

# **Practices of Sustaining Handicrafts as a Core Tourism Product: A Perspective from Kashan**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Studying the role of handicraft production and sales as an important component of cultural tourism can prepare an ideal plan to improve the results of the adaptation of the cultural economy in the sustainable livelihood growth of artisan women, which is capable of helping sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, by using these factors, we might promote the conservation of cultural heritage and its tangible consequences (handicrafts and unique and innovative arts).

Investigating various studies enables us to better understand the best strategy for supporting female artisans who create handicrafts and contribute to their sales, as well as how handicrafts can significantly contribute to and facilitate the sustainable livelihood of artisans' women in developing countries. By encouraging the preservation of cultural tourism and supporting the cultural economy in Kashan City, Iran, it focuses primarily on the local community, government, and private groups that may work together to generate sustainable tourism.

For this research, Kashan, home to numerous female artisans who work in various fields, was selected as one of the most significant places among Iran's well-known cities for producing exquisite handicrafts. Since this research was concerned with the viewpoints of the respondents, the qualitative data collection method was appropriate. The researcher's physical absorption as well as semi-structured interviews with 30 female artists were both used to collect further information for the study. chosen by purposive sampling in order to gather data. The gathered data was analyzed using the Thematic Analysis (TA) method. The conclusions have had practical implications

through their capacity for the identification of various capitals within the framework for sustainable livelihood development based on sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** Artisan women, Sustainable livelihood, Cultural economy, Women empowerment, Handicraft, Sustainable tourism.

## ÖZ

Kültür turizminin önemli bir bileşeni olarak el sanatları üretimi ve satışının rolünü incelemek, sürdürülebilir turizm gelişimine yardımcı olabilecek zanaatkâr kadınların sürdürülebilir geçim büyümesinde kültürel ekonomiye uyum sağlamanın sonuçlarını iyileştirmek için ideal bir plan hazırlayabilir. Ayrıca, bu faktörleri kullanarak, kültürel mirasın ve bunun somut sonuçlarının (el sanatları ve benzersiz ve yenilikçi sanatlar) korunmasını destekleyebiliriz.

Çeşitli araştırmaları incelemek, el sanatları üreten ve satışlarına katkıda bulunan kadın zanaatkarları desteklemek için en iyi stratejiyi ve el sanatlarının gelişmekte olan ülkelerde zanaatkâr kadınların sürdürülebilir geçimine nasıl önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunabileceğini ve kolaylaştırabileceğini daha iyi anlamamızı sağlar. İran'ın Kaşan Şehrindeki kültürel turizmin korunmasını teşvik ederek ve kültürel ekonomiyi destekleyerek, öncelikle sürdürülebilir turizm oluşturmak için birlikte çalışabilecek yerel topluluk, hükümet ve özel gruplara odaklanır.

Bu araştırma için, çeşitli alanlarda çalışan çok sayıda kadın zanaatkâra ev sahipliği yapan Kaşan, İran'ın seçkin el sanatları üretimi açısından tanınmış şehirleri arasında en önemli yerlerden biri olarak seçilmiştir. Bu araştırma, yanıtlayıcıların bakış açılarıyla ilgili olduğu için nitel veri toplama yöntemi uygun görülmüştür. Araştırma için daha fazla bilgi toplamak amacıyla hem araştırmacının fiziksel özümseme hem de 30 kadın sanatçıyla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler kullanıldı. veri toplamak için amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilir. Toplanan veriler Tematik Analiz (TA) yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçların, sürdürülebilir turizm gelişimine dayalı

sürdürülebilir geçim gelişimi çerçevesinde çeşitli sermayelerin belirlenmesine yönelik kapasiteleri aracılığıyla pratik çıkarımları olmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Esnaf kadın, Sürdürülebilir geçim, Kültür ekonomisi, Kadının güçlendirilmesi, El sanatları, Sürdürülebilir turizm.

## **DEDICATION**

My dear sons "Sepanta" and "Avesta" are the reason that my life continues, and this research paper is dedicated to them. Once you grow up, you will understand how much your presence in my life has inspired me to continue on my path despite all the challenges. You both are my greatest gift from the universe. Let us be proud of ourselves together.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

Sustainable tourism developed in the late 1980s and has since grown in prominence in tourism strategy and planning as well as in studies on tourism (Hall, 2011). Sustainable tourism entails the behavior, morals, and methods of individuals. A comprehensive comprehension of sustainable tourism requires integrating the environmental, economic, and social-cultural dimensions. Sustainability in this context entails the protection of cultural, social, environmental, and physical resources, whereas productivity focuses on achieving profitable and efficient competition (B'echerel, 2001).

The tourist market is intricate and multifaceted. According to Tang and Tan (2015), tourism has recently been recognized as an innovative commercial growth booster. In addition, according to Rezapouraghdam and Karatepe (2020), tourism is one of the world's major industries. The tourist industry needs to be sustainable, and community members must benefit from it (Weaver, 2008). By offering the potential for stakeholder participation, which is compatible with the concept of sustainable tourism, the possibility of achieving greater sustainability for developing tourism is improved (Alipour et al., 2021).

Supporting an area's handicrafts and artistic creations contributes to the conservation of the natural environment and the homeland's cultural heritage, as well as to the development of domestic integration and international cooperation (Thommandru et al., 2023). According to research by Bouazza et al. (2015), the handicraft industry merits assistance from local governments, non-governmental organizations, and travel companies in terms of luring tourists and bringing in foreign cash. Furthermore, handicraft provides excluded populations with an economic pathway since it allows them to improve their talents through work experience, education, and mentorship.

It emphasizes the necessity of innovation for the preservation and sustainability of traditional handicrafts from the perspective of protecting cultural value and heritage. The creative perspective seems to be impeding the industry's overall ability to develop sustainably (Abisuga et al., 2023). Handicraft commerce, which relies on natural resources and can generate employment (Oyekunle, 2014), A method of local revitalization that Ray calls a "culture economy" refers to measures taken to make regional expertise and experience usable on the ground.

Knowledge may be defined as "patterns to perform tasks and methods for knowing about the world," yet this is just scratching the surface. Local eating habits, indigenous languages, artwork, folktales, unique handicrafts, theatrical literary allusions, ancient and archaic locations, environmental frameworks, and their biodiversity are all examples of cultural flags that may be used to identify this kind of information (Ray, 2002a).

Explains that they are a component of a "development repertory," which means a country may pick and choose tools and methods that are most useful. The concepts of

community responsibility for assets and the feeling of autonomy (local, communal action) regarding how to utilize that wealth are both included in the concept of a repertoire, which is central to the concept of homogeneity (Ray, 2002b). Artists, as an isolated category in local areas, have difficulty gaining autonomy because of policies, organizational, and physical barriers and constraints that have played a part in setting the creative industries on a sustained vulnerable foundation and enhancing generally recognized opinions of vulnerability that characterize the artists' livelihoods (Mahon et al., 2018).

Improved living conditions for women artisans may be achieved via the integration of cultural economy and planning that takes into account the specific economic strengths of each target community, as well as sustainable livelihood development initiatives that make profit from current capital.

In the sustainable livelihood framework, "capitals" or "assets" are the fundamental core, and the relationships between various assets of livelihood are crucial factors that provide a deeper understanding (Fang, 2013). This research concentrates on how women artists of local handicraft businesses use all of these material resources—physical capital, resources of nature, human capital, and social capital—to grow their businesses, emphasizing the significance of this framework for a sustainable way of life.

According to this research, handmade items are made from natural resources and thus use raw materials (natural capital). To make handmade items, the locals mostly rely on knowledge, creativity, and indigenous skills (human capital) rather than formal schooling. Physical resources, such as transportation, energy, and transportation

facilities, are thus necessary for the firm to succeed. A handicraft company requires start-up money (financial capital) to get off the ground. Handicraft owners may get this cash from other reliable domestic sources, such as benefits, selling off home possessions, assistance from the government, or family members. These business owners also have access to institutional support organizations or unofficial communities of support (social capital) (Abisuga et al., 2023).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Tradition and sensitivity to culture deserve an essential role in the development process (Teresa C.H. Tao), because development is multidimensional (Aazami & Shanazi, 2020). Besides, Women's empowerment and their sustainable livelihood have been major issues of discussion all around the world (Aghazamani et al., 2020; Nassani et al., 2019). In recent years, sustainable tourism has emerged as a possible platform for supporting women's empowerment (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021). Yet, the importance of handicrafts in promoting women's empowerment in sustainable tourism has received little attention.

This study is to evaluate the benefits of handicrafts in sustainable livelihood along with sustainable tourism and how a comprehensive plan is able to support the cultural economy and provide empowerment for artisan women as a weak gender in traditional culture in developing countries like Iran. The capacity of creative women and makers of handicrafts to strike a healthy balance between work and personal life is another crucial aspect. It is essential to their manner of life and social function (Clercq & Brieger, 2021).

Iran's Isfahan province contains the city of Kashan. The route from Qom to Kerman occurs along the edge of Iran's central deserts and passes through Kashan, the first of the country's great oases. The sharp distinction between the barren vastness of the deserts and the lush oasis is what gives it plenty of allure.

According to archaeological findings at the Sialk Hillocks, which are located 2.5 miles (4 km) west of Kashan, this area was one of the main hubs of civilization throughout the prehistoric eras. Kashan thus originates from Iran's Elamite era. After 7000 years, the Sialk ziggurat in Kashan's suburbs is still in existence. Due to its abundance of historical sites, Kashan is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Iran after Isfahan and Shiraz, which are both well-known ancient towns ([kashanu.ac.ir](http://kashanu.ac.ir)).

One of the city's attractions is Kashan Bazaar, a bazaar with amazing mudbrick architecture. You may be taken to the top of the bazaar for a modest fee and get a great perspective of the ancient city while learning about the technical miracle of creating such massive buildings out of mudbricks. Tourists can be seen wandering about the market.

Daughters learn the art of Kashan carpet weaving through training while being taught by their moms and grandparents. Men acquire their design, coloring, slicing, loom-building, and tool-creation abilities through internships equally. More than 30 fields are still being manufactured and provided to locals, Iranians, and international visitors in the handicraft workshops of Kashan city, which is remarkable given the ancient age and wealth of Kashan's handicrafts in its culture and history.

In addition to the hand-woven carpets (kilim, zilo, rugs, etc.) that Kashan is renowned for in Iran, other valuable arts include pottery, the making of dolls, the knitting of woolen processes, the weaving of silk, wool, and velvet, and the zari embroidery of special traditional fabrics. Since women artists produce the majority of handicrafts across all industries, it is imperative to look at their access to sustainable livelihood opportunities while planning sustainable tourism programs for them.

### **1.3 Thesis Purpose and Objectives**

Sustainability endures as a major global concern that the United Nations supports. As a result of the UN's decade of education for sustainable development, the goals of sustainable development have altered the international plan of action (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2022; UN, 2015). In addition, according to the Sustainable Livelihoods Support Office (1999), the purpose of the sustainable livelihood theory is to assist the disadvantaged in implementing sustainable policies that they individually establish.

