: Flow chart by Author]**



**Figure-9 Framework for Sustainable development Goals 9-11 [Source: Flow chart by Author]**





**Figure-10 Framework for Sustainable Development Goals 12-13 [Source : Flow chart by Author]**

## 10. Conclusion

The effect of an intangible cultural legacy on sustainability was covered in the paper. The framework makes it abundantly evident that intangible cultural resources can contribute to the accomplishment of sustainable development objectives. Many techniques were outlined in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. As an intangible cultural asset, banjara embroidery serves as a means of subsistence for the handicraft-producing community. This resulted in the growth of sustainable fashion and the empowerment of women over a few decades.

## 11. Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this present research paper. This research work is not a part of any other studies, and it is my original work.

## 12. Notes

Banjara, also known as Lambadi or Lambada, are a historically nomadic trading tribe who reside in South, West & Central India and with a language of their own called Gar Boli. In the Mughal era, the community was engaged in transporting provisions and trading goods. Their habit of living in isolated groups, away from others, still persists and they live in settlements on the fringes of towns. Banjara Embroidery, Handmade Stories, Available Online: <https://antimakhanna.com/banjara-embroidery/index.html> [1].

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As Grobar (2017) points out, a key weakness in measurement of exactness in the handicrafts sector is non-availability of data. This craft is still being practiced as a household art and there have been practically no efforts to bring it to the mainstream. Moreover, currently the textile and craft sector carries the stigma of inferiority and backwardness, and is viewed as decorative, peripheral and elitist. This is compounded by the Government's treatment of crafts as a sunset industry, which has resulted in a lack of well-developed policies and programs to protect and strengthen the ecosystem for artisans. Grobar, L.M. Policies to promote employment and preserve cultural heritage in the handicraft sector. Int. J. Cult. Policy 2017, 2, 1–13.[7].

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