

Market Potential of Traditional *Indhi* of Haryana

Parul Gill*, Saroj S. Jeet Singh**, Prem Lata** and Pankaj Gill***

*Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India

**Department of Clothing and Textiles, CCS Haryana Agricultural University,
Hisar, Haryana, India

***Govt. PG College, Karnal, Haryana, India

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ABSTRACT Haryana has a rich tradition of handicrafts. But due to various reasons rural artisans are abandoning the age-old art. The study is an attempt to prove the potential of revival of traditional *Indhi* of Haryana. *Indhi* was modified to suit the needs and taste of potential contemporary users. The market potential of modified *indhi* was assessed on the basis of aesthetic appeal, utility, workmanship, uniqueness, color combination, fabric and traditional value. The overall acceptability was found to be excellent.

INTRODUCTION

Handicraft is man's first technology, the technology of the hand. A handicraft at its finest represents man's need to create simultaneously with mind and hand. A fine object is intended not only to be aesthetically pleasing. It is essentially a skilled solution to a specific need. So at one level handicraft may emerge from an indigenous use of locally available natural materials – clay, fibre, wood, metals. On another, it may be a highly intricate and expensive set of processes that are commissioned by the temple, by the land-owning community, or by the court (Saraf 1982) and the identity lies in the nature and its usage.

The rich craft heritage of India is unique and diverse as its customs and traditions. Each part of the country has its own unique cultural ethos, which is manifested in the handicrafts of that particular region. Indian crafts and handicraft traditions are influenced by local topography, climate, and socio-religious factors (www.crafts.in India.com).

Haryana has some interesting handicrafts to offer. Village women usually make crafts after the harvest is over (www.indian-handicrafts-suppliers.com). The folk art objects in Haryana are primarily and originally designed and made to serve the self needs of the artist's family, they may not give that artistic excellence and refined look to the outsiders, but still they are fascinating and are used as the functional objects. The strong forms, rich ideas and the rare material of folk-art in Haryana come from the dominant folk-spirit. *Beejna* (hand fan), *indhi* (a round disc-kept on a head for carrying water-pitchers), *durrie* (to spread on *charpai*), *toran* or

bandanwar (door decoration), *jhilmil* (a decorative item) and *guddo* (doll), are the very beautiful folk art objects of Haryana (Nagar 1995).

Due to several socio-economic and cultural factors, the artisans are gradually moving away from these traditional crafts. Based on the folk craft, innovative articles of contemporary use can be prepared. This aspect of value addition of traditional craft needs to be disseminated among rural women (Grewal and Kaur 2004). Researches have been undertaken in other states to adapt these crafts to contemporary uses (Goyal 2008; Jani 2008; Prakash 2008 and Thoudam 2008). But such efforts are rare to found in Haryana.

Innovation, in a way, has a bearing on the sustenance of the artisans/craftsmen and their ability to preserve their traditional skills. The need of the hour is to innovate but not at the cost of the craft losing its distinct identity. Inducing distortions and making senseless objects may prove counter-productive. Instead, introducing designs or new themes within the traditional framework like introducing or adapting the craft to other uses would help in the survival and growth of the craftsman and his craft (www.hinduonnet.com).

The compelling need to sustain crafts and craftspeople has rendered irrelevant the debate over whether tradition should be 'preserved' or modified. The relevant and tricky question today is how to modify, or 'contemporise'. Both by instinct, and observation, the SEWA women understand the logic and say that it is better to modify our tradition to suit the market than let it die? In any case, they say, the tradition will not survive if the artisans don't (Sharma 2011).

In view of the above discussion the present study is conducted with the following objectives:

1. To explore the existing handcrafted household textile articles of Haryana.
2. To modify the selected article for contemporary use for marketing.
3. To assess the market potential of modified article.

METHODOLOGY

1. Collection of Articles

To prepare a list of possible handcrafted traditional household textile articles 30 women above 50 years of age having rural background were contacted personally using snowball technique. Preliminary information about articles with reference to fabric, colour, embellishment techniques and their cultural importance was gathered using open ended interview schedule. The articles were collected as per availability from households of acquaintance from different villages of Haryana state and were documented through photographs.

