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A Study on Customer Perception towards Kalamkari Products - Pedana, Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Kalamkari work is an art form of textile tradition, using modrants and natural dyes. Kalamkari started off during the Mughal dynasty and presently Andhra Pradesh is the largest producer of Kalamkari fabric. With the emergence of high quality machine looms and acceptance for printed textiles; Kalamkari art came on the verge of extinction. However, printed Kalamkari is a new craze among the current generation, as it is a combination of traditional and modern trends. Present study is to analyse the perception of customers towards kalamkari products with respect to four marketing mix elements. Statements related to product, price, promotion and place were offered to customer and their responses, further analysed to summarise findings and draw inferences.

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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.

Kalamkari has got rich heritage from ages by making various products in different styles. Most of the units are small and labour intensive. These units are providing employment to women and youth of Pedana. But today Kalamkari units in Pedana are facing plethora of problems due to the advancement of technology in garment industry, change in preferences of customers, lack of variety in Kalamkari products and increased role of middlemen. Present study is an attempt to understand customers perception towards kalamkari products. It offers valuable inputs to kalamkari entrepreneurs to make necessary changes in the marketing mix elements, which will be helpful not only in retaining target customers but to grab new markets as well.

Research Objectives

- To know about kalamkari products and the process of making Kalamkari fabrics
- To analyse the perception of customers towards kalamkari products.
- To draw inferences on the basis of customer responses

Hypothesis Statements

The following Hypothesis statements are tested to figure out the inferences.

1. H₀: The perception of customers on kalamkari product features is not positive ($U \leq 3$)
2. H₀: The perception of customers on pricing strategies of kalamkari products is not positive ($U \leq 3$)

3. H₀: Perception of customers on promotional strategies of kalamkari products is not positive ($U \leq 3$)

4. H₀: Perception of kalamkari customers on demand, accessibility, availability and adoptability of alternate channels is not positive ($U \leq 3$)

About Kalamkari Products and process

One of the most ancient arts in INDIA originated about 3000 years is KALAMKARI. The word Kalamkari is derived from the words Kalam and Kari. Kalam means pen with which the drawings are drawn, and Kari means craftsmanship. Kalamkari involves seventeen steps and only natural dyes are used in it. This art form is used to describe the events of HINDU mythology on the fabrics. In the past, this art is done only on cotton textile. But nowadays this has been extended to all types of fabrics, wall paintings, dupattas, pillow cushions etc.

In India, there are two distinct styles of Kalamkari. They are the Srikalahasti style and the Machilipatnam style. The Srikalahasti style kalamkari is made by using a pen (kalam) for a freehand drawing of the subject and filling in the colours. This is entirely handwork. Whereas the Machilipatnam style is made at Pedana near Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The Machilipatnam style involves the procedures of block printing. This art is influenced by Persian art and involves patronage of Mughal and Golconda sultanate.

According to sources, Hand block-printed Kalamkari is a tedious and time-consuming process involving a minimum of 10 steps. Important steps in making kalamkari are:

Most of the ingredients used in making kalamkari are bought from local sources. Key ingredients used in Kalamkari art are:

- Cotton Cloth
- Indigo Blue
- Alzarin
- Anar

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- A solution of alum, tamarind and Indian madder root
- Pobbaku
- Ventilago Madraspatana Gartan (Surudu Chekka)
- Myrobalan
- Mango Bark and Pomegranate

