THE ROLE OF HANDLOOM WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MANIPUR

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
SARDAR PATEL UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction:

The word Handloom derives its meaning from the process of operation by hand of a country-made wooden structure called loom. (Rao, 1991)

Handlooms are an important craft product and comprise the largest cottage industry of the country. In the entire country, there are more than 38,00,000 handlooms. However, in north-eastern states, there are more than 15,00,000 domestic handlooms. Handloom in North India and South India are geared for commercial production catering to the needs of domestic market and also for exporting their products. Presently, handloom weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis because of adverse Government policies, globalisation and changing socio-economic condition. Textile sector in India is growing and has been undergoing enormous changes within its structure, which are affecting its characteristics. The profession of handloom weaving has been one of the main factors of growth in Indian economy, promoting inter- and intra-relationship between different communities. This sector has been considered important for the sheer magnitude of people endowed with traditional artisan, craft skills attuned to the local needs and resources. (Vyas, 2007). Today the handloom industry is the largest economic activity in the informal sector after agriculture, with approximately 3.8 million handlooms in India engaged in the production of natural fiber fabrics like cotton, silk and woolen and in man-made and mixed fiber fabrics. Integrally a part of rural life, about ten million people or more depends on these looms fully or partially for their livelihood. India's heritage has been subsumed into the national and ethnic design vocabularies in the world. (www.hinduonnet.com/folio/fo9906/99060060.htm-18k)

Meaning and definition of Handloom:

Handloom is totally different from the mill made, semi automatic and power loom sectors in the area of production, sizing, designing and also stronger than the same type of mill made and power loom cloth due to double reeds and lower speed of weaving. “The word Handloom derives its meaning from the process of operation by hand of a country made wooden structure called loom”. (Rao 1991)

Rayudu, (1988) states that “Loom is a wooden country made structure used for making cloth with the sole aid of manpower. Except the handlooms all other types of looms need power for operation”.

The socio-economic significance of handloom weaving and its impact upon the life and economy of the people of India can better be gauged in the words of Borpujari, (1885) that “the loom was in fact the centre of domestic economy, the only hope of salvation in an hour of distress or despair.”

Many researchers carried out on handloom industry and criticize on their study related on the problems faced by them and how to uplift their living standard.

Venkaraman, (1937) was one of the pioneers who worked on this industry in the erstwhile Madras Presidency and Bombay Deccan. The study highlighted the economic problem faced by the
weavers. Krishnamurthy (1969) who worked exclusively on cotton handlooms in India, all have looked into the different aspects affecting handlooms in different parts of the country. The stress has been on the general low economic standard of weavers, poor level of productivity, absence of modernization and the greater need for Government patronage. Arulanadam (1980) in his work on handlooms of Tamilnadu dwelt upon the general economic condition of weavers. Though Tamilnadu has strong cooperative base and accounts for a large part of handloom exports yet the weavers were under constant competitive threat and pressure from the powerful power loom sector. Roy (1999) illustrated the switching of handloom weavers to power looms in Tamil Nadu. He had undertaken few case studies in this regard. The major finding were that handloom being slow machines often faced problems delaying in delivery schedules and about 1.50 lacs. Handloom in the State was engaged in non-competing goods such as very high quality silk sarees. Sundari, and Mukund, (2001) in their book entitled “Traditional Industry in the New Market Economy – The Cotton Handlooms of Andhra Pradesh” provided an insight of handloom performance and prospects of this industry in the state.

The export of handloom goods also increased and touched approximately Rs.2, 100 crores in 1996-97. It has now become the largest economic activity in the country after agriculture, providing direct and indirect employment to more than three million weaver households. This sector contributes nearly 22 per cent of the total cloth produced in the country.

What is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is the propensity of mind to take calculated risk with confidence to achieve a pre-determined business or industrial objective. In substance, it is the risk-taking ability of the individual, broadly coupled with correct decision making when one witness a relatively larger number of individuals and that too, generation after generation, in a particular community, who wages themselves in the industrial or commercial pursuits and appear to take risks and show enterprise, it is acknowledged to be a commercial classes.

Definition of Entrepreneurship:

Cantilon (1730) defined entrepreneurship as self-employment of any sort. Entrepreneurs buy at certain prices in the present and sell at uncertain prices in the future. The entrepreneur is a bearer of uncertainty.