2. Locale of Study

The articles were collected from twenty different villages of nine districts of Haryana state.

3. Development of Product

Selected article was planned to be converted into a commercial product to meet contemporary tastes in order to enhance their suitability for marketing. The planning was done on the basis of experts' suggestions.

(a) The Experts: Thirty experts including faculty members and Ph.D. students from I. C. College of Home Science, CCSHAU, Hisar were selected for recording preferences for the shown articles.

(b) Data Collection: The information related to the feasibility of modification for commercial purpose keeping in mind the aesthetic appeal was gathered using interview schedule. Suggestions of experts regarding possible unconventional uses of preferred articles were also sought. Articles preferred by more than 50% respondents were selected and the suggestions were considered for modification as per end uses. Suggestions of

experts regarding colour combinations, fabrics and embellishment were also recorded.

(c) Preparation of Articles: The articles with the suggested modifications were prepared by the researcher herself. Substantial time and efforts were devoted in learning the process of making those articles by close observation of the original specimens.

4. Assessing Market Potential

(a) Costing and Pricing: An informal market survey was carried out to set the upper limit of the price range of the prepared articles within the market acceptability range. While the lower limit was fixed after calculating the total cost of manufacturing, which include raw material, labour and overhead charges. Ten percent margin was also added to this production cost in order to make it more realistic.

(b) Preparation of Tools: For assessing market potential of modified articles two different tools, questionnaire and visitors book, were developed with the help of a business management expert.

A well-structured questionnaire comprising of general information of the respondents and specific information regarding product and price was prepared. To assess the price acceptability three price ranges were offered in the questionnaire. The seven product features were aesthetic appeal, utility, workmanship, uniqueness, color combination, fabric and traditional value. The product features were assessed using four quantum scale, that is, Excellent Very Good, Good and Poor.

For each feature the frequency of each rating was multiplied by the respective weightage and the products were summed up to obtain the total weighted score. It was converted to Weighted Mean Score by dividing it from the number of experts, that is, 200. The sum of WMS of all the product features was divided by the number of features, that is, 7 to obtain the WMS for each article. The articles were finally rated on the basis of their WMS as per the following scale.

WMS	Rating
3.26-4.00	Excellent
2.56-3.25	Very Good
1.76-2.50	Good
1.00-1.75	Poor

(c) Collection of Data: The prepared articles were assessed for product features and price.

Acceptance of these articles in domestic as well as foreign market was assessed by 200 respondents. For this purpose these articles were displayed in the International Trade Fair, Delhi. Responses of Indians as well as foreign visitors, stall owners/exporters, were recorded through the questionnaire and visitors' book.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Traditional *Indhi* /*Indhwa* (Pitcher Base) of Haryana

Various utility articles crafted by women of Haryana revealed the talent hidden in them. They used their skills in making beautiful articles like *Indhwa*, *Indhi*, *Pidhi* (low stool), *Tikri* (lace), *Beejni*, *Jhola* (bag), *Thalposh* (plate cover), *Mejposh* (table cover), and *Takia* (pillow). As mentions a website, the villages of Haryana are bustling center for localized crafts. Women make cloth endis that are used to balance pots on their heads or on the ground (www.indian-handicrafts-suppliers.com).

The round base used to carry pitchers on head to fetch water from the well is locally known as *indhwa* or *indhi*. Features of *indhwa* and *indhi* are presented in Table 1. *Beejna* (hand fan) and *indhi* (a round diskcept on a head for carrying water-pitchers) were mentioned by Nagar (1995) as beautiful folk art objects of Haryana. Deswal (2004) wrote that young *Haryanvi* women helped each other in preparing various articles like *chadar* (sheet), *takia*, *makherne* (forehead ornament for ox), *topi* (cap), *thaile* (bags) and *beejohandi* (seed bag). According to Ranjan and Ranjan (2007), the *indhi*, used as a supportive base for carrying water pots on the head are also made from grass. These form part of the bride's dowry.