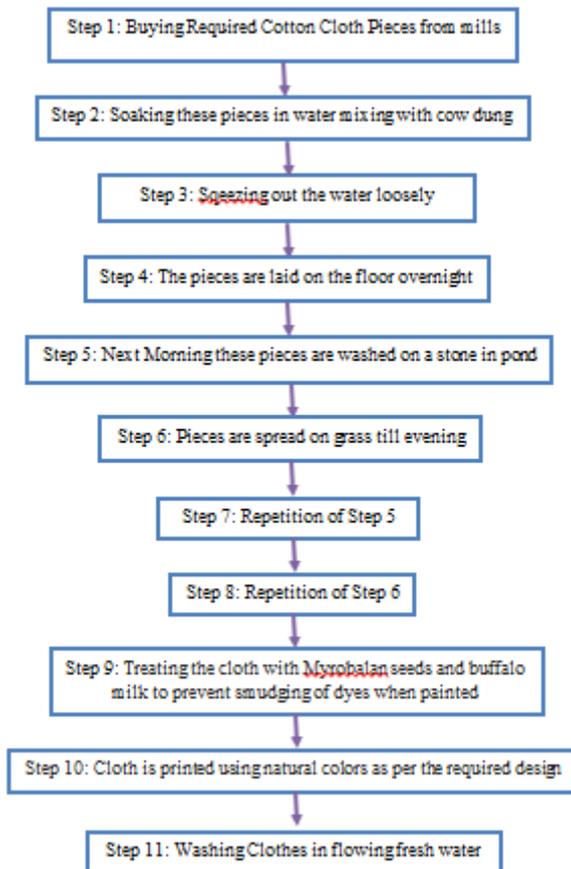


Figure 1. Process of Kalamkari Products.

6. Review of literature

K. Prakash (2003), Kalamkari the very famous form of art expression by the use of vegetable styles on cotton fabrics is yet prevalent in Kalahasti of a Bamboo sticks, fashioned by the painters themselves to apply mordant on the fabric.

Shakuntala Ramani (2007), a distinctive aspect of Kalam Kari is the versatile use of vegetable colours by the artist. Kalamkari paintings on cloth are produced by application of dyes extracted from natural sources like roots, leaves, flowers and fruits. Another significant aspect of this art is that it has been a vehicle of not only disseminating knowledge of religious texts, but also records historical events and important happenings connected with Royalty and polity. Kalamkari paintings have transformed this purely religious textile art form into a vibrant textile tradition with the beauty of its design and colour.

Unnikrishnan (2001) defines; Eco-friendly products are the products, which do not contain harmful, dangerous, toxic, allergic or poisonous chemicals or other substances used at different levels of manufacturers of textiles.

According to Guru Mallesh Prabhu (2001), the textiles which do not contain any hazardous substances or toxic substances and are biologically degradable, so that they do not cause any damage to the environment is called as ecofriendly.

Jason duke (2003), in his blog People are becoming more conscious about the products they are buying and how these products are made. That's why manufacturers are creating styles crafted from sustainable resources. From sport shirts to fleece to accessories, eco friendly products are a welcome

alternative that are designed to work in harmony with nature. Eco Friendly products is a fledgling part of the apparel industry it will take time to make it to the mainstream in a more profound way, but as time goes on more products will be available for the environmentally conscious consumer.

Hashmi (2012) "The Handicraft 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." Hence it should be a job of the design professionals to identify the problems and try and invent and create methods that would boost the industry.

Research Methodology

Present study focuses on understanding customers perception on kalamkari products. The core of the research is to study the marketing mix elements of the Kalamkari units (product, price, place and promotion).

SAMPLE SOURCE: customers of Vijayawada, Guntur and machilipatnam are considered as sample source.

SAMPLE SIZE: 100 respondents are covered to carry out the study.

SAMPLING METHOD: Simple random sampling method is used.

DATA SOURCE: Primary data is mainly used for the study.

DATA COLLECTION: Data was collected through comprehensive questionnaire to prospect customers. Questionnaire consists of statements, which cover important aspect of product, price, place and promotion.

DATA ANALYSIS: Likert scale is used to identify scores. For further analysis one sample t-test is applied to prove hypothesis.

Limitations of the study

The study is confined to villages and cities near Machilipatnam. The study is limited to understanding perception of kalamkari customers.

Brief Presentation of Demographic results of respondents:

Important demographic characteristics of respondents are consolidated and presented in the below table.

Table 1. Demographic Representation of Respondents

Category	Number Respondents	Percent
Gender:		
Male	59	59
Female	41	41
Total	100	100.0
Age group		
0 - 20 Years	4	4
21 - 40 Years	70	70
41-60 Years	26	26
>60 years	0	0
Total	100	100.0
Marital Status		
Married	58	58
Unmarried	42	42
Total	100	100.0
Type of Family		
Nuclear family	75	75
Joint Family	20	20
Single Parent	5	05
Total	100	100.0
Place of living		
Village	44	44
Town	26	26
City	30	30
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field survey

Table 2. Perception of customers on Kalamkari Product features and design.

