



A View on Marketing of Handloom fabrics in Manipur: A Local Market's Prospective

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Abstract: Marketing of Handloom fabrics in Manipur is done by weavers themselves, master weavers, middlemen, co-operative societies and also by marketing organizations, Handloom houses of Apex, All India Handlooms Fabric Marketing Co-operative Societies and sales and showrooms of Handicrafts and Handloom Export Corporation etc., The handloom sector plays an important role in the economic development and livelihood of the rural poor in the state. It contributes significantly by generating more employment opportunities and providing bread to the rural poor. Mostly in the state handloom market is done in the local markets. The market is an unorganized one with no control over buying, selling and pricing of the product. There is almost no promotion activity for the handloom products, which is also one of the reasons why the market is not expanding to a wider scale. The article is taken up in order to study about some of the commonly produced handloom fabrics and the present marketing system adopted by the weavers in the local markets of the State.

Index Terms - : handloom, marketing, Manipur, weavers, product.

I. INTRODUCTION

Manipur is well-blessed state by Nature and it to be one of the richest bio-geographic areas in the world. Because of the God gifted beauties of the state many great scholars gave different names of the state "Manipur". Indian first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the Manipur as "The Land of Jewels" in the extreme north-eastern border of India (Arun's G.K., 2011). Manipur is also named as "A Little Paradise on Earth and Switzerland of India" by Lord Irwin. The more than 33 different communities in the State have imprinted upon their handloom products, exquisite designs peculiar to their communities. The Handloom sector of Manipur is the largest cottage industry in the State. The industry has produced many skilled weavers who have received both national and state award for their unique handloom fabric designs. Handloom fabrics of Manipur are in high demand in many parts of India and abroad. The weavers of this state produce varieties of fabrics starting from a small napkin to more luxurious items like phanek, lengyan phee, sarees, raniphee, wangkheiphee etc. People from outside Manipur would like to take home a handloom product when they came to this state as this product have their unique, rare and exotic designs.

II. CONCEPT OF MARKETING

Marketing plays a crucial role in accelerating the pace of economic development and growth. The traditional concept of marketing implies volume selling activity or distribution of goods and services. Modern methods of marketing have been evolved after the World War II. All the post-war studies on marketing stressed the need for greater attention on distributive function of business. The American Marketing Association (1960) defined marketing as performance of business activities that direct, flow of goods and services from producers or suppliers to consumer or user.

Marketing is the economic process by which goods and services are Exchanged and their values determined in terms of money price. It refers to as the process of discovering and translating consumer needs and wants into product and service specification, in turn, helping make it possible for more and more consumers to enjoy those products and services. In order to promote the handloom, marketing plays an important role. The Textile Policy of 1985 clearly mentioned that to improve the marketing of handloom products, infrastructure marketing complexes, training of marketing personnel and intensive publicity shall be organized. Accordingly, marketing of handloom products is of immense significance because of the diverse nature of the products. The marketing of handloom can be studied through 4 P's of marketing viz., product, promotion, price and place.

Product

The handloom industry has been plagued by organisation deficiencies, technological limitations and input constraints. There is lack of quality consciousness among the weavers, as the fashion keeps on changing from time to time, there is need to diversity into newer products, designs and inputs. Newer inputs like polyesters and yarns extracted from pineapple fibres have to be used extensively. Developments and approaches towards using polyester in the hill areas of Manipur, where join looms are used can be provided because polyester is suitable to the conditions of loom weaving.

Price

There is no clear-cut price policy for handloom sector. Most of the weavers, co-operatives and master-weavers follow the age-old tradition of pricing, viz. a fixed margin over the total cost as profit. The pricing policy should essentially reflect the buying behaviour of the consumer and the movement of the product.

Promotion

The promotional policy of handloom sector includes design collection and new product developments, special sales and exhibitions, discounts and rebates, price schemes and such other tactical interventions, which all are ingredients of promotion. Thus, it can be viewed that media advertising is merely a tool conveying these promotional measures to the consumers to appeal and motivate them to purchase.

Place

The channels of distribution of handloom are co-operatives, mobile units, traders, middlemen/dealers, whole-sellers, commission agents, master weavers, hawkers, exhibition sales, etc. The co-operative fold has played an important role in the development of marketing network for handloom.

Underlying problem

The standard of living of the weavers is significantly low and they are leading miserable and pitiable life due to unemployment and underemployment. This situation prevails everywhere in our country. The handloom scenario in India is likely to undergo drastic changes in terms of skills, inputs like designs, market trends and changing demands therein. The main thing is that whether these changes affect the interests of weavers who are still continuing their traditional skills and knowledge in producing. Many policies and schemes are being implemented by government for the benefit and welfare of handloom industry by providing livelihood for many people directly and indirectly. A plethora of measures is undertaken by the government in order to promote the handloom sector. They are expected to safeguard

the interests of handloom weavers and improving the standard of living by providing enough employment opportunities and facilities to them to market their products at competitive prices. Still the handloom industry is facing crisis.

