CHAPTER III

HANDLOOM INDUSTRY OF MANIPUR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Manipur, a border state in the north-eastern corner of India bordering Myanmar is a picturesque land of the oval shape valley and rolling hills. The state has an area of 22,237 sq. km. which is about 0.07% of Indian Union. It lies between the latitude of 23°80'N and 25°68'N and longitude of 93.03°E and 94.78°E. The state consists of two main regions viz. hills and the valley. The state is divided into 8 districts of which 5 districts are in the hills and the remaining 3 in the valley. The districts which are on the hills are Churachandpuri, Chandel, Ukhrul, Tamenglong and Senapati districts while in the valley are Imphal, Thoubal and Bishenpur, Centrally located. Imphal is the capital of Manipur.

Manipur is a hilly state with a small valley of 1,843 sq.km. which is centrally located and surrounded by hill ranges. Manipur is situated at an altitude of 792 metres above the mean sea level (MSL). The population mainly consists of Manipuris (popularly known as Meiteis) and several tribes. There are as many as 29 different recognised scheduled tribes. Among the popular tribes some tribals worth mentioning are Kabui, Hmar, Tangkhul, Paite, Thadou etc. Manipuris which constitute about two third of the total population lives in the valley (which is just about 8 percent of the total area) while the rest one third of the population lives in the hills. The density of population in the valley is 415 persons per sq.km. and that of the hills is 24 persons per sq.km. The average density of population in Manipur is 82 persons against the all India average of 257 persons per sq.km according to the population census report of 1981.¹

3.2 MANIPUR AND HANDLOOMS

The Meiteis which consist the major population are the Hindu Vaishnavites and the hill people are mostly Christians. The arrival of Hinduism cannot be ascertained definitely but the mass conversion took place during the reign of Garibniwaja (formerly called Pamheiba). Christianity crept into Manipur in the late 19th century but the Muslims settled in Manipur as early as 1606 A.D.\(^2\)

The tribals which consist of 29 recognizes scheduled tribe and others have a dialect of 33 different types. The tribes have somehow stuck to their traditions although influenced here and there by Christianity.

The history of Manipur is a long one and they have a fine tradition of cavalry, race, wrestling and polo though they cannot be exclusively separated from the neighbouring kins in various aspects of life. Meiteis have inherent love of performing art with lyrical beauty and rhythm. Their rich culture and tradition are also reflected in their handloom, tasteful cloths and in finer workmanship of handicrafts. Weaving among them is a traditional art of the women and finds an easy market. They are deeply sensitive and their unique pattern of life with inherent love of art is reflected in their dance and music. Their dances whether folk or classical or modern are devotional in nature\(^3\).

The present Meiteis art of dancing and singing is deeply rooted in the traditional Meitei religious beliefs. Ancestor Pakhangba who is believed to be the first king of Manipur is the deity of the Meitei and takes the form of a serpent with peculiar movement of tail. In fact, most of the Manipuri art of textile motifs are related to Pakhangba. While the male members profess in agriculture, womenfolk are engaged in weaving and embroidery. It was believed that no mother would think of giving her daughter in marriage unless she becomes an expert in handloom weaving under her tutelage. Irrespective of the status of her family practically almost every houses equipped with a loom or some weaving materials. Giving loom as dowry at the time of marriage is still practised in the villages and weaving is treated as a respectable profession by each and every home of Manipur.

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3.3 HISTORY OF HANDLOOM IN MANIPUR

Depending on the environmental condition man has been concerned with the making of utilitarian fabrics since a very long time and also came to discover that textiles offered a good medium for expression of his aesthetic genius. This is precisely the reason why the history of textiles reveals a close co-relation between the cultural progress and the development of mankind itself. The relationship between the body and the soul is often expressed in terms of dress.\(^4\)

Since time immemorial, handloom of Manipur has been known for its beauty, distinctive features, colour combination, designs, texture, artistic skill and durability. In Meitei lories, the weaving of textiles appears as a replica of cosmic process. During the dance of creation, the male (Maiba) and female (Maibis) messengers of God simulate the sounds of spinning and weaving. It is a matter of great significance that in the traditional belief system of the Meiteis, it is the God of handicrafts (Leisenbi) who taught the Meiteis the method of textile weaving as well as the mystique of the dance of creation. There is however another stand in the belief system of the Meiteis. According to this, it is not by the grace of God that man has learned textile weaving, but by its own enterprise that man has picked up the skill from nature. He observed the spiders weaving their webs on the shrubs and bushes and he responded to this challenge.