When women used to tie their hair in the form of *chundaa* on their head they used *indhwa* for carrying pitchers. This small sized round shaped base of approximate $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter (*indhwas*) with extended fabric strip may or may not have a decorative hanging part. Cushioned base used to support the pitcher was arranged before *chundaa*. The extended fabric strip, crocheted or woven was used to cover voile over *chundaa* to avoid the spoilage of voile with pitcher. Optional hanging part which hung at the end of the extended fabric strip could be a semicircle or a quarter circle and was decorated with mirrors, sequins, beads, etc. According to www.indian-handicrafts-suppliers.com,

the endis are decorated with sequins and colored fabric.

Table 1: Features of *Indhwa* and *Indhi*

Name	Type of article/ use	Material	Colour	Embellishment
<i>Indhwa</i>	Pitcher support (used by women with <i>chunda</i>)	Fabric, crotchet lace	Bright colours	Sequins, beads
<i>Indhi</i>	Pitcher support (used by women with plaits)	Fabric, ropes, cord yarn (soot)	Brigh colours/ multi-colour	Gotta work, sequin, glass bangle pieces, mirrors, <i>funde</i> , crotchet work, cardboard pieces wrapped in fabric

After partition of the country, when plaits came in to existence in Haryana, *indhi* was invented. Ladies without *chundaa* (bun like hairdo on top of head) or with *choti* (plait) used a bigger, multicoloured round base called *indhi*. *Indhies* used with *borla* (forehead ornament) in *Bagar* zone were more in height (approximately 4-5") to cope with the height of *borla*. Traditionally *indhies* were made with tightly twisted fabrics as base material and then these fabrics were wrapped with ropes. Later cotton and woollen threads were used for wrapping. Some ladies started sewing fabric around base instead of wrapping it. This functional article was converted to a piece of art work by decoration with silver coloured *gotta* (metallic ribbon), sequins and beautiful hangings.

The hanging part in early days was made with cardboard pieces wrapped in fabrics and joined together using beads or sequins. *Indhies* were also decorated using cone shaped fabric pieces (*Fun-dane*). Fabric pieces of semicircle shape were turned to bell shape or funnel shape by hanging it at its centre. An interesting accessory is made by women from broken glass bangles. The semicircular pieces of bangles were bent by heating and closing the ends to form an eye like shape. These pieces were hung in the *jaal* (trellis) of threaded beads. Plastic

pipes purchased from market were also used for creating the *jaal*. Pompoms and small stuffed parrots were also used as end pieces to decorate the *indhies*. According to Ranjan and Ranjan (2007), the *indhie* are decorated with colourful fabric, woollen yarn, synthetic rope, beads and shell tassels.

2. Preferences of Experts

This section included the preferences of the experts for contemporary application of handicrafts which were later selected for production of modified articles as per their preferences. All the collected articles were exhibited for taking preferences of the experts on the basis of aesthetic appeal and feasibility of modification for contemporary application.

In the category of household articles *indhie*, (pitcher support), *beejani* (hand fan) and *pidhi* (low stool) were felt to be most suitable for modification being preferred by 76.7, 66.7 and 53.3 per cent experts, respectively. While *batua* (purse), *bijotia* (seed bag) *jhola* (bag), *thalposh* (plate cover), *mejposh* (table cover), *takia* (pillow) and crochet *tikri* (lace) were preferred by 33.3, 10.0, 36.7, 20.0, 20.0, 36.7 and 33.3 per cent experts, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Preferences of experts for contemporary application of textile handicraft articles (N=30)

Articles	F	%
1. <i>Indhi</i>	23	76.7
2. <i>Beejni</i>	20	66.7
3. <i>Peedhi</i>	16	53.3
4. <i>Batua</i>	10	33.3
5. <i>Bijotia</i>	3	10.0
6. <i>Jhola</i>	11	36.7
7. <i>Thalposh</i>	6	20.0
8. <i>Mejposh</i>	6	20.0
9. <i>Takia</i>	11	36.6
10. <i>Crotchet tikri</i>	10	33.3