No	Statement	SA	A	NO	D	SD	TOTAL
1	The quality of fabric on which Kalamkari prints are made is high	69 (345)	21 (84)	6 (18)	3 (6)	1 (1)	100 (454)
2	High quality Kalamkari products are available.	41 (205)	46 (184)	10 (30)	2 (4)	1 (1)	100 (424)
3	The Kalamkari products are not harmful.	49 (245)	41 (164)	7 (21)	2 (4)	1 (1)	100 (435)
4	Kalamkari products last longer when compared to synthetic fabrics.	17 (85)	26 (104)	10 (30)	35 (70)	12 (12)	100 (301)
5	The Kalamkari products are available in wide variety of designs.	10 (50)	28 (112)	18 (54)	31 (62)	13 (13)	100 (291)
6	Kalamkari designs are very much attractive and appealing.	42 (210)	43 (172)	10 (30)	5 (10)	0 (0)	100 (422)
7	Customization is possible for Kalamkari products(products as per customer demands like colour, fabric and etc)	41 (205)	36 (144)	13 (39)	7 (14)	3 (3)	100 (405)
8	Kalamkari products are eco friendly and safe.	50 (250)	34 (136)	11 (33)	5 (10)	0 (0)	100 (429)
TOTAL		319 (1595)	275 (1100)	85 (255)	90 (180)	31 (31)	800 (3161)

Note: (SA- strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-No Opinion, D-disagree, SD Strongly Disagree).

Source: Field survey

Product Related Statement Analysis

The questions relating to product design, features, quality etc are framed to analyze the satisfaction of the 100 customers with kalamkari products. The responses are tabulated using Likert five point scale.

The Likert's five-point scale aggregated in customer perceptions results show a positive response on kalamkari product related statement. The total aggregate score is 3161, which is more than mean or neutral value of 2400. Out of eight product related statements, most of the customers agreed that the kalamkari products are not harmful (435) and that high quality products are available (424). Customers responded most positively on the quality of fabric on which kalamkari prints are made is high (454). There is a low response to the statements like durability of kalamkari products (301) and varieties of designs (291). Further t-test is applied to test the hypothesis.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: The perception of customers on kalamkari product features is not positive ($U \leq 3$)

H₁: Customers have positive image on kalamkari product features ($U > 3$)

For six statements related to product features, customers' opinion is positive and Null Hypothesis (H₀) is rejected as calculated t-values are greater than that of critical value. Hence "Kalamkari products have got positive image in the minds of customers with respect to products features" and Alternate Hypothesis H₁ is accepted.

Null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted for the 4th and 5th statements as calculated values are less than table values. Due to natural dyes and other colors, durability of kalamkari products is less than synthetic fabrics. Kalamkari fabrics are also available in limited designs.

Price related statement analysis

Statements related to pricing, bargaining power, various price ranges, affordability and uniformity were asked and results are presented in Table 4.

The total aggregate score is 2410, which is more than neutral score of 1800. Out of six price related statements, most of the customers agreed that the kalamkari products are available at affordable price (430) and most of the customers felt that prices of kalamkari products are satisfactory (424); most of the customers are also opined that kalamkari products are available at various price ranges (420); it is evident from the responses that retailers or dealers are charging higher prices when compared to e-channels (421). There is a scope for customers to bargain the pricing of the products (406). Most of the customers disagreed to the statement that the prices of kalamkari products are uniform irrespective of the location, which indicates that there exist the price difference in various locations (309).

Table 3. Single sample t-test results to measure the perception of customers towards product features of kalamkari products.