These two different stands shows their duality in views. One is that of living with the grace of Gods and the other is that of living in harmony with nature. It is this duality, which in its turn seems to underline their conception of the reality, processes and their creation of the symbolised design connected with textile industry.

Palace records are said to have revealed that loom weaving was practised in Manipur before the birth of Christ and throw shuttle loom was used in the valley as far back as 87 A.D. Each region of Manipur is specialised in the production of different traditional designs. Most of the garments used were made of silk. In fact the first and foremost industry in Manipur was sericulture.

According to James Watt, a British sericulturist, Manipur is the original home of silk and tea. The use of cotton was started during the reign of king Kangba. The colours used by each of the seven clans of Manipur while weaving cloths served as an identification of the clan. The colours assigned to the seven clans are as follows: 1. **Mangang** – Red, 2. **Luwang** – Blue, 3. **Khuman** – Black, 4. **Angom** – White, 5. **Moirang** – Yellow, 6. **Khaba Nganba** – Green, and 7. **Sarang Leisangthem** (Chenglei) – Brown & Green. The ceremonial dresses and costumes of each clan has to be in the assigned colour.

Among the rulers, who are believed to have been great patrons of the craft in their time and mentionable are Nongda Laiyen Pakhangba (33 A.D. to 153 A.D.) and king Loyamba who ruled in 1074 A.D. According to Ningthourol Seireng, during the reign of Nongda Laiyen Pakhangba, the motifs of animals and birds were introduced in the designs of textiles and paintings. On the coronation day, Pakhangba was adorned with such garments as Mainu Tomsen (a kind of head dress decorated with features) and Noingningkhoi Khaon Phurit (a kind of shirt) was restricted only to the royal prince and that also only during coronation.

During the reign of Pakhangba, all the land belonged to the king and the king distributed pieces of land and cloths to the people as prizes for bravery in the wars and hunttings. Such practice was continued up to the time of king Mungyamba (1562-1597 A.D.) The cloths which were used as prizes were called Pariphee Phimu.

The craft died down with the Burmese invasion. After the seven years domination by Burma in the years and frequent invasions during the period of 1758 A.D. to 1828 A.D., the former glory of the craft went down as people thought of survival as the first necessity.

The state of the craft remained deplorable until the arrival of Britishers. The arrival of Britishers also brought about new methods of weaving, knitting and sewing cloths. In 1910, Mr. Pillary a weaving master from Bengal was engaged by the Manipur State Darbar for giving training to the Manipuri weavers and demonstrating as to how the Swadeshi Automatic Handlooms be handled. While doing this he brought with him the different parts of a Swadeshi Automatic Handloom.
which he assembled soon after his arrival in the state and demonstrated how to repair it. Thus it created an impression that the Automatic Handloom was superior to the native loin looms as to the former saved a great deal of labour time. But due to some mechanical and operational difficulties, it failed to make an impact on popularising the new looms among the Manipuris. However, it was again in 1920 that a new fly shuttle loom was procured by a Manipuri on his account, Haiyen Kaifa Selungba, of Yaiskul Hiroohanba Leikai. It was reported that after this, another 30 looms were also made within the state by copying the model of the imported and which were found working well.

Haiyen Kaifa Selungba had been to Tripura on a short visit and had picked up the new skill there. Although, he did not succeed in his attempt to popularise the fly-shuttle loom, he made a number of Manipuri youths to be conscious of the new possibilities of the craft and helped to widen their vision.

In 1922, K. Tomba Singh of Yaiskul Hiroohanba Leikai and H. Amooba Singh of Uripok Haobam Dewan Leikai left Manipur for obtaining regular training in the weaving industry in Serampore Training Institute, West Bengal.

