



Present Scenario of Handloom and Handicrafts industries in Siang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract: *From beginning of the known history the handloom and handicrafts forms a valuable cultural trait of a society. The cultural pattern of a society is reflected in the quality and craftsmanship of their handicrafts. The term handloom and handicrafts refers those products of a common folk or a specific community, which are produced manually with their indigenous technology. The handicrafts of a society are one of the chief means of livelihood. The people of Arunachal Pradesh are artistically minded and gifted with deft hands and skilled fingers. Handloom and Handicraft for instance, offer wide scope to produce a variety of artistically blended and beautifully designed clothing. Handicraft is a very common craft in Arunachal Pradesh. The main handicraft items made in the state are masks, carpets, painted wooden vessels and silver articles. Cane and Bamboo play an important role in the rural economy of the state. Arunachal Pradesh has a rich tradition of Bamboo and Cane Handicrafts. The products reflect the rich and varied culture of the tribes inhabiting this enchanting State and the products featured are representative of the wide range of Handicrafts produced in the State.*

Keywords: *Handloom and handicrafts, Indigenous technology, Cane and Bamboo, Livelihood*

Introductory

Handicrafts industry comprises diversified artistic and decorative products portfolio with its large variety and contributes significantly to the national economy by way of both exports and employment generation. "To write about Indian Handicrafts is almost like writing about the country itself, so vast, complex and colourful, and yet with a simplicity and charm, difficult to attain under comparable conditions" (Upadhyay, 1976). Although India is rich with her exquisite and vast handicrafts industry, precise statistics on handicrafts are not available. As per the Development Commissioner, Handicrafts (DCH), India accounted for over 80 lakhs artisans in handicrafts and the total value of their production in 1999 was estimated to be ₹ 31,000 crores.

According to UNCTAD, "the term hand-made should be taken to include those articles produced with or without the use of tools, simple instruments, or implements operated directly by the craftsmen mainly by hand or by foot". At times, handicrafts may have additional attributes such as traditional or artistic features derived from the geographical region of production or production by craftsmen working at a cottage scale. Some goods may be partly machine-made and partly hand-made. In India the Supreme Court has laid down the tests for an article to be recognized as a handicraft, viz, (i) It must be predominantly made by hand; it does not matter if some machinery is used in the process, (ii) It must be graced with visual appeal in the nature of ornamentation or inlay work or some similar work lending it as an element of artistic improvement; such ornamentation must be of a substantial nature and

not a mere pretence. The typical handcrafting skills involved are Casting, Engraving, Etching, Inlaying, Embossing, Enamelling, Shaping, Carving, Turning, Lacquering, Painting, Coiling, Dyeing, Tie and Dyeing, Batik, Artistic Weaving, Embroidering, Knotting, Appliqué, Felting, Knitting, Cobbling, Polishing, Moulding and Glazing. Also, a product may be an application of a single skill or a combination of the above skills. The Task Force on Handicrafts (1989) defines, 'Handicrafts are items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and are generally artistic and / or traditional in nature. They include objects of utility and objects of decoration'. The DCH groups handicrafts as Carpets, Art metal wares, Wood wares, Hand-printed textiles and scarves, Hand-knotted and embroidered Goods, Shawls as art ware, Zari and zari goods and Imitation jewellery. Miscellaneous handicrafts goods are musical instruments, lace and lace goods, buttons and studs, hat ware, carpeting, articles of stoneware as art ware, leather goods, attars, sculpture & statuary, paintings and drawings, pottery articles of fur, skin, human hair, articles of tortoise, articles of horn; articles of grass, straw & fibre, papier-mâché products, stuffed animals, fancy glassworks, hookahs, trophies, antiques and jute articles.

From beginning of the known history the handloom and handicrafts forms a valuable cultural trait of a society. The cultural pattern of a society is reflected in the quality and craftsmanship of their handicrafts. The term handloom and handicrafts refers those products of a common folk or a specific community, which are produced manually with their indigenous technology. The handicrafts of a society are one of the chief means of livelihood. It also fulfils their daily requirements and provides employment to the workers in their own home. So it plays magnificent role in the socio-economic development of a society. A master

craftsman always enjoys a privileged status in the society.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to investigate the present scenario of handloom and handicrafts industries of the Adi tribes in the Siang Valley of the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Methods and Materials

Selected Geographical Area under Study: The study is conducted in the Siang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh. The Siang valley, which was previously known as Siang District, is presently divided in to three districts namely, East Siang, West Siang and Upper Siang.

