



Handloom and Master Weavers Operation in Mizoram: A Case Study of Thenzawl Handloom Cluster

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Abstract : The rich tapestry of India's cultural heritage is intricately woven with the threads of its traditional handloom industry. Handloom, being the second-largest employment generator next to agriculture, plays a pivotal role in the textile industry. Moreover, the products of the weavers in different parts of the state or region signify the identity of the people. As we explore the world of handloom in India, it is essential to consider the broader context of the handloom industry in the 21st century. As such, for centuries, master weavers have played a significant role in shaping and preserving the cultural legacy. In the same way that Thenzawl, the handloom hub of Mizoram, is located in the district of Serchhip, where a significant portion of the industry is handled by master weavers. More than 70 percent of weavers work under master weavers (Government of India, 1996), and little is known about their existence. The dominance of master weavers is so great that they have established weaver cooperatives, each operating in a unique manner in this particular area. So the case study focuses on the operations of master weavers as handloom entrepreneurs.

Index Terms : Handloom, master weavers, employment, textile, Thenzawl, weavers, entrepreneur.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian handloom industry has a distinct place in the world of fabric. This is just not a cloth or traditional wear it symbolises the Indian civilisation and in fact one of the oldest on planet. Handloom represents an age-old tradition of the rich cultural heritage of India. Indian handloom industry is the second-largest employment generator next to agriculture¹. The All-India 4th Handloom Census (2019-20) showed that there are more than 35.22 lakh people who are engaged

in weaving and its allied activities. Handloom has been defined as textile produced through 'manual intervention' or using 'human energy for production' (Varghese, 2015).

In Mizoram 27540 are engage in weaving and its allied activities (Fourth All-India Handloom Census, 2019), Thenzawl, the handloom hub of Mizoram, located in the district of Serchhip in Mizoram, among the eleven districts Thenzawl has become an important centre of weaving providing livelihood to a significant number of households in the town. The looms at Thenzawl weave rich and colourful types of handloom merchandise. As such master weavers have played a pivotal role in shaping and preserving the cultural legacy of Mizoram, employing age-old techniques and artistic skills that have been passed down through generations.

Master weavers are ones who employ around 10-15 individual weavers who carry out all the weaving and related activities (Singh,2018). Their work extends far beyond the loom, as they navigate intricate patterns, colour palettes, and textiles, all rooted in a deep understanding of culture and tradition (Feng et al.,2022) Individual weavers prefer to work under the master weavers (entrepreneur) as they get the continuous flow of work (Singh,2018).

As we explore the world of master weavers in India, it is essential to consider the broader context of the handloom industry in the 21st century. While the traditional charm of handwoven textiles remains timeless, it coexists with challenges stemming from globalization, mechanization, and evolving consumer preferences. Master weavers are the vanguards of this art form, ensuring its continuity and relevance in an ever-changing world.

In fact, master weavers adapt to contemporary challenges and continue to contribute to India's heritage (Sharma et al.,2020). Back in the times there was move towards technological advancement i.e. power looms. The handloom weavers began to face the brunt when the designs were imitated and same designs were made in much less time. But the master weavers (entrepreneurs) were able to sustain their working model (Singh,2018).

II. Review of Literature

Niranjana and Syamasundar (2006), in their study on master weavers of Andhra Pradesh, Guntur district, showed that the master weavers handle a large volume of business and have expanded from a small base initially. But the entry into the trade has been managed differently by different entrepreneurs in terms of their approach to flexibility, product differentiation, new markets, etc. This case study focuses on a small sample of five master weavers from the region.

Reddy (2007) discussed the present status of the handloom industry in India, its strengths, and its relevance to the Indian economy and suggested relevant policy measures that would provide the sector with a level playing field to compete in the globalised economy.

Singh and Naik (2008), from a study conducted on weavers of Banaras, highlighted that the majority of weavers (66 percent) worked as wage laborers for master weavers, while the remaining weavers (30 percent) belonged to cooperative societies, which, after completion returned the sarees to their separate owners. Independent weavers are occasionally forced to offer their products directly to consumers on a retail basis (25 percent) or to wholesalers (15 percent) due to need and want. Nearly 50 percent of the residents belonged to the middle-income category and worked as master weavers or in cooperative societies.