After two year viz, in 1924 the craft received tremendous support from an unexpected source. The source was from a Mrs. Jolly, who was a private tutress of Maharani DhanaManjuri Devi; became interested in the handloom industry of Manipur. She engaged some expert Manipuri female weavers and producing various fabrics of European taste by using traditional designs found among the Meiteis and various tribal groups of Manipur. Those fabrics were produced with traditional looms like “Pang iyong” (throw-shuttle loom) and “Khwang Iyong” (loom-loom). She established the workshop in one part of her residence at Pueilomba Bungalow within the palace compound. This imparted a new prestige of the craft. She was anxious to secure the services of trained persons to assist her. On coming to know about K. Tombi Singh and H. Amooba Singh, she personally

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5. Political Agency file no. 138. Letters from the under secretary, Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to the Agent Governor General, Eastern Bengal and Assam. No. 672 of 27/1/1910.
visited Serampore Textile Institute and in consultation with the principal, recruited K. Tomba Singh to work with her.

Later on, H. Amooba Singh joined them. Together three of them did a great deal in reorganising the handloom industry of Manipur. Captain Harvest, the then President of Manipur State Durbar permitted to open a "Weaving Institute of Arts and Crafts" in 1930, and appointed Mrs. Jolly as the first Manager of the Institute. However, on her leaving the state, His Highness Maharaja Shri Churachand Singh appointed K. Tomba Singh as the Manager of the Institute in 1936. But the Institute collapsed during the Japanese invasion in 1942.

With the entrance of the Mrs. Jolly and the Arts and Crafts Institution, a tendency towards area-wise specialisation of articles started. They, for commercial production, had taken one-area Nagamapal Kangjabi Leikai and introduced bedsheets, table cloths, etc. for modern taste which found a good market in India and abroad. They remained more or less confined to this area, although the production was not much as they depend mainly on loin and the fine cloth remained confined to its traditional area, viz. Wangkhei, as it needs a special technique involving the work of two persons at a time. In other areas, turbans and towels of inferior quality thrived. Before the Second World War, main commercialised fabric of Manipur found a ready made market in different parts of India.⁸

3.4 GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS

Having felt the need of bringing the handloom industry in the organised sector, the Manipur State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd. was set up in the year 1954-55 as an apex body of society. The structure of the handloom co-operatives in the state were divided into two tier levels viz. apex at the state level and primary weavers co-operative societies at the village level. The Apex weavers society is a federation of primary weavers co-operative societies. Its main functions are to supply yarn to the primary weaver co-operative societies in marketing the cloths produced by them.

The primary weavers co-operative societies on the other hand are organisation of individual weavers formed on a co-operative basis.

In October 1976, Manipur Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation was established to assist handloom and handicraft artisans by supplying raw materials, improving methods of production and marketing.

Reorganisation of the handloom co-operatives in the states were taken up from 1977 as per the report submitted by Sivaraman Committee. The reorganised handloom co-operative are to have

i) 100 members with paid up share capital of Rs. 5,000/- from the individual weavers.
ii) 100 weaving looms and,
iii) the population of a primary weavers co-operative between 3000 to 5000.

In December, 1982, Manipur Development Society was established and its handloom development programme was started only in February 1984. Its objective was to meet the marketing requirement produced by 2450 weavers of the 49 production centres of the Society.

Manipur Spinning Mill Corporation Ltd. was established with an objective of producing quality cotton yarn for meeting the demand from the handloom weavers in the state. It started production from 1st April 1985 onwards.

The Ministry of textiles, under its central sector scheme set up a Mechanised Dye House and it was commissioned by the Manipur Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd. on the 29th June 1987. The second Mechanised Dye house at Iroisemba is the second of its kind in the whole of North-Eastern Region.

During the year 1986-87 the Government of India introduced a project for the development of the skills of weavers in the Hill areas and the project was sanctioned for Manipur in January 1987. Hill Area Handloom Development Project was started through the Manipur Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd. by opening 5 training-cum-production centres at the 5 hill districts head quarters during the 1987-88.

The Directorate of Industries, Manipur whose office is at Lamphelpat looks into the affairs of
supply of modern looms, assistance in construction of common workshop, design development, marketing support, implementation of other welfare programmes and deputation of selected youths in Diploma Course of Indian Institute of Handloom Technology, Guwahati.

