

## “CHANGING FAMILIES AND LIFE STYLE OF WOMEN WEAVERS FROM CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY AT MANIPUR”

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The family is by its nature the best medium yet evolved for preparing the immature for social maturity. Successful family building requires affection, sound and mature judgment for the approach to and the handling of problems of human relations in the home. It also requires a degree of economic security and a willingness on the part of the homemakers to keep learning in order to meet the new problems that come with each stage of family life. Manipur occupies a coveted position in the field of handloom industry. There are 3.40 lakh weavers and 2,77lakh looms producing 86.41 lakh meters of handloom fabrics per month. 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 three tier levels viz apex at the state level and primary weaver's co-operative societies at the village levels. 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 cloth produced by them. Today, women's empowerment has become a growing concern both at the national and international levels on the subjugated and the disadvantaged position and status of women in the society. In India too, the concerned Government departments, numerous women's groups, NGO's and International agencies are endeavoring to espouse the cause of women as a part of their initiatives. They have taken many policies and programs that aim to enhance women's confidence, their rights, financial freedom and improve their rights, and improve their inter-personal relations, leadership qualities, general management abilities etc. Despite the facts, there have been strong activities of women in the present society in Manipur as they fight against atrocities, injustice and numerous anti-social issues. With their untiring efforts, they challenge against any anti-social elements that would bring harmful effects to the society. Besides the house

hold works and occupation being followed as a supplement to their families, they try to manage household frame and gainful entrepreneurship effectively. 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 fibre fabrics like cotton, silk and woollens and in man-made and mixed fibre 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. Handloom is the biggest industry in Manipur. There are three lakh spindles and at least 3 lakh persons are in the fields. The Manipur Spinning mill, launched in 1974 has grown to use 16,416 spindles and effort is made therefore to study effect of entrepreneurship and changes of family life style in Manipur.

**Definition of Entrepreneurship**-As **Pandit J. Nehru** remarked, “the greatest revolution in a country is the one that affect the status and living condition of its women”. (Sen Gupta 1974)

**Richard Cantillon (circa 1730)**; Entrepreneurship is defined 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.

**Jean Baptiste Say (1816)**; The entrepreneur is 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)**; 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.

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**Joseph Schumpeter (1934);** The entrepreneur is the 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.

**Objectives-**1) To explore the awareness regarding developing entrepreneurship among selected women. 2) To study the changes in families lifestyles due to entrepreneurship 3) To study the problems faced by women weavers of Manipur for running the enterprise.

**Methodology-**The present study is a combination of descriptive study specially classified under survey study and experimental method. The subtopics covering the methodology of this study in brief are grouped as under:-

1. Sample selection
2. Tool
3. Pilot study
4. Procedure of data collection
5. Plan of analysis

**Sample selection** – Stratified weighted random sampling will be used for drawing sample for general survey and purposive sampling will be used for experimental group. The sample will be selected from the women weavers from Co-operative sector of Manipur. Total sample size will be **98** weavers in Manipur. The data obtained from the survey is tabulated, discussed and statistically interpreted; suitable tables and graphs would be presented for easy interpretation.

**Result and Discussion:**

**Table 1: Age of the weavers:**

Sr.No.	Age Range (yr)	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
1	32 – 44	8	8.16	
2	45 - 57	79	80.6	51.55
3	58 - 70	11	11.2	

Table 1: shows that the mean of the age of the weavers was 51.55. Majority of the weavers belonged to the age group between 45-57yrs. It means most of the weavers who were working in the co-operative

societies were from late middle age groups.

**Table 2: Education of the weavers:**

Sr.No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	29	29.6
2	Primary	18	18.4
3	H.Sec	36	36.7
4	Graduate	14	14.3
5	PG	01	1.00

Table 2: shows that majority of the weavers were educated upto H.Sec (36.7 percent.) Some of them were illiterate (29.6 percent) and primary education was among 18.4 percent. There were very less graduates and postgraduates. Maximum number of the weavers belonged to joint family i.e. 52 percent and 48 percent belonged to nuclear family. Most of the respondents were married (79 percent). 16 percent, 4 percent and 1percent of the respondents were widows, unmarried and divorced respectively.