Bagavatula (2010) highlighted in his study on the Working of Entrepreneurs in a Competitive Low Technology Industry: The Case of Master weavers in the Handloom Industry in Andhra Pradesh that textile entrepreneurs (also known as master weavers) have played an essential role in making handloom extremely competitive. It is challenging for master weavers to get money back from the textile merchants. To get their money back, they must make multiple visits to the stores and endless phone calls. They must also proceed cautiously throughout this recovery process because if a master weaver is too assertive, the store owner can reverse course and decline to buy more goods. Every master weaver has a tale to share about how store owners avoid payments for extended periods of time while citing weak economic cycles, thus locking up thousands of rupees in capital as bad debt. The store owners may even file an insolvency petition in extreme circumstances, in which the master weaver loses the majority of his capital. Fourth, many weavers demand that their master weavers switch to more expensive looms, necessitating the initial infusion of capital that cannot be employed in the production cycle and the where profits will appear only later.

Ramswamy and Kumar (2010) highlighted that majority of the entrepreneurs in the cluster are tribal women who have chosen to be entrepreneurs in their own right, notwithstanding the number of looms owned by them. It analyses some crucial aspects of marketing of the micro artisan enterprises in terms of share of different products in total sales, distribution channels, payment for sales, sales promotion techniques, and extent of participation of sample enterprises in exhibitions and fairs. The researchers have offered suggestions for improving the marketing practices of the enterprises through cluster intervention initiatives to enable the cluster to sustain and grow.

Ramswamy and Kumar (2011) studied various entrepreneurial aspects of the traditionally run micro handloom enterprises in the Thenzawl cluster, a remote tribal cluster predominantly run by women entrepreneurs located in Mizoram. They suggested that development activities be undertaken in the cluster to enable the enterprises to sustain and grow. They also examined the relationship between cluster processes and entrepreneurship and concluded that clusters played a significant role in entrepreneurial growth in Thenzawl.

Ramswamy (2012) studied the entrepreneurial aspects of tribal weavers in the Thenzawl handloom cluster in Mizoram. The study ascertained the entrepreneurial motivations of the weavers and evaluated the growth and managerial performance and the problems of the micro handloom enterprises in Thenzawl.

Singh and Kumar (2018) highlighted in their study that most of the master weavers follow the mode of the operation including transactional cost and social capital. The weavers still feel the need for the support from the government for the entrepreneurial activity. Off late due to so many schemes launched at regular interval, weavers feel motivated towards taking up this venture. Earlier it was more of family legacy but eventually more new individual weavers are moving towards entrepreneurship. Some of the weavers were not able to start anything on their own due to lack of credit and marketing facilities. Few Government schemes are there which specifically address these issues. Weavers in general feel the lack of awareness towards these schemes. If properly implemented these schemes will boost the entrepreneurial activity in this sector.

Bagavatula (2020) highlighted that over the past 40 years, the handloom sector has been held by many master weaver as a manufacturing and marketing channel. Although they have been exploitative in the past, market demand and financial constraints are forcing master weavers to start looking into alternative ways to control production, like creating contract weavers or mini master weavers. From a master weaver's point of view, starting a business in the handloom sector is fraught with risk.

Remlalhruii (2021) from her study reveal that the handloom entrepreneurs faced various problems with differences in wages of labours, prices of yarn and handloom products. Some entrepreneurs would buy off skilled workers of other enterprise or entrepreneurs of other clusters would bet prices down due to differences on factors of production.

Sharma et al. (2021) reflects that for handloom industry to be sustainable the handloom weavers market has to be expanded and organized. Handloom sector plays an important role in state economy.

Ahmed and Shereen (2022) showed that 40 per cent worked as master weavers. It was found that most, or 59.5 per cent, of weaver households, have an income of less than Rs. 5,000. It can be said that most (53.2% of the weaver households) have taken out a loan for handloom purposes. The study found that most (25.5%) handloom households got loans from the government, followed by commercial banks (21.9 per cent). It found that most weaver households (73.5% of them) work with looms and that 26.5 % of weaver household's work without looms.

Kalam and Babu (2023) highlighted that handloom industry is thus the most significant tool for the development of rural non-farm sector, the absorption of resources and the advancement of justice in the nation, particularly in rural Andhra Pradesh. Despite several actions taken by the government through institutional support and direct economic aid to hand-held weavers, they have been in miserable condition owing to countless issues and are sustaining ongoing losses.

