

Role of Culture, Traditional Practices and Small Scale Industries of North East India on Its Economic Development with Special Reference to Manipuri Community

Dr. K. Jilangamba Singha

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Lala Rural College, Lala

Abstract

Culture consists of religion, language, art, music, and rituals. A society is defined by its custom, belief, social values and behavior. Tradition is the pattern of thought, action or behavior that performed through generations to generations. Tradition includes festivals, religious rites, family customs, culinary traditions, clothing, jewelry, music and dancing. Culture and tradition are closely related. Both culture and tradition form, shape and protect the society influencing their laws, customs, and social interactions. Small Scale industries are small business characterized by limited capital investment, it focus on local markets, and more labor intensive production process. These industries play a vital role in economic development by creating jobs, promoting regional development and fostering entrepreneurship. Traditional practices are customs, beliefs or action passed down through generations within a community or society with symbolic meaning, significance and practical value. These practices encompass a wide range of areas including agricultural techniques, rituals, social norms and value. They form a fundamental part of community's cultural identity and heritage. Women folk are practicing weaving in Manipur. The crafts are woven with culture and spiritual beliefs of the Manipuri community since time immemorial. My present paper is an attempt to examine the role of Traditional Practices and Small scale industries of North East India on the economic development with special reference to Manipuri community. The study will be covered the areas of extension and compatibility between ideas and values that signify modernity and traditional practices are reviewed.

Keywords: Tradition, weaving, capital, profit and entrepreneurship

Introduction:

Culture, traditional practices and small scale industries are foundational interconnected factors of sustainable, inclusive economic development particularly in North East India. They generate employment, ensure equitable income distribution, preserve local knowledge and fostering innovation. Tradition is the pattern of thought, action or behavior that performed through generations to generations. Tradition includes festivals, religious rites, family customs, culinary traditions, clothing, jewelry, music and dancing. Culture and tradition are closely related. Both culture and tradition form, shape and protect the society influencing their laws, customs, and social interactions. Traditional practices are customs, beliefs or action passed down through generations within a community or society with symbolic

meaning, significance and practical value. Small Scale industries are small business characterized by limited capital investment, it focus on local markets, and more labor intensive production process. These industries play a vital role in economic development by creating jobs, promoting regional development and fostering entrepreneurship. Industrialization may be considered as important factor influencing the pace of economic developments. In this context small scale and cottage industries are playing very important role in the economic development of the North Eastern states. The state of Assam is the pioneer state of North-Eastern Region in India, whose economy is full of potentialities. Different valuable natural resources are within the possession of this state. Entrepreneurship is the ability and readiness enterprise along with its uncertainties and risk in order to make profits. But in economics entrepreneurship connected with factors of production i.e. land, labor, capital and natural resources can generate profit. The best example of entrepreneurship is starting a new business. Weaving is one of the main traditional practices of Manipuri community. Women folk are practicing weaving in Manipur within the cultural boundary. The crafts are woven with culture and spiritual beliefs of the Manipuri community since time immemorial. My present paper is an attempt to examine the impact and significance of traditional practices of Manipuri community in North-East India on its economy. The study will be covered the areas of extension and compatibility between ideas and values that signify modernity and traditional practices are reviewed.

My present paper is based on the following objectives:-

- The first objective is to highlight the meaning and significances of culture, traditional practices and small scale industries on economic development.
- The second objective is to analyze about the role played by the culture, traditional practices and small scale industries in socio-economic development of Manipuri community in North-East India.
- The third objective is to highlight the conclusion and some challenges and prospects.

Methodology: - The study is attempt to evaluate the role of culture and traditional practices of North East India on its economic development with special reference to the Manipuri community in North East India and the study based on secondary data which are collected from published and un-published sources like books, journals and website.

Review Literature

A thorough review of the related literature forms an important part of research. It deals with the critical examination of various published an unpublished works related to the present study. Knowledge of related research enables the researcher to define the frontiers of his fields; it helps in comparing the efficiency of various procedures and instruments used. In the early literature on economic growth and development, industrialization as a source of employment and capital accumulation has been recognized by various economists. Here I highlight the review of works by various authors as well as different committee reports related to the small scale and cottage industries at international, national and local levels.

According to Fisher (1945) every progressive economy has a steady shift of employment and investment from the agricultural sector to industrial sector. Gunnar Myrdal (1922) state that industrialization is one of the vital factors in the development policy. I.C. Dhingra (2002) also stated that transition of surplus labour from agricultural sector to industrial sector is one of the important factors for economic development..

Rathod, C.B.(2007) described the importance of small scale industrial sector and also the contribution of small scale entrepreneurs in world economy. The new objective was study the growth pattern to evaluate the impact of globalization on SSIs and export opportunity, to identify the barriers and constraints that SSIs Indian and impact of structural adjustment on employment. It was revealed by the author that the New Economic Policy was not even diluted the problem of educated unemployment but even the structural adjustment is unfavorable as far as employment is concerned. In fact liberalization has promoted capital intensive industries, decentralized production and generating new employment in informal sector.

