

Digital Marketing: An Emerging Platform for Artisans in India

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Abstract

Artisan communities are rightly described as the heritage preservers of a country. They have responsibilities to sustain Art and crafts till present society with flow of culture from the ancient Indian craft structure. Over a period of time, the society transfigured itself into a modernized, industrialized and a globalized society. As a result, it became difficult for the artisans to compete with the emerging consumerism patterns. Moreover, they are subjugated by intermediaries and deteriorated direct access over their financial rights. These significant inequalities in handicraft market have become recurrent feature-tending artisans to a new phase of struggles with manifold consequences. However, in recent times digital marketing showed up as a strong pillar to organize market for handicraft sales. Apart from reaching to the masses through Trade Fares and shops, artisans can switch over to 'Digital Technology' for better promotion of their work. Although, there is a need to plan up strategies for creating awareness amongst the artisans so that they would openly access the newly emerging marketing platform for better profit making. For the purpose, the paper attempts to assess information about the role of Digital marketing in the lives of artisans and what measures needs to be adopted for its better attainment by them.

Key Words- Artisan, Consumerism, Digital, Marketing, Financial

Introduction

An artisan according to the contemporaneous definitions is the one who makes or creates things by hand, which may include, decorative arts, sculptures, jewellery and other functional items. Artisan industry is very important in building and sustaining the economy of a country. In fact, the artisans contribute significantly in not only strengthening the economy but also in reflecting a community's cultural and social traditions. They have faced various challenges when there have been rapid advancements in material culture in the society. They fail to cater to people's preferences for modernized and westernized modes of production as well as consumerism patterns. They have turned merely into those labor class workers who, despite having the required skills, work under elite class i.e. middlemen (brokers and dealers) to earn their livelihood. These elite classes deal advantageously with artisans who relatively acquire disadvantaged position in the hierarchy of workplace. They extract maximum profit from them, by sell artisan made items at exorbitant rates in the market and paying minimal to the artisans. Thus, it becomes necessary for them to access their financial rights by confronting the exploitative modes of earning and switch over to the modes that provide them direct access over market. In order to reach consumers directly, Digital platform thus become an important measure they can update into their market skills. It refers to the advertising of a product through online channels such as websites, mobile apps, social media etc. In this way, the targeted population will be reached easily in a cost effective and at larger scale. Inclusive of only personal efforts, any individual belonging to any industry can get a break through the market by providing product information, rates, availability etc. The customer can visit the

site and get a direct access the products at any time getting all the information required. As the production of handicraft items by the artisans is in ample amount in India, proper access to internet marketing can help reach consumers at large scale, which will not only provide them effective mode of earning, but also people in the market will get to know the variety and beauty of the traditionally made items. In this way, financial security of the artisans along with cultural identity of the society can be preserved at low cost.

Review of Literature

A review of literature comprises a self-contained unit of secondary resources used to analyze a segment of the published work. As the paper intend to gather information on how Digital marketing is affecting the lives of artisans, some existing literatures were reviewed for the purpose.

Kapur opines that Digital technology for the handicrafts sector is helpful by providing better promotion of crafts and outreach larger population. Artisans can sell online with proper displaying and pricing methods and can distinctively know the demand and supply of their products.

Soni highlights an initiative by *Anwasha* a non-governmental organization in Odisha to establish marketing for the artisans with use of digital technology. They are providing an interface to about 50,000 artisans across India and are selling their handmade craft items like jewellery, tribal artifacts and other ethnic products directly to the customers through online platform.

Role and Importance of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing encompasses all the efforts with just a use of electronic media devices and reach the customers with product and services. These platforms not only creates exposure to the art and artifacts but also help the artisans to reach a larger and targeted audience in less time as compared to physical market outlets. Digital trends of marketing can provide rankings in the search engine, popularity gains, identification of the competitors, multiplicity of communication channels, and analytics and optimization. It can help artisans in following ways-

Customer relations- It can help artisans to establish business communication and provide information regarding their products. As once a customer's database gets recorded, they can be offered with details of upcoming products and offers.

Customer's trust- It also confers to the loyalty of the products. As the market in present scenario is full of products and services that may not be original or duplicity may exist, direct access to the products dealing directly with the artisans may build trust and conformity within customers for the originality of the product. It gives customer a clear idea about the product, availability, designs and varieties.

Lower cost- It becomes an efficient way to reduce the costing of retail outlays, supply chain management and can monitor products with just technological efforts. It cuts time to manage shop deals and makes products easily accessible at any times as per customer's comfort.

More profits- More profits can be gained when there is no intervening dealers or middlemen. Direct customer relations can help artisans to gain complete profits from their respective products.