III. Objective

To understand the business operations of master weavers in Thenzawl.

IV. Research methodology

To fulfil the objective of the study, primary data has been collected from the respondent master weavers. Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques have been used in the study. A structured questionnaire was prepared and has been analysed and interpreted for the purpose of the study. The snowball sampling method was used. Primary data was collected from 47 handloom master weavers in Thenzawl. The interview schedule contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

V. Operation of master weavers

The operation of master weavers in the handloom industry involves a combination of traditional craftsmanship, technical expertise, entrepreneurial skills, and market acumen. Master weavers are central figures within handloom clusters, leading production units and overseeing various aspects of the weaving process.

The work of master weavers can be divided into two parts: firstly loan work(as termed by weavers in the studied area).Loan work is when the master weaver provides the contract weaver with yarn, already mounted on a loom with a pre-made design. The contract weaver has no choice in the colour or design of the fabric. The contract weaver weaves the fabric according to the master weavers instructions, and then gives the finished product back to the master weaver. And the contract weaver keeps 20 percent of the finished product, and give the rest to master weavers. If the contract weaver is unable to sell his or her share, the master weaver will buy it from them.

Secondly the master weaver provide yarn which is already mounted in the loom and ready to be woven to the contract weaver. In this case contract weaver does not have any share in the cloth woven but sell the puan woven directly in payment to the master weaver. Upon finishing a puan, weavers went directly to the master weaver for getting paid. This way is more common as it provides an active revolving of money as weaving is their main source of income for the weavers and majority of the weavers are also fond of these. Here in the same way the master weavers provide the weavers with designs. In fact, it is important to note that master weavers are operating 100 of loom not only within Thenzawl itself but outside the cluster in places like Kanhmun, Ramlaitui and Buangpui which is nearby Thenzawl area.

Firm establishment

How most master weavers came into being can be divided into two sections: firstly, inheritance from generations to generations, which they pass on from their parents, who have been textile entrepreneurs for more than a decade. Secondly, typically they weave as an individual weaver and later turn into master weavers by initially having 4 to 5 looms in the beginning and expanding over time with contract weavers and daily weavers operating from their household and master weavers household.

Table 5.1: Number of weavers employed by master weavers in accordance with firm age

Size of weavers	Firms age
10-50	1-5 years
50-100	5- 10 years
More than 100	More than 10 years

The table 5.1 shown above, indicates that the older the firm, the more contract weavers or daily weavers work under the master weavers. The study shows that in the recent 5 years, the number of master weavers has been increasing, which has led to an increase in the number of weavers as well. From the qualitative data collected, the oldest textile entrepreneur in the studied area who is in the business for 27 years is still willing to expand the firm over time. Which means that the handloom business, with its operation of master weavers, has great prospects and viability in the future.

Number of looms owned

The number of looms owned by master weavers can vary significantly depending on various factors, such as the scale of their operations, financial resources, and market demand. Master weavers in the studied area mostly own 5 to 10 looms in their households, along with contract weavers who come on a daily basis and weave normally for 10 to 12 hours a day. Some master weavers may gradually expand their operations and own multiple looms to increase their production capacity and meet growing market demands. The number of looms owned by master weavers is influenced by the type of handloom products they specialise in.

Most master weavers who have been in operation for more than 20 years have more than 100 looms operated, and others who have been in operation for 1 year have not less than 40 looms operated, which indicates that the handloom business is growing and is significantly contributing towards employment generation. The number of looms owned by master weavers can impact their productivity, income potential, and ability to fulfil orders in a timely manner. Access to financial resources, government support, and training programmes can play a role in enabling master weavers to acquire and maintain a higher number of looms. Understanding the number of looms owned by master weavers can provide insights into the scale of their operations, their level of expertise, and their potential for growth and expansion in the handloom industry.

Out of 47 sampled master weavers, on average 10 looms are owned by each master weavers, and these looms are located within the premises of these master weavers. However, most of the looms operated by the master weavers are located at the contract weavers households owned by the weavers themselves.

Table 5.2: Percentage of location of looms

Firm age (in years)	Weavers household	Master weavers household
1-5	40	60
5-10	70	30
More than 10	90	10

Table 5.2 shows that master weavers in the studied area employ both household weavers and weavers in master weavers household. It basically indicates that all master weavers have their own loom in their premises, with wage weavers coming on a daily basis.