Say (1816) explained entrepreneur as the agent "who unites all means of production and who finds in the value of the products...the reestablishment of the entire capital he employs, and the value of the wages, the interest, and rent which he pays, as well as profits belonging to himself.”

Frank Knight (1921) expressed that entrepreneurs attempt to predict and act upon change within markets. Knight emphasizes the entrepreneur's role in bearing the uncertainty of market dynamics. Entrepreneurs are required to perform such fundamental managerial functions as direction and control.

Schumpeter (1934) defines the entrepreneur as an innovator who implements change within markets through the carrying out of new combinations. The carrying out of new combinations can take
several forms; 1) the introduction of a new good or quality thereof, 2) the introduction of a new method of production, 3) the opening of a new market, 4) the conquest of a new source of supply of new materials or parts, 5) the carrying out of the new organization of any industry. Schumpeter equated entrepreneurship with the concept of innovation applied to a business context. As such, the entrepreneur moves the market away from equilibrium. Schumpeter’s definition also emphasized the combination of resources. Yet, the managers of already established business are not entrepreneurs to Schumpeter.

Penrose (1963) expressed that entrepreneurial activity involves identifying opportunities within the economic system. Managerial capacities are different from entrepreneurial capacities.

Women Entrepreneurship in India:

Since the past two decades there has been a gradual change in the status of women in the majority of the developing countries. Women are discovering themselves and trying to create a niche for themselves in all the fields. Women constitute almost half of the total population in the world. But they have played a disproportionately small role in business activities.

In simple words, women entrepreneur is one who takes initiative and risks to set up a business enterprise and run it in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of generating self-employment, income and growth. She identifies opportunities and assembles the necessary resources to capitalize on them. She has business aptitude. According to Harbison (cited from Sudha, 2007), “Any woman or group of women which innovates, imitates or adapts an economic activity may be called women entrepreneur”. Today women are launching small businesses at twice the rate of men. With the turn of century women are enjoying a better socio-cultural environment. Today society and governments are recognizing women empowerment through the provision of employment, economic freedom, business venturing and creation of various types of enterprise. (Sudha, 2007)

Growth of entrepreneurship in Manipur is lacking considerably, not to speak about women but also men. A few have come up recently but bulk of them as traders or suppliers, supplying goods mostly to Government offices or Government sponsored projects thus may be deemed as protected trading. What is more alarming being these protected entrepreneurs are actually pseudo entrepreneurs, either are close relatives of powerful politicians or officials and in many cases they only make paper transactions than actually doing the business, or they are only representatives of business house from outside Manipur and are projected as entrepreneurs to get the orders as son or daughter of the soil.

Manipur is an industrially backward state. Manipur has practically no large scale industry which can produce a commodity in a large scale. The few small scale industries that are functioning are also not functioning optimally due to lack of availability of resources and the appropriate environment. Growth of entrepreneurship in Manipur is lacking considerably not to speak about women but also men. It is not that people of Manipur lack in entrepreneurial skill. Particularly women of Manipur traditionally used to manufactured and sell their products and had intimate knowledge of trading operations. But they could not grow since they are not organized lot and they have not grown beyond their tradition to adjust with the order of the day. Industrialization and entrepreneurship are inseparable
factors and the crucial role of the entrepreneurs needs to be highlighted in any study relating to industrial and economic development. The individual as an entrepreneur is a crucial factor in economic development and an integral part of socio-economic transformation. Because it can generate large scale employment with relatively low capital investment; promote more balance regional development; equitable distribution of income; make use of untapped capital, natural and human resources; and finally it also urge to take risk in the face of uncertainties and intuition.

In Manipur many women start their own business and try to improve their socio-economic condition in the family. The investigator found out that many researchers did their study on women entrepreneurs and their financial problems.

Chanambam (2006), carried out a study titled “women entrepreneurship in North Eastern Region of India, Problems and Prospects” revealed the problems faced by the women entrepreneurs from Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura. 60 percent of women entrepreneurs from Manipur faced the problems of scarcity of raw materials followed by Tripura with 34 percent and Nagaland 25 percent, so also 50 percent of women entrepreneurs in Manipur, 64 percent in Nagaland and 48 percent in Tripura faced transportation problems.

From among the different motivating factors, the analysis of the data reveals that 90 percent of them in Manipur, 74 percent in Nagaland and 76 percent in Tripura have cited economic needs or pressure for starting their enterprise. The analysis of the primary data has reveal that the monthly income of the enterprise is Rs. 9833.00 in Manipur, Rs. 9476.00 in Nagaland and Rs. 6086 in Tripura.