The possible contemporary uses of household articles as suggested by experts are shown in Table 3. Twenty-two innovative ideas were received from experts for utilizing *indhie*. Most of experts (69.56%) suggested use of *Indhi* in its original form because they felt that it could be used for multiple purposes, for example, base for flower vase, decorative pot and *dongas* (serving bowls). In case of *beejani*, 90 per cent of the experts felt that it should be offered for original use but in miniature form rather than as

decorative piece (35%). *Pidhi* was suggested to be made in miniature form by 87.5 per cent respondents so that it can be used as a decorative item which would be more readily accepted than original size.

Table 3: Possible contemporary uses of *Indhi* (N=23)

Unconventional uses	F	%
1. Original form (Multi purpose base)	16	69.56
2. Wall hanging	8	34.78
3. Flower vase	3	13.04
4. Pen stand	1	4.35
5. Cutlery stand	1	4.35
6. Beneath the glass of glass top table	1	4.35
7. Door/ Window hanging	8	34.78
8. Mirror frame	5	21.74
9. Partition curtain	4	17.39
10. <i>Kalash</i> stand	1	4.35
11. Coconut stand	1	4.35
12. Bed crown decoration	1	4.35
13. Paper weight	1	4.35
14. Party wear dress with <i>Indhi</i> yoke	1	4.35
15. Necklace	3	13.04
16. Skirt ornament/accessory	1	4.35
17. Jewellery box	1	4.35
18. Curtain rings	4	17.39
19. Photo frame	1	4.35
20. <i>Toran</i>	1	4.35
21. Valence	4	17.39
22. <i>Indhwa</i> as head ornament	1	4.35

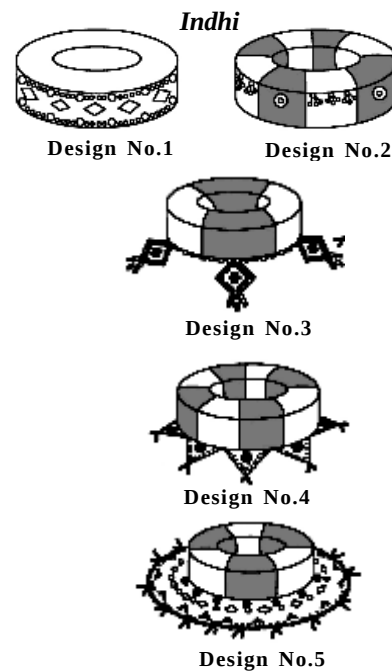


Fig. 1. Five designs of *Indhi* developed in the study

Figure 1 shows the five designs of *indhi* developed in the study. Multicoloured style without extension was the most preferred design for *indhi* with WMS 3.36 followed by single colour without extension (WMS 3.30), diamond shape extension (WMS 2.90), triangle shape extension (WMS 2.92) and circular extension (WMS 2.70). Designs with extension were not preferred by experts as they felt that extension will create hindrance and occupy too much space on table (Table 4).

Table 4: Preferences for designs of *Indhi*

Design no.	Design description (main feature of the design)	Weighted mean score	Rank
1.	Single colour without extension	3.30	II
2.	Multicolored without extension	3.36	I
3.	Diamond shape extension	2.90	III
4.	Triangle shape extension	2.92	IV
5.	Circular extension	2.70	V

3. New *Indhi*

An item may lose some of its utilitarian value in course of time so one has to adapt it to prevent it from becoming redundant (www.hinduonnet.com). This article *Indhi* was prepared in its original form, as suggested by the experts, for different end uses, for example, *donga* stand, pot stand, pot holder, flower vase stand etc. It may also be used as hanging or a wall piece. Raw materials used were rubber ring and cotton fabric strips. Present raw materials and accessories were used to make it suitable for contemporary use. Accessories used were *ghungroos* and mirror rings.