Table 5.3: Duration of contracts with master weavers

Network size of weavers	Duration of more than 10 years (in percent)	Between 5-10 years (in percent)	Less than 5 years (in percent)	Daily basis (in percent)
10-50	0	0	75	25
50-100	10	30	45	15
More than 100	15	40	25	20

Table 5.3, indicates that as more weavers are engaged the relationship with these weavers last longer and the ability to build mutual trust with weavers increases. As mentioned elsewhere, with the increase in the number of master weavers, retention of master weavers is a challenge for the master weavers, so even if a particular master weaver has more than 100 weavers, they rarely maintain a permanent network with weavers for more than 10 years, if only if they are relatives. In fact, with the rise in the number of master weavers in the past 5 years, retention of weavers is very difficult for every master weaver, which creates a problem in maintaining their ventures.

Loom engage

Table 5.4: Types of loom engage

Types of looms	Master weavers loom (in percent)
Loin Loom	5
Frame loom	78
Both	17

Table 5.4 reveals that majority of the master weavers in the studied area i.e. 78 percent purely depend on frame loom for production. This signifies that most of the weavers and master weavers in the studied area are experts in frame loom as compared to other looms such as Burmese loom, jacquard or loin loom. And out of 47 master weavers in Thenzawl handloom cluster only 17 percent are engaging both frame loom and loin loom for their production. Generally, experienced weavers prefer frame looms to loin looms due to their significantly faster production rate. The researcher also observed the ingenuity of these weavers, as some have even modified existing frame looms to create tools resembling loin looms, potentially seeking a balance between speed and specific weaving techniques.

Production process

Most master weavers operated from their homes. As mentioned earlier, master weavers have few looms in households, and the majority of other looms are in contract weavers households.

Table 5.5: Percentage of lodging facilities used by master weavers

Place of stay	Master weavers in Thenzawl
Dorm	8
Weavers Residence	70
Dorm and weavers residence	22

Table 5.5 demonstrated how master weavers run their businesses by hiring day labourers to weave on looms in their homes and by housing weavers who are primarily from outside the area in dormitories. Interestingly, the majority of the weavers residing in the dormitory furnished by experienced weavers are beginner weavers who aspire to enhance their weaving abilities.

Skill evaluation by master weavers

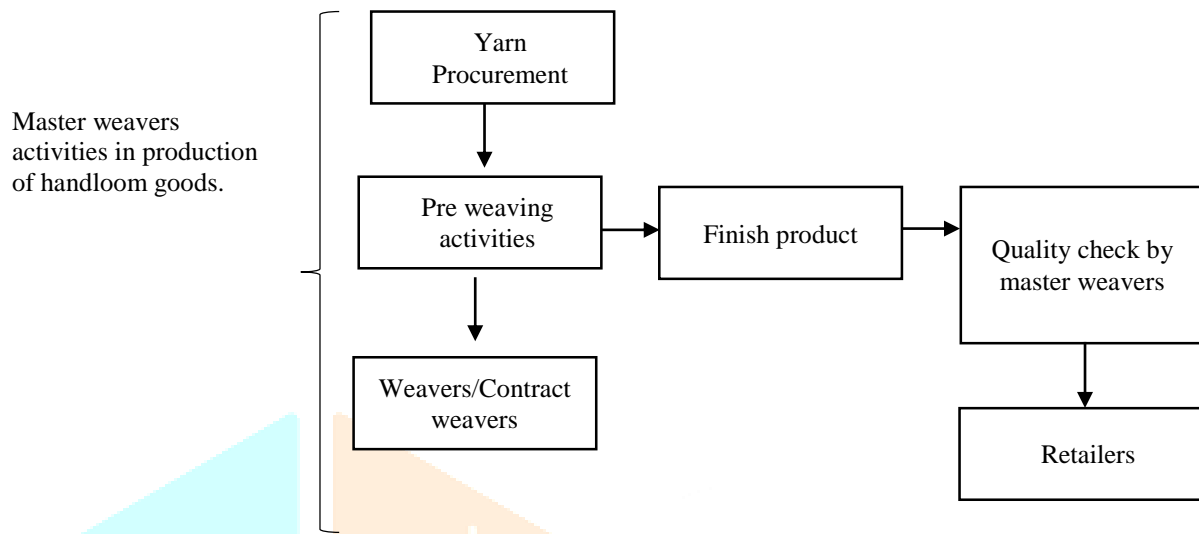
Master weavers distinguish between contract weavers or daily weavers based on their expertise. This involves identifying weavers who specialise in specific patterns and those who lack such knowledge. Through examining their work, master weavers assess each weaver's skill level and area of expertise. This evaluation not only benefits the master weaver but also empowers individual weavers to understand their strengths and pursue independent weaving, if desired.

