

THE PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF KALAMKARI ARTISANS:

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ABSTRACT

Kalamkari is a traditional Indian art form that involves hand-painting or block-printing on fabric using natural dyes. While Kalamkari is celebrated for its intricate designs and vibrant motifs, ancient practices and their continuation in modern times face several challenges.

These problems can be categorized into historical, cultural, and practical aspects: Kalamkari faces challenges such as the loss of traditional techniques, declining demand due to competition from cheaper machine-made textiles, cultural misappropriation of designs, erosion of distinct styles, and environmental issues caused by the use of synthetic dyes replacing natural ones.

INTRODUCTION

Kalamkari is an ancient textile printing art that finds its roots in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Kalam implies pen and Kari means art a name given by the Mughals when they discovered the art during their reign over the Deccan region. Kalamkari is the art of drawing and painting with a bamboo pen using natural dyes. There are two main styles of Kalamkari. The block printed that is practiced in the town of Machilipatnam and the hand painted style that is largely practiced in the town of Srikalahasti.

Present study is to bring some insights on Kalamkari units in a small village pedana near Machilipatnam city, Andhra Pradesh.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

• Pooja Purohit (2013): In the research project titled “The study was on the traditional hand painted kalamkari to design a set of new age prints” .

Explored to bring innovation in Kalamkari prints and bring awareness about them amongst youngsters.

National Centre for Design and Product

Development (2016): In the report titled “ A report on design and technical development workshop on kalamkari at srikalahasti, tirupati” , it was concluded that, the design and technical development workshop in kalamkari at Srikalahasti was a good opportunity to develop more new designs.

RESEARCH GAP:

The review of literature revealed that many studies have been made on specific aspects of Kalamkari art such as, The study was on the traditional hand painted kalamkari to design a set of new age prints, The study was on kalamkari- the painted temple cloths, A report on design and technical development workshop on kalamkari at Srikalahasti, Change of the Technic of Kalamkari under Handcrafts Promotion Policy- Case Study of Temple Cloth in South India, a study on purchase preference of websites in A.P, there is no study that has been made on the standards of living of the artisans, issues and challenges faced by them. So, a comprehensive study covering the standard of living of the artisans is needed.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the research is to study about the kalamkari artisans, their life style, standard of living, issues and challenges faced by the artisans.

Major concerns and Suggestions to Policy Makers & Kalamkari

Entrepreneurs:

Marketing network of Kalamkari: Absence of systematic marketing network has been a discouraging factor in the Kalamkari segment. The artisans must be organized by marketing their products by themselves. For this more and more linkages must be developed with outside parties.

Tourism-Centred craft: For the crafts culture to be appropriately propagated and its commercial potential duly explored, development of tourism can go in tandem with the development of crafts. There is a great deal of scope for craft-centered tourism possibilities to be explored.

Strict registration norms for ancient Kalamkari work to reduce imitated items.

Design registration of Kalamkari: Design registration of Kalamkari should be done. That means whatever designs any artisan has introduced on any item should be registered. Then no one can copy it.

Price uniformity in Kalamkari: The prices of Kalamkari products are very much erratic and not uniform. There is significant difference in prices of the same item if purchase from two shops or from two places. In this situation the customer feels very much exploited and harassed. This might have very bad repercussion on the demand of the products. Pricing of the product should depend on categorization of art in each craft, skill exhibited and quality of raw materials.

More Research and Development in Kalamkari: For improving the quality of the products Research and Development is a must. Many more new items and new designs can be developed with the help of Research and addressed. European nations are sensitive to toxin substance, e.g., azo dyes in textile crafts. Child labour is, no doubt, another emotive issue. Environment friendly packaging and general social and hygienic conditions are other important facets. These aspects can well be aggressive campaign to enhance the acceptability of Indian products among affluent consumers susceptible to these considerations. Environment and conservation need to be woven into the concept.

technologies occur in the formal sector of economy on a routine basis. In the case of the informal sector, the concept of product innovation remains subdued. With an introduction of modern technologies of design and product innovation, the change is necessary in informal sector so that the economy can be uplifted.

Value Addition in Kalamkari: The Commissioner (Handicrafts and textiles), may help the local units to produce various value added items with would not only help to penetrate the local market, but also help in exporting of such items to foreign countries.

Window Display of Kalamkari products: In whatever possible manner, all the promotional and marketing organization, must display the local items in various airports, railway stations, bus stands, commercial

centers, etc. This will help the local artisans to get more orders from foreign tourists, traders, marketing organization etc. Window display is emerging as the new mantra in retail and is fast changing from a dull, uninteresting exhibition of wares to a dynamic form of advertising. Retailers are recognizing the importance of window display as the first point of contact between the store and the customer and a chance to create the most critical first impression on the customer. Developed countries look at window display as a critical tool of marketing; however, in India, it is still an emerging concept. Done properly, window display can attract the right kind of customers to undertake impulse buying under the influence of attractive window display.

Positioning of Kalamkari which are produced with traditional skill, are gradually facing competition from machine made products, which give greater uniformity and better finish. For large number of Kalamkari items, there have been neither substitutes nor competition from any significant entrant into the field.

Thus, suppliers, new entrants and substitute products do not appear to be significant factors in the strategic positioning of typical Kalamkari design.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Present study is a descriptive and investigative in nature. Most of the data is collected from secondary sources like journals, articles, news reports, and Government reports.

CONCLUSION

• Kalamkari is such a product that when a buyer likes it, he is prepared to pay a price, which may be far in excess of the standard price of the product. The prime consideration is his liking of the product. Channel agents, such as middlemen, retailer or distributor try to capitalize on such possibilities and earn significant profit almost wholly at the cost of the craftsmen. Kalamkari product may be categorized on the basis of price, export on domestic market, ease of maintenance, ease of storage, utility value or decorative value and modernity or traditional orientation. Besides, it is necessary for likeminded institutions to come together to provide the strategic direction and action plans to evolve systems. Procedure and norms related to design, market, technology, innovation and quality of life so that product designs, technology and marketing become integral part of the craft up gradation and repositioning process. The sector has, however, suffered due to its being unorganized, with the additional constraints of lack of education, low capital, and poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence, and a poor institutional framework. However Indian unique art of Kalamkari has great growth potential in the changing scenario with its basic strength being the abundant and cheap availability of manpower and being a traditional profession of thousands still requires very low

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