No.	Statement	Mean	Variance	Obs	H.M	df	t Stat	t Critical one-tail	H ₀
1	Kalamkari Products are not made of high quality fabrics	4.54	0.675	100	3	99	18.742	1.660	Rejected
2	High-end quality Kalamkari products are not available.	4.24	0.629	100	3	99	15.639	1.660	Rejected
3	The Kalamkari products are harmful (not skin friendly).	4.35	0.614	100	3	99	17.234	1.660	Rejected
4	The durability of Kalamkari products are less when compare to synthetic fabrics	3.01	1.788	100	3	99	0.075	1.660	Accepted
5	Kalamkari products are available in fewer varieties	2.91	1.517	100	3	99	-0.731	1.660	Accepted
6	Kalamkari designs are not very attractive & appealing.	4.22	0.678	100	3	99	14.812	1.660	Rejected
7	Customization is not possible for kalamkari products	4.05	1.098	100	3	99	10.018	1.660	Rejected
8	Kalamkari products are not eco-friendly products.	4.29	0.733	100	3	99	15.065	1.660	Rejected

HM – Hypothesis Mean, Obs: No of Observations, df – Degrees of Freedom. H₀ – Null Hypothesis

t-test is executed at 5% Significant Level

Source: Table 2

Table 4. Response of customers on Pricing strategies of Kalamkari Products.

No	Statement	SA	A	NO	D	SD	TOTAL
1	Price of the Kalamkari products is satisfactory	52 (260)	28 (112)	13 (39)	6 (12)	1 (1)	100 (424)
2	Bargaining power of customers is high for Kalamkari products	34 (170)	46 (184)	15 (45)	2 (4)	3 (3)	100 (406)
3	Kalamkari products are available in different price ranges	40 (200)	46 (184)	8 (24)	6 (12)	0 (0)	100 (420)
4	The prices of Kalamkari products are affordable.	48 (240)	40 (160)	7 (21)	4 (8)	1 (1)	100 (430)
5.	The prices of Kalamkari products are uniform irrespective of the location of the store (city/town/village)	17 (85)	29 (116)	14 (42)	26 (52)	14 (14)	100 (309)
6.	The retailers are charging high prices by offering through e- commerce websites	41 (205)	43 (172)	12 (36)	4 (8)	0 (0)	100 (421)
TOTAL		232 (1160)	232 (928)	69 (207)	48 (96)	19 (19)	600 (2410)

Note: (SA- strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-No Opinion, D-disagree, SD Strongly Disagree).

Source: Field survey

Table 5. Single sample t-test results to measure the perception of customers towards pricing statements of kalamkari products.

No.	Statement	Mean	Variance	Obs	H.M	df	t Stat	t Critical one-tail	H ₀
1	Prices of kalamkari products are not satisfactory	4.24	0.932	100	3	99	12.846	1.660	Rejected
2	Bargaining power of kalamkari customers is low.	4.06	0.845	100	3	99	11.532	1.660	Rejected
3	Kalamkari Products are available in limited price ranges.	4.2	0.687	100	3	99	14.479	1.660	Rejected
4	The prices of kalamkari products are not affordable	4.31	0.707	100	3	99	15.538	1.660	Rejected
5	The prices of kalamkari products are differed on the bases of location of store	3.09	1.800	100	3	99	0.671	1.660	Accepted
6	There is no differences in kalamkari prices between store and online channels.	4.21	0.652	100	3	99	14.980	1.660	Rejected

HM – Hypothesis Mean, Obs: No of Observations, df – Degrees of Freedom. H₀ – Null Hypothesis

t-test is executed at 5% Significant Level

Source: Table 4

Despite there is a mixed opinion on differed pricing of kalamkari products between traditional and modern distribution channels, overall aggregate score relate to pricing of Kalamkari products is positive (2410) against neutral score of 1800. For further analysis, t-test is applied to conduct hypothesis test.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: The perception of customers on pricing strategies of kalamkari products is not positive ($U <= 3$)

H₁: The perception of customers on pricing strategies of kalamkari products is positive ($U > 3$)

The statistical t-test is applied to all six pricing related statements with a significant level of 5%. The null hypothesis for five statements is rejected as calculated values are higher than table value. Hence it is proven that “The perception of

customers towards pricing of kalamkari products is reasonable and positive” and alternate hypothesis H₁ is accepted.

The statement related to price difference among locations turned out to be true as the calculated value (0.671) is less than table value (1.660). It reveals that price standardisation is needed among distributors and dealers of various locations. Hence null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted.

