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Title: Changing Face of Commercial Studio Photography with Advent of Digital Technology: Ten Year Case Study of Delhi-NCR

Commercial studio photography in India has witnessed many transitions ever since it was introduced by Charles Shepherd and Arthur Robertson in 1862 at Agra. However, the study under discussion concentrates on how digitization has altered the way photography studio industry functions in Indian context. Divided into five chapters, this thesis begins with definition and types of commercial photography and expected traits of professional photographer. Various supporting literature (including works by renowned authors like Shannon Thomas Perich, Fred Bremner, José Van Dijck, Christopher Bonanos, John Falconer, Ralph Jacobson, Sidney Ray, Geoffrey G Attridge, Norman Axford, Ben Long, Stephen Bull, Reese V. Jenkins, Min Zhang and Paul D. Berger, etc.) are studied and reviewed to build a foundation structure for this research.

Second chapter titled 'Photography: Film to Digital' narrates the evolution of photography and the use of various image capturing medium during different eras. It also briefly touches upon how diverse photography processes gave birth to a new art form on one hand and a new profession on the other. Further, the chapter explores digital technology, how digital technology was first made available to photographers and how the art and profession of photography switched over to this newer technology.

The third chapter of this thesis (Commercial Photography Firms) discusses about various types of photography businesses, both within India and abroad. Services offered by Indian commercial studios are listed and current trends are elucidated here. The contribution of western photographers (including Samuel Bourne, Sir William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, Josiah Rowe, Thomas Biggs, William Johnson, William Henderson, Linnaeus Trip, Willoughby Wallace Hooper and James Waterhouse) as well as Indian pioneers (like Dr. Narain Dajee, Lala Deen Dayal, Rajendralal Mitra, Babu Preonath Sett, Hurrichund Chintamon, Mahmud Ali Khan, Darogha Abbas Ali, Raja Ram Singh, Kulwant Roy, Bandi Rajan Babu, Homai Vyravala, etc.) who shaped the commercial photography industry in India are also discussed in this section.

The fourth chapter concentrates on the methodology adopted for this research. The three hypotheses for this study were:

1. With the influx of digital technology in photography, business of studio photography in Delhi has witnessed unforeseen growth in comparison with studios located in the sub-urban regions of NCR.
2. Unlike other trades in which industries employ newer technologies and prefer qualified professionals without gender inequality, digital studio photography businesses do not hesitate if their workforce is under-qualified; however, male employees are preferred even today over their counterparts.
3. Introduction of digital medium in photography has increased operational and equipment cost and has also augmented image manipulation to unimaginable levels turning this art

into a rather in-genuine medium. Due to this, photography studios are venturing into non-contemporary activities to sustain in the market and remain profitable.

For examining the above hypotheses within the geographic purview of the National Capital Territory of India (i.e. Delhi and NCR), two research investigation tools, namely demographic survey and personal interviews, were used. The survey was conducted among 150 studios with the help of a questionnaire segmented into three sections. Questions of 'Section A' were aimed to gather broader information about photo-studios (like year of establishment, services offered, number of male and female employees, their qualification, etc.) while 'Section B' and 'Section C' questions aimed to collect psychographic data and physiographic data respectively.

Though demographic survey provided a substantial quantitative data for research analysis, opinions of Padamshree Raghu Rai, Mr. Benoy Behl, Mr. Shail Nath Sinha, Mr. Vineet Modi, Mr. Shahid Hashmi, Mrs. Renuka Puri, Mr. Rajesh Goyal, Mr. SPS Kalra, Mr. Harbans Mody, and Late Mr. Sharad Saxena contributed in accurately comprehending that how commercial photography in India changed post advent of digital technology.

The last chapter presents analysis of results offering major findings alongside. Some of the most important findings were that since arrival of digital technology, studio photography in India has seen unprecedented growth in terms of scale and profitability. Also at the same time, it was inferred that these days, more emphasis being is given by studios on engaging qualified and trained workforce without gender bias but till recent times, physical, social, and Indian family values were keeping females away from this profession.

Some more findings suggest that against the research assumption, the introduction of digital medium in photography has not increased operational costs of photography studios. Rather the ease of checking digital images instantly has reduced the operational cost and overall profit margins. Further, easily usable digital image manipulation software, instead of sacrificing of creativity of a photographer, have actually opened newer job avenues and an art form in itself. In addition, the studios are not venturing away into non-contemporary activities, but supporting the old ones with new procedures.

Towards the end of this chapter, the limitations of this research and scope of further research in this area were presented. The most important one of these was to study the working of photography labs and printing businesses in a future research.