The study intends to accomplish the following objectives:

- I. To investigate the impact of handicrafts on promoting women's sustainable livelihoods through sustainable tourism.
- II. To examine the obstacles and possibilities that women active in handicrafts confront in the context of sustainable tourism.
- III. To make recommendations to improve handicrafts' contributions to sustainable tourism and women's sustainable livelihoods.

### **1.4 The Significance Study**

The subject of how the ability of the artisan women residents to expand their sustainable livelihood in line with tourism development is affected by the cultural

development of handicrafts generated in direct connection with the destination's attractions for tourists (the city of Kashan in Iran) This research focuses on the advantages of community involvement caused by the center's location in terms of the sustainable livelihood of women, cultural economy, structural development, and international recognition. The study's emphasis on both primary and secondary information offers important benefits for scholarly investigation, and based on it, it is able to provide a practical plan for the development of sustainable livelihoods and tourism.

It is important to consider how creativity may ensure sustainable growth for industries that produce goods. To overcome obstacles to long-term economic development, innovation and design are essential (Abisuga et al., 2023). Due to the wide range of craft items, manufacturers of handicrafts should be aware of and take note of how changing trends in basic supplies and machinery impact the various products they generate (Makhitha, 2016).

### **1.5 Methodology and Data Analysis**

This study employed a qualitative research approach (e.g., Alipour et al., 2021; Rezapouraghdam et al., 2018), especially semi-structured interviews (Doody & Noonan, 2013), with artisan women participating in their sustainable livelihood via creating handicrafts and developing sustainable tourism planning.

The research was carried out in a specific location noted for its handicrafts and sustainable tourism practices: Kashan, Iran. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify individuals who satisfied the following criteria: women artisans active in handicrafts, aged 18 and up, and willing to participate in the study. The most crucial

aspect of the theme examination is accurately characterizing the interview. The data utilized audio and visual recordings that the researcher transcribed. The main goal was to decrease the amount of inaccurate data by taking into account each respondent's explanation of faithfulness. These tools were used to look at the basic socioeconomic characteristics of the identified participants in the study region.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

This research is beneficial because it demonstrates how crucial it is to the livelihoods of artisan women, their livelihood and empowerment, and the development of sustainable tourism in the area (Kashan in Iran) as a cultural economy-based and heritage tourist destination. Therefore, this research supports the growing requirement for protection for women in the artistic field and entrepreneurial sectors as long as tourism develops globally.

This part covers the introduction to chapter one, while chapter two explores the literature review of our variables, theory, and relevant background research. The processes of Methodology for collecting data and discovery are covered in depth in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, we expand on our findings before diving into the discussion and implications of this research based on the analysis of thematic data that speaks about them in Chapter 5. Finally, the conclusion of our study is provided in the last section of Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 The Intricacies of Sustainable Tourism**

The flexibility of those who participate in adapting to various cultural contexts is essential for transformational change in dynamic systems like tourism. The capacity of a community to evolve determines its continuity and survival; hence, it is important to carefully review the fundamental principles that guide social structures, methodologies, and human behavior (Mihalic, 2016). Anthropologists have long understood that sociocultural contexts and conditions influence how beliefs, standards, and procedures develop. To successfully manage their unique zones and conditions, humans establish a wide variety of communities and civilizations (Budeanu et al., 2016).

The study of tourism, with its intricate framework and dynamical phenomena, calls for a systems viewpoint (Rezapouraghdam & Akhshik, 2021). Without acknowledging their extensive environment, the multifaceted concerns of sustainable development are unable to be solved, and an organized strategy is required for fixing sustainability difficulties in a complex environment (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2022). The theoretical framework of sustainability is a powerful concept (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2019). To achieve sustainability, it is crucial to factor in the demands of all stakeholders (inner as well as external) while evaluating options (Karatepe et al., 2020).

Sustainable tourism requires the behavior, standards, procedures, and values of individuals. On the one hand, tourism actions have developed as tourists have learned how to be hosts. Many of them want to have enjoyable encounters and regard their hostesses with courtesy (Mihalic, 2016; Ooi, 2005).

Whereas indigenous people and other stakeholders may work together to create a tightly connected system. This system will place special emphasis on indigenous people (Borne, 2013). Tourists shouldn't force themselves on localized cultures and societies. The contention that a host society is able to endure untouched by tourism in the same direction is untenable. Tourism contributes to the social and cultural evolution of a place of attraction (Budeanu et al., 2016). On the other side, these include indigenous and natural resources that have historically been essential to the survival of a community and must be safeguarded if the community is to achieve sustainability (Andereck et al., 2005; Luo et al., 2015).

Sustainability in this context is defined as the protection of the environment and cultural, social, and physical assets, whereas competitiveness focuses on efficient and financially viable competition (B´echerel, 2001). Based on Persson-Fischer and Liu (2021), governments' sustainable tourism policies included monetary assistance for the tourism industry, the development of local tourism, expanded marketing campaigns, and increased collaboration between governments. Tourism is going to certainly generate employment and also help achieve lengthy financial growth and poverty reduction by more evenly spreading socioeconomic benefits across the community (Vanegas Sr. & Croes, 2007).

Sustainable development means preserving assets and providing long-term oversight. The tourism industry's commitment to sustainable growth has increased strongly. Besides, it improves the local economy by increasing the ability to purchase at all levels of society. Tourism-based revitalization focuses predominantly on the community's creation of scenery by incorporating "tourism, industry, and community organizing," which in turn empowers local residents and therefore promotes strengthening capacities (Butler, 2017).

Consequently, tourism has frequently been portrayed as a "savior," particularly for rural populations (Khan et al., 2020). Multiple researchers (Campbell, 2002; Forstner, 2004; Vaughan, 2000), have regarded tourism as a viable means to provide more revenue for populations whose traditional occupations are threatened by conservation. For tourism to be effective and sustainable, plans must be put in place to guarantee that tourists have a positive experience, that businesses succeed, that locals reap the benefits of tourism, and that the environment is protected and improved.

As previously indicated, one of the most crucial aspects of sustainable tourism is its direct influence on the conservation of cultural heritage and cultural tourism destinations. In the following section, we will examine the connection between these two main keywords.

## **2.2 Cultural Tourism**

The synergistic narration centers on two major points. First, tourism and heritage both stand to gain from one another, and second, the tourist industry has a favorable impact on historic preservation and enhancement. The purpose of the development of sustainable tourism is to enhance tourism and benefit host areas in a way that is both

environmentally and culturally responsible. Due to the fact that heritages are seen as mediators between current, previous, and future generations, cultural discourse via tourism may be advantageous for both educational and wellness-related fields (Davallon, 2006).

The "World Heritage Convention" divides humanity's traditional assets into two separate classifications: heritage of culture and natural resources (Maldonado-Erazo et al., 2021). Cultural tourism consists of tangible and intangible heritage, modern culture, and the arts and crafts sector (Abouelmagd, 2023). For over a decade, cultural initiatives have played an increasingly important role in the marketing and growth of numerous popular attractions for tourists (Kim et al., 2007). In fact, to stay competitive in the tourist industry, places are increasingly using creative approaches (Adamo et al., 2019).

Offering for purchase local services and products associated with the heritage and culture of a particular tourism destination assists the national financial system and enhances the quality of life of the local population. Heritage preservation operations attract an increasing number of tourists, raise revenue, generate employment opportunities, and enhance the exporting of antiquities and handicrafts, as well as urging local and foreign financing of those regions (Grefe, 2004).

Tourism culture may be understood as an emerging culture formed when host and visitor cultures collide at a destination. This culture, in turn, shapes and is influenced by the local tourism environment (Canavan, 2016). Furthermore, one of the fastest-growing subsets of the tourism industry is cultural tourism, in which visitors engage in hands-on cultural activities in their destination cities (Abouelmagd, 2023).

Numerous types of culture, such as structures, heritage, and brands, have a role in cultural innovation and tourism, which originate from the quest for invention in cultural sectors (Coblence & Sabatier, 2014). It's an effective strategy for building tourism destinations and creating unique content (Gardiner & Scott, 2018).

According to Jafari, who makes reference to both tourist and local cultures, both of them should be researched in connection with residual culture in order to understand why visitors from other cultures act in different ways (Jafari, 1987). For a place to continue to attract tourists interested in seeing its cultural history, it is crucial that this history be preserved for future generations (Carlisle et al., 2013).

In the research of Hakim et al. (2021), significant tourist destinations rely heavily on the presence and variety of cultural and natural heritage sites because of the substantial economic advantages they provide to host towns and, by extension, the quality of life for locals in these regions. By means of the creation of revenue, public awareness, and policy changes, these places have the potential to positively impact local economies (Nosheen et al., 2021).

A significant component of intangible cultural heritage that represents history and may preserve historical values (Ona & Solis, 2017). In tourism and hospitality contexts, artifacts (such as handicrafts) that blend with the environment are included (Rosenfeld, 2008). Because it is a metaphysical or moral heritage, the cultural tradition that is intangible is a piece of the collective and human consciousness that should be recorded and preserved to prevent loss. If it is not safeguarded, it will eventually be lost and acquire its unique characteristics and the concept of identity.

Handicrafts are a key element of the local culture and reflect the values of the people who make them (Nagarguna, 2015; Ona & Solis, 2017). Therefore, handicrafts must meet certain criteria in order to be considered genuine. These criteria include novelty, creativity, craftsmanship (handmade), beauty, function, and utilization, cultural and historic authenticity, artisans, materials sourced locally, and product identity (Soukhathammavong & Park, 2018).

### **2.3 Handicrafts and Art Tourism**

Cultural tourism, which has been developing significantly since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Richards, 2019), is where the connections between the artistic and creative sectors and tourism really take root. Once oriented mostly on material objects, cultural tourism has evolved into a journey in which tourists actively participate in the creation of the destination's unique identity. In today's world, travelers are looking for enduring memories rather than generic attractions (II & Gilmore, 1998).

The intangible cultural heritage of a people or a region serves as a powerful foundation for innovation and progress. Indeed, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, or normative *influences*, lists certain intangible cultural heritages as innovative areas, such as handicrafts, folklore art, or gastronomy. World Tourism Day 2011's theme of "Tourism-Linking Cultures" further brought attention to their significance in the industry, and this was followed by the first UNWTO Study on Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNWTO, 2021).

Using examples like "handicrafts and creative works that illustrate historical craftsmanship," intangible cultural heritage may help the local community by also incorporating them. Their view of the place will be grounded in its cultural

characteristics according to their participation in dynamic or immersive experiences, much like a "mental souvenir" (Krajnovic & Gortan-Carlin, 2007). Art tourism should concentrate on tourists traveling to a location, especially for its galleries and museums, exploring or participating in art events, and producing art in a particular location. Cultural tourism is very broad because it involves a great deal that occurs in a destination (cuisine, architectural landmarks, operations, etc.) and is characterized by the destination's heritage (Slak Valek, 2021).

The employment of art and artists to promote prosperity and revitalize communities is another kind of "art tourism" that merits particular consideration. Gentrification is associated with art tourism even if it has no specific relationship to the reasons why visitors travel (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015).

