Contemporary sociological research is increasingly debating the problems and prospects pertaining to women as a gender. In fact, the sociology of gender has emerged as a powerful area of sociological investigation. The role of women in societies, polities and economies of various parts of the globe is being recognized as vital to the very survival of human civilization. Countless studies detailing the inestimable contributions made by women have been carried out in American and European continents. Asian and African Sociologists have also been conducting significant studies regarding the role of women in our times. The last quarter of the Twentieth Century has witnessed exponential growth of Women's Studies in India. The underlying assumption of all these studies is that owing to multiple ideological pulls and pressures the crucial social, political and economic role of women has been grossly underestimated by official institutions of patriarchal establishment. In view of the same, the role of women in the sustenance and survival of civilization has largely remained invisible. The aim of Women's Studies is to bring out a methodologically informed account of the seminal contributions made by women. It is hoped that such an account will be instrumental in highlighting the invisibility phenomenon of women's work.

This study attempts to give an outline of the role of women of Srinagar in the Handicraft Industry of Kashmir. It is an exploratory study based on empirical data collected from field survey. The Handicraft Industry of Kashmir is largely a home-based industry in which women's contributions are significant. This study to begin with gives an introduction of the Women's
Studies and women at work in general. Numerous studies pertaining to role of women in various economic sectors in general and home-based industry in particular have been summarized in this introductory part.

Secondly, the chapter on methodology stipulates the aims and objectives of the study. It also gives a statement of the problem. Different crafts in which women are involved have also been briefly explained. Various aspects of the research design pertaining to selection of universe and sample, data collection procedure, tools adopted, analysis of data etc. have also been explained in detail in this chapter.

In the third chapter the quantitative analysis of the data is presented under three different sections namely; Socio-demographic and educational characteristics of the respondents, Artisan Women: Work and Family and their Perceptions and Aspirations. Some important case studies of artisan women have also been included in this chapter. A brief about the working pattern of the handicraft industry based on the interviews of middlemen and dealers has been appended to this chapter as well.

Lastly, a concluding chapter giving an outline of the entire study has been worked out. It also incorporates the significance of this study. Some suggestions have also been given in this chapter.

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