Thokchom, (2002) explained in her study titled “A study on women entrepreneurs and labourers in Weaving, Knitting and Embroidery units of Imphal Districts” that most of the Manipuri women entered in the field of weaving, knitting and embroidery not only from the point of traditional occupation but also as income generating activities. Maximum of 56 percent, 52 percent and 46 percent of the entrepreneurs of weaving, knitting and embroidery units belonged to the high income group. 40 percent to 46 percent of weaving and knitting units invested Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- initially and 26 percent of embroidery units invested above Rs. 30,000/-. 22 percent to 34 percent of the entrepreneurs engaged in weaving, knitting and embroidery units because of unemployment and urge to supplement the family income. 22 percent to 27 percent of weaving and embroidery units and 19 percent of knitting units have received financial help from co-operative banks, 22 percent of weaving units were receiving financial assistance from the department of Industry.

Idris (2008), explained her study “A Profile of Innovative Women Entrepreneurs” that women entrepreneurs, mainly as a result of culture, have been found to have traits different from their male counterparts and yet they grapple with similar business issues including the need to continuously change and innovate. Dasgupta, Roy and Chattopadhyay (2006) explained in their study “Gender Entrepreneurship in a Rural Scenario: A Case Study of South West Midnapore, West Bengal “that the tribal women in a rural set up of South West Midnapore, West Bengal to give a realistic tune to the role of women entrepreneurship in a stringent manner. Women entrepreneurship is a much nurtured notion of today. Gray, (2001) explained that in the global marketplace, women entrepreneurs are a vibrant
and growing economic force. Factors enhancing and inhibiting Moroccan women entrepreneurs include socio-cultural and religious; family background; education; and work experience.

**Handloom industry in Manipur:**

The handloom industry of Manipur has distinguished from other places because it was exclusively in the hands of women and the tradition and skills were handed down from mother to daughter and on to the generation beyond. Manipur has been a famous place in the world for its natural beauty, culture with fascinated dances for colourful handloom clothes. The growth of handloom industries in the State had adversely affected the traditional craft of the city which enjoyed a place of pride in the State’s traditional textile and rendered thousands of women jobless. It has also survived in Manipur due to traditional, religious and cultural values, community and the dress habits of its people. *(Tombi, Singh 1972)* Earlier in Manipur, it would be difficult for a girl to get married if she does not have the skill of weaving. *(Kaldate, 1984)* It has been almost a compulsory vocation for the young women and even when any young girl was married off the equipment required for weaving was normally given as dowry. This was irrespective of social status or the economic condition of the family. Weaving in Manipur was started with an emotional attachment since women and girls wove only for their near and dear ones and in each of their products, they tried to express something of personal emotion and communicate warm feelings through the fabrics that were intended to be worn.

**Problems of the Entrepreneurs at Present in the State:**

1. Socio-environment problem: Prevailing social unrest in the state, numerous bandhs and blockades called by various organizations on the National Highway hampers the efforts of the entrepreneurs in procuring enough raw materials from outside the state. The problem is accumulated due to lack of railway services in the state.

2. Electric-Power shortage: It is a real headache to the entrepreneurs and it often interrupts the smooth functioning of industries.

3. Marketing problem; Different forms of marketing problems are faced by SSIs of the state. Some industries are yet to obtain ISI-mark for their product from the Bureau of Indian Standard and it become a big burden to the entrepreneurs to compete with the products having such symbol in the market. Sometime, due to no export market of some products of homogeneous type produced by various SSIs, they face too much competition among them in the local market.

4. Capital constraints: It is a common problem of most of the entrepreneurs in the state. A more liberal release of fund by various agencies including commercial banks is pertinent to improve the situation.

5. Technological adaptation: Incapability of adapting new techniques of production makes the entrepreneurs of the state unable to increase production level of their products with up-to-date quality and feature.
6. **Lack of Infrastructure:** Due to lack of infrastructures like cold-storage, warehouse, some SSIs whose production based on seasonal raw materials like fruits, agro-products etc., could not function for many months in a year, as raw materials are exhausted within a short period. (Prassain, 2006)

In Manipur, many researchers carried out studies related to the problems faced by the women handloom entrepreneurs and tried to find the ways of reducing their problems in managing their enterprise.