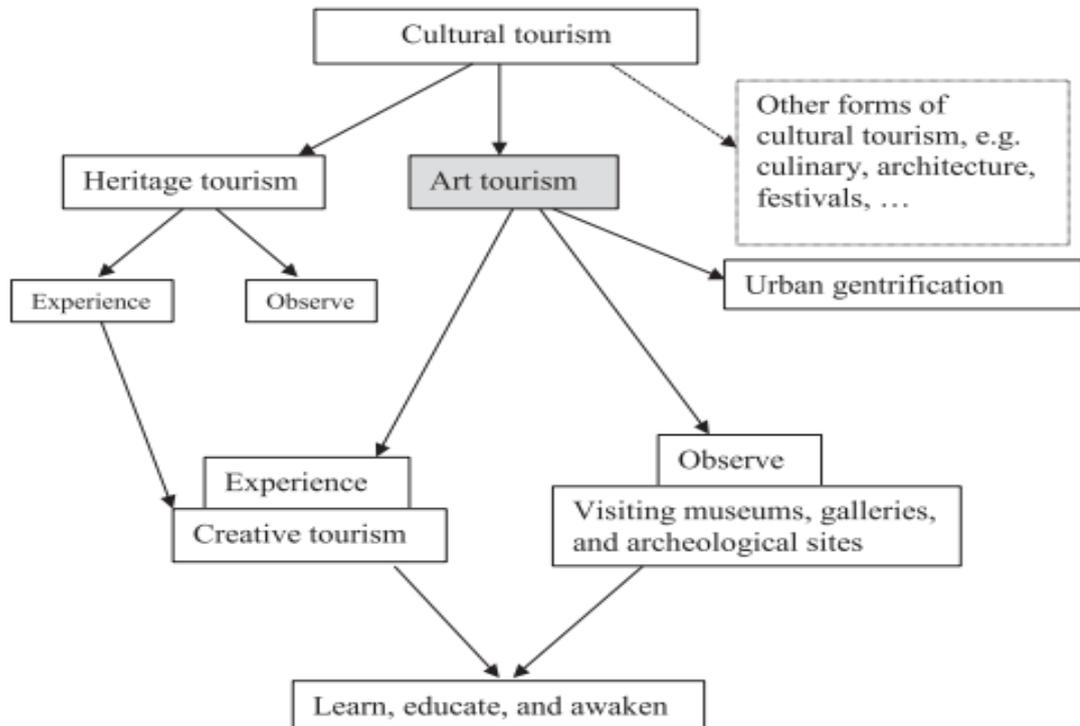


Figure 1: Positioning of art tourism. (Slak Valek, 2021)

Art tourism must include creative tourism (like producing handicrafts) if this learning experience is considered art. A significant number of publications on souvenirs in the tourism industry discuss the reasons behind the way handicrafts and local art were commercialized for the tourist market (Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Indigenous handicrafts, regional events, and the traditional methods of life have all been addressed in relation to the concept of authenticity.

Based on the Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology (1998), handicraft provides less fortunate individuals with both the capacity and willingness to develop their abilities through work experience, education, and coaching as a pathway into the economy. To develop an innovative value system and thereby increase competition, it is necessary to coordinate the growing talents and knowledge of artists and designers with the handicraft industries. It emphasizes the necessity of creativity for the long-

term survival and sustainability of ancient handicrafts from the standpoint of protecting heritage and conventional wisdom (Scott, 2022).

Despite the fact that handmade products are of cultural and financial worth to many low-income families, the majority of government politicians continue to overlook them. Governments as well as non-governmental organizations do not provide adequate funding to the industries. As a consequence, the expected value of handicrafts for sustainable livelihoods and alleviating poverty is not entirely utilized (Pereira et al., 2006). As a field dependent upon resources and an opportunity to produce jobs (Abisuga & Fillis, 2016), handmade is a thriving product whose sustainable development merits examination of the crucial role that inventiveness plays in ensuring its viability.

While advanced technological and innovative organizational practices increase the rivalry of the handicraft industry by decreasing expenses for manufacturing, the creation of novel merchandise is bound to generate high earnings and a sustainable way of life for the artisan. Makhitha (2016), gave significant credit to innovation and the creation of creative handmade crafts as a tactic for breaking into new marketplaces and boosting renown. Innovation and originality must be prioritized as the top targets throughout the whole process of product creation.

Due to the fact that there are so many different kinds of handcrafted items, creators need to be aware of the new procedures, assets, markets, and developments that affect the diverse merchandise they make. The gradual nature of handicraft developments can be described as the continual and insignificant improvement of merchandise

currently available, business devices, and assembly techniques in order to integrate value (Fagerberg, 2005).

Many innovation investigations aim to characterize radical, revolutionary advances in technological fields, so incremental progress is rarely the subject of research. Based on UNDP and UNESCO (2013), the handmade product segment is a developing and creative market that is dominated by economies that are developing.

Handicraft manufacturing uses global resources and tools. A country's handicrafts are also shaped by its natural assets, machinery, ingenuity, and experiences. The development of products needs to prioritize invention and originality. Handicraft makers must comprehend their items due to their diversity, according to Makhitha (2016), and observe how raw supplies and technological improvements impact numerous products. Additionally, Abisuga & Fillis (2016), describe a number of broad categories into which innovations in making crafts may be placed, mostly according to the resources, structure, and method employed.

## **2.4 Cultural Economy**

The phenomenon known as the "new cultural economy," which refers to the practice of capitalizing on the revenue-generating power of culture in the context of worldwide commerce and information technology (Collins & Cunningham, 2017; Gibson & Klocker, 2005; Pratt, 2005). An examination of a cultural economy requires considering the intricate interactions throughout historically stratified social connections that influence perceptions of commercialization, information, and tourism worldwide and contemporary interactions between and inside places. Ray implies this by stating that "we require to understand more concerning the particular connections

between location, history, and the continual procedure of symbolism construction" (Ray, 2002a).

Cultural social interactions supply players in the present with an awareness of location (maybe even a "love of place") and persistence (Kneafsey, 2001). Increasing and maintaining significance to livelihoods and local economies, as Marsden (2003), mentioned, all while extending the region's financial transaction base. These issues have served as an obstacle in the process of identifying "local knowledges" that involve language and historical capital as conceivable assets that might be leveraged inside a culture economy. Because the attitude is that we need to be "grateful of a cultural identity, which is an essential value" (Eshete, 1994), and because Ray's idea of a culture economy gives an essential structure for understanding the mechanisms of commodification that are taking place in a particular locale or region (Ray, 2002b), Adapt Ray's (2002a), culture economy concept to an actual study of local tourist commodification and propose that the location identity's disputed character might help us comprehend culture economies.

This requires identifying locales' past and modern social connections. This emphasis on social interactions should assist us in recognizing what Ray (2002b), calls the "creative tension" among localized and extra-local factors while preventing the temptation to establish global/local and endogenous/exogenous oppositions. Furthermore, when artists in economically depressed rural areas create art out of financial necessity rather than choice, the artist's expertise is less important to buyers or to the success of regional economic development tactics (Bunting & Mitchell, 2008).

Urry's (2002), advice on examining the "complex linkages between international and regional processes" helps explain "the specific manners by which a region's cultural and historical heritage have been rendered accessible and converted into an asset of regional social and economic growth within a worldwide expanding economy and the community" In the same manner, it is important to emphasize the potential of the performing arts to supply sustainability to rural areas and societies that are undergoing local reorganization and transformation. This is accomplished by the crafts initiating fresh economic endeavors linked to the creation of art, in addition to cultural and social pursuits as a component of community-engaged art that improve local cultural and social capital.

Ultimately, this allows rural positions and organizations to remain viable in the face of indigenous transformation and evolution (Anwar McHenry, 2011; Duxbury & Campbell, 2011). Along with the local destination, it should be noted that cities and towns typically have an extended tradition of financial, socio-cultural, and commercial or capitalist influence, leaving an inheritance of historic structures and urban environments or townscapes. Cities and towns are "dense clusters of residents and financial operations," according to Scott & Storper (2014), with complex monetary, socio-cultural, and political legacies. Cities are "multifaceted tangible, social, and political spaces [s]" that attract visitors due to the "urban interaction of craft, technological advances, culture, and management" (Enright et al., 2018).

The observations presented above point to the possibility that art can make a contribution to cultural economic development, but only if this contribution is viewed through the lens of a more comprehensive concept of sustainability—an understanding that additionally takes into consideration the artists' means of subsistence, which

involves recognizing and maintaining their livelihoods while supplying them with the opportunity to obtain a certain quality of life in the local community in the context of its development opinions and tactics (Mahon et al., 2018).

In further developments, Bourdieu & Ferguson (1999), argue that "profits of position" argue that visitors' economic capacity for visiting the area may provide them with symbolic prestige or capital. Cultural purchasing may be a socio-economic asset (Blomley, 1997).

## **2.5 Sustainable Livelihood and Empowering for Artisan Women**

Sustainable livelihoods cover all aspects of poverty, including joblessness, monetary obstacles, and more. It also outlines the links between poverty's qualities (manifestations, reasons) and improving productivity in operations. Thus, the sustainable livelihood concept helps impoverished people attain the sustainable goals they specify (Sustainable Livelihoods Support Office, 1999).

The idea of Sustainable Livelihood will be utilized to analyze variables that improve craftsmen's utilization of livelihood opportunities and capital and their relationships. This framework might be used to determine the extent to which handicraft product development will allow business owners in handicraft small firms to obtain livelihood resources, resulting in sustained revenue and industrial expansion. The sustainable livelihood paradigm was favored because it put people at the center of development (Carney, 1998).

This study investigates how handmade artisans employ physical properties, natural assets, and human, financial, and social capital to grow their firm, emphasizing the relevance of this sustainable lifestyle paradigm. This research uses resources from

nature to make handicrafts. Regional crafts producers use expertise, ingenuity, and local abilities (known as human Capital) instead of educational institutions. Thus, their business requires Physical Capital like transportation, energy, and roads. Handmade producers often get new company cash (Financial Capital) through their pension's sale of private wealth. Financial assistance from the government or family that provides Social Capital supports business owners.

The Sustainable Livelihood paradigm shows that creating a diverse property strategy is the first step toward a livelihood (Ansell et al., 2016). To make an income, people must be inventive with their financial holdings. Both the public and private sectors establish and carry out rules and regulations, and processes—laws, rules, organizations, and culture—determine how constructions and individuals communicate and perform their duties (Solesbury, 2003).

Now, study the linkage between sustainable livelihood development by employing the sustainable tourism concept and the empowerment and capacity of artisan women to support their cost of living and quality of life, which we have to explore in five parts:

1. Innovation's ability to support sustainable livelihoods depends on its achievement and capacity to adapt to market developments (United Nations & United Nations, 2008).
2. The availability of livelihood assets affects creativity and who benefits from it; therefore, outside involvement affects the creativity system and livelihood results via its detrimental effect on livelihood providers (Gottret, 2007).
3. consumption of product requirements and market features (Uzgoren & Guney, 2012).

4. Crafts creation may help crafters earn more and reach higher-value markets, but trading laws and values of culture are now problematic to get.
5. Interactions between artisans and government, non-government, and commercial organizations do not promote invention along with capacity development (Abisuga & Sirayi, 2018). Government assistance, such as the granting of support for financing, equipment, and essential components, and the educational and production/marketing environment, is an essential element in the formation and expansion of enterprises (Begley et al., 2005).