4. Marketability

General information of the respondents contacted for final assessment of the products for social and market acceptability is shown in Table 5. The table makes it clear that male respondents (55%) were slightly higher in number as some females (45%) were hesitant in responding. Maximum number (50.5%) of respondents were from Delhi, followed by Haryana (20%), Punjab (20%) and abroad (16%). Remaining 11.5 per cent included visitors from, Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh (U.P), Rajasthan, Bombay and Chandigarh as well as the foreigners and a NRI.

Table 5 : General information of the respondents (N=200)

Aspects		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	110	55.0
	Female	90	45.0
	Nagaland	1	0.5
	Haryana	40	20.0
	Chandigarh	1	0.5
Place	Punjab	4	20.0
	Uttar Pradesh	14	7.0
	Rajasthan	5	2.5
	Delhi	101	50.5
	Bombay	1	0.5
	NRI	1	0.5
	Foreigners	32	16.0

It is clear from Table 6 that acceptability of *indhi* was found to be excellent with respect to traditional value (WMS 3.75), colour combination (WMS 3.71), uniqueness (WMS 3.50), aesthetic appeal (WMS 3.48) and fabric (WMS 3.40) while utility WMS 3.22 and workmanship (WMS 3.05) of *indhi* were assessed as very good. Overall acceptability was found to be very good with WMS 3.44. It is clear that adaptation of *indhi* was liked by the visitors. In IFFTEX'06 NIFT's exhibited the products developed during artisan/student workshops at five centers under the same project, for creating marketing opportunities for our rural artisans. The collection got a very good response from the buyers, International buyers were impressed with the contemporisation of the traditional crafts. A lot of inquiries were received for the products (<http://www.nift-sgsy.com>).

Table 6: Acceptability level of *Indhi* (N=200)

Features	Excellent	V.Good	Good	WMS
Aesthetic appeal	97	103	—	3.48
Utility	64	116	20	3.22
Workmanship	36	139	25	3.05
Uniqueness	104	92	4	3.50
Colour combination	148	47	5	3.71
Fabric	110	60	30	3.40
Traditional value	151	49	—	3.75

WMS-Weighted Mean Score

1-1.75(Poor), 1.76-2.50(Good), 2.56-3.25(V. good), 3.26-4.00(Excellent)

It is evident from the Table 7 that the price ranges fixed for different handicraft articles varies

depending upon the raw material and labour involved. The price range categorized into three for each article appended in table revealed that for file cover (126-155), photo frame (110-230), curtain (241-310), *fargal* (hooded winter garment for kids) (171-230), *indhi* (pitcher support) (151-210), *beejani* (hand fan) (26-35), miniature *peedhi* (low stool) (121-175), miniature *chaarpai* (cot) (121-160), key ring (16-25), *fuljhari* (ceiling hanging) (76-100), *bailari* (bullock cart for bride) (241-320) and *bail* (oxen) (76-100); the middle range of prices was accepted. Hence, higher profit margin can be possible with these articles.

Table 7: Acceptability of assessed price range (N=200)

Price range(Rs.)	Frequency	%
90-150	70	35.0
151-210	130	65.0
211-270	-	-

A respondent from Sri Lanka commented that while going back she would like to take a cot, *Indhi* and *Beejani* with her as mementos because these three articles, she thought, truly belong to Haryana. While traveling she had seen ladies in villages of Haryana using these articles very commonly. Another visitor stated, "In the whole pavilion this is the stall which truly represents Haryana. But it is very sad to know that the articles are not for sale". A lady doctor from Chandigarh appreciated the display/exhibition and quoted "Models of the articles once useful need to be given boost in order to carry on the legacy to next generation before they become extinct completely." A respondent from Germany liked the mirror frames the most and according to her "*Indhi* will be accepted in Germany very easily as its colour combination matches the national flag of Germany."

CONCLUSION

Indhi was found to have excellent market potential. To make commercial success such articles should be exposed at international level. Adequate

financial incentive should be given by the government. These items should be displayed in state government offices and tourist complexes so that tourists and visitors have exposure to these things.

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