

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

## A Study on the Business Perspective of Handmade Paintings in the City of Kolkata, India

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### **Abstract**

*The changing lifestyle of Indians along with their expanding wallet size has brought substantial changes in the gift, decoration and fashion markets. The inclination of people towards handmade paintings has also increased. In such a scenario, exploring the attitude of customers towards handmade painting and finding out the market potential of handmade painting may be helpful for the budding professionals and people in that industry. With that purpose, an exploratory study was conducted in the city of Kolkata. Among 150 questionnaires, distributed to the residents of Kolkata, 116 (77.33% response rate) completely filled in questionnaires were received. The Data was analysed with the help of SPSS package. Apart from descriptive statistics, chi-square and phi-coefficient tests were conducted to analyse the data. The results reflected various opinions of the customers in different aspect of marketing of handmade paintings in the city of Kolkata. Mainly the findings revealed that people have inclination towards handmade painting but the hindrance is its availability at the time of need.*

### **1. Introduction**

India is famous for artistic works and painting is one of them. Indian paintings are historic, innovative, dynamic and vast. Indian paintings speak about the prevailing socio-economic condition and hence, become historical evidences. Cave paintings of Ajanta caves, Ellora caves etc. are representing the ancient Indian painting. Famous styles Mughal painting, Rajasthani painting were explored under the supervision of number of kings and royal patronage. Mughal painting tells about the indo-Islamic style on the time of Mughal emperors. The paintings are generally classified depending on their medium, origin, evolution, emergence and style.

The technique and medium are the two major aspects of painting. On the basis of these two aspects, Indian paintings can be further classified as Marble paintings, Batik, Kalamkari, Silk paintings, Velvet paintings, Palm Leaf Etchings etc. Famous products, found in the market such as sharee, wall mat, bed cover, carpet etc. come under this category of painting.

Based on different place of origin, paintings can be classified in India. Potochitra from Orissa and Bengal, Madhubani painting from Bihar, Pahari painting from Himachal Pradesh & Jammu & Kashmir must be mentioned in this category.

Tribal painting is another type of painting existing in India. Tribal paintings are prepared by the tribal people according to their culture. In this type of tribal paintings, skills are passed on from one generation to another. Most popular tribal paintings are Saura painting, Warli painting, Pithora painting, Pichhwai painting, and Santhal painting.

Having so much varieties of paintings been prevalent in India, very few painters have earned name and fame for their paintings. To name them, Rabanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose Raja Ravi Verma, Jamini Roy, Satyajit Ray, Rabindranath Tagore, Jatin Das, M. F. Hussain are the few fortunate ones. Earning name and fame may be a far off thing when the local painters producing such beautiful products are not paid value for their talents and efforts. Hence, many traditional paintings (e. g., Traditional paintings such as scroll paintings of Orissa, Idital & Patachitra of West Bengal, Madhubani paintings of Bihar) are existing today only because of the struggle of the small artists of tribal villages. Recently it is seen that because of lack of proper marketing of these products, people are not getting rewarded and consequently are changing their profession. If this continues, the existence of these paintings will not be there after a couple of years. Hence, branding and popularizing such products can be a good idea.

Although there has been lots of initiatives from different aspects such as *Adibasi mela*, *Craft exhibition*, *Agri mela* which provide opportunity to those painters and artisans to be recognized and earn value for their talent and effort, more and more systematic initiatives are required to keep the heritage of painting alive and encourage the artists.

In the case of educated painters who are passing out from different arts institutes, are joining different advertisement agencies, web development companies or many other designing related companies. But they are not creating handmade painting because of career risk. Also they are not getting proper market to sell their products. Some organizations are trying to explore the talents by

giving common platform to sell paintings. But, it may be occasional and have failed to create bridge between consumers and artists. Talents are going astray. Only few reputed handmade painters are earning huge money only for their brand image.

## 2. Printed Pictures Vs. Handmade Painting

Handmade painting is one of the examples of craft which is trying to fight in the market with the printed pictures. The advent of digital technologies is creating major impact on the creative industries. Digital technology with reduced cost and increased production capacity can replicate the handmade painting. When these paintings go to the market, common people can hardly differentiate between a real handmade painting and a replica done with the help of digital machine. In fact, there is a huge difference in quality between handmade work and machine work. However, the increased penetration of printed picture is reducing the market value of the handmade painting. Printed pictures are being copied from the traditional pictures or modern pictures. Consumers also prefer this because of low cost and lack of proper knowledge on handmade paintings.

## 3. Consumer Behavior Of Indians Towards Gift And Luxury Items

In general, today's Indian consumers are characterized by quickly developing middle class, its changing values and increasing consumer demand. Consumers' spending on luxury items has increased aided by past savings and the introduction of the credit system. India's changing consumer economy is interested in different arts. Today artistic products are status symbol. Handmade painting is one of them. Consumers can buy handmade painting to decorate their own home or to gift someone.