Weavers Service Centre, at Takyelpat is for training in modern loom, dyeing, printing and development of modern design and relevant research works. Recently Handloom and Handicrafts Design Extension Centre has been set up at Porompat for design development for the benefit of weavers and for imparting training in handloom and handicrafts.

Table 3.1

The state government agencies at Manipur further development of handloom industries are mentioned below :-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. NO.</th>
<th>NAME OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES</th>
<th>PARTICULAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Directorate of Industries, (Manipur), Lamphelpat.</td>
<td>Deputation of selected youths in Diploma course at IIHT, supply of modern looms, assistance in construction of common workshop, designs development, marketing support and implementation of other welfare programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Controller of Technical Education, (Govt. of Manipur), Takyelpat, Imphal.</td>
<td>Degrees and Diploma Course in Textiles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Manipur, Lamphelpat.</td>
<td>Registration of Primary Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd., Association and Recommendation for various financial assistances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Weavers Service Centre, Govt. of India, Takyelpat.</td>
<td>For training in modern looms, dyeing, printing and development of modern design and relevant research work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Manipur Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd., Paona Bazar, Imphal.</td>
<td>Supply of yarn, marketing of handloom fabrics of weavers outside Co-operative fold.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Manipur State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd., Paona Bazar, Imphal.</td>
<td>For arranging market outlet of handloom fabrics of Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies Ltd. and supply of yarn.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>NABARD, RIMS Road, Imphal.</td>
<td>For arranging weavers (individuals upto Rs. 50,000/-) and Primary Weavers Co-operative Societies Ltd. according to the pattern of financial assistance for production of cotton, silk, polyster cloths etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd., M.G. Avenue, Imphal.</td>
<td>Supply of hank yarn and dyes and chemicals at reasonable prices round all the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Co-operative Societies Ltd, Opposite Polo ground, Imphal.</td>
<td>Marketing of Handloom Fabrics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Handloom and Handicrafts Design Extension Centre, Porompat.</td>
<td>Design development for the benefit of weavers and for imparting training in handloom and handicrafts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. HANDLOOM PRODUCTS OF MANIPUR

The handloom products in Manipur consists of various types of designs based on traditional and new motifs, artistic and attractive in colour combination. Generally, the prominent handloom products in Manipur can be classified into five broad categories i.e., Meitei, Kabui Naga, Hmar, Tangkhul Nagas and Paite. A brief description of the various types of products are explained below;

MEITEI

1. Lampee :- A war cloth used by warriors during war.
2. Ningthoupee/Saiklupa : - A waist coat presented to the warriors by the king.
3. Saijonba/Ningthoupee : - A long coat meant the trusted courtiers of the king.
4. Pheeanarba : - A small flag used by the warriors as plums on their turban. The flag has signs designating the status of the warrior.
5. Khamechhata : - A design derived from the belly of Lord Pakhangba. It is a white silk dhoti with people patterns of scrolls stamped on it by means of wooden blocks. It has been introduced by the Chinese merchant who visited the state during the reign of king “Khagemba” in 1630 A.D.
6. Namthang Khuthut : - A design derived out of the head of Pakhangba on the wrapper and is used by the ladies of the Royal family.
7. Kabui Singnangpam : - A design derives from the neck of “Pakhangba” and is embroidered on the flags of the warriors.
8. Phiranji : - A red blanket presented as a reward to the persons of merit by Maharaja Loyamba.
9. Moirang Phee or (Temple design) : - It is derived from the name of the village Moirang, which is 47 kms. south of Imphal. It is one inch solid border and one and a half inch of pyramidal figures to which geometrical and floral designs have been added.
11. Likli Mayekphee : - A design evolved out of a part of loom called Thengu– a tool

for processing and beating the handloom cloth. This also being a portion of the dowry of a bride in Manipur e.g. bed cover, shoulder bag.

12. Maibung Mayekphee :- A design copied from the skin of Pakhangba. e.g. bed cover.

13. Shamilaam phee :- A shawl embroidered with shamilaami and animal motifs. Originally it was worn by the Angami Nagas and popularly known as Haophee (Naga Shawl). One of the legend had its origin is that the Nagas used to cut out figures of animals from barks and leaves and stitched it on the shawl.