Chambers & Conway (1992), define a livelihood as sustainable if it can adapt to changing circumstances and produce beneficial impacts on economic potential for future generations at various temporal and spatial scales. Tourism livelihood sustainability involves human time and space interactions. Communities in the region rebuild their livelihood assets to keep them sustainable while tourism becomes an innovative livelihood alternative (Rongna & Sun, 2022).

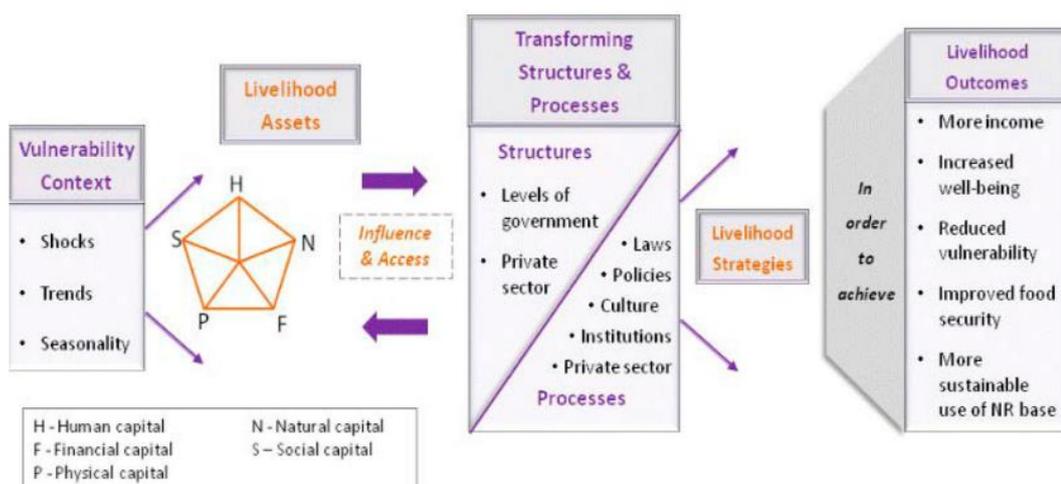


Figure 2: The sustainable livelihoods framework, DFID (1999)  
 Source: Solesbury, 2003

It seems that artists seek to keep a low profile when it comes to their art production and enjoy selling their unique works to visitors. This demonstrates a lack of engagement in one's own self-promotion and advertising. According to Bandinelli (2019), social capital is based not only on output but additionally on interaction and leadership of the identity. It seems that artists have a strong understanding of production but little knowledge of interpersonal relations and administration. On the other side, the artists' tendency toward humility might result in their passing up possibilities. There is a potential for visitors, such as art collectors, to provide a market for authentic artwork. Despite this, most artists are under the impression that their creations can only find a market as "small art" or as souvenirs on huge scales.

According to Aghazamani & Hunt (2017), "A complex, context-specific, and dynamic procedure enabling humanity, either personally or collectively, an increased authority, autonomy, and potential to enhance their quality of life as an outcome of involvement with the concept of tourism,". In politics, psychologically, culturally, and financially (Scheyvens, 1999). Besides, women's empowerment involves delicate negotiations with males and teaching their own kids about gender imbalances in a manner that respects local traditions and enables them to achieve their aspirations (Afshar, 1998). Additionally, empowerment has been shown to have positive psychological effects, as evidenced by people taking greater pride in their heritage, being more open to learning and sharing what they are aware of with tourists, and having higher levels of self-esteem and confidence (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Strzelecka et al., 2016).

Women in the tourism industry said that feeling empowered increases their sense of agency, innovation, and connectivity. Research by Vosoughi and Ghasemi (2015), and Amiri (2011), all agree with this statement. Regular contact with domestic and foreign

travelers probably exposed women to varied cultural traditions, bolstering their sense of self-confidence. Women's capacity to overcome obstacles they faced in the tourism industry is an example of creative problem solving. They've become more respected in Kashan society as a result of their entrepreneurial success and widespread acclaim. The concept of an empowered Iranian woman is a woman who does not give in to traditional, patriarchal, and religious attitudes and actions that significantly restrict her agency; who makes an effort to obtain information regarding whatever is of passion to her; and who uses her capabilities to cultivate her talents, achieve her targets, and leave the family home (Moustakas, 1994; Povey, 2016).

## Chapter 3

### STUDY AREA

This chapter examines study area and situations, research method, research instrument, data collecting and its sampling strategy, and concludes with a discussion on data analysis in qualitative research.

#### 3.1 Study Setting

This research was conducted in the field of handicrafts in the city of Kashan, which is considered one of the most popular and attractive places for tourists in Iran due to its location as a link between Tehran, the present capital of Iran, and Isfahan, the capital of Iran in the 16th century. The city is located at 33°59', East and 51°27', North and marks the transition from mountainous to desert terrain. Kashan, formerly known as Qashan, Cassan, and romanized as Kāshān (Adamec, 1976). According to the 2006 census, there are “67,464”, dwellings with a total population of “248,789”. Qom lies to the north, Aran va Bidgol, the desert, and Salt Lake to the east, Isfahan to the south, and Ghamsar and the Karkas Mountains to the far west. The rivers that flow from the mountains into the arid desert are small and ephemeral. The underground channels are mostly used for agriculture, and the water is somewhat salty. There are also a number of rivers, with the Fin water source being the best known (Iranicaonline.org).

Since this study is one of the few of its kind that focuses on Kashan and its current tourist conditions, we take a quick visual look at some of the most interesting attractions in the tourism industry of this Iranian city.

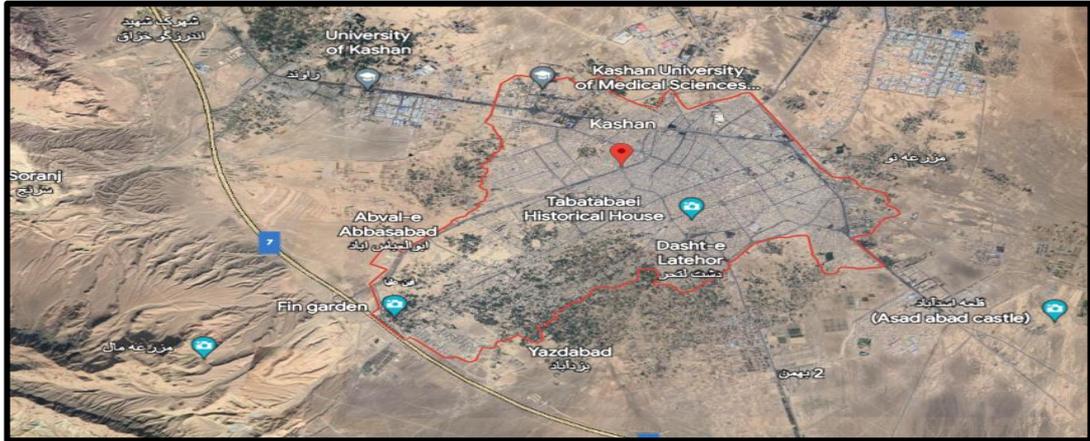


Figure 3: Kashan site and drone perspective (2D) of case investigation  
Source: Google Earth



Figure 4: Kashan site and drone perspective (3D) of case investigation  
Source: Google Earth

Kashan offers several attractions. Fin Garden is a 300-year-old exquisite garden west of Kashan at the end of Amir Kabir Road (Fin highway). The Fin Garden has two significant architectural components: a bath and a museum. The museum houses 3,000-year-old tools. Amir Kabir, a high-ranking governor of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (Shah of Iran), killed 200 years earlier in the bathroom of Fin Garden and is now a sign of Kashan.



Figure 5: Fin Garden  
Source: kentaltravel.com, 2023



Figure 6: Fin Garden's Museum  
Source: karnaval.ir, 2023



Figure 7: Killing Amir Kabir in Fin Garden's Bathroom  
Source: jazebeha.com, 2023

Tourists can explore the old Tape Sialk Ziggurat of Amir Kabir Street. The Silk Hills are one of the largest and oldest significant historical sites in Iran and the world, containing evidence of the development of human civilization from about 8000 years ago (from the Neolithic to the Median period). The northern mound (small silk) is five hectares in size, while the southern mound is eight hectares in size. Among the greatest civilizations of Silk are the first societies and residences, local fauna and flora, pottery and metal furnaces, and calligraphy. Based on their discoveries and investigations, archaeologists categorized the artifacts discovered on Silk Hill into six historical periods, from the Archaic period to the present (Berberian et al., 2012, Sialk.ir).