According to a study (NIELSEN, 2010),... "the majority of Indian consumers believe that their gifting budget has increased over the past two years and is likely to increase further over the next two years. People also spend more on gifts for immediate family members with an average spending of Rs.7,000 and the average spending amongst the mature age group on gifting their immediate family is even higher (average is around Rs. 13,000). Extended family members and business partners are the next groups who are likely to receive gifts of higher value, with the average amount being around Rs.2,500 and Rs.3,000 respectively. The average spending on gifts for friends and colleagues is around Rs.2,000 and Rs.1,200 respectively". This kind of consumer behavior is a positive indication or a huge opportunity for the handmade painting as a gift item.

Now, if the rural and urban consumers are compared, there is hardly any difference in the factors behind their purchasing decisions- the gap is reducing day by day. The urban consumers first look into the quality and finally price. Rural India is driven primarily by price, followed by aspiration and then quality. The thing, important to understand, is that the Indian consumers from each segment give attention to the price of the product (MATRADE CHENNAI 2005; Venkatesh 1995).

Buying power has also been expanded to new consumer segments — be it the youth and the earning woman. In India the young generation is getting job at an early age. Most of them do not have family burden. So their spending amount is more on luxury items. Similarly, women control the majority of purchasing decisions in a household and have also become earning members in most cases; their influence is gradually growing (MATRADE CHENNAI 2005; Venkatesh 1995).

As per the behavioral characteristics, Indian consumers are associated with values, care and affection. Most of the Indian consumers preferred products which communicate feelings and emotions. Traditional products are mostly preferred by them. In India traditional products along with modern products is sharing retail shelves. It is called typical modern India (MATRADE CHENNAI 2005; Venkatesh 1995).

To sum up, if we look at the changing lifestyle and taste of Indians, they seem to be more tilted towards traditional antique objects. Along with that what is observed is that the tradition and mystique of cultural products have been becoming branded gradually. Global forces are constructing the "authentic" cultural product (Ger & Csaba, 2000). In such a context, studying the market potentiality of handmade paintings—a traditional product of India can be very much useful for the budding artists and entrepreneurs. With this backdrop, this study aims at studying the perception of customers towards handmade paintings in one of the metro cities of India (Kolkata).

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Sample

Respondents of Kolkata participated in this survey. On the basis of convenient sampling method samples were selected and total 150 questionnaires were distributed and after a week the filled in questionnaires were collected. The data was collected by the researcher during his vacation and he had personally got the consent of the respondents and taken utmost care to collect the filled in questionnaire. In few cases he had to give repeated phone calls to the respondents to fill up the questionnaires properly. In total 116 (77.33% response rate) completely filled in questionnaires were received, out of which 70 were done by male participants and 46 by female ones and their mean age was 36.23 years and median age was 35 years. In total 69 working persons and 47 nonworking persons participated in the survey.

Variables	Groups	Figure in percentage
Age	18-25	24.1
	26-35	28.4
	36-45	21.6
	46-55	17.2
	>55	8.6
Sex	Male (%)	60.3
	Female	39.7
Income	Less than Rs. 5000	20.7
	Rs. 5000-10000	22.4
	Rs. 10000-20000	22.4
	Rs. 20000-35000	19.8
	More than Rs. 35000	14.7

Table 1: Sample Profile

#### 4.2. Instrument

Looking at different aspects of marketing of handmade paintings, a questionnaire was prepared in English and was verified by subject experts. The structure of the questionnaire was mostly close ended and comprised of nominal and ordinal scales. Then the same was translated into Bengali and retranslated into English by dual language experts.

#### 5. Results

Data was analysed with the help of SPSS package. Apart from descriptive statistics, chi square and phi coefficient tests were conducted to analyse the data. The frequency distribution given in table 2 reveal that most of the respondents (57.8%) like handmade paintings extremely and only a few (0.9) expressed dislike for it. However, 77.6% of respondents said that this product is not readily available in Kolkata market.

The spending pattern of the respondents on gift items reveals that most of them spend about less than Rs.1000 per month on purchasing various gifts and home decoration purpose. When they were asked, how much they would like to spend on one hand made painting, most of them agreed to spend nearly less than Rs. 1000. Hence, paintings can be prepared to target these customers.

The preference of the customers was mostly towards traditional painting (46.6%) followed by realistic paintings (26.7 %). And most of them prefer colour painting (65.5 %) to black and white painting. Since, art exhibitions are organized for the marketing of such products , we wanted to know how many of them visit the art exhibitions and would like to purchase handmade paintings from there. It was found that 69.8% of our respondents visit art exhibition and 52.6% expressed that art exhibitions are their preferred place to buy such things. May be that people believe that real handmade paintings are available only in such places. A good number of respondents preferred customized painting (56.0%).

Handmade paintings have been found to be the most desirable item to decorate home. Out of all other items such as, printed picture, flower vase, show piece, 48.3% have given first rank to handmade painting. However, it is not a very preferable item for gifting others (only 13.8% have given it first preference for gifting). However, more respondents have accepted handmade painting for official gift purpose. May be the cost of handmade paintings led to such type of reaction. Mainly the findings revealed that people have inclination towards handmade painting but the hindrance is its cost and availability at the time of need. Hence, if such paintings are made easily available to the customers at a low cost, the artists as well as the customers will be benefited.