Handloom production

It is important to note that in the Thenzawl handloom cluster, most of the master weavers are not much into quality concerns and barely reject the product. A little or no inspection is done at the time when the contract weaver gives the product. Moreover, master weavers are more interested in producing a larger number of products than high-quality products. Master weavers encourage the contract weavers to produce as much as possible; in fact, the weavers are also into this strategy, as they can earn more money if they produce more in a day. That is why most contract weavers working hours start right from the time they wake up until midnight to produce more. Which literally means the working hours of weavers are around 12 hours from the interaction held with master weavers. And it is crucial to note that master weavers normally do not ask anyone to be under them for weaving if they feel they have enough to operate; it is the weavers themselves who beg the master weavers to mount yarn for them or else their loom will be idle, and idle looms signify no income for that particular weaver significantly during the pandemic.

Mounting a loom for producing 20 puan in particular would require at least Rs 10,000 in cash for purchasing yarn and for pre-weaving activities, which is quite difficult for the weavers family. Especially during COVID times, as said by one master weaver, "there are a number of weavers who came into my house with tears begging me to mount their idle loom or else they will never have food to survive." This is persistent not only during COVID times but till date. Also, it is quite difficult for the weavers since mounting a loom and maintaining a number of looms require huge amounts of money, and sometimes master weavers used to take credit from the banks and operate those weavers who were in need, in which they had to bear huge interest.

Figure 1: Handloom production process chart



From the figure 1 shown above, it shows that master weavers or textile entrepreneurs are not only in the business of production but also in the business of marketing finished goods to retail store owners. It indicates that master weavers begin by conceptualising designs, drawing inspiration from tradition, nature, or contemporary trends. They carefully plan the weaving process, considering factors like yarn selection, colour schemes, and weaving techniques, by selecting high-quality yarn, which is crucial for the outcome of the fabric. Master weavers often work with acrylic, cotton, and silk. Moreover, most of the master weavers conduct their own pre-weaving activities. Finishing processes such as washing, pressing, and embellishing add final touches to the handloom fabric, enhancing its quality and appeal.

All master weavers in the Thenzawl handloom cluster have the skill of weaving and have woven in their beginning stages before becoming master weavers. Also, this helps them make designs quickly and instruct their weavers accordingly. Yarns mostly woven by master weavers in this particular area are acrylic yarn, which most of them acquired from Thenzawl itself. Do not opt to go to the capital of the state, as the price will be the same after considering the transportation costs. Around 3 percent of the master weavers are also getting yarn from outside the state, as they already have a good connection with suppliers of yarn. Here again, it is important to note that most master weavers who procure yarn from outside the state are in the business of selling yarn. While few of them feel that managing business as master weavers is more than enough.

Marketing of handloom product

Master weavers emphasise the designs and craftsmanship of their handloom textiles. They produce a wide range of products, including puan, household products, and accessories such as bags, shawls, shirts, etc., each meticulously woven with attention to detail and traditional techniques. Master weavers in the study rarely take on customisation services, allowing customers to personalise designs, colours, and patterns according to their preferences. This adds value to their products and caters to individual tastes.

Table 5.6: Types of handloom product specialise in percentage

Types of products	Master weavers specialise
Puan (wrap around skirt)	86
Accessories (bags, shirts, top ,etc)	12
Household products (table runner, cushion covers, table cloth, etc)	2

Table 5.6, shown above, highlights that the majority of the master weavers, i.e., 86 percent, are into the production of Mizo traditional wraparound skirts known as 'Puan'. These Puan can be of Mizo cultural wear and contemporary modern designs incorporated with Mizo designs. Master weavers price their products based on the quality of materials, the intricacy of design, and the time invested in weaving

The main places where master weavers from Thenzawl supply are the capital of the city, i.e., Aizawl and Lunglei, which can be termed the second capital of Mizoram. Moreover, before conflict arose, master weavers were exporting a huge number of finished products to Manipur, but due to conflict, it has stopped lately. Master weavers purchase finished products from individual weavers but cannot sell them directly to their suppliers. This results in large stockpiles and delays in sales, hindering cash flow and slowing down their business cycle which creates problems for the next batch of production. Based on the provided information, out of a sample of 47 master weavers in the handloom industry, 33 of them earn more than Rs 200,000 annually. This suggests that a significant portion of the master weavers in the sample have a relatively high-income level.