Basem Mohammed Lozi (2008) found in his study the small scale industries in Jordan find itself in an inter competitive environment since 1991, due to globalization domestic economic liberalization and dilution of secure specific protective measure.

Concept of traditional practices and small scale industries: - Traditional practice means holding and exercising any activity for day to day livelihood and on the other hand traditional practice implies that the practices followed by a family or by a community in which it is handed down by an ancestor to this posterity. Throughout the world, there is a great diversity in traditional practices, reflecting the diversity of culture, traditions as well as natural environment and climates where indigenous people lives and practice their activities. Small Scale industries are small business with limited capital investment, it suited for local markets, and more labor intensive industries. These industries play a vital role in economic development by creating jobs, promoting regional development and fostering entrepreneurship.

Role of culture, Traditional practices and small scale industries on economy of North-East India:

Many traditional practices are relating to daily livelihood and subsistence activities involving the use of biological resources in North East India. Such as cultivation, jum-cultivation, fishing, holding livestock like, poultry, piggery, diary, traditional weaving/ handloom and other handicraft, pottery etc. These activities take place in diverse eco-systems in North East India. For example jum-cultivation is practicing in the hill areas of the Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram, But jum- cultivation has negative effect on the ecological valance and disturbed sustainable development. Weaving traditional occupation is practicing in various parts of the North East India but it is very much practicing in the plain area of the state of Manipur at present. This practiced of hand loom products give good economic support to the daily livelihood and the economy of the state also. This handloom product is progressing day by day by using modern method of technology and financial support in the state of Manipur. These handloom products are exported in the other state also. Traditional fishing is practicing in the some parts of the region where indigenous people are living in the bank of the rivers and lakes. The occupations like piggery, poultry and jum-cultivation are practicing traditionally in the various parts of the North East India since very long time and also these are main occupation of their livelihood.

Another important traditional occupation which is related to traditional medicine, including healer (doctor), mid wife/birthing. Traditional cooking is also a traditional occupation including expertise on preparing or strong foods. For example, practices of homemade wine, dry fish and meat fermented food etc., these traditional occupations are practicing all over the Manipuri inhabited area. Other traditional occupations like traditional crafts/skills for making utensils or household equipment. Many communities in North East India have expert to build objects in the traditional way, and can make specific products, equipments and clothes. Certain occupations have specific rituals, ceremonial or spiritual dimensions

which can also be combined with other ceremonial functions. For example – practicing as a traditional occupation at the time of traditional well-coming and rituals of dead, birth, and wedding ceremony and astrologer/future teller are also practicing as traditional occupation in North East India. Some traditional occupations are relation with strong cultural or art dimensions and includes actors, singer, dramatist, music players, and cinema etc. There are some traditional occupations which are specially directed towards teaching and education, the survival and continuation of indigenous traditional knowledge and the revival and maintenance of traditional knowledge.

It is indeed, the above mentioned traditional occupations are one of the sources of livelihood for the rural people of North East India even in the era of globalization. Though agriculture contributed major share in the economy of North East India but these traditional occupations supports human subsistence on secondary basis. Due to the advent of modernization and industrialization these traditional occupations struggle for exist. Now a days it is observed that the occupational diversity shifts from traditional to modern varieties of occupation.

Role of Traditional practices and Small Scale Industries of the Manipuri community in North-East India:- Manipuris are settled all over the North-East India and the state of Manipur is the parent state of Manipuri community. Outside the state of Manipur the Manipuri community is mainly settled in the Barak valley and the Brahmaputra valley of the state of Assam. Manipuri community also settled outside the country like Bangladesh and Myanmar. The practices of hand loom products give good economic support to the daily livelihood and the economy of the Manipuris in North East India. This handloom product is progressing day by day by using modern method of technology and financial support in the state of Manipur. These handloom products are exported in the other state also. Traditional fishing is practicing in the some parts of the region where indigenous people are living in the bank of the rivers and lakes. The occupations like piggery, poultry and jhum-cultivation are practicing traditionally in the various parts of the North-East India since very long time and also these are main occupation of their livelihood.

Another important traditional occupation which is related to traditional medicine, including healer/village physician, mid wife/birthing. Traditional cooking is also a traditional practices including expertise on preparing or strong foods. For example, practices of homemade wine, dry fish and meat fermented food etc., these traditional occupations are practicing all over the Manipuri inhabited area in North East India. Other traditional occupations like traditional crafts/skills for making utensils or household equipment. Many communities in North East India have expert to build objects in the traditional way, and can make specific products, equipments and clothes. Certain occupations have specific rituals, ceremonial or spiritual dimensions which can also be combined with other ceremonial functions. For example – practicing as a traditional occupation at the time of traditional well-coming and rituals of dead, birth, and wedding ceremony and astrologer/future teller are also practicing as traditional practices in North-East India. Some traditional occupations are relation with strong cultural or art dimensions and include actors, singer, dramatist, music players, etc. There are some traditional occupations which are specially directed towards teaching and education, the survival and continuation of indigenous traditional knowledge and the revival and maintenance of traditional knowledge.

