

COMMERCIAL MARKETING OF MITHILA PAINTING: TOOLS, VARIETIES & USP

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Abstract : Initially known to be drawn by rural women as a part of their culture and tradition or decorating their living places, now every day it's presence, demand and popularity is growing leaps and bounds. Yes, we are talking about our rich cultural heritage, i.e. Mithila Painting. Once done on walls and roofs, limited to festivals or weddings, the Mithila painting, or Madhubani, changed drastically down the years.

IndexTerms - Traditional, Mithila, Painting, styling, insert.

Introduction:

Now, the traditional Mithila Painting art style is seen not only on paper but has got a place on clothes and home furnishing. Hence, this is high time for harnessing a planned commercial marketing plan. Although, many commercial channels are in place, but, still a consolidated and channelized effort is must for optimum utilization of the potential available and further creating more market space.

Objective:

In spite of many commercial channels being in place as well as well groomed artists, but a consolidated effort and knowing our wing spread is a must. Hence, we need to discuss the tools and varieties available and scope therein which can act as Unique Selling Proposition (USP) along with further innovations which will take place as per skills of artists and needs of users.

Encouraging events in the recent past:

Last year, when Indian Railways painted a few Bihar-bound trains with Madhubani paintings a traditional art form of Bihar, it rightly earned applauds from all corners. Not only art connoisseurs but people from all over the world expressed their appreciation. United Nations India lauded the efforts of Indian Railway and artists by sharing an image of Indian Railway coaches painted with Madhubani art on Twitter. Of course, this was a proud moment for not only the artists, but the entire country, as the traditional art form of Bihar was getting visible globally. However, this is not the first time that Mithila or Madhubani painting, is getting acknowledgment worldwide.

The art form, which was once limited to a part of Madhubani, and was only used to decorate the walls of village homes, has now been showcased in several landmark museums in the US, Japan and several other countries. The latest feather in its cap was when Godavari Dutt from Ranti village Bihar was bestowed the Padma Shri award by the President for her immense contribution to Mithila painting. The journey has been encouraging and market for commercial utilization of art is growing day by day.

A brief history and discovery of Mithila painting to world:

It is very important to get insight of this centuries old art and it's introduction to the world. This is the real story of silver lining in the cloud, which resulted in the worldwide shining glory of this art today. In the Treta Yuga, King Janaka was the ruler of Mithila. It is believed that on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter Sita to Lord Rama, he ordered to paint the walls of the kingdom through paintings. These paintings were later known as Mithila paintings.

However, it was a natural disaster, a massive earthquake in 1934, which gave this art visibility. Before this, it was unknown to the outside world, limited to certain parts of the state. After widespread destruction due to the earthquake in the Mithila region in 1934, which devastated the whole undivided Bihar, a British officer, William G. Archer visited Madhubani district and inspected the damage caused by it. While inspecting, he discovered paintings on the interior walls of the houses similar to the work of Western artists such as Miro and Picasso. He took some pictures of these paintings and wrote about the paintings in an art magazine, thus Madhubani painting also became known in the outside world.

Mithila region has an agricultural economy but was crippled by the drought of 1966 to 1968. The All India Handicrafts Board encouraged the women of Mithila to make paintings on paper for commercial sale. Since then the women of the region have started making paintings on handmade paper and created a new source of income.

Popular products:

Today thousands of Madhubani painting artists make various products for livelihood. Some of the products are:-

- Madhubani Paintings
- Mithila painting bearing artifacts
- Madhubani Hand Painted Sarees
- Madhubani Hand Painted Suits
- Madhubani Hand Painted Kurtis
- Madhubani Hand Painted Dupattas
- Madhubani Hand Painted Stoles
- Madhubani Hand Painted Bedsheets and curtains
- Madhubani Hand Painted Cushion Covers

- Madhubani Hand Painted Handbags
- Madhubani Hand Painted Purses
- Madhubani Hand Painted Trays
- Madhubani Hand Painted Coasters
- Madhubani Hand Painted Office Supplies

Raw Materials ::

Paper :

In the past, Mithila paintings were done on walls prepared by applying mud and cow dung, but after 1966-68 these paintings are also made on handmade paper.

Handmade paper is prepared by mixing cow dung, neem juice, and multani mitti. This gives the paper a light yellowish appearance that resembles a mud wall. It also enhances the durability of paintings by protecting them from termites and insects. But currently handmade paper of light yellow color is easily available in the market and it is directly used for making Madhubani paintings.

Colors :

Natural and bold colors like red, yellow, blue, black, etc. are used in Madhubani paintings. Some colors and their natural sources are mentioned below.

- Black: The black color is made by mixing soot with cow dung. Black is used to make borders and outlines.
- Yellow: The yellow color is made from turmeric.
- White: White color is made from rice powder.
- Green: The green color is made from the leaves of a wood apple tree.
- Blue: Blue color is obtained from indigo.
- Red: The red color is obtained from Kusum flowers or red sandalwood.
- Orange: The orange color is made from the Tesu flowers of the Palash tree.

(Natural colors are being replaced by fabric colors because fabric colors are long-lasting. However, there are still many artists who are making Madhubani paintings in traditional ways.)

Tools :

Nib Pens and brushes of various sizes are used to draw the outlines of the images. Drawings are filled with natural colors or fabric colors using brushes, twigs, matchsticks, and fingers.