**Ibemhal, (1987),** carried out in her study “Development of Handloom Industry in Thoubal district during the plan period” that the women from Thoubal district faced the problem of marketing, procuring finance from the bank, pricing of the their products and lack of skill and entrepreneurial ability to managed the enterprise. One of the major problems was that most of the weavers were illiterate and lack of knowledge of innovative new designs, quality of the products and stick to the old tradition that why weavers did not earned more income compared to their labour work.

**Khomdram, (1991) explained in her study “Development of handloom industry in Manipur during the plan period” that the women weavers of Manipur Handloom industry faced the problems during the plan period as proper organization, non-availability of raw materials, skill and entrepreneurial ability, marketing facility, lack of coordination and unequal competition with the mill industry.**

**Importance of Handloom Weaving to State’s economy of Manipur:**

Manipur is situated in the North Eastern corner of the Indian union and enriched by hill ranges accounting for more than 90 percent of the total geographical area of the state. The entire state of Manipur has been declared as industrially backward. The living standard of the people of Manipur in both rural and urban areas is quite low. Due to non availability of infrastructural facilities, vast mineral and forest resources of the state are unutilized. The economy of the state of Manipur is largely based on production in the agriculture and forest sector. Next to agriculture, weaving as one of the household industries occupies the most prominent place in the economy of Manipur in term of employment generation. At present about 5.00.000 people or 28 percent of the total population of the state are employed full time and part time on about 3, 50,000 looms. It provides the largest scope for earning to womenfolk. About 80 percent of the women in the state are engaged in producing handloom cloth. Weaving is a part of their culture, a way of life with them and the absence of this skill in a Manipuri woman is considered unbecoming. (Laiba, 1988.)

**Present position of handloom in Manipur:**

Handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in the State. The State was ranked the fourth position in terms of the number of looms in the country according to the Handloom Census, 1987. It has more than 2.7 lacs looms comprising of fly shuttle, throw shuttle and loin looms with a weaver population of more than 2.8 lacs of which about 1 lacs are full time weavers, according to the handloom census. The State Government has made full efforts for overall development of handloom industry in the State. Manipur Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation and Manipur
Development Society are the two agencies of the State Government taking concerted efforts for production and marketing of handloom products. Manipur State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society is the apex co-operative society taking pivotal role in the co-operative sector for development of handloom in the State. There is also, a departmentally run Raw Material Bank in the Commerce & Industries Department to meet the requirements of various types and qualities of yarns of weavers at reasonable price. The Mechanized Dye House now run under the Commerce & Industry Department is also making full efforts to make available quality dyed yarn for the weavers of the State. Various schemes are also implemented for growth and development of handloom in the State. 

(\text{http://mastec.nic.in/handloom.htm})

**Significance of the study:**

Manipur is rich in natural resources but due to its difficult terrain, inadequate infrastructural facilities and varying climatic conditions the pace of industrial development is slow. The economic condition of Manipur is comparatively not sound. The state is lacking behind in many areas for economic growth. The proper development of the socio-economy of the state calls for a well balanced pattern between agriculture and industrial growth. At present, there are no industries worth mentioning except traditionally oriented one such as Khadi & Village industries, Handloom and Handicrafts. Manipur women are taking a very prominent role in the economic development of the state. Handloom is the oldest and largest cottage industry of the state. The present study is also important to understand the variation in income from handloom in the families located in different districts of the state as a result difference in road connectivity and market access. The researcher try to carry out the income generated by the weavers from the handloom industry and problems facing while running the business.

Poverty is the source of all evil. Manipur is a burning state under the influence of all types of violent activities. Due to geographical location, and hilly terrain, the state suffers from poor road and rail connectivity. Even after 50 years of India’s independence, the state is still deprived of rail connectivity. As a result there is less opportunities for industrialization and market access leading to the aged old problem of unemployment. Though the state enjoys a high literacy percentage (above 66%) there is less employment opportunity for the youth and they feel dejected and frustrated in life. These angry youth fall easily into the path of anti-social elements leading to non-stop violence in the state.  The only solution to the problem is socio-economic development of the state. The state being covered mostly by hilly terrain, agriculture is limited mainly in the valley. There is less prospect of growth in agriculture sector. Majority of the families in the entire State, whether hilly or valley area, depends on handlooms to earn livelihood. Thus the present study holds utmost importance to try to understand a clear picture on how much important role handloom industry plays in the livelihood of the people of Manipur. The present study is also important to understand the variation in income from handloom in the families located in different districts of the state as a result difference in road connectivity and market access. Again it is important to understand the products which have higher demand in the domestic as well as international market and hence giving more return to the weavers. The study will give a clear understanding of the contribution of handloom industry in the family income and also give market intelligence about the market segments in the domestic and international
markets and develop the marketing skills of the weavers. The study will also give an idea about the particular designs which are preferred by the different market segments. Handlooms being the most important source of income for the people of Manipur, the present study will try to find ways and means to increase the income generated from handlooms and develop the socio-economic condition of the people of Manipur.