Network of suppliers

Master weavers clients are retail owners in different parts of the state. These clients do not look for suppliers due to the large presence of master weavers across the cluster itself. It was the master weaver who went directly to these retail owners and looked for a regular client to supply their products. But the master weavers have to meet the requirements of the client in terms of designs, quality, payment of money, and price. It is usually these retail owners who decide the price for procuring finished products from the master weavers. The master weavers have little or no decision regarding the pricing of the product, as the amount they ask for usually will not be agreed upon by the retail owner. At the end, they must stick with client demand, or else they end up not getting clients due to the large number of master weavers across the state.

An average master weavers have 20 to 30 clients, of whom only around 30 percent are regular clients. Which creates a problem for master weavers. Most transactions between clients and master weavers take place in the form of credit at the beginning. According to one successful master weaver, there are several clients who end up not paying debt and last for more than 10 years. But these only factors do not demotivate the master weavers to stop their business but to thrive for more. Master weavers went around different places across the state with different means of transportation, searching for clients. Core clients are difficult to find for the master weavers.

Most master weavers use to revise their prices according to the fluctuation in the price of yarn. Transportation of finished goods is not much considered for the revision of the product price. Most successful master weavers do not use any form of promotion; they simply go to the market and supply their clients. Few master weavers who are of younger age use social media as a form of promoting their product to their retail clients.

Most master weavers clients are those with whom they have had friendly connections for a long time, and those turn into their clients. Master weavers, in order to receive debt from the client, have to make several trips to the client's location in order to collect debt from the client. Handloom sales happen in cycles; in fact, master weavers must have a large number of weavers during the festival season, such as Christmas and conferences held across the states. Here it also signifies in terms of pricing, that during peak season, the master weavers have the upper hand in getting back the credit on time, and in contrast, during off-season, the retail clients have the upper hand in paying money to the master weavers. The payment period for such debt usually takes place in instalments and usually takes 3 months for full payment.

Also, while visiting the client, the master weavers make use of their social contact with different stakeholders so as to know the demand in the market. Master weavers use their social networks extensively because the growth of their venture is heavily dependent on the inputs obtained through these networks. (Bagavatula, 2020).

Designs

Master weavers design their products, as said earlier, according to retail clients requests. Knowledge exchange between master weavers and retail owners is quite important to meet the demand in the market. Once the design is settled, master weavers use graph paper to draw designs themselves and provide them to the weaver to produce accordingly. Here, master weavers employ both social media and other internet platforms to gain design knowledge. Designs introduced by one master weaver are not usually copied by other master weavers, as they respect each other's work. That is why all master weavers are thriving on their own to develop their own specific custom design, and they themselves are also quite sure by seeing that product to whom that design belongs. Most master weavers incorporate modern patterns with Mizo traditional designs. A textile entrepreneur with good colour combination skills and design knowledge grows faster than others.

Master weavers from Thenzawl handloom cluster normally do not take custom designs for one specific client for only one or two products with different designs, as these may hinder the ongoing work of the weaver, and in fact, they must search for a particular weaver who could weave that design, which is quite a problem for the master weavers. So, they think it is better to stick with their own designs and produce as much as possible without any hindrance. Master weavers prioritise building strong relationships with customers by providing personalised service, responding to inquiries promptly, and offering support throughout the purchasing process. They cultivate a loyal customer base through excellent service and attention to detail.

VI. How Master Weavers Survive

The survival of master weavers in the handloom sector hinges on their ability to blend tradition with innovation, adapt to evolving market demands, and leverage available resources and support systems to sustain their craft and livelihoods. Their ability to adapt to changing times while preserving cultural heritage ensures the continued relevance and resilience of handloom weaving as a timeless craft. Master weavers often diversify their product range to meet diverse customer demands, each tailored to different market segments. This diversification helps spread risk and ensures a steady income stream. Master weavers have better access to markets and distribution channels compared to individual weavers. They participate in craft fairs, exhibitions, and trade shows to showcase their products to a wider audience. Additionally, master weavers often invest in branding and marketing efforts to differentiate their products and build brand recognition.