Promotion related statement Analysis

A list of statement is posed to customers on promotional elements of kalamkari products. The details are exhibited in Table 6.

The Likert’s five-point scale aggregate results show a positive response on promotional related statements of kalamkari products. The acceptance score (1264) obtained is more than the neutral score (1200). It is an important point to note that the acceptance score is just marginally higher than

Table 6. Response of customers on Promotion strategies of Kalamkari Products.

No	Statement	SA	A	NO	D	SD	TOTAL
1	The promotion of Kalamkari products drives the people to buy the product.	42 (210)	35 (140)	17 (51)	6 (12)	0 (0)	100 (413)
2	The Kalamkari products are advertised through print and electronic media.	23 (115)	23 (92)	8 (24)	31 (62)	15 (15)	100 (308)
3.	Discounts/Offer are available on Kalamkari products which influences purchasing decision.	37 (185)	37 (148)	14 (42)	8 (16)	4 (4)	100 (395)
4.	The availability of Kalamkari products in handicrafts exhibitions and tradeshows leads to impulsive buying.	42 (210)	41 (164)	14 (42)	2 (4)	1 (1)	100 (421)
TOTAL		144 (720)	136 (544)	53 (159)	47 (94)	20 (20)	400 (1537)

Note: (SA- strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-No Opinion, D-disagree, SD Strongly Disagree).

Source: Field survey

Table 7. Single sample t-test results to measure the perception of customers towards promotional strategies of kalamkari products.

No.	Statement	Mean	Variance	Obs	H.M	df	t Stat	t Critical one-tail	H ₀
1	The promotion of kalamkari products does not drive customers to buy them.	4.13	0.821	100	3	99	12.469	1.660	Rejected
2	There is no considerable advertisement efforts of kalamkari products in both print and electronic media	3.08	2.074	100	3	99	0.555	1.660	Accepted
3	Discounts and offers do not have significant influence on sales of kalamkari products.	3.95	1.199	100	3	99	8.674	1.660	Rejected
4	Impulsive buying decisions are not made in trade shows and handicraft exhibitions.	4.21	0.693	100	3	99	14.537	1.660	Rejected

HM – Hypothesis Mean, Obs: No of Observations, df – Degrees of Freedom. H₀ – Null Hypothesis

t-test is executed at 5% Significant Level. Source: Table 6.

the mean score. Out of Four promotion related statements, customers responded most positively that the availability of kalamkari products in tradeshows persuaded them to take impulse decisions (421); they also felt that the promotion of kalamkari products drives people to buy the product (413). With a less score (308), considerable percentage of customers opined that the advertisements of kalamkari products through both print and electronic media are very less.

Total aggregate score (1537) indicates that the perception of customers is positive towards promotion of kalamkari products. Further t-test is applied to test the hypothesis.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Perception of customers on promotional strategies of kalamkari products is not positive ($U \leq 3$)

H₁: perception of customers on promotional strategies of kalamkari products is positive ($U > 3$)

Null hypothesis is rejected for three out of four statements. Hence it is concluded that “the overall perception of customers on promotional strategies of kalamkari products are positive”. Hence Alternate Hypothesis H₁ is accepted.

Most of the customers perceived that Advertisement efforts made by both kalamkari entrepreneurs and dealers are not at all sufficient (Statement 2). The calculated value of the statement (0.555) is less than table value (1.660). Hence Null hypothesis is accepted.

Place related statement analysis

Availability of the products through various channels is very essential for success of any product or service and kalamkari products are also not an exception. In this regards, perception of customers on place related statements of kalamkari products are shown in Table 8.

The acceptance score is 1260, which is not higher than mean or neutral value of 1200. Out of four place related statements, most of the customers agreed that the availability of kalamkari products is more in cities but the access of kalamkari products is differed in various regions (322).