**Broad Objective:**

To study the contribution of handloom entrepreneurship in the family income generation for the people of selected districts in Manipur, namely Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur and Thoubal and to give a market intelligence for handlooms products and thereby trying to find ways to increase the family income from handlooms in order to improve the socio-economic condition of the people of Manipur.

**Specific Objectives:**

The present investigation will study the following objectives.

1) Contribution of handloom industry in the state economy and percentage of beneficiaries in the society.

2) To study the traditional as well as modern handloom products and their market segments.

3) To study the customer’s choice of handloom products in the market.

4) To estimate the average income generated by a handloom weavers in the different selected districts.

5) To study the existing socio economic condition of people engaged in handloom entrepreneurship.

6) To study the problem faced by the handloom weavers in selected districts.

7) To find ways and means to increase the income generated from handlooms and develop the socio-economic condition of the people engaged in handloom entrepreneurship

8) To introduce the innovation in selected handloom units.

9) To estimate the increase in family income by introducing innovation in handloom industry.

10) To study the improvement in socio-economic development of selected handloom weavers due to innovation.

**Limitation of the study:**

There were various delimitations of the study.

1) The study was limited to the selected four districts namely, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal west of Manipur.

2) The study was limited to 98 cooperative society weavers and 98 private weavers of selected districts of Manipur.
Hypothesis:

**HO1:** There is no significant difference between various age group respondents and severity of problems in
- Financial problems
- Production problems
- Workplace problems
- Marketing problems

**HO2:** There is no significant difference between the respondents from different educational level and severity of problems in
- Financial problems
- Production problems
- Workplace problems
- Marketing problems

**HO3:** There is no significant difference between the respondents from different socio-economic status and severity of problems in
- Financial problems
- Production problems
- Workplace problems
- Marketing problems

**HO4:** There is no significant difference between the problems faced in selected aspect of enterprise by the women weavers from different districts.
- Financial problems v/s production problems.
- Financial problems v/s workplace problems.
- Financial problems v/s marketing problems
- Production problems v/s workplace problems
- Production problems v/s marketing problems
- Workplace problems v/s marketing problems

**HO5:** There is no significant difference between the respondents belonging to different enterprise and severity of problems in
- Financial problems
- Production problems
- Workplace problems
- Marketing problems

Methodology:

The current study was based on “The role of handloom women entrepreneurship in socio-economic development of Manipur” The current study focused on women weavers of urban and rural areas of selected districts of Manipur namely, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal West, examining the level of awareness regarding the enhancement of socio-economic development and supplementary income through handloom industry.

Research Design:

The research design used for present study has two pronged approach. A descriptive survey with pre-tested, validated interview schedule was used to acquire the information needed for the improvement of socio-economic status of the women weavers regarding handloom industry. After the survey intervention program (need based) was designed to enhance the level of skill and knowledge of weaving among the selected weavers, thus the most suitable design for the present study was a combination of descriptive and experimental method sandwiched with again the descriptive survey method for post test.

Variables: There were two sets of variables selected for present research. They are as follow

A. Independent variables:
- Age of the respondents
- Education of the respondents
- Socio-economic status of the respondents
- District of the respondents
- Type of enterprise owned by the respondents

B. Dependent variables:
- Problems faced by the respondents

DATA COLLECTION:

- Locale of the study:

The conducted survey was among the cooperative and private women weavers of rural and urban areas of selected districts namely, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal West of Manipur.