14. Leirum :- A ceremonial cloth. It is also an essential item of presentation during marriage.

15. Tindongbi :- This design is copied from the insect eating away leaves thus creating a peculiar design and is traditional. Originally it was a folk dance costume and now it is embroidered on blouses, curtains etc.

16. Leirong design :- A traditional floral design. The motif has been copied from the flower Chinghurao, used in bed cover and table cloths etc.

17. Phaneek :- It is the most important ladies-wear of this state. It is a typical traditional design for ladies. Phaneek Mayeknaibi is one of the famous handloom products which is woven on loin and fly-shuttle loom.

18. Khudei :- This type of cloth is used by men and women in their day to day life in Manipuri homes.

19. Innapee (Saree) :- A cloth of about 1½ m. long and ½ m. width which is used for covering the upper portion of the body. A longer version is used as saree. This is a typical traditional cloth for ladies.

20. Scarves :- There are different types of scarves of traditional designs which are produced in the state.

21. Monpak Phidak :- Means cloth which covers the mattress. Different varieties of bed covers are found with different designs.

22. Table covers, pillow covers, screens, door curtains, window curtains, towels, handkerchiefs, side bags etc. These are woven on fly shuttle loom. Generally yarns used in these cloths are cotton and wool in different colours and designs.

KABUI NAGAS10-11

1. Phetsoi :- A type of phaneek but without any border, a ceremonial dress and is used as a daily dress.

2. *Song Na*: A dancing dress for the adolescent boys and is used as a lower garment.

3. *Phang Phei*: A dancing dress for females, also used at other ceremonial functions.

4. *Leijing Pheljol*: A kind of skirt used on ceremonial occasion as well as daily uses.

5. *Marei Pne*: A romantic cloth used by both the sexes (marei romantic; Pne=cloth).


7. *Nai*: A langoti type of menfolk and is out of use.

8. *Rang lan*: A ceremonial lower garment for the male and it is worn during dance.


10. *Thiam Phei*: A common wrapper made of 2 pieces for daily uses; also forms a part of the present of the bride.

11. *Phai-Kam*: A piece of cloth tied in the calf muscles as decoration by boys during dance.

**HMAR**

1. *Thangsoo Pne*: *(Thangsoo=famous; Pne=cloth).* It is meant for those persons who had killed the maximum numbers of enemies. Their wives are also allowed to wear it but is out of use.

2. *Pne laisen*: *(Pne=cloth; laisen=middle; sen=red).* The cloth has several designs. This is further divided into:
   
   i) *Sakt zang zie*: *(Sakt=tiger; zang=back; zie=colour).* This design looks like an arrow; it is interpreted as the design on the back of the tiger and
   
   ii) *Disul*: *(Di=love; sul=abandon).* The design is created from a lovelorn story of a boy and a girl.

3. *Ngouteker*: Symbolically the design represents the upper part of the Kou plant.

4. *Hmarm*: A loin cloth for the female but out of use.

5. *Pneonri*: A blanket for winter; woven by unmarried girls before marriage and accompany to their in-laws house. If in case it is not woven, the bride’s price paid by the husband is cut down to the minimum.

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6. **Zakuo Laisen** :- (Zakuo = blouse; lai = middle; sen = red) It is a blouse piece for the unmarried girls.

**TANGKHUL NAGAS**

1. **Pangvai Kashan** :- A phanek for the females.
2. **Changkhan** :- A shawl by both the sexes as wrapper.
3. **Seiyang kashan** :- A female skirt.
4. **Shandkhan** :- A female skirt.
5. **Kangla Kashan** :- A female skirt.
6. **Kashang Kashan** :- A female skirt.
7. **Khoram Pai** :- A wrapper used by both sexes.
8. **Thang -gang** :- A special type of cloth used by those persons proving their gallantry in war by killing enemies.
9. **Phaleng chi** :- A mill made red blanket presented by the Manipur Raja to the chiefs and his assistants.

**PAITE**

1. **Thanguo puon** :- (Thanguo = famous; puon = cloth) Unless a man kills his enemies in inter-tribal fight or war it is restricted to wear it. Those persons who even killed ferocious animals are also debar from wearing it. In order to wear it, the only alternative is to harvest the largest quantity of crops in the village and a feast is given.
2. **Puon dam** :- (Puon = cloth, dam = black) It is a national cloth or the Paites. It is worn during condolences, official meetings etc.
3. **Puon Pie** :- A quilt type and is compulsory for any girl to bring over to her husband's house after her marriage.
4. Nikkriet and Jawl Puon are also produced by this community.