III. MARKETING ANALYSIS

The State Government has made full efforts for overall development of handloom and handicrafts industries in the state. Manipur State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society is an apex co-operative society taking pivotal role in the co-operative sector for development of handloom in the state. There is also departmental raw-materials bank to meet the requirement of various types and quality of yarn of weavers at reasonable price. The Mechanised Dye House now runs under the department are also making full efforts to make available quality dyed yarn for the weavers of the State. Handloom & Handicrafts Delivery Scheme was formally launched by the Department of Textiles, Commerce and Industry, Govt. of Manipur vide Order No. 4/18/2016-C&I dated 2nd January, 2017, with the objective to promote the socio-economic conditions of the weavers, artisans and for the growth of textile sector as a whole. It is a scheme of Save Time Save Money, with an objective to provide yarn with buy back arrangement at the doorsteps of weavers. The district wise number of weavers who have registered and enrolled as beneficiaries for employment on handloom weaving is shown at Table No.1.

Table No. 1. District wise number of beneficiaries of Manipur

Sl no	District	Beneficiaries
1.	Senapati	61
2.	Tamenglong	159
3.	Noney	32
4.	Churachandpur	122
5.	Pherzawl	27
6.	Chandel	99
7.	Tengnoupal	15
8.	Ukhrul	1510
9.	Kamjong	365
10.	Imphal East	3295
11.	Imphal West	1655
12.	Bishnupur	160
13.	Thoubal	937
14.	Kakching	422
	Total	8859

Source: Directorate of Trade, Commerce and Industries, Govt. of Manipur, Annual Administrative Report, 2017-18

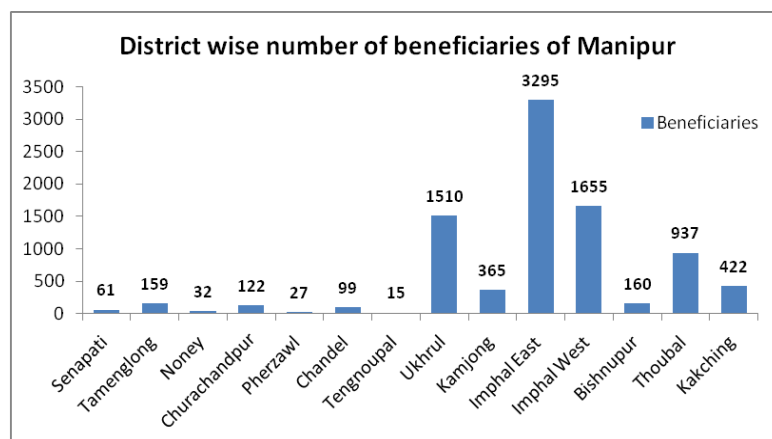


Fig. no. 1: District wise number of beneficiaries of Manipur (2017-18)

Manipur ranks first in terms of looms per 1000 man in the country according to National Handloom Census, 2010. The number of looms and weavers of the top ten states of India recording highest density of looms and weaver according to National Handloom Census Report, 2010 is shown at Table No.2.

Table No. 2: States of India recording highest density of Looms & Weavers

State	Loom	Weaver
Manipur	190634	204319
Tripura	139011	131742
Assam	1111577	1483864
Nagaland	47,688	65,303
Mizoram	24,136	41,189
Arunachal Pradesh	27,286	39,566
West Bengal	307829	665006
Tamil Nadu	154509	318512
Andhra Pradesh	124714	306465
Uttar Pradesh	80,295	217015

Source: Directorate of Trade, Commerce & Industries, Govt. of Manipur

IV. DISCUSSION

The government needs to take proactive steps to overcome the challenges in the Handloom sector of Manipur. The government needs to make the handloom sector an important one and a source of living for the weavers by providing financial assistance, modern technology, marketing support and promoting at the national and international levels. In order to make the overall growth and development of Handloom sector in Manipur the following suggestions have been made:

1. Provide Financial Assistance to weavers:

The Government and other organisations should provide easy access to loans, subsidies and other financial assistance to help weavers invest in their business and improve their production capacity.

2. Improvement of market accessibility:

There should be efforts to connect weavers with national and international markets. This can be achieved by increasing the visibility of handloom products through exhibitions, trade fairs and online platforms.

3. Skilled Labour:

Handloom requires skilled labour to maintain quality and improve efficiency. Government can facilitate skill development programs, which will attract more people to the industry and make it more sustainable.

4. Quality:

The handloom products need to maintain quality standards to meet customer expectations and gain trust. Government can ensure quality control by setting up testing and certification labs and encouraging weavers to adopt standard operation procedure.

5. Giving awareness:

Efforts should be made to raise awareness among consumers about the value of handloom products and the importance of supporting the industry. This can be done through campaigns and initiatives that showcase the unique craftsmanship and cultural heritage of Manipur's Handloom industry. By implementing these suggestions, the handloom industry can overcome its challenges and thrive in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

Handlooms product quality has to maintain accordance with the customer preferences. Handloom industries need to know the market segmentation to realize the target market for each product. Entrepreneur has to try to introduce the modern technology on their process to make better and low cost in output. Price is vital factor to run the firm that only factors to be giving income to the sectors. So handloom industries have to consider whole cost of production. When determine the price for the product

should be aware the income of the specific target group. Producers should make separate pricing strategies for each product. Pricing strategies have to attract the customer. Product price has to cover the whole sellers and retailers. The Handloom industry is a vital part of Manipur's economy and culture. The growth and development of this sector are crucial for the State's overall development. However, despite its various challenges, the handloom industry also has several prospects including increased demand for handmade and eco-friendly products, emergence of e-commerce platforms, its unique designs, employment generation, women empowerment, etc. Further, the State Government needs to establish market linkages and marketing opportunities for wider markets and greater benefits for the weavers of the State. Efforts should also be made to increase their efficiency and productivity through the application of modern amenities and technologies. This is highly essential for the State's economic growth and development.

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