Figure 8: Sialk Hills  
Source: Sialk.ir, 2023

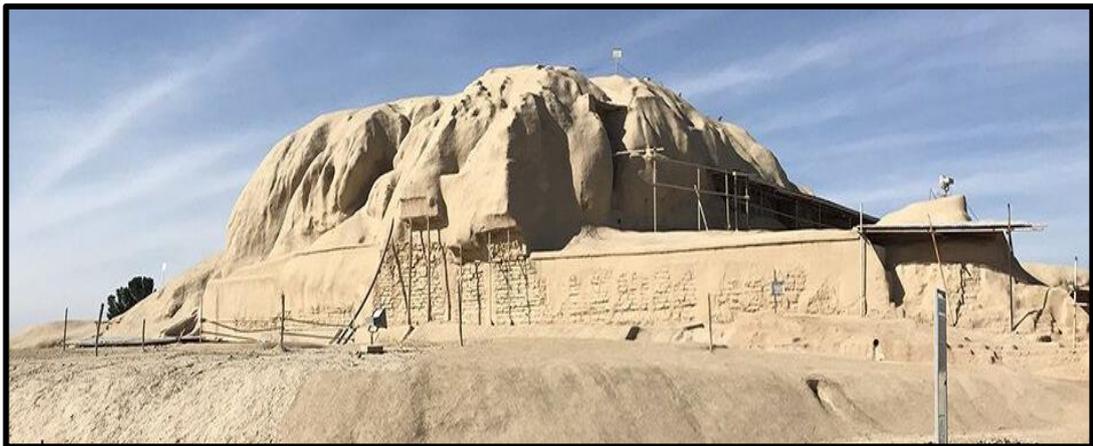


Figure 9: Sialk Hills  
Source: Sialk.ir, 2023

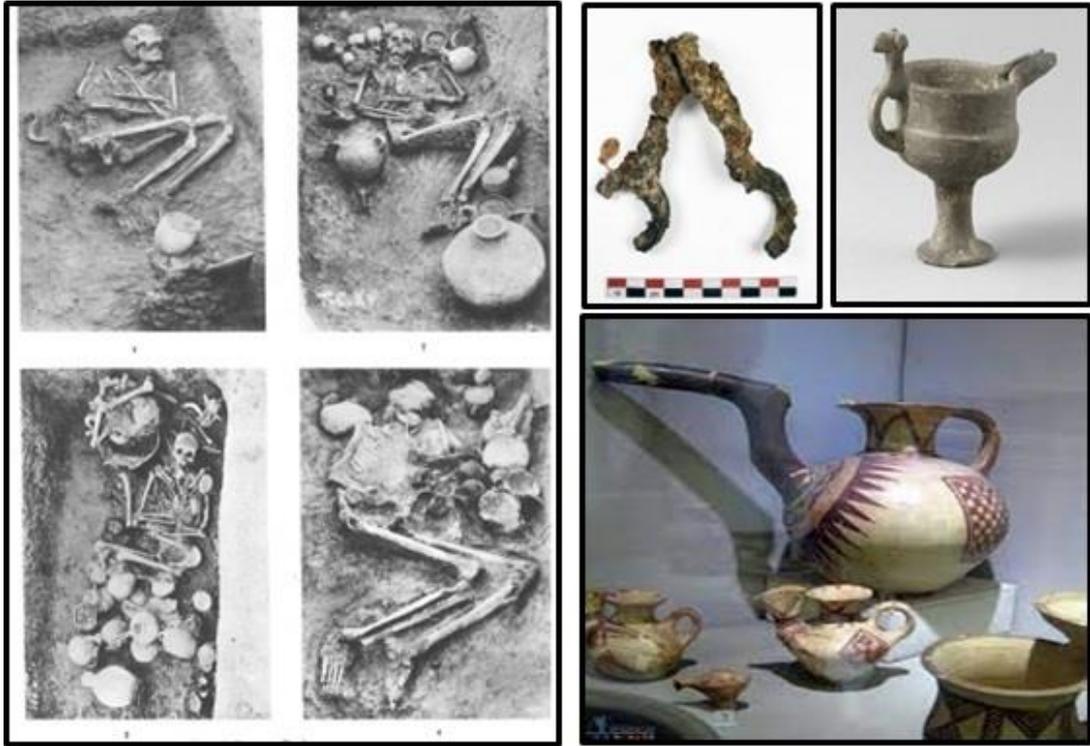


Figure 10,11,12,13: Sialk Hills Museum  
 Source: Sialk.ir, 2023

Alavi Street in Soltan Mir Ahmad has old residential houses. There are many 300 years old houses in this neighborhood.



Figure 14,15: Historical Houses  
 Source: gigaplaces.com, surinexport.com, 2023

In Figure 16, the red color shows Ghaleh Jalali, another ancient structure on the southern border of the city of Kashan.

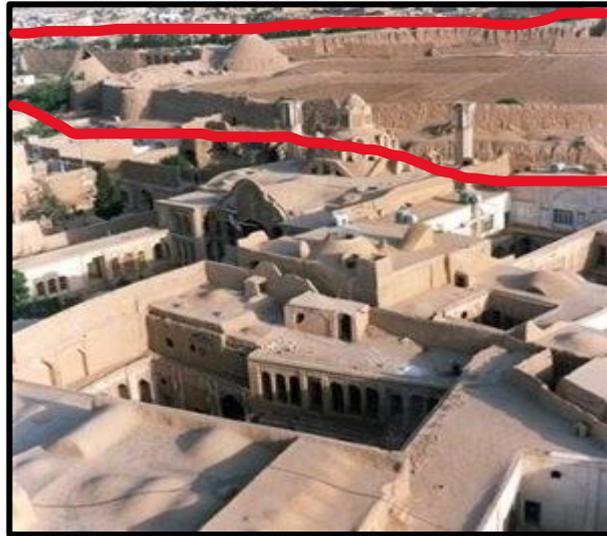


Figure 16: Ghaleh Jalali  
Source: hamgardi.com, 2023

The traditional bazaar of Kashan, built during the Qajar era and after the devastating earthquake that shook the city, is another popular tourist attraction in Kashan.

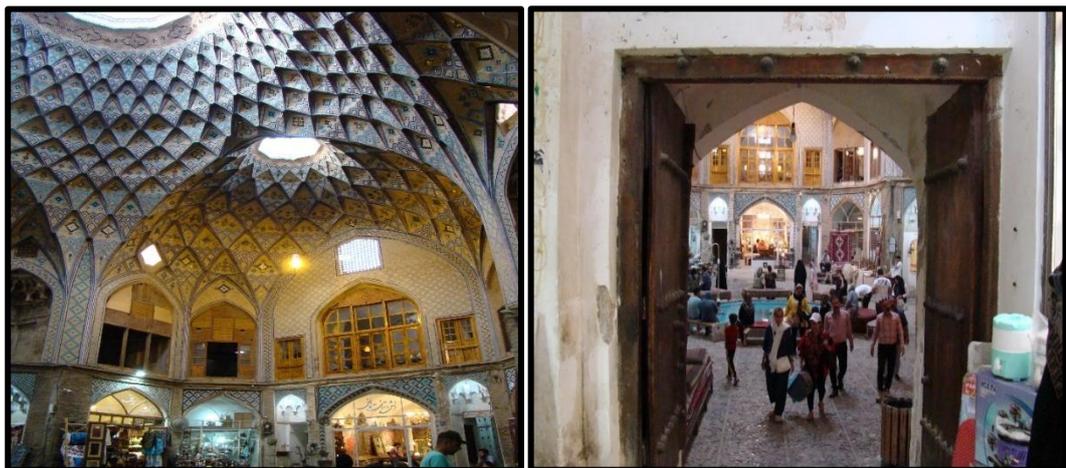


Figure 17,18: Traditional Bazaar in Kashan  
Source: Author

Behind Fin Garden and the Tehran-Isfahan Highway rise the Karkas Mountains. Kashan's many attractions, including Abyaneh and Qamsar, draw tourists at all times of the year. The artificial cave of Niasar and the fireplace building are historic. Kashan is known for its handicrafts such as famous Sialk Hills pottery, carpet weaving, silk and textile weaving such as Zaribafi, Makhmalbefi, Sha'rbafi and rose gardens and their rose water. The locals take advantage of this to attract tourists during the rose blooming season (April–June) and hold festivals and events and sell all the unique handmade products during this time in addition to the gardens and at festivals. In addition, Kashan mines, natural stone and copper, which are used to produce a variety of handicrafts and raw materials for the industry.



Figure 19,20: Carpet weaving  
Source: Author



Figure 21: Textile Weaving  
Source: Author

## 3.2 Methodology

The qualitative and the quantitative technique are two primary frameworks in the research investigations. We begin by defining these techniques and explaining why we settled on the one we did for this research.

Quantitative prepared methods create value numbers and quantitatively describe the future. While analytical techniques are able to be discovered for basic models, mathematical frameworks are employed for producing numerical models in a large number of instances (Jahel et al., 2023). Completely quantitative methods are mostly about machine learning techniques that predict reaction variables using measures that qualify relationships about a data entry set (Chérel et al., 2015; Kwakkel et al., 2013). The authors also desire to quantify future outcomes to minimize uncertainty (Haegeman et al., 2013). Numerous studies on the tourism sector have used quantitative techniques, including those by Abubakar et al. (2021), Rezapouraghdam et al. (2018), and Karatepe et al. (2021).

Qualitative anticipatory approaches predict with no numbers. They frequently depict the future in tales, illustrations, or images (Jahel et al., 2023). Planning scenarios (Godet, 1832), visioning (Helm, 2009), back casting (Quist & Vergragt, 2006), direct layered evaluation, the prediction tool, and the futures triangular (Inayatullah, 2008), are common techniques. Qualitatively planned approaches encourage imaginative thinking, innovation, and mutually beneficial disciplinary integration (Jahel et al., 2023). A qualitative technique is a systematic scientific investigation that builds a comprehensive, narrative description to help researchers understand a social or cultural phenomena (Astalin, 2013). In the field of tourism, a significant amount of research

uses qualitative methodologies like Behravesht et al. (2018), and Rezapouraghdam et al. (2022).

In this research, data collection, analysis, and design were planned using a qualitative methodology. The primary sources and data collection method was key informant interviews including the researcher's own observations. The utilization of recording interviews and visual aids such as photography, may facilitate careful observation of respondents.

### **3.3 Research instrument**

According to Bernard et al., (1988), the use of a semi-structured interview is particularly beneficial when there is a singular chance to engage with a subject for collecting data in the field. The main strategy employed to obtain data from this site is to conduct semi-structured interviews with selected participants, supplemented by a field study and the collection of visual records by the researcher.

The semi-structured interview guide is a reliable and consistent source of qualitative data that provides interviewers with well-defined instructions. Understanding the issue at hand effectively is crucial for coming up with relevant semi-structured interviews to guide the study, it is common practice for researchers with operations such as observation, conducting interviews informally, and unstructured conversations (e.g., Akhshik et al., 2022; Alipour et al., 2021; Rezapouraghdam et al., 2018).

### **3.4 Method of data collection**

In accordance with the study's critical factors, we used the purposive sampling technique in our data collection method. The non-probability sampling method recognized as "purposive sampling" is implemented when the scholar chooses what

stuff to involve in the sample (Black, 2009). This method yields a better sample that is statistically identical to the whole population being studied with few missing data points (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2018).

### 3.4.1 Sample and Procedures

In order to find the best group, the researcher visited the handicrafts workshop of the administrator of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism in Kashan and obtained from them the name and address of the workshops of women artisans. Finally, selected a perfect group of 30 people who are residents in Kashan and produce various local handicrafts. These women were directly related to the tourism industry and had personal contact with tourists.

On this basis, Table 1 shows the circumstances of the candidates chosen for the interview. The interviews arranged between 30 and 60 minutes, and the questions were developed based on the capitals of sustainable livelihood development.

Table 1: The Circumstances of The Candidates Chosen for The Interview

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Proficiency</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Head of Household</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>
<b>AI1</b>	Pottery	35	yes	no	Private Diploma
<b>AI2</b>	Embroidery	42	yes	no	Master in Art
<b>AI3</b>	Pottery	36	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI4</b>	Pottery	36	yes	no	Master in Art
<b>AI5</b>	Wooden Arts	34	yes	no	Bachelor in Art
<b>AI6</b>	Painting & Calligraphy	32	yes	no	Bachelor
<b>AI7</b>	Pottery	46	yes	no	Private Diploma
<b>AI8</b>	Textile Weaving (sha'rbaaf_Weaver)	47	yes	yes	Bachelor

<b>AI9</b>	Wooden Arts & Embroidered leather	38	no	yes	Bachelor
<b>AI10</b>	Textile weaving (sha'rbaaf_Weaver)	36	no	yes	Bachelor in tourism
<b>AI11</b>	Wooden Arts (Mosaics)	39	yes	no	Bachelor
<b>AI12</b>	Pottery	27	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI13</b>	Enamels on Metals	33	yes	no	Bachelor
<b>AI14</b>	Fabric & Garment Design	43	yes	no	Master in Art
<b>AI15</b>	Pottery	37	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI16</b>	Miniatures	46	yes	no	Master in Art
<b>AI17</b>	Wooden Arts	42	no	yes	Private Diploma
<b>AI18</b>	Pottery	39	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI19</b>	Wooden Arts	47	yes	no	Private Diploma
<b>AI20</b>	Carpet Weaving	44	yes	no	Private Diploma
<b>AI21</b>	Puppet Making	43	yes	yes	Private Diploma
<b>AI22</b>	Puppet Making	39	no	yes	Private Diploma
<b>AI23</b>	Puppet Making	36	no	yes	Private Diploma
<b>AI24</b>	Puppet Making	41	yes	yes	Private Diploma
<b>AI25</b>	Braiding (Lacet)	42	yes	no	Private Diploma
<b>AI26</b>	Fabric & Garment Design	39	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI27</b>	Pottery	38	yes	no	Master in Art
<b>AI28</b>	Embroidered leather	43	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI29</b>	Pottery	29	no	yes	Master in Art
<b>AI30</b>	Wooden Arts	42	yes	no	Master in Art

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The processes for performing thematic analysis are generally the same across field of study. The main aspect of thematic analysis is the precise depiction of the interview's contents (Rezapouraghdam & Karatepe, 2020). Thematic analysis (TA) is a specialized methodological approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), that has significant prominence in the field of management research (Andriotis, 2010; King et al., 2016).