Variables	Groups	Figure in percentage
Liking of H.P.	Extremely	57.8
	Very much	12.1
	Somewhat	29.3
	Not at all	.9
Availability Of H.P. in Market	Yes	22.4
	NO	77.6
Spend for gift & home decoration per month	Less than Rs. 1000	47.4
	Rs. 1000-2500	32.8
	Rs. 2500-5000	7.8
	Rs. 5000-10000	6.9
	More than 10000	5.2
Ever Purchase H.P.	Yes	50
	No	50
Like to spend for H.P.	Less than Rs. 1000	35.3
	Rs. 1000-2500	25

Variables	Groups	Figure in percentage
	Rs. 2500-5000	6.9
	More than 5000	7.8
	No idea	25
Kind of Painting liking	Religious Painting	6.9
	Realistic Painting	26.7
	Traditional Painting	46.6
	Abstract Painting	19.8
Like to prefer colour of painting	Black and white	34.5
	Colourful painting	65.5
Visiting art exhibition	Yes	69.8
	No	30.2
Preference the place to buy the Painting	Direct from Artists	31.9
	Shop	9.5
	Art exhibition	52.6
	Online	6.0
Customized Painting	Yes	56.0
	No	44.0
Office Gift Purpose H.P. Acceptable	Yes	82.6
	No	17.4
Preference for Decorate home		
Handmade painting	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	48.3
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	8.6
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	20.7
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	22.4
Printed Picture	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	22.4
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	26.7
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	19.8
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	31.0
Flower Vase	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	12.1
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	31.0
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	40.5
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	16.4
Show Piece	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	17.2
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	32.8
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	19.8
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	30.2
Preference for gift purpose		
Garments	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	25.9
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	24.1
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	22.4
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	27.6
Gift Cheque	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	33.6
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	27.6
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	25.9
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	12.9
Ornaments	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	26.7
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	19.8
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	32.8
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	20.7
Handmade Painting	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	13.8
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preference	29.3
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preference	19.0
	4 <sup>th</sup> Preference	37.9

Table 2: Customers' Preference Towards Handmade Painting Market

To know Further, whether the preference of customers towards different aspects of handmade painting is dependent on their demographic variable, chi- square tests were conducted. Results revealed that only income was a factor that was significantly associated with the preference for handmade painting for gift and decoration and preference for customized painting. In other words it was found out that as the income level of respondents varied, so also their preference for handmade painting as a gift item or decoration item varied. This finding also indicates towards the cost of handmade paintings. Because these are costly items people do not want to purchase it for day-to-day gifting. Also the cost of paintings becomes high when people opt for customized painting (table 3).

	Age	Gender	Income
<b>Family expense on gift purpose and home decoration purpose</b>			
Chi-square	22.57	3.85	44.34***
Phi coefficient	0.44	0.182	0.618***
<b>Painting type preference</b>			
Chi-square	19.750	2.772	17.475
Phi coefficient	0.413	0.155	0.388
<b>Painting colour preference</b>			
Chi-square	2.773	0.553	8.572
Phi coefficient	0.155	0.069	0.272
<b>Customized Painting preference</b>			
Chi-square	4.256	0.723	13.628***
Phi coefficient	0.192	-0.073	0.343***

Table 3: Demography Of Respondents And Their Preferences

\*\*\*P<.001

## 6. Conclusion & Implications

The overall finding of the study suggests that people have lots preference towards the handmade painting- they would like to purchase handmade painting and would like to buy it from exhibitions. Mostly respondents had likeness towards colorful paintings and customized paintings. Income level of the respondents was main determining factor for many aspects of handmade painting preference. Hence, if customized paintings would be provided to the customers at a reasonable price, both the artist and the customers would be benefited. Keeping this in view a brief outline of a business model has been developed.

Based on the research result a business model can be proposed. The business will be based on different products of handmade painting. Consumer can buy the product for gifting or decoration purpose. Under a single brand the products will be sold. The main advantages of handmade painting are that it is a traditional product, unique product, realistic product and artistic product. This product communicates feelings and emotions. Company will work as a bridge between the artists and the consumers. Company can buy the regional paintings from different villagers and students of art colleges. For procurement again some artists may be recruited who have an understanding about the paintings and can put proper value for the paintings. They can also place order to the artists based on the customers' demand. Collected paintings will be stored in a centralized place. Company can sell handmade painting in different ways. They can sell through their dedicated shops, different gift shops and direct personalized selling.

Advertising of this product is another challenge because selling different kind of handmade paintings under a particular brand is a new concept. And also establishing handmade painting as a unique gift item in the market can be a big challenge. There is a need to change the mental setup of the consumers. Mainly at the time of communication, Company has to focus on the Indian tradition and culture. They can communicate to the consumers through different life-style-magazines, art exhibitions and fairs. Organizing theme based programme can also be a good way for marketing.

## 7. References

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