To test the hypothesis statistical t-test is conducted by taking all four important statements relate to availability and accessibility of kalamkari products.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Perception of kalamkari customers on demand, accessibility, availability and adoptability of alternate channels is not positive ($U \leq 3$)

H₁: Perception of kalamkari customers on demand, accessibility, availability and adoptability of alternate channels is positive ($U < 3$)

Except accessibility statement, Calculated values of t-statistical test at 5% significant level are higher than table values for remaining three statements such as availability of kalamkari products, demand for the products in various regions and adaptability of alternate channels by customers. Hence it can be said that “perception of customers of

Table 8. Responses of customers on Place related statements of Kalamkari Products

No	Statement	SA	A	NO	D	SD	TOTAL
1	The availability of Kalamkari products is very high in cities.	45 (225)	35 (140)	11 (33)	9 (18)	0 (0)	100 (416)
2	The access to Kalamkari products is similar irrespective of the regions(cities, towns and villages)	20 (100)	29 (116)	16 (48)	23 (46)	12 (12)	100 (322)
3.	The demand for Kalamkari products is more in metros when compared to villages	40 (200)	36 (144)	9 (27)	7 (14)	8 (8)	100 (393)
4.	Customers in cities prefer online buying rather than direct buying.	35 (175)	40 (160)	12 (36)	7 (14)	6 (6)	100 (391)
TOTAL		140 (700)	140 (560)	48 (144)	46 (92)	26 (26)	400 (1522)

Note: (SA- strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-No Opinion, D-disagree, SD Strongly Disagree). Source: Field survey

Table 9. Single sample t-test results showing demand and place related statements of kalamkari products.

No.	Statement	Mean	Variance	Obs	H.M	df	t Stat	t Critical one-tail	H ₀
1	The availability of Kalamkari products is not high in cities.	4.15	0.912	100	3	99	12.011	1.660	Rejected
2	The access of kalamkari products is differed in cities, towns and villages.	3.21	1.743	100	3	99	1.590	1.660	Accepted
3	There is no difference between cities and villages in demand for kalamkari products	3.92	1.509	100	3	99	7.490	1.660	Rejected
4	The customer preference of buying choice cities is equal between physical store and online channels.	3.90	1.303	100	3	99	7.884	1.660	Rejected

HM – Hypothesis Mean, Obs: No of Observations, df – Degrees of Freedom. H₀ – Null Hypothesis

t-test is executed at 5% Significant Level

Source: Table 8

kalamkari products is positive on distribution and demand related statements” Alternate hypothesis (H_1) is accepted

Availability or accessibility of kalamkari products is differed among cities, villages, towns and metros. The calculated value (1.590) for the statement is less than table value (1.660). Hence Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

Summary and Conclusion

When demographic of respondents are observed, majority of the respondents were male respondents. Also, majority of the respondents belong to 21-40 years. Majority of sample respondents live in villages followed by cities and towns.

Most of the customers are of the opinion that the durability of kalamkari products is low when compared to synthetic fabrics and other handicrafts. Fading of kalamkari designs on the fabric was observed. Manufacturers have to find ways to improve durability of the products without causing damage to the environment. Even though kalamkari designs are found to be attractive and appealing, they are very limited and routine (like leaf design, dolakh, hands, Buddha, durga ma, swans and others). To meet demands of customers, manufacturers need to prepare blocks of new designs based on customers' needs and latest fashion trends.

The kalamkari products are not available uniformly across different regions viz villages, towns, cities and metros. Some customers who belong to villages and small towns are not able to buy the products even though they are interested. In order to increase the sales the kalamkari products should be made available at different regions by estimating the demand properly.

Despite the status of cult branding and positive mouth publicity, demand for kalamkari products is not at expected levels. Cultural and heritage model advertisement through print and electronic media may improve the prospects of kalamkari products. It is also clear from the analysis that people tend to buy kalamkari products more when exhibited in handlooms, handicrafts exhibitions and tradeshows. So the

manufacturers should make the products available more and more in exhibitions and tradeshows. Government should also support in organising frequent events to scale up sales and revenues of craftsmen. The products should be made available not only in metros but also in small towns and villages to increase customer awareness and there by demand for the products. Stakeholders like Manufacturers, middle men and supporting bureaucratic institutions have to draw an effective action plan for penetrating kalamkari products deep into semi urban and rural areas. It is also important to maintain price uniformity between traditional and online channels of distribution.

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