The first phase of this methodology included thoroughly reviewing and revisiting the data in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of its content, a crucial prerequisite for doing the preliminary observation phase (Rezapouraghdam & Karatepe, 2020). The determination of themes in advance of doing full analysis is a common practice in research. This is often done based on pragmatic concerns or theoretical concepts that provide guidance for the study (King et al., 2018).

The data analysis step, referred to as thematic analysis, entails the researcher's process of acquainting oneself with the data via the examination of transcriptions of photographs and audio recordings. The fundamental concept involved in this study was to carefully review and evaluate the explanations provided by each participant with the goal of enhancing the reliability of the data and minimizing any potential mistakes (Rezapouraghdam & Akhshik, 2021). Engage in a process of identifying themes within the data and then categorizing them into distinct groups. This approach is undertaken with the aim of enhancing the dependability and validity of the data (Rezapouraghdam & Karatepe, 2020).

Consequently, creating upon the basis of sustainable livelihood, our investigation initiated by identifying six predetermined themes (namely, perceived vulnerability,

perceived risk, perceived advantages, perceived obstacles, advantages to action, and modifying variables such as age, head of household and knowledge). These themes were subsequently utilized to construct our ultimate framework.

In this study, the author evaluates the targeted community of women artisans using the sustainable livelihood capital framework. This framework encompasses various dimensions, including Human Capital, Economic Capital, Natural Capital, Social Capital, and Physical Capital. The author selects relevant topics and generates questions based on these criteria. After conducting interviews and obtaining responses from the participants, the author transcribes the interviews verbatim, converting them from voice recordings to written format in a separate Word document. Each interviewee is assigned a unique code for identification purposes. During the subsequent stage, the author proceeded to print out the collected data and begin the analytical processes using the TA approach. In the end, researchers read and reread the word documents of responses several times. The primary findings of the investigation were categorized according to thematic elements. Finally, reaching their findings that will be presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter will discuss the findings gained from the questions formulated within the framework of sustainable livelihood capital. These questions were used in conducting 30 interviews with women artisans engaged in the production of handicrafts in Kashan city.

#### **4.1 The Findings of Sustainable livelihood Development Capitals**

As was already mentioned, the study focused on the particular demography of female artisans in the selected neighborhood. The evaluation was done within the framework for sustainable livelihood capital, covering several aspects including human capital, economic capital, natural capital, social capital, and physical capital.

##### **4.1.1 The Findings of Human Capital Factor**

The main topic of this interaction is the idea of "human capital," which is a term that is made up of three primary components in the context of sustainable livelihood development: knowledge, innovation, and indigenous skills. This coming together creates a key framework on which social and economic growth can move forward and stay stable.

At the heart of this study is an examination of a group of thirty individuals who all work in the craft production field. Within this group, there is a wide range of skill levels. 13 women have Master of Arts degrees, while the rest have at least one specific diploma in their fields. The broad range of educational achievements creates a

reservoir of intellectual and practical skills that makes it easy for them to keep learning and improving their skills. It is obvious that the artists and women in question are always trying to improve their skills, which is the most significant aspect. Each member follows a program of private lessons that have been carefully chosen to include modern techniques and practices. This shows not only how proficient they are at what they do, but also how committed they are to keeping up with the latest trends and innovations in their field.

Several of the interviewees who held a master's degree from the university additionally had a bachelor's degree in handicrafts from Kashan University, with some of them completing their master's degree due to their high academic standing in the bachelor's program at the University of Kashan. The interviewees, like AI3 and AI4, said that they continued in the major of Islamic art, Pottery and ceramics, or Research in Art. Furthermore, all of these individuals periodically, in accordance with their requirements, update their skills and techniques or acquire techniques that were not imparted to them at the university, as well as for their handicrafts. Since they typically attend private classes in Tehran, which is the capital of Iran and the city with the most advanced educational facilities.

On another note, interviewees who were only in high school, such as the interviewee AI22, learned several art fields that they employed to increase their skills to the highest level, which was puppet making. She has received private training from qualified professors, and to attend these sessions, she has always traveled to Tehran, where a large number of professors are engaged in research and instruction.

Most of the 27 women artisans agree with the practice of learning from traditional skilled craftsmen's personalities, in which experienced practitioners teach new artists ancient knowledge. This way of passing on information, which is called "indigenous arts" informally, shows how connection between generations is important to keeping old skills alive. Notable in this chain is the part played by female artists, who become the torchbearers of this heritage. They work hard to make sure that this valuable source of knowledge stays alive and speaks to future generations.



Figure 22: AI3 & AI4's pottery artworks  
Source: Author



Figure 23,24: AI22's Puppet Making  
Source: Author

Interviewee AI15 states that for this reason, she was interested in doing an internship with traditional skilled craftsmen, and from the beginning of her work and before establishing her workshop, she spent a year in a traditional workshop in addition to professional training at the university. Because she believes that many arts require training in the academic aspect, some techniques that may be even very subtle need a master craftsman who has years of practical experience who knows and can teach them.

Interviewee AI10 states that when I wanted to learn how to weave textile (sha´rbaaf fabric), at that time, apart from the few people who knew how to weave, I finally found a skilled traditional craftsman to teach me after months of insistence; the only one was the master craftsman of the Kashan Traditional Arts Center. He was around 80 years old, and now, unfortunately, he has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. In any case, if I had not learned these skills at the time, I would never have found another master craftsman to learn this very old art, especially for Kashan.



Figure 25,26: Textile Weaving, sha´rbaaf Fabric  
Source: Author

The third most important part of human capital is the way that up-to-date information, innovation, and native skills work together with each person's own creative ambition.

A striking agreement among the 24 participants backs up their efforts to combine their creative imagination with modern concepts and techniques in a way that works well together. The way they make use of regionally specific design elements strengthens this combination substantially more. Their hopes for making handicrafts are built on this carefully planned and managed union.

The interviewee AI5 is a cross-stitch artist who also incorporates wooden arts into her work. She is making some wooden bags that have cross-stitched decorations. These wooden bags are made with their own special creativity and traditional technique mixed with modern art, making them useful for daily use. All of the key components of human capital can be seen in the process of making these bags.



Figure 27,28: Wooden bags decorated with Cross-stitch art  
Source: Author

At the root of their mindset is the belief that making innovative and intriguing products is both a must and a long-term goal. Their commitment shows how much they care about keeping their craft alive and how much they want to make sure their cultural history lives on through their art. They produce their creative handicrafts through appropriation, a significant and productive labor strategy in art. In view of this capital's findings, the studied group deeply embodied human capital principles by combining

knowledge, creativity, and indigenous skills. This was shown by their unyielding commitment to excellence and cautious preservation of their cultural heritage. As an example of how to build a sustainable way of life, their story shows how custom and progress can work together for producing their handicrafts in their communities and the long-term preservation of cultural history and promote it in sustainable tourism development pathway.

#### **4.1.2 The Findings of Economic Capital Factor**

Only three people out of the entire community that we interviewed did not have any significant issues when it came to providing an initial investment to start their work. The rest of the artists had solved the problem of providing the initial funding to start their work with difficulty and in a variety of ways, including the following:

1. Providing through family members such as their father or spouse, or even borrowing loans from their family and relatives,
2. After creating and selling some of the handicrafts, they gradually invested further in equipment and raw materials with their earnings from the sales of the creations. At first, they only provided a small amount of revenue for the items that were prepared as essential for getting the workshop started.
3. Obtaining funding for their new handicraft company by using the funds they currently have or even by selling gold coins that they catch as gifts in their weddings and wedding rings, etc., in order to supply the necessary financial circumstances.
4. Providing initial capital by spending money from another career, such as the position of a teacher or the employment of a staff member who has a monthly salary and spends a significant portion of that income to provide basic necessities, while still meeting the shortfall through the first job.

Twenty-two respondents in the same context recognized the workshop's lengthy history but spoke concern about sustaining the quality of their work in the present financial situation. However, the constant commitment of these artists to their work acts as a motivating factor, allowing them to consistently use their passion and creativity into their work.

Furthermore, there is a persistent desire for Iran and its people's economic future to be more optimistic. This includes the goal of creating social and economic stability, providing the accessibility of basics like food, clothes, healthcare, and education, and promoting the population's general well-being. People are expected to have more freedom as conditions improve to explore their unique heritage and support regionally made products. The response rate, in conclusion, emphasizes the challenges that Iranian artists have as a consequence of financial constraints and international sanctions. The nation's projected brighter economic future and its unshakeable dedication to their crafts, however, combine to promote the long-term stability of the local creative culture.

#### **4.1.3 The Findings of Natural Capital Factor**

In line with this important capital that has real value, the main source of all crafts comes from a wide range of natural resources. The survival, presence, and continued production of these creative pursuits depend on how long it is possible to get to those natural assets and how easy it is to get to them. Using these ideas and the results of the in-depth talks with the female artists and craftswomen in the community, the 30 people came to a clear decision. They all agreed that natural resources are the basis of their handmade items and the way they build their crafts as a whole. But only a small number of these people—three to be exact—said that they had not had trouble getting

important raw materials that came from nature. They said for 7000 years, starting with the Sialk

civilization in Kashan and the millennia preceding it, a collection of pottery artworks has been in existence. On the other hand, most of them talked about times when they had to deal with the problem of being unreachable. As an example, under code AI29, there were times when a certain native stone that was needed to make pottery covers and was a part of both artistic and lead glazes was not available within Iran's borders. Even when it was available, it was sometimes asserted to be rare on purpose, and it could have been kept in stock so that the price would go up later, forcing people to buy it.



Figure 29,30,31: Code AI29's pottery artworks  
Source: Author

In the same way, speaker AI19, who makes rustic wooden artwork, talked about the problems they had to deal with. The vegetable oils they used to make their wooden products waterproof and last longer either had to be brought in from Turkey or they ran out of high-quality oils, which meant they had to wait longer to get more.



Figure 32,33: Code AI19's rustic wooden artworks  
Source: Author

At the same time, 27 people agreed that the earth and stone materials that are important for making pottery and clay handicrafts are likely to last forever. Also, leather will always be available as long as people continue to eat meat from cows, sheep, and even camels. By nature, leather can be made from their skin, and this is expected to be the case.

For example, interviewee code AI9 identified a specific concern about the use of leather from animals like deer, foxes, and even crocodiles that are raised in Iran, such as in the city of Qom and on Hengam Island in the Persian Gulf. This person made it clear that they would never use any of these types of leather to make a product. Instead, they only use leather that is made in the traditional way. Their dislike goes beyond the usual uses of meat and things made from it.