Master weavers typically possess strong business management skills, including budgeting, inventory management, and customer relationship management. Master weavers often collaborate with other artisans, designers, and organisations to leverage collective strengths and resources. They may form cooperatives or associations to access funding, training, and marketing support. Collaborative efforts enable master weavers to overcome common challenges and achieve greater market visibility.

VII. Findings

Master weavers have expertise and have provided employment opportunities to a number of weavers across the state. They are the lifeblood for many weavers. The reason they boom in the market is the close proximity they maintain with retail clients and their frequent trips to clients to study market demand. They can withhold any financial inability by taking high risks and bearing unforeseen circumstances. Master weavers, weavers are not only located in Thenzawl alone but also in Kanghmun, Ramlaitui and Buangpui, which is nearby the Thenzawl area.

The majority of master weavers do not belong to a cooperative society and are unaware of government intervention. And here it is also important to note that around 30 percent of master weavers are aware of government intervention in the studied area. Master weavers mostly provide contract weavers with ready-to-weave mounted yarn with ready-made or sample designs.

Master weavers employ contract weavers based on their speciality in handwork. Retaining of weavers is a problem for many master weavers. During earlier times, when master weavers were less in number, they could have a large number of contract weavers under them, but now, due to the rising number of master weavers, contract weavers are hard to retain, as amongst the master weavers themselves, there is a high level of competition by stealing someone's weavers who have a high and special skill set. Even the master weavers are having problems giving out their products to retailers due to unpaid debt.

Master weavers often want to retain highly skilled weavers and pay them higher wages based on the skills that they acquire, which indicates the level of competition amongst these textile entrepreneurs. Commonly, master weavers operate their business in the form of a 'Loan' as named by the weavers and master weavers, as mentioned earlier.

VIII. Conclusions

To conclude, master weavers are the ones who maintain cultural heritage and ensure the continued relevance and resilience of handloom weaving as a timeless craft. Master weavers are still struggling to maintain connections with suppliers due to the large presence of master weavers lately. Yarn procurement causes problems for them as they have to acquire it at a price higher than the retail price. Most master weavers are eager to have a yarn depot from the government where they can purchase it at a subsidised rate.

Master weavers can be termed eminent entrepreneurs firstly because they can survive in hard times like during a pandemic where all things were shut down and no demand was there from the client part too, but they are still able to sustain and provide bread to the weavers. It is not easy for the master weavers because they themselves do not have clients to survive; they sometimes have to depend on bank loans with high interest rates to keep the business going. Secondly, master weavers are facing huge problems with the recovery of debt and a long duration for the recovery of debt. This creates a problem, and at the same time, a quick rotation of money with no delay payment is demanded from the weavers' side.

Master weavers must be concerned with designs, make sure they are according to what is trending in the market, and make sure they will be fast-moving in the market. Weavers are willing to work with master weavers rather than becoming individual weavers, as their main source of income is weaving and they are in high need of a quick rotation of money, which basically means that weavers are not flexible with delays in payments.

At times, it is difficult for textile entrepreneurs to maintain their ventures as weavers are reluctant to meet the demand made by the weavers. This hinders their innovative ideas, and these weavers are able to reject the request made as they have a number of other master weavers to shift. And it is common that, many times, master weavers used to buy from individual weavers who did not have connections or suppliers in the market. Where master weavers have to thrive with these products as their use to be deviation in the designs which their supplier can easily notice. Overall, master weavers are the provider of all-year-round employment to weavers. Though master weavers are facing huge problems recovering debt from their suppliers, they still thrive with motivation to survive in the industry. And also, it is crucial to note that all master weavers are individual weavers in the initial stage; as time passes, they turn themselves into master weavers. Which shows that the excellent knowledge that they have in weaving and interest in making designs guide them to be successful textile entrepreneurs.

Due to a lack of research with respect to master weavers alone in the country, it has led to the thought that these master weavers are exploiting weavers, but in reality, they are the providers of employment. Moreover, more research needs to be conducted in this particular area, as it will shed better knowledge on how master weavers are resilient in the handloom sector and why individual weavers are often not able to survive. These studies will also help individual weavers understand the traits of master weavers and try to assist in their survival.

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