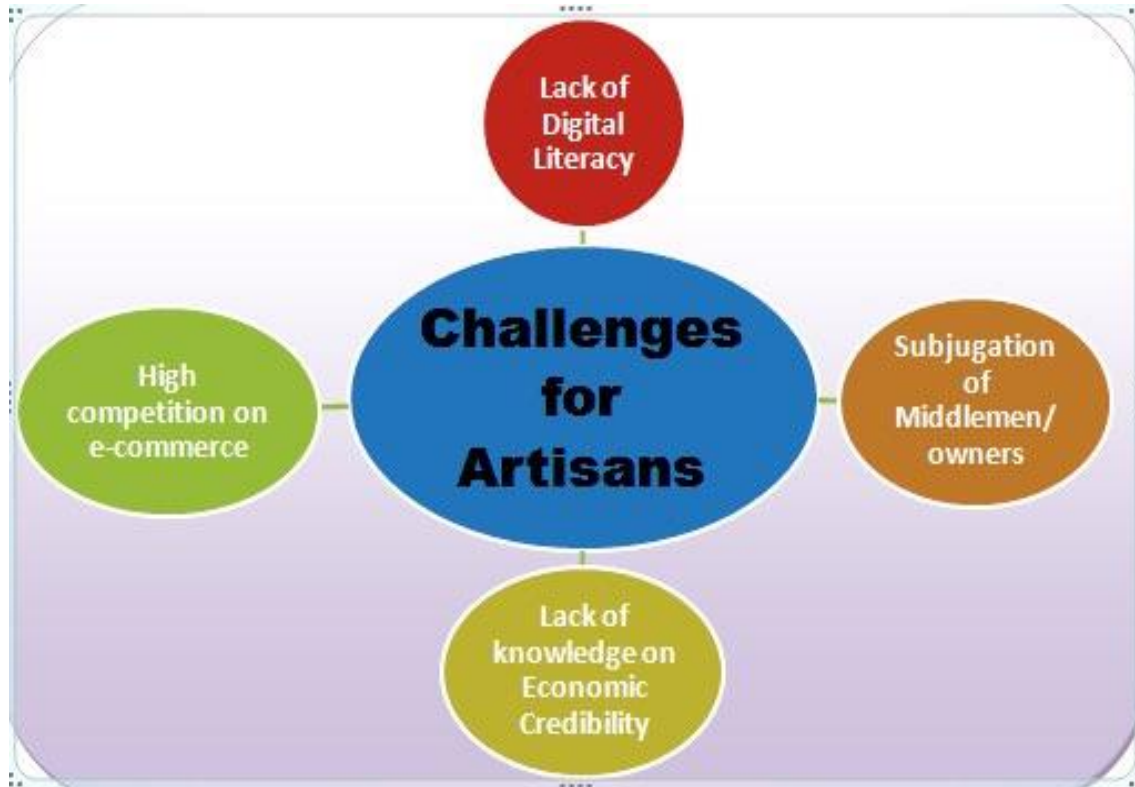
Global market- Digital platforms wont only serve at small-scale domestic levels, but also can become accessible at Global level.

Emerging trends- Digital platforms can also upgrade one with emerging trends in the market. Tendency to explore coming changes in consumerism, styles and tastes can benefit artisans to research the customer's desires and requirements. It becomes more precise as how to reach the customer's taste.

Challenge for the Artisans

Digital marketing proves to be very essential for artisans to promote their products among the customers in the present scenario. However, grasping the knowledge of such upgraded technology also seems to be a challenging task for them. As maximum of the artisans in India are illiterate and lack in knowledge about the emerging trends in this modern era, they are getting deprived of many financial gains. They are dependent on middlemen for raw materials, production, marketing and sales to earn their livelihood. As a

result they are dislodged from the mainstream recognition and are accustomed to stay dependent on middlemen and owners.



Employing the ideas towards Economic liberalism, “it is an economic system organized on individual lines, meaning that the greatest possible number of economic decisions are made by individuals or households rather than by collective institutions or organizations” (Adams, 2001). This implies that private and individual gains depend upon the amount of freedom one is provided with. On similar thought, if artisans need to be emancipated, it is necessary for them to get relaxation from the capitalist form of behavior by middlemen and dealers who are exploiting the artisans in order to maximize economic gains from the market. Artisans are subjected to minimum direct access to market fields and have less knowledge about economic credibility. Private property, independent access to market, control over means of production, and self reliance with no external control, etc. are the necessary attributes for enhancing economic status of artisans in the society. This aligns with the thoughts of liberals like John Locke who states that people are in “a state of perfect freedom to order their actions.... as they think fit.... without asking leave, or depending on the will of any other Man” (Locke, 1960(1689)).

Being a victim of half-education regress their growth to adopt updated measure of technology. They have no idea of the internet ‘Know-how’ and thus are unable to get direct access over market. As a result, artisans are ultimately inclined to work under intermediaries to earn their livelihood. Thus, another earning opportunity for the artisans through internet platforms become a challenging task and needs voluntary helps to teach them and help them.

Conclusion

Artisan sector as a second largest employer after agriculture can maintain its ability to pathway out of poverty for many households. Inability of the artisans and craftsmen to innovate methods of marketing and be creative enough to get adaptive to the changing needs of market with time, is limiting the growth of the handicrafts sector. Therefore, even after having unique and identical artisanship in the country, failure of the artisans in being adaptive to the upgrading technology is preventing their growth. If artisans need to be emancipated, it is necessary for them to get relaxation from the capitalist form of behavior by

middlemen and dealers who are exploiting the artisans in order to maximize economic gains from the market. Artisans are subjected to minimum direct access to market fields and have less knowledge about economic credibility. In order to sustain their lives in modern era, it is necessary for them to adopt new marketing trends, amongst which, Digital marketing can be proved as the most fruitful one. They are required to be educated enough to grasp the trending technology in present society. It is necessary to organize awareness programmes for them and make them learn to utilize digital platforms for direct market access. As a part of suggestion, marketing people organized by either Government or Non-Governmental organizations to help artisan boost their skills to larger levels of the market would take some voluntary actions.

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