Figure 34,35: Code AI9's leather artworks

Source: Author

When dealing with soil, mineral stones, water, and other natural resources, it is essential to determine ways to use them in a manner that doesn't hurt the environment. We want to be sensitive with these resources and make absolutely certain that our future generations will be able to use them over time with as little damage as possible. This is particularly critical for making crafts based on perfect planning for sustainable tourism development that is beneficial for the environment. In this case, a group of 22 women artists said that they make their artwork in ways that are beneficial to the earth. And 27 people said they are committed to creating products with less waste and making absolutely certain any waste is converted to become useful again.

Here is an illustration: the participant in code AI26 who works with leather creates little products like key rings with the symbol of their workshop using even the smallest bits of leather. Small pieces of cloth are also used to make bags. They also create a product called "Forty Pieces," in which 40 little leather bits are joined to form an enormous fabric item. Then they use this to make leather rugs or bags.



Figure 36,37: Code AI26's leather artworks  
Source: Author

Regarding this, in accordance with Code AI12, pottery-specific artisans demonstrate amazing competence while creating skill out of waste clay and broken pots. These materials are used to create decorative items like mosaic panels and useful products like tabletops. With a focused effort to reduce waste production, great care is taken to make the most of the clay and other resources that are accessible.



Figure 38,39: Code AI12's pottery artworks  
Source: Author

#### 4.1.4 The Findings of Social Capital Factor

In the debate of social capital, a number of significant notions come into focus that have a substantial impact on the long-term sustainability of female artists' means of survival in the handicraft market. From this perspective, it's essential to emphasize

four key elements. The collaborative interaction among artisans working in this field is an especially vital component. This aspect is significant in many different ways. Such relationships allow the balancing of production limits via mutual support and the facilitation of customer introductions, in addition to encouraging enhanced empathy and collaboration within the artisan community. With regard to these aspects, the value of planning group activities and exhibits becomes clear, resulting in increased earnings and a more thorough awareness of external circumstances outside the artisan union.

These initiatives serve the desires of artists as a whole by filling the awareness gap, which leads to missed opportunities for increased income and quicker access to markets. In the account of interviewee AI8, who specializes in creating Sha'rbaaf textiles, this cooperative technique is shown. When a certain fabric type, like silk, is required but not accessible since there isn't a machine for silk weaving, AI8 accepts the order and sends it to a colleague artisan who is skilled in silk weaving. This strategy not only brings in money for the contributing artist, but it also eliminates fabric scarcity and guarantees client happiness.



Figure 40,41: Code AI8's Sha'rbaaf textile artworks  
Source: Author

The respondent AI28 emphasizes the value of her wide network of craftspeople in a similar manner. Collaborations between artists with various styles and commercial offers, as well as events featuring them, have been crucial. The collection of various pieces of art demonstrates the effectiveness of teamwork. This kind of interaction with other artists has also resulted in orders from several companies. Likewise, the creation of merged product bundles for festivals like Nowruz or International Women's Day exemplifies the teamwork attitude. These packages mix products made by numerous craftsmen to provide buyers with a wide variety of attractive options.



Figure 42,43: Code AI28's Leather artworks  
Source: Author

The existence of organized and formal creative networks, which include both governmental and non-governmental groups, is the second crucial variable in the discussion of social capital. All of the skilled artisans we spoke with a total of 30 people agreed that official government agencies had not given them significant or focused help aimed at improving their living circumstances. When it has been provided, this funding has been particularly selective, only helping a limited number of artists.

During the Rosewater Festival, which runs from April through June, artisans are given stalls at discounted rental rates under the supervision of the Kashan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization. The aforementioned stands are located in parts of the city that are noteworthy historically. The municipal government has also been active, but in a much smaller capacity. The story of an artist, code AI2 in the interview, who claimed to have received help only from the Cultural Heritage department, is noteworthy. This support included the free distribution of a group exhibit at international expos conducted in Tehran and Isfahan. Notably, there was no charge for using the exhibition space.



Figure 44,45: Code AI2's Mix leather and Carpet decorates design artworks  
Source: Author

Through several interviews, a single case of independent support was discovered. The owner of a historic home, who cleverly converted it into a boutique hotel, was the case's beneficiary. This old house's rooms were made available for rent, especially during the time when COVID-19-related bans were in effect. These facilities were made available to female handcraft producers at a very low cost. The experiences of respondent code AI1, who established her handcraft workshop within the constraints of a rental property, served as a further illustration of this.



Figure 46,47: Code A11's pottery artworks  
Source: Author

At the same time, 18 people said they had not gotten any help from any agencies or organizations. These two sisters, listed as AI23 and AI24, were Puppet-making experts. They were essential in the construction of a massive statue of Amir Kabir, which is today recognized as the symbol of Kashan. The sisters described how they tried to display the Amir Kabir's doll in Kashan's Fine Garden. Despite their efforts to reach out to various organizations, they encountered not only a lack of assistance but also clear directives prohibiting the doll's presentation at public events in Kashan. The sisters, who were female puppeteers, found societal hurdles that prevented them from participating in public engagements within Kashan's social scene. This reluctance was mostly linked to their gender.



Figure 48: AI23 & 24's Giant Amir Kabir doll  
Source: Author

The third important component of social capital in the context of dollmakers in Amir Kabir is the existence of social barriers. Due to things like gender-based conventions, these obstacles tend to be less strong in traditional and religious communities. Such civilizations may not give enough thought to working circumstances. Additionally, problems like the introduction of commercial competitors can lead to social barriers inside cooperative groupings.

It was found that the 22 female craftspeople experienced these difficulties often during the length of their careers. One participant, coded as AI16, emphasized that these difficulties weren't only gender-based. They lived and worked in a conventional culture that did not properly recognize their value as artists. The general lack of comprehension brought on by this disregard for their desires and objectives made the issues they were experiencing harder.

In the discussion of social capital, the last point is that broad social contact is the most important consideration. This element covers all the social ties that artists develop in

their surroundings, from families and friends to work environments, and goes beyond the sharing of connections and involvement within creative circles. The main question at issue is how these relationships amongst women artisans have enhanced market access for the sale of their handicrafts through community participation, helping to raise their quality of livelihood. All 30 participants agreed that, especially during the early phases of the workshop, the majority of our clients have been recommended to us through word-of-mouth and members of our local community.

#### **4.1.5 The findings of Physical Capital Factor**

Physical capital is an issue that involves a number of variables. These characteristics, which were previously described in the literature study, include things like having access to infrastructure, having high-quality raw materials accessible, and using contemporary technology.

In response to the questions designed to investigate the physical resources associated with infrastructure, it was discovered that 21 female artists indicated they do not have problems with accessing infrastructure. Additionally, they said that procuring raw materials is often not an issue if one has the financial resources. For instance, a person identified by the interview code AI13 commented: "I can obtain all the essential raw materials in the market, but despite that, I struggle to complete my assignment because of financial limitations. Due to my financial situation, I was able to get the required equipment, but the original equipment is still out of my price range. The problem is not a lack of infrastructures but rather a deficiency in economic capacity.



Figure 49,50,51: Code AI13's Enamels on metals artworks  
Source: Author

The accessibility of energy for electric furnaces and gas for gas furnaces inside ceramic factories are additional crucial physical factors. Due to budgetary constraints, several individuals have acknowledged the necessity of choosing tiny and insufficient workshop places. Domestic single-phase power is not enough to sustain furnaces, which results in excessive energy costs as well as a chance of furnace damage. Pottery-related AI7 respondent further explained: "We ran into problems with the pottery firing process. Gas kilns must run continuously during the night, which results in high gas expenses. Electric kilns need three-phase power, while residential areas only have access to single-phase power, which is unsuitable for their needs. A proper answer to this problem is still elusive, despite our best efforts.

The quality of the available raw materials is the subject of the next item, as was already indicated. There are two different ways to guarantee the quality of these materials, and 17 women artisans have agreed. The first entails asking our colleagues who run active workshops for advice and finding out where they get their high-quality raw materials from respondent AI6 claimed they struggle to get high-quality raw materials and colors for painting on different surfaces. Her students pay a lot, yet they don't get good material possessions. The respondent said that her parents, who do not reside in Iran,

give them costly raw materials that they have purchased. Nonetheless, the materials caused students significant problems with their quality.

Therefore, it is crucial that every piece of equipment entering the workshop gets extensive testing before the start of primary production. As there have been cases where the composition of materials given by suppliers has changed, resulting in a reduction in material quality, this procedure remains the only trustworthy method of verification. This testing procedure covers all raw materials used in a variety of handicraft disciplines, which involve those used to make carpets, rugs, leather, and related items, including silk, cotton, and pottery clay.

According to 28 female craftspeople, Iran has access to almost all of today's infrastructural technology, but with low quality. Due to these instruments' innovations in technology and enhanced efficiency, the working conditions for the craftsmen have substantially improved. It's crucial to remember that the accessibility of this cutting-edge technology depends on a stable economy. Access to the Internet stands out among these technologies as being essential to the advancement of technology worldwide. Through online platforms like Instagram, the Internet has made it possible for craftsmen to reach an international market, which has benefited the tourist sector as well. Despite issues like low internet speeds and content filtering, notably on websites like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, the Internet's influence on Iranian artists and the tourist industry is still significant.

The individual with reference code 14 noted the use of computer software developments in both clothing and carpet design. By directly interacting with the program, making the required modifications, and engaging the help of other people,

she constantly followed her original ideas. The interviewee also discussed how she uses online workshops for personal training. In addition, she employs virtual platforms like Instagram for sales. She also underlined her strategy for using these techniques to boost the branding of her work.



Figure 52,53: Code AI14's Fabric & Garment Design artworks  
Source: Author

With the help of the framework for sustainable livelihood development, we have completed our findings on the key elements and capital in this segment. Interviews with female artists from Kashan, a popular tourist destination, helped us achieve this. The emphasis of the next chapter will be on discussing and presenting the useful implications that result from our research's analysis of data and findings.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 5.1 Discussion

It is clear from the thorough discussions that the foundation of sustainable cultural tourism development in regional tourist attractions like Kashan is rooted in the sustainable development of their residents' livelihoods, especially for women artisans working in the tourism industry in developing countries like Iran. The second chapter, which includes an examination of important literature and conceptual bases, provides key insights for this investigation. The fourth chapter's main theme is based on observations made by 30 female craftspeople who are currently working in the field. Their stories provide clarity regarding the complex interactions between their way of life and the inflow of both local and foreign visitors, with a focus on Iran's cultural tourism industry. This section of the study concentrates on outlining potential routes for supporting the long-term improvement of these skilled craftsmen's methods of livelihood. This project is built on the diverse capital included in the suggested framework, with a particular emphasis on developing a sustainable tourism industry in Kashan, a typical travel destination.

According to the literature on sustainable tourism, the combination of "tourism, industry, and community organization" has the ability to improve the quality of life and increase the capacity of local citizens (Butler, 2017). Additionally, sustainable tourism has a direct impact on preserving cultural heritage, especially handicrafts from

popular tourist areas. It is clear from an examination of the situation in Kashan, a developing region of Iran, that the use of this kind of cultural tourism improves understanding of numerous cultural features.