- Sampling procedure:

The objective of this step was to gather data among the women weavers in systematic way. By using stratified random sampling; the sample was selected from cooperative and private women weavers from selected districts of Manipur namely Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal West.
Sample selection criteria:

- The weavers are all women.
- They were from private and cooperative sector from selected districts of Manipur namely Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal West.
- 20 samples each were selected from cooperative and private women weavers Bishnupur district.
- 28 samples each were selected from cooperative and private women weavers of Thoubal district.
- 34 samples each was selected from cooperative and private women weavers of Imphal East district.
- 16 samples each were selected from cooperative and private women weavers of Imphal West district.

Research Tool: Interview schedule was considered as appropriate tool to collect data. An interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in term of oral – verbal responses. This method is suited for the intensive researches.

According to the objectives of the study, two types of data were collected using secondary data from Manipur Commerce and Industries Department, Govt. of Manipur and primary data was collected from the respondents through a structured, pre validated with reliability calculated (r=88.0), interview schedule was designed which was divided into six sections covering the following areas.

I. Background Information of the respondents:

This section had the questions pertaining to the background of the respondents’ age, education, type of family and income per month and some information on the enterprise.

II. Socio-economic status of the respondents:

Information to explore the socio-economic status was gathered using standardized tool and scale developed by Patel (2005) with questions and checklist regarding vehicles possessed, equipment possession, type of entertainment, accommodation facilities, reading facilities. Scores were assigned according to the author’s guidance to find out socio-economic status of the respondents.

III. About the enterprises:

This section of the schedule had information questions to explore the type of activity, method of weaving, amount of time spent in weaving, involvement of number of person working at the loom, place where the work is carried out, raw materials used, design used for weaving, financial assistance and the extent of family’s dependence on the enterprises were enquired.
IV. Marketing factors:

This section had a set of questions to elicit the information on price range of the products, procurement of the raw-materials and selling of the products.

V. Problem faced by the respondents:

This section dealt with the information of type of problems faced by the respondents in business such as financial, production, workplace related problems and marketing problems.

VI. Motivating factors in Handloom entrepreneurship:

This section contained a set of questions regarding identifying motivating factors to enter into handloom entrepreneurship.

Thus a tool contained six major parts to gather the information about the handloom enterprise and their owners as per the set of objectives.

Data Analysis:

1. Coding:

All the data were coded to maintain confidentiality, and facilitate data entry, documentation and discussion of findings. Code numbers were given to each answer. The information from each interview schedule was transferred on excel sheet of computer.

- Tabulation: The data were transferred from excel into tabular form to give a clear picture of findings.

- Statistical Analysis: Statistical analysis was carried out to test the relationship between selected variables and hypothesis postulated for the study.

Major findings:

1. Market and customer assessment to study the popularity of handloom products:

- Large number of items like bed sheet (37%) and shawl (thick/thin) (37%) were sold in Ima market, domestic market, retail and wholesale market respectively.

- Maximum percentage of shawl (41%) popular among the customers and 38.3 percent each bed sheet and shawl were exported from the Ima market, domestic market, retail and wholesale market respectively.

- Bed sheet (37%) and shawl (37%) were the main items earning more profit and 37.5 percent of shawl (thin/thick) were demand in the Ima market, domestic market, retail and wholesale market respectively.

- Majority of respondents (89.2%) bought Khudai (75.0%) from Ima/ domestic market.

- Majority of respondents (76.7%) expressed that quality of Chunnies were very good but the price of other items like Rani Phee, Wangkhei phee, mayeknaiibi were high compared to other items and they bought those items for their own use.
2. Background information of the selected respondents and about the enterprise

- Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group between 45-65 years and little more than one fourth of the respondents were educated up to higher secondary level.

- One fourth of the respondents from private weavers contributed 15-25 percentages to monthly income whereas maximum percentage of the respondents (44.9%) from cooperative weavers who contributed above 70 percentages to the family income.

About the enterprises:

- Cent percent of respondents from private and cooperative sectors were involved in weaving activities as predominant activity carried out by them.

- Majority of the respondents from private and cooperative sectors preferred to weave during evening (91.3%) and morning (89%) time. Majority of them spent 2hrs – 4hrs in weaving activity.

- Majority of respondents from private and cooperative weavers used fly shuttle loom for weaving.

- Maximum percentage of respondents (49%) from private sector and 56.1 percent from cooperative sector invested money for buying raw materials which ranged between Rs.200 – 350 and Rs 2000 – 3667 / per month respectively.

- Majority of respondents (86.2%) from private and cooperative weavers used traditional designs while weaving and 94.4 percent of them preserved their design in memory.