**Problems faced by the Weavers**

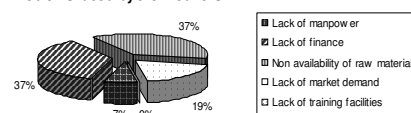


Fig: 1 denotes that 37 percent of weavers faced the problems of money and non availability of materials. 19percent weavers faced the problems of marketing demand and 7 percent faced the problem of lack of manpower. The awareness regarding entrepreneurship was explored and it was found that 46% of them lacked understanding about insurance and marketing. Remaining 54% took help of husband or any elder male members in understanding finance and marketing related issues. The female were good sellers as they had experience in Ima market. Most Manipuri women were traditionally engaged in almost all the production activities including handloom and agriculture. Over the years, they have been increasingly marginalized. Their products could neither compete with the machine made products from the industrial centres of India nor could they cater to the fast changing tastes of the society. The people are artistic and creative. Every house possesses a loom, and Manipuris weave with a passion and style, unrivalled by any other state. Manipuri bed covers of Moirangfee and flower designs, silk and cotton sarees,

scarves, blankets and shawls, in distinctive shades and weaves, make for an enchanting collection. A wide range of artistic handicrafts from bamboo, papier-mache, decorative ivory, dolls and Jewellery make for prized souvenirs. These exquisite handlooms and handicrafts are sold at Khwairamband market, the largest exclusive women's market in the country, which is a must on every visitor's itinerary. Unlike weaving in other parts of India, the Manipur weaving is entirely the work of women. Weaving is a part of their domestic duties. In fact, it is a primary qualification of a Meitei woman. This handloom industry is practically monopolized by women not only from the idea of economic necessity but also from the sense of social custom. The support system namely hired labour help and automatization of work in the home was found very poor. Thus the quantum of work did not reduce but it increased the work of the women. They had to compete with modern demand, change in motif and style in handloom and had to be updated. This requires addition of the skill of weaving and good knowledge about marketing. Through innovation the women themselves enhance their skill of weaving whereas the lifestyles did not change. In Manipur those who took up education seriously went and settled outside Manipur and those who remained in Manipur did not change their lifestyles. To fulfill the third objective, the researcher made a humble effort to suggest few tips to women entrepreneurs of Manipur. The first step toward that

- 1) Recognized the part women have played traditionally in their own society.
- 2) To device policies that fully brings the role into account rather than under mining it.
- 3) Help women acquiring managerial skills, self reliance, wider knowledge of product, market, consumers, social obligation and family roles and responsibilities.
- 4) Remember ten commandment:
  - a) Identify target group from the unemployed women.
  - b) Find out type of work carried out, expectation at home away from home.
  - c) Identify lightly economic activity that will suit the

- d) Carry out feasibility study of potential economic activity with the help of professional assistance.
- e) Determine most satisfactory institutional set up to promote and protect women participation.
- f) Identify a mother institute to foster the growth in formative period.
- g) Hold meeting with potential workers, financial institution to explain basic action plan.
- h) Appoint able project director to review progress and check the schedule of implementation.
- i) Make women workers responsible to manage day to day chores with minimum orientation in basic right and responsibility.
- j) Overview the whole project, procurement of material, market, funding and banking agencies, meeting conduction, management controls and law enforcement.

Take following precautions

- \* Enterprise must have clear significant objectives.
- \* Enterprise should be based on adequate current facts.
- \* Major attention should be given to the most significant needs.
- \* The skillful involvement of progressive leader is a much.
- \* Programme plan must take into account cultural and social values.
- \* Organize women, increase their autonomy and create pressure group for collective action.

**Conclusion:** The study showed the trend that their consciousness for expanding enterprise was visible but there was very less change observed in the life of Manipur women. It is further suggested that sustainable effort from government, NGOs, experts in the field must help and encourage them to take handloom as a profession. It is very important at this juncture to revive our handloom industry by providing it with raw materials and finding markets for it. The government must play a leading role and ensure that the industry is given a new lease of life. It will also considerably solve the unemployment problem for the young women of the state and be able to improve their family life styles.

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