As a side effect, this technique aids in the more successful marketing of this location within the tourist industry, which causes a notable increase in the production of regional handicrafts in Kashan. The effects of the COVID-19 outbreak have led to a decreased number of foreign visitors, which has an impact on Iran's economic, political, and cultural environment as a whole. Adopting novel tactics outlined in the field of tourist development literature is necessary to meet this problem. Studies from the past have shown that initiatives aimed at historical protection tend to draw a growing number of visitors.

Most visitors to Kashan are from inside Iran, according to the current situation there and insights gained through interviews. It is clear that Iranians determine handicrafts differently from visitors from other countries, taking into account things like color variations, creating methods, material quality, and functional characteristics. The combination of these elements highlights the need for developing innovative programs to draw visitors who are already citizens of the nation, filling a critical gap found through our study. Such efforts are important because they help to preserve historical, artistic, and cultural assets, make it easier to export handicrafts and cultural objects, and promote employment and economic development in the rapidly expanding tourist industry.

Certain features of handiwork are accepted as real by the academic literature. The uniqueness of a product is determined by its "uniqueness" according to

Soukhathammavong & Park (2018), in terms of "novelty," "innovation," "handmade workmanship," "good looks," "practical design," "culture and traditional validity, and "indigenous raw materials".

An instance in which gentrification's impact on artistic tourism becomes notable is when a visitor to a certain area does not first choose to go there because of the abundance of cultural attractions there. Also, it helps with cultural activities like making handicrafts that people want. We noticed that the description matched the previously described published literature to a match. We complement this section with a few points of discussion drawn from the responses we received.

The first is for the artisan to set up a scene where the tourist can sit at the pottery wheel and feel the clay under their fingers as they spin the wheel, all while providing a broad explanation of the production process. Alternatively, one might experience weaving by sitting on the machine's back. In addition to imparting useful information, this encounter will motivate the traveler to become a voice for the location. Furthermore, many people will visit places of artistic interest since practically everyone now has a social media profile and uses it to publish personal blogs complete with photographs and videos. The interviewees added that they learn about the preferences of consumers from interacting with tourists, which encourages them to develop their products to appeal to the tastes of the largest possible group of people.

Existing research suggests that gaining a cultural economy could have a significant socioeconomic benefit (Blumelli, 1997) that can be provided by innovative handicrafts. On the basis of these ideas, our most current study and data collection have shown that this development may greatly boost Kashan's economy and way of

life. It should be noted that this potential depends on the development of appropriate infrastructure.

For instance, our research discovered that owners of art galleries in Kashan's historic bazaar—which is frequented by almost all tourists—hold a special status. These gallery owners are skilled at hiring female craftsmen to produce traditional-style handicrafts with modern applications by drawing on their close connections with customers. The Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of Kashan is responsible for several historic houses in Kashan. We have discovered the possibility for these locations to be transformed into boutique hotels or artist exhibition spaces, even if they are mainly frequented for their historical value.

The antique house in Ameriha stands out as an excellent example. This magnificent building, hailed as the greatest historical house in Iran, was privatized and turned into a hotel. The hotel's owner worked with a variety of female handcraft producers, some of whom we spoke with for our research. These artists were given access to several hotel rooms, creating a setting that supported their artistic activities. As an example, this campaign inspired potters to create food plates in the classic clay design representative of the centuries-old pottery history in Kashan and the Sialk Hills. Evidently, this strategy has sparked the growth of a regional cultural economy for female artists, greatly enhancing both their personal livelihoods and the cultural environment of the city.

The historic Noghli House has also been transformed into a unique boutique hotel. The owner provides a gallery area in its courtyard for these artisans to exhibit their artwork, in addition to renting them a room for establishing their workshops for female

handcraft creators. Another original strategy is to give visitors a 50 by 50-cm handkerchief when they pay for their rooms. Using the sha'rbaaf weaving fabrics, encouraging a feeling of connection and making an effective impression on visitors.

This strategy not only promotes the objectives of all destination stakeholders, but it also strengthens favorable word-of-mouth advertising. Additionally, this approach fosters the sustainable livelihood of female craftsmen while also making a tangible contribution to the development of the cultural economy.

In the literature review, we made the case that women artisans in the field of handicrafts can benefit from the framework of sustainable livelihoods if both the governmental and nongovernmental sectors uphold the law and diligently carry out their obligations. In the context of sustainable tourism development, this adherence would logically result in increased capacity to support these artisans, yielding notable profitability and prosperity.

Our Findings section thoroughly examined the various facets of existing capital within the sustainable livelihood framework. This investigation makes significant contributions to the body of literature already in existence, which frequently focuses only on women's empowerment while ignoring their multifaceted roles, which include both domestic duties and handicraft production.

This research, which is centered on Iran as a growing country and especially Kashan as a popular tourist destination, highlights the change in how Iranian women artisans that are completely linked with the tourism industry are seen. Even if they are married,

these women actively contribute to their houses and are no longer relegated to living in the shadows of their male relatives (father, brother, and husband).

They invest in skill development through a variety of channels, including online courses and face-to-face classes in places like Tehran and Isfahan. Surprisingly. They make a concerted effort to avoid paying high private class fees, occasionally choosing instead to pay more for expensive organizational classes, all the while remaining serious and committed to their training and achieving an updated level of performance.

These talented craftspeople must overcome several challenges in order to educate the next generation about their skills. Their inventiveness combines centuries-old cultural traditions from Kashan with modern art and methods to create works of art that are suitable for current life. Along with production, they have been successful in establishing a professional market for their works by developing their networks, even though 80% of them get no assistance from public or private organizations.

Financial limitations prevented the construction of many necessary infrastructure components, and excessive loan interest rates discouraged borrowing. Due to high expenses, renting adequate workshop locations remained difficult. It took a lot of time and effort to find high-quality raw materials, which was made more difficult by growing costs brought on by Iran's struggling economy and international sanctions.

Additionally, their sales attempts were impeded by the slow internet connection and limited access to international social media platforms, which made it more difficult to move toward sustainable livelihoods within the context of sustainable tourism development.

## **5.2 Implications**

We are now prepared to explain the main consequences resulting from this topic in light of the thorough investigation and analysis provided in this part. The most important theoretical and practical implications of our investigation will be outlined in the following sections:

Theoretical Implications can be defined as, in terms of theoretical consequences, our finding being very noteworthy. It is an innovative project that is specifically targeted at the group of female artists and artisans that create handicrafts in Iran as a developing country. This inquiry, which includes a significant number of respondents, is the first of its type in this field.

The focus of our study was on the investigation of the sustained improvement of female artisans' methods for livelihood. Understanding the effects of situations for sustainable tourism development on their quality of life is our particular area of study. The manufacturing and trading of products made by these women artisans are closely linked to the tourism industry. The knowledge we gained from looking at these aspects and how they interact makes our research superior and unique.

Practical Implications: Moving on to the topic of practical implications, our investigation into the sustainable framework of livelihood for female craftsmen working on handmade products generated a number of notable suggestions. Each recommendation has the potential to accelerate the development and realization of sustainable livelihoods for these artisans, though linked with various elements of capital.

1. Professional Training Provision: A key component of the idea is the provision of a range of professional training, from primary to advanced levels. The cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism organizations training program is an essential resource for developing creative abilities. People who have an interest in different handicraft professions may take advantage of these training opportunities without spending any money due to government funding that facilitates the wages of educators.
2. beneficial Loan Terms: The second claim relates to finance arrangements. It is advisable to distribute loans with either no interest or a very low rate. A grace period for repayment also recognizes the financial cycles of artisans working in the handicraft industry.
3. Infrastructure Improvement: It's important to support female craftsmen's access to the workplace. It is advised that craft markets be established with little or no leasing costs by working with relevant organizations. This provision offers artists a platform that allows them to produce and sell their creations. Practical considerations, including availability of raw materials and utility services (gas, water, and electricity), should be carefully handled.
4. Accessibility to Raw Materials: The fourth suggestion focuses on having low-cost, high-quality raw materials available. A government-backed project might pay the difference in prices paid by raw material suppliers in order to get over the difficulties brought on by rising economic inflation. This project supports craftspeople in their search for the raw materials required for their creations.
5. The fifth suggestion supports the expedited formation of private creative firms and collectives. Group projects, such as local and foreign exhibits, have a

significant potential to improve Iran's art tourism. Such activities provide a channel for showing and encouraging Iran's high levels of creativity.

6. Digital Empowerment: The sixth and last suggestion emphasizes the significance of digital connection. It is essential to provide craftspeople with unlimited high-speed internet access. The agreement makes it possible for artisans to share their artwork on a worldwide stage, network with other creatives from other cultural contexts, and promote intercultural cooperation.

The results of the study that was conducted are discussed in the concluding section of Chapter 6.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

We sum up our research in this part by going through the complete study. The decision to carry out this study was initially supported by the author's prior research in related fields, her practical experiences within a female-operated handicraft production workshop, and her in-depth familiarity with the difficult conditions faced by women working in this sector in Iran.

This research explores the potential benefits of using sustainable tourism to support the livelihoods of women artisans, who are at risk in developing countries like Iran. The research also recognizes the feasibility of designing strategies based on the core principles of the sustainable livelihood framework to reduce poverty in communities, which is another significant factor. It is noteworthy that Iranian research has not yet fully explored the complex relationship between female skilled handicrafts and the fields of art and cultural tourism.

It became clear after developing the proposal, receiving guidance and supervisor approval, and studying the relevant literature about the crucial microfactors within the suggested paradigm (sustainable livelihood development through sustainable tourism). Based on the aims of the research, the best method for bringing this investigation to a successful conclusion was through a qualitative methodology because there is an absence of identical research exactly in line with the goals of this study. Therefore, the

research had to interact directly with Kashan, one of Iran's most popular tourist destinations, which is known for its wide variety of handicraft fields.

In this setting, the research attempted to examine the living circumstances of female artisans working in the handicraft industry, recognizing the pervasive cultural and social variables that, despite advancements in traditions and religious practices, continue to have a substantial impact on their livelihoods. The study engaged in structured interviews and observation inside the artisans' workshops, capturing their experiences and documenting them through audio recordings, interviews, and photographic records. The questions were carefully planned and grounded in the sustainable livelihood development framework.

Purposive sampling was used to guarantee the appropriate choice of respondents and collect essential information from reliable sources. In order to reach the target group, the Kashan City Department of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism was crucial. The office supplied a list of women who were actively engaged in producing a variety of handicrafts, running functional workshops, and directly interacting with visitors in the promotion of their crafts.

The author conducted semi-structured interviews with all participants during visits to their workshops, with each session lasting around 30 to 60 minutes and being customized to the study's aims. The data analysis stage was launched using Thematic Analysis (TA) after obtaining input from all 30 women artisans. The procedure required transferring all of the interviews into Word format directly from their audio recordings. Each interview received a unique code. To achieve the most accurate analysis, the interviews were then printed, carefully studied, and reread many times.

The conclusions that came out of this section were in line with the capital aspects of the sustainable livelihood development framework. These results were later investigated and debated, providing insightful information that enhanced the body of knowledge on the issue and improved the conversation around the livelihoods of female artisans working in Iran's handcraft industry.

To sum up, the research has consequences that extend beyond its specific field of inquiry. Through the lens of sustainable tourism development, the study's results are synthesized to provide key recommendations for improving the quality of life of women artisans.

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