Nature and Sources of Data: The proposed study is basically empirical in nature based on secondary sources.

Secondary Sources: Analysis of the changes in production and its performance overtime in the study area are fulfilled through secondary data to serve as the backdrop to the in-depth study based on investigation. The data of the secondary sources are collected from the publications of District Statistical Office, District Industries Centre, Textile and Handicraft Industries, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Itanagar and Directorate of Textile and Handicraft Industry, Itanagar.

Tools and Techniques for Data Analysis: Simple numerical calculations and graphical representations have been used to analyze the data. Thus, the various information obtained are processed, interpreted and analyzed in the following sections of the research study.

Result and Discussion

The Adis are proud for their traditional and fantastic indigenous handicrafts of cane and bamboo, blacksmith, pottery and also proud for most colourful textile products used for various purposes like adornment carrying, storing, straining, decoration, cooking, agriculture, war and chase etc. They are not lagging behind in this venture and are producing varieties of handmade products using traditional techniques with various eye catching colour. The Adis are artistic minded and gifted with deft hands and skilled fingers. Their nimble fingers weave excellent designs on textiles, carpet and basketry various arts and crafts are in their very blood. The technology and design of the handicrafts and the tools and implements used in production are simple and not varied among the various groups of Adis. Handloom for instance offers wide scope to produce a variety of artistically blended and beautiful designed clothing's. Like other tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, weaving is exclusively preserved for the women in Adi society. The women in spite of heavy economic commitment and other household works find time for weaving. The Galo of Aalo area and the Padam-Minyong of the Pasighat area grow cotton in their jhum land. They know how to prepare warp from the raw cotton and dye them from the leaves and barks of the indigenous plants. Generally ginning, carding, spinning of cotton and dyeing of warp are done by the old women. Weaving is a very common crafts among the Adis and every women and girls are expert in weaving. An Adi girl from their teenage picks up this venture and became expert as she grows. The Adi women are good weavers and their choice in shining colour and artistic designs is unique. Their looms are small, a single-heddle tension or loin-loom, which can be easily operated. There is not a single family in the Adi village where lion-loom is not available.

The loom is an inheritable property for the girl. They weave textiles of highly artistic design and magnificent beautiful cotton blanket (Gudu/Badu or Jim), shoulder bag, colourful skirt (Galle) and sleeveless coat (Galuk/Lalik) of various designs are the most attractive items manufactured from their own cotton.

Now-a-days the young generation embraces the mill made synthetic cloth and is very much in vogue in these days. The girls are using petticoat, different designs of skirt, full- sleeved or short-sleeved blouses both of velvet and mill made clothes, and tailored in the styles obtaining in the plains and the boys with shirt, sporting and trousers. However in comparison to that of the Adi male, the dresses of Adi female have not been changed much. On the other hand cloth made out of hand labour in the loin-loom has their own importance and this tradition cannot die altogether through there is fast industrialization to meet the compelling demands. Though the mill made cloths have come up, older generation are still using their own simple loin-loom cloth and it enhances their beauty. There is no doubt that the magic of the rich colourful and variegated traditional handicrafts of the Adis is still attracting the outsiders.

The cane and bamboo handicrafts are by and large most common among the Adis and play a very important role in their material culture. Different species of cane and bamboo which are found abundantly in their surrounding forest are the only raw materials used extensively for all purposes like house construction, in making various kinds of carrying cum storing baskets, winnowing fans, mats, haversacks, water tube, drinking mug, strainer, fishing traps, items of dress, war and chase, image of God and Goddess and construction of suspension bridge etc. The Adis are very skillful in cane and bamboo works and their products are of

very high standard. The most beautiful and artistic cane and bamboo works are noticed on the making of varieties of hats in different size and shapes. The other most skilled engineering works as well as labour is seen in the construction of cane and bamboo suspension bridges over the turbulent rivers and streams. Basketry and other cane and bamboo works are exclusively done by the male folk during