3.6 **WEAVING—TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS**

India was pioneer in the cultivation and manufacture of cotton. The cotton plant (order-
Malvaceal, generic term - Gossypium) is extremely sensitive to weather condition. Cotton is not grown much in Manipur.

The weavers purchase their need from the co-operatives or the local shops. It is only few who grow the crop at the hills in their jhum fields. Silk industry was famous in Manipur. Sir James Johnstone holds that silk manufacture was introduced by the Chinese settles in Manipur in the 13th Century. But different opinions of the local sources indicates the use of it from the 1st century A.D.

For weaving of cloth source of the traditional implements used by the Meitei are Masha (winding machine); Tareng (spinning wheel).

*Masha* :- It is a process of transforming yarn from banks to bobbins. It is a drum-like structure with a wooden stand. The drum consists of a circular wooden rod and two wooden disc which are joined at two ends of the rod. On this wooden disc bamboo split are connected by cotton string making the shape of a drum. A wooden stand is placed on a heavy wooden-base. The two perpendicular stand have a notch at the centre, where the drum is fixed by means of two iron nails. Thread of yarn is kept on this drum.

*Tareng* :- The machine consists of 4 parts (i) base, (ii) stand, (iii) wheel and (iv) spindle. The tareng is placed on the arms of a T-shaped stand. The spindle is turned by a belt running round the wheel and the spindle. The revolving wheel rotates the spindle.

Those who produces cotton in their fields have to pass through different stages to make suitable yarn for weaving. In order to produce proper yarn, they pass through the following process:-


1. *Ginning* :- The ginning is carried out by a locally constructed wooden machine. It consists of two vertical wooden posts, fixed to a flat piece of wood. The rollers are geared to move in opposite direction. The operator sets the rollers in motion by means of a crank attached to the end of one of them. With one head the operator moves the crank and with the other feeds the machine with
cotton. Once the seeds are removed from the cotton, it needs dyeing in the sun and cleaning.

2. **Carding**: Carding aligns or strengthens the fibres carried out by the improvised carding machine. It is a simple small bow consisting of a bamboo reed to which a cane string is attached to give it a shape of bow. The operation is simple and the operator cleans the cotton by flicking the string. Thus the cottons get cleaned and is ready for spinning. The cottons get cleaned and is ready for spinning. This cleaned cotton is called slives.

3. **Spinning**: Cleaned cotton (slives) is spun into a simple local made spindle. Local made hard-spindle is a simple spike made of smooth straight, thin and hard wood or in some cases an iron needle. One end of the spike is inserted in the centre of a round flat stone, wood or bake clay spindle whorl. The spindle with its whorl facilitates the spinning process. The other end of the spike has a notch for the purpose of holding the thread. The yarn is produced by rotating the spindle by the right hand against the thigh and holding the cotton piece on the left. The yarn thus produced is wound round the wooden or iron spike from time to time and thus works as bobbin.

4. **Winding**: The yarn thus spun is transferred in the masha to the form of hanks.

5. **Twisting Machine**: Twisting machine consist of base, stand, blade with spike and handle. The base is hexagonal in shape with two perpendicular stands. The stands are rectangular in shape with pointed free-ends. The blades are fixed to the stand by means of an iron-rod. The blades are at right angles to other having one spike at either end, fixed horizontally. The handle is fixed to one of the blades near the centre. After twisting, the yarn is again transferred to the winding machine. From the winding machine, the complete yarn is transferred to the bobbin with the help of the spinning wheel.

6. **Dyeing**: The dyes used were mostly barks and common type of mordants. Various materials from vegetable-dyes, oreirong tree seeds, turmeric, yellow pungedol (guava) were used extensively. Even now some of these materials are used. Now synthetic dyes have substituted the vegetable dyes. First the dye is mixed in the boiling water with caustic soda flakes and then the
yarn is dipped and stirred properly with a wooden stick. The yarn is allowed to cool down and finally the yarn is washed several times in cold water and then it is dried in the shade.

