



“THE FIRST GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON PRICING THE PRICELESS PAINTINGS- A PARTICIPATIVE APPROACH”

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ABSTRACT:

“The Group Discussion and Participatory Methods are used to collect required information to reach the given objectives in this study. The focused group discussions were carried through open-ended questions to identify the determinants of the painting price. It is learnt during the discussions that the majority of the respondents do not disclose their personal income, pricing policy, links with galleries, and knowledge about the art market as they will have fear rivals. With all that some respondents opined that the price depends upon theme of the painting, situations and circumstances at the time of sale. It is learnt that pricing of painting is an absolutely an individualistic approach rather than a collective game and it is arbitrary in nature as the product is unique in many ways. Hence, the pricing policy of the respondent varies from place to place, time to time and one respondent to another for the same painting”.



KEYWORDS: *Group Discussion and Participatory Methods , pricing policy.*

INTRODUCTION:

This paper is designed to analyze the illustrations carried out during the field work through the group discussions, participatory and observation modes. In the process, an effort is made to investigate the determinants of painting price by asking open-end questions to the participants in the group. The primary objective of conducting the group discussions is to focus upon the open-ended questions with selective respondents.

The open-end questions like No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were asked to 4 selective respondents in group. The discussions are audio recorded with the prior permission of the participants and also maintained in the form of handwritten proceedings. Further, the paper includes the observations made group painting exhibitions during the field work. The discussion was conducted in Bajaj Art Gallery, Nariman Point, Mumbai on 21st April 2016.

Table No: 1. Details of the Group

Sl. No.	Groups Discussions	Number of Participants
1	Group One	4

Source: The field work

2. Group One

Images 1: Group Discussion-1



Participants from left to right: 1) Shri Sandeep Prabhkaran (Age 54), Manager and Curator, Bajaj Art Gallery, Nariman Point-Mumbai. 2) Shri Suraj Lahiri (Age 50), Proprietor, J.S. Art Gallery, Andheri Mumbai, 3) A well known freelancer Shri. Ganesh Panda (Age 58), Mumbai, and Researcher (Age 47). **Date:** 21st April 2016. **Venue:** Solo Exhibition in Bajaj Art Gallery, Nariman Point- Mumbai. **Number of Participants:** 04.

Source: The field work

Table 2: Decoding the respondents of Group-1

Sl. No.	Participant’s original name	Decodes
1	Shri. Sandeep Prabhkaran	Respondent No. 1
2	Shri. Suraj Lahiri	Respondent No. 2
3	Shri. Ganesh Panda	Respondent No. 3
4	Self	Researcher

Source: The field work

Researcher, Question No.1

What amount you have spent on entire education? And do you think that money spent on education will have influence on painting price?

Respondent No 1: “ I don’t remember the total money spent on my entire education, but roughly I must have spent around Rs. 80,000 to 1,00,000 on my entire education. Though, I am fine art graduate but do not practice art because I am Manager and the Curator in this gallery. So, I may not be able to answer this questionthe impact of educational cost on the painting price.”

Respondent No 2: “Nor I remember the total cost of my education. I am also graduate, but not in the field of fine arts. I am a businessman in the field of painting. I run art gallery on commercial

lines. I know practical aspects of art market, but I do not know how far educational cost influences the painting price.....”

Respondent No 3: “.....Yes, I have studied fine arts up to graduation. I must have spent around Rs. 1, 00,000 on fine art education. Though, I am freelance artist for last couple of decades, I do not think money spent on education determines the painting price. I have sold many paintings, but never connected the cost of education and painting price, that is for sure.”

Question No.2. How many solo, group and foreign painting exhibitions have you participated so far ? Does the number of exhibitions determine painting price?

Respondent No1: “..... I do not take part in exhibitions but organize exhibitions of other artists in my gallery. It is my personal experience about other artists that those who have conducted large number of exhibitions in their career, they tend to charge higher price for paintings. I believe, some relationship exist between the number of exhibitions and the painting price.”

Respondent No 2: “Since, I am a proprietor of the art gallery, even I do not take part in exhibitions but I feel the number exhibitions and painting price are somewhere related....., but I may not able to connect the relationship between the number of exhibitions and the painting price.”