Themes :

The themes and motifs of Madhubani art are drawn from mythology, rituals and local flora and fauna. Madhubani paintings mainly depict the following subjects: –

1. Scenes and stories from Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata and other Vedic literature.
2. Images of Hindu deities like Shiva-Parvati, Rama-Sita, Radha-Krishna, Lord Ganesha, Vishnu-Lakshmi, Lord Hanuman, Maa Saraswati, Maa Kali, Maa Durga, etc.
3. Human figures with large bulging eyes and pointed noses.
4. Heavenly bodies like the sun and moon.
5. Pictures of elephants, fish, turtles, snakes, peacocks, parrots, trees, leaves, flowers, etc.
6. Social events such as weddings and festivals. Auspicious marriage painting like Kohbar is related to wedding rituals. The central theme of Kohbar painting is love and fertility.
7. Aspects of the daily life of women of the Mithila region.
8. Folklore of King Shailesh of ancient Mithila.
9. Rahu Puja.
10. Tantric style Hindu deities and auspicious yantras.

Madhubani Painting Styles & Designs :

Madhubani paintings are classified into four different styles like Bharni, Kachni, Godhana, and Tantric.

Bharni Style:

Bharni means filling. In the Bharni style, the outlines of the images are drawn in bold and dark black and the images are filled with bright colors like red, yellow, orange, etc.

Kachni Style:

Kachni means line art. In the Kachni style, elaborate line paintings are made. The images are filled with closely drawn parallel lines or small dots. The thickness of the lines depends on the design.

Mainly black and vermilion (brilliant red) colors are used to make the Kachni style paintings.

Godhana Style :

Godhana means tattoo. In the Godhana style, repeated images are arranged in parallel lines, concentric circles or rectangles to form various patterns. The images are drawn in black, but some are also filled with colors. Some Godhana style artists use cow dung washed handmade paper to make paintings.

Tantric Style:

Tantric is related to tantra. In the Tantric style, the colors and descriptions given in the Tantric texts are followed. The pictures of Hindu deities and yantras such as Shree Yantra, Shri Bhairav Yantra, etc. are depicted.

Response from modern marketing spaces:

Modern marketing channels, i.e. online marketing spaces are extending very positive response towards marketing of this art form. This is because of it's growing fame and glory along with domestic and international demand. Online marketing giants, such as Amazon, Flipkart and others are getting very encouraging response which indicates bright future for commercial viability of this art form.

What we need further:

All is well, but we still require a few catalysts to grow further and to avoid stagnation in the early future:

- (1) Dedicated Market research,
- (2) Dedicated Marketing platform,
- (3) More exposure to encouraging related reforms,
- (4) A thorough research on more aspects of this art form,
- (5) Research and survey for marketing needs on innovation and fusion without damaging it's basic structure to avoid stagnation,
- (6) Structured training and refresher programmes for artisan and marketing personnel.

EVALUATION OF DEVELOPED ARTICLE :

It can be seen from **Table-1** that table cloth obtained highest weighted mean score 3.46 in case of colour combination. Folder and cushion cover with average weighted mean score 1.83 and 1.56 obtained second and third rank respectively. Data in **Table-2** revealed that table cloth (WMS-3.7) was found the most preferred article by the respondents whereas folder with weighted mean score 1.66 obtained third rank for its innovativeness. Data in **Table 3** showed that majority of the respondents considered table cloth as "best" with respect to their overall appeal with weighted mean score 3.5. Folder was obtained third rank by the respondents (WMS-1.73) for its overall appearance. It can be seen from **Table 4** that there was variations in the views of consumer over the cost of the articles. 63.3 percent and 76.6 percent of total respondents reported that the cost of cushion cover and table cloth was adequate. The suggested cost for folder was found to be high according to 43.3 percent of the total respondents.

Table-1 : Preferences of the respondents of colour combination of the prepared articles

(n=30)

Name of the articles	Weighted means score	Rank
Cushion Cover	1.56	III
Folder	1.83	II
Table Cloth	3.46	I

Table-2: Preferences of the respondents of innovativeness of the prepared articles

(n=30)

Name of the articles	Weighted means score	Rank
Cushion Cover	2.06	II
Folder	1.66	III
Table Cloth	3.70	I

Table-3: Preferences of the respondents of overall appeal of the prepared articles

(n=30)

Name of the articles	Weighted means score	Rank
Cushion Cover	2.86	II
Folder	1.73	III
Table Cloth	3.50	I

Table-4: Preferences of the respondents regarding suitability of quoted price

(n=30)

Name of the articles	Quoted Price	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.
		High	Adequate	Low
Cushion Cover	125	10	76.6	13.3
Folder	155	43.3	16.66	40
Table Cloth	195	3.3	63.3	33.3

Conclusion :

The Mithila Painting has travelled ages and continues it's glory. It has been transferred generations to generations without hampering it's basic structure. Now it is high time to harness it's commercial viability and thus extending financial gain to it's followers and practitioners. We also, conclude from above study that, there is enough variety and styles available to offer fresh products to seekers and to avoid stagnation through fusion among themselves and further innovations as per need, which is also

it's Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Mithila Painting is all set to mesmerizing the world around for long and hence it's commercial viability is immense.

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