7. Sizing :- The cotton yarn needs sizing, whereas, staple silk type yarn does not. The process followed by them is very simple. A quantity of boiled rice with starch is squeezed through a cloth strainer in a tub of cold water. The dyed or the white yarn whatever the case may be is then taken through the solution and wound round on two bamboo poles stretched properly to dry. The dried sized yarn is then cleaned from any rice particle or dirt on it.

3.7. TYPES OF LOOM

There are three types of looms used in Manipur.

They are:-

1. Loin loom (*Khwang iyong*)
2. Throw-Shuttle loom (*Pang iyong*)
3. Fly-Shuttle loom. (*Kon yongkham*)

1. Loin loom

Loin loom consists of the following parts.

(a) Circular Iron Rod :- It has a length of approximately 1.20 m. with diameter of 4cm. It is held in two holes bored on the upright pillars.

(b) Back rod (yeppu kanga) - A circular wooden rod of about 1 metre length and 4cm. in diameter suspended from the iron rod by strong loops. It works as the back rod.

(c) Tension rod :- It is similar to the back rod and placed below it. It is meant to keep the warp in tension and fixed while weaving is going on with hard beatings with the tem.

(d) Front rod (yeppu chei) :- It is a circular wooden rod of 1 metre in length and 4cm. in diameter with the ends grooved to take a back strap. The warp is wound round the back rod to the front rod

(e) Ootong (circular bamboo rod) :- It has a length of about 90cm. and a diameter of 7cm and is made of bamboo. The yarn passing over and under the bamboo makes an opening and this is used as one shedding while lifting the heald rod acted as another shedding.
(f) **Heald rod (suna chei)**: It is a round piece of bamboo of about 1 metre in length and 1cm in diameter. This rod is used for lifting a set or group of yarns to form a shed with the help of the heald. It is placed in front of ootong towards the weaver.

(g) **Lease rod (Nayet chei)**: It is also a round piece of bamboo exactly like the heald rod and is placed behind the bamboo and it keeps the yarn from getting entangled.

(h) **Back strap (sanam)**: It is a leather strap of a length of 35cm. and a diameter of 10cm. with two loops at the end. The strap is placed at the back of the weaver and the loops are hooked to the two grooved ends of the front rod (yeppu chei). Tension of the warp of the cloth is maintained by the weaver by placing her feet pressing against the foot rest.

(i) **Foot rest**: It consist of two wooden strips, one about 1.30m. long and other about 45cm. in length. The longer piece is placed perpendicularly towards the wall and the shorter one is placed towards the weaver for her feet to rest on.

2. **Throw-shuttle loom**

A throw-shuttle is made of wood or metal and must be heavy and smooth, so that it may easily run from the edge to edge of a loom, over the bottom layers of the warp. Skills of the weaver, smoothness of the shuttle, the manner of driving it produces the finest fabrics like muslin or silk with the help of this simple loom. The throw-shuttle loom (pang iyong) is used extensively in Manipur for the production of silk cloth. Although the production is very slow when compared to fly shuttle loom. The products of throw-shuttle looms are distinguished by their softer feel and finer appearance.

3. **Fly-shuttle loom**

*John Kay's invention of the fly-shuttle was an extremely important event in the history of weaving. The fly-shuttle has both sides served exactly alike and metal tips are set at the centre of the two ends. A fly-shuttle frame loom is made of heavy wooden frame having an overhung or underhung sley. The fly-shuttle loom is more efficient that the throw-shuttle over it production speed. It can be adapted for the production of both fine and coarse fabrics. Fabrics of long width can be easily woven as the narrow ones.*
3.8 CONCLUSION

The history of the handloom in Manipur shows that in its economic importance, it is next to agriculture. It has been found that the state government has been taking active participation to organise this sector. The setting up of the Manipur Handloom and Handicrafts Corporation, and the reorganisation of the handloom co-operatives according to the recommendations of Sivaraman Committee Report has been the main activities. The Directorate of Industries, Manipur and its Handloom Section has been looking into the affairs of handloom. Despite these activities considering the vast potential of the handloom, there is a need to change the overall situation. It will depend on the government to bring back the old galore of this industry. But without adequate financial resources and professionalism, towards the industry, it would not be a plausible effort.