It is indeed, the above mentioned traditional practices are one of the sources of livelihood for the rural people of North East India even in the era of globalization. Though agriculture contributed major share in the economy of North-East India but these traditional occupations supports human subsistence on

secondary basis. Due to the advent of modernization and industrialization these traditional occupations struggle for existence. Now a days it is observed that the occupational diversity shifts from traditional to modern varieties of occupation.

At present Manipuri community involves the traditional occupation like- practicing traditional cultivation, weaving, goldsmith, and other traditional occupation relating to the specific ritual ceremonial occasions such as ritual ceremony of dead, birth and wedding since very past. Outside the state of Manipur most of the Manipuris are inhabited in the village areas and a little portion of the total population is settled in the urban areas. In the villages Manipuris are practicing traditional cultivation but at present they are using modern technology and equipments. From this activity they meet subsistence only and support day to day livelihood. In the ritual ceremony like birth, wedding and dead some persons are appointed already traditionally they have responsible for the occasion. They get financial support to their day to day livelihood from these occupations. Another traditional occupation of Manipuris is related to traditional medicine and treatment like traditional healer (Amaiba/doctor) and mid wife (Maibee), these two traditional occupations are practicing since very past and at present also. The traditional healer or Amaiba is practiced by male, and he knows the herbal medicine and some healing process but the practice of mid-wife is performed by female. The practice of mid-wife is very rear now days but it is practicing in remote villages. The most important traditional occupation of the Manipuris is traditional weaving and handloom products. But in outside of the state of Manipur the inborn traditional occupation of weaving/handloom of Manipuris are practicing very little now days. It may be due to the lack of skilled persons and production could not be marketable but in the state of Manipur this traditional occupation weaving/handloom is progressing since very past and gives big financial support to the household as well as economy of the state also. Other traditional occupation like astrologers and future tellers are also practicing in the Manipuri community. It is indeed, among the above mention traditional practices of Manipuri community, the traditional practices of weaving playing very active role and financial support to improved socio-economic condition till today.

Traditional practices of weaving of Manipuri community are a primary source of income for women in Manipur, helping them become financially empowered and supporting their families. It is a women entrepreneur which provides significant employment opportunities especially for women, making it a crucial aspect of Manipuri community's socio-economic life. Women entrepreneurs use their weaving skills to sustain their household and contribute to the overall rural economy. The handloom industry preserves traditional knowledge and the unique cultural identity of Manipuri community. Weaving is not just an economic activity but also a status symbol of Manipuri women, reinforcing their importance in the community. They actively sell handloom products like wangkhei phee, phaneks, and sawls at various fairs and markets, connecting their work with consumers who value cultural heritage. Women entrepreneurs support each other through self-help groups, sharing skills and resources to overcome common challenges and strengthen the community.

Challenges and prospects:- The entrepreneurs are facing challenges in accessing wider markets, through government programs and participation in events aim to provide market linkages. The small scale industries must contend with competitive modern markets and can struggle with a shortage of capital, requiring supportive government initiatives and financial assistance. Upgrading hand looms and incorporating modern techniques can enhance productivity and quality product, but challenges exist with the availability of appropriate technology.

The challenges of Manipuri handloom weavers struggle with a shortage of capital, high cost of raw materials, and low profit margins due to the low-income nature of their work. A weak marketing network and exploitation by the middlemen limit the income of the weavers. Many weavers are illiterate and lack of appropriate training. Therefore it needed to access government scheme and support effectively. The prospects of Manipuri handloom weavers are government intervention through financial aid, developmental scheme and the promotion of hand loom products.

Conclusion:

Traditional practices are still key sources of income or aspect of daily livelihood subsistence, for many indigenous people and rural communities. These practices also play an important role in cultural, spiritual, religious and medicinal aspects of community's wellbeing. Traditional practices providing income and employment opportunity in the rural people. But at present the traditional occupations are declining day by day this may be due to modernization and negligence by modern society to the traditional activities but traditional practices like Manipuri weaving or handlooms are playing very active role in the Manipuri community till today. In this regards, some traditional occupations like weaving, traditionally occupied goldsmith, blacksmith, poultry piggery and fishing etc. which may be developed and converted into commercial activities. To improve these traditional occupations following remedial measures are important. Firstly, efforts should be made for modernization and expansion of traditional occupations. Steps are to be taken to provide improved tools and equipments. Secondly, at present various schemes of short term and long term credit are provided by the government for development of such small entrepreneurship. It is indeed, the so called traditional occupations are playing key role in the livelihood of rural people of North-East India. Though agriculture contributes major share in the economy of North-East India but these traditional practices and occupations supports human subsistence on secondary basis.

References:

1. Ahmed, N. *Problems and Management of Small scale and Cottage Industries*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1987.
2. Alam, K. *The development experience in Assam*, Guwahati, 1983.
3. Gopala Krishna, R. *Research Priorities in North Eastern India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2001.
4. Boas, F. *Primitive Art*, Aschhoug and company, Oslo, 1927.
5. Forde, C.D. *Habitat, Economy and Society*, Methuen publications, London, 1934.
6. Das, A.K. *Tribal Art and Craft*, Agamkala Prakashan Publications, Delhi, 1979.
7. Thurston, E. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Cosmo publications, Delhi, 1975.