Respondent No 3: “Yes..... I have organized about 20 to 25 solo exhibition in India and Abroad. Actually, I do not take part in group exhibitions. To be precise, there is no relationship between the number of exhibitions that I have organized so far and the price of the paintings. I do not increase the price of a painting after each exhibition. It is not the number of exhibitions but it is the cost of the exhibition may influence the painting price.”

Question No.3 .What is the average cost of a solo exhibition for 7 days in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata including lodging, boarding and gallery expense? Does the cost of exhibition influence the painting price?

Respondent No1: “Oh..... as a Manager, I can answer this question. The average cost of 7 days solo exhibition differs from one gallery to another gallery in the same city and also differs from city to city. Now, it depends up on the kind of the exhibition you are organizing..... for example, exhibition with or without cocktail. The average cost of exhibitions is in between Rs 70,000 and 80,000 without cocktail and with cocktail between Rs. 200,000 and 250,000. As a manager and curator of the gallery, I feel, the cost of exhibition has an impact on the painting price.”

Respondent No 2: “Yes, as a Proprietor, I agree with the Respondent No1’s reply, but I wish to make some additions here, that the major portion of the exhibition cost is “Promotional Expenditure”. We need to promote art and artists well before exhibitions are organized. We spend lots of money on publicity i.e. printing of catalogue, display of posters and banners and postage charges. Some time, we need to manage the media too. When so much money is spent on the exhibitions, naturally it will have an impact on the painting price”

Respondent No 3: “Even, I agree with Respondent No1 and No 2, and conclude saying that the cost of the exhibition has link with the painting price.”

Question No.4. How many paintings you have sold so far? What is the total income earned ? Does it have an influence on the painting price?

Respondent No1: (Not applicable)

Respondent No 2: (Not applicable)

Respondent No 3: “I feel your questions are irritating some time. I do not exactly remember how many paintings are sold by me and what amount of income I have earned.....but one thing is sure, I have sold good number of paintings in the market and made good money out of it. Since, I am freelancer; I am supposed to make living out of it. And most of my clients are the foreigners.”

Question No.5.How many paintings have you done so far? Is there any relationship between the number of painting done and its price?

Respondent No1: (Not applicable)

Respondent No 2: (Not applicable)

Respondent No1: “Actually, I have not maintained any records of the paintings done and sold. But roughly I must have done more than 3000 paintings till now. And your second half of the question is

about the relationship between the number of paintings produced and its price. For me, doing a painting depends up on so many unknown factors like mood, situations and surroundings and so on. So, the number of paintings produced is nothing do with its price. The fact is, if paintings are sold, you will do more paintings and vice versa. The sale of large number of paintings has positive impact on it's price.”

Question No.6. What is the cost and price of a painting of 24” x 24” size? What factors do you consider while fixing the price?

Respondent No1: (Not applicable)

Respondent No 2: (Not applicable)

Respondent No 3: “ Oh....the cost of the plain canvas (size 24”x24”) is around Rs 1000, colours Rs. 500, and other expenses Rs 200. All put together, the cost of making 24”x24” painting on canvas is between Rs. 1500 and 2000 and not more than that.”

“.....hmm price tag is all together different. The price of the painting is independent of it's cost. I charge Rs. 16.000 for per square feet. Now you calculate the total price for 24”x24” size painting? i.e. 4 sq. feet x Rs.16, 000 = Rs. 64,000. So, the final price is Rs 64,000 for 24” x 24” painting.”

Observations:

The group includes different stakeholders of the art market such as the Manager and Curator of the gallery, Proprietor and the Artist. The manager being agent between the artists and the owner of the gallery does not relate much with painting price. His objective is to maximize the sales revenue by promoting art and artists. The second stakeholder is the owner of the gallery; he has influence over the painting price in one or the other way. And the third stakeholder is a freelance artist, who has more than 3 decades experience in the field of art. It is learnt from the discussion that the money spent on education, the number of exhibitions, and the number of paintings produced do not determine painting price. According to Respondent No.3, the size of the painting and the cost of exhibitions govern the painting price. According to him, the painting price is determined by the 'size' of the painting and not by the cost of exhibition.

REFERENCES

The field work; the discussion was conducted in Bajaj Art Gallery, Nariman Point, Mumbai on 21st April 2016