- Majority percentage of the respondents (31.6percent) from private said that family depended to a certain extent on their business where as contrary to that 99 percent respondents from cooperative weavers accepted that their families were fully dependent on their business.

Marketing factor:

- Majority (65.3%) of respondents from private and cooperative weavers wove phanek.

- Majority of the respondents from private and cooperative weavers sold their products in the regional market (81.1%) where as 69 percent sold the products in whole sale market as well as to neighbor, chit fund collecting system, friends and relative.

Motivating Factors in Handloom Entrepreneurship:

- Among the older groups (45 -65 years) the top most priority was financial need and lack of employment; whereas younger group prioritized lack of employment and financial need as the motivating factors to enter the entrepreneurship.

- Out of the total respondents, maximum respondents from private (59%) and cooperative sector (52%) (From Imphal East -17.9%, Thoubal 15.8%, Bishnupur 12.2% and Imphal West 10.7%) were motivated by the financial need to enter handloom entrepreneurship.
3. **Assessment of socio-economic status of selected handloom entrepreneurs:**

- Almost half of the respondents from private and cooperative sector belonged to Medium level of socio-economic status

District wise picture of the respondents revealed that maximum percentage of respondents from Imphal East (17.9%), Thoubal (14.3%) and Bishnupur (10.7%) were from Medium level of socio-economic status but respondents from Imphal west (8.2%) belonged to high level of socio-economic status.

4. **Problems faced by handloom weavers in selected districts:**

- Cent percent and 64 percent women weavers faced the problems of high cost of raw materials and need of working capital for their work respectively.

- Majority (73%) of women weavers faced the production problems such as non availability of raw materials and 68 percent of them faced the problem of lack of finance.

- Majority (69%) of respondents didn’t face any problems in workplace. Very few of them faced problems in workplace

- Majority of respondents (67%) expressed that they faced the problems in marketing their products.

5. **Testing of hypothesis:**

- There is no significant difference in the severity of the financial, production, workplace and marketing problems faced by various age group respondents.

- There is no significant difference in the severity of the financial, production, workplace and marketing problems faced by educational level of respondents.

- There is no significant difference in the severity of the financial, production, workplace and marketing problems faced by different socio-economic status of respondents.

- There is no significant difference among the districts and problems but there is significant between the problems faced by the respondents. T-test was carried out to get the result and found out that finance, production, workplace and market were having significant effect in problems faced by women weavers.

- There is no significant difference in the severity of production and workplace problems faced by different enterprise of respondents.

- Multiple regressions were used to find out which independent factor is having more significant effect on the problems faced in an enterprise. This will guide the researchers in future to plan course of action for further study. Study concluded that rank wise effectiveness of independent variable expressed that age is associated with experience factors and it is considered bigger than education. Other variables did not have greater impact on enterprise run by them.
To conclude in the end the researcher would like to express that, the handloom industry in Manipur is one of the most important cottage industries to supplement income to the family of women weavers. The State was ranked the fourth position in terms of the number of looms in the country according to the Handloom Census, 1987. It could be concluded from the present study that marketing is one of main parameter where selling and buying of the products were done. The monetary contribution of entrepreneur was larger than the family monetary contribution among the selected respondents. The cooperative weavers earned more income than private weavers and contributed about 70 percent of the total family income. Majority of the respondents from private and cooperative weavers belonged to the moderate socio-economic status level. Many researchers carried out studies regarding socio-economic status of women; Gupta (1995), Giri (1998), Seth (2001) and Joshi (1999) showed that lack of empowerment of women, discrimination, male domination, inequality in the society and different socio-economic constraints were faced by the rural as well as urban women entrepreneurs. Chandam (2005) also felt that to elevate the socio-economic level of women of Manipur handloom is the only answer and innovation in handloom and application of handloom is the step forward towards better socio-economic status. The researcher found out from her study that cent percent respondents faced the problems of high cost of raw materials and majority of them faced the problems of non-availability of raw materials and the problems of marketing in their products. It showed that financial need was the first priority in their work. The maximum percentages of the respondents from private and cooperative sector both were motivated by the need of finance to enter handloom entrepreneurship. The severity of problems faced by the respondents from various age group, educational level, socio economic group and districts were not significantly different. Age is associated with experience factors and it is considered bigger than education. Other variables did not have greater impact on enterprise run by them. This proved that EXPERIENCE MAKES MAN PERFECT.

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