Visual Ergonomic Issues in The Craft Sectors of Rajasthan, India

Prabir Mukhopadhyay

Indian Institute of Information Technology Design & Manufacturing, Jabalpur, INDIA.

Introduction:

Craft and craft related products form the livelihood of significant population of rural and semi-urban India (Mukhopadhyay, 2006) In India craft is the largest employer after agriculture (Woods, 2011). The craft market in India is steadily increasing. It was US Dollar 1.2 million in 2004 and in 2006 it rose to US Dollar 1.9 Billion (Express News Service, 2009). Majority of the people live in rural and remote rural areas where there are no proper roads, electricity or other infrastructural facilities. Thus marketing concepts of the Western world cannot be applied in India (Bhatt, 2007). In the Indian marketing scenario, it is the “made for India” marketing strategies that work (Bhatt, 2007). Craft merchandizing has to adhere to these trends to survive. Unfortunately in the Indian context no organized efforts are evident till date in this direction. The focus in this sector has been exclusively at a micro-level with too much emphasis on occupational health and safety aspects at the manufacturing stage only. This sector generates employment for the local youth. This research was an attempt in that direction to see what role ergonomics could play in visual ergonomic aspects of craft products.

Practise Innovation:

The main objective of this research was investigate the ergonomic issue related to craft merchandizing with reference to visual angle of the tourists, color preference, displaying of elements, illumination level and personal grooming of the staffs selling such merchandize. Direct observation and activity analysis along with photography was used to collect data from the field. Tourists were interviewed at the different tourist sites regarding the different problems they faced related to the display of different craft products.

Findings:

Questionnaire study

Amongst the tourists mementos were maximum in demand (52%) followed by garments (18%) and home décor (12%). Textile (bed sheet, pillow cover etc.) were the least in demand (8%). Shop owners on the other hand put forward a different view based on the sales pattern. According to them mementos were maximum in demand (43%), but it was followed by home décor (30%). The least in demand was also textile (7%) very similar to what the tourists perceived. Majority of the tourists preferred roadside stalls followed by vendors on the road (33%) who sell their products on foot.

Direct observation and activity analysis

There were different points of purchase of merchandize. The observational study reflected maximum frequency of purchase from roadside stalls (54%) by tourists on foot, followed closely by showroom (17%) and vendors on foot (16%). The least point of purchase was from tourists inside moving vehicle and vendors on foot (6%). There were several problems faced by the tourists while purchasing craft merchandize. Majority of them (71%) could not comprehend what the product meant. 22% had problem in visualizing the products. Some tourist (7%) perceived the products as something different (critical confusion).

Photography of different types of craft display units

This revealed five ergonomic issues. The first was visual clutter at the entrance of many showrooms, as a result of stacking of too many products in unorganized manner. The next was change in visual angle of the tourist on elephants back as the elephant climbed up the slope and interacts with the
vendor on foot. The next important issue was odd outfits of the salesperson, like western out fit and selling traditional Indian products.

Discussion:

Display of craft merchandising in India, demands a systems approach with specific focus on customers movement, behaviour, limitations, aspirations and context around. The best place to display craft merchandising or advertise them were at the exit point of monumental sites. At many strategic locations shops or advertisements in expect quadrant of the human visual field could be located

Key Words: ergonomics, systems, craft, merchandizing, visual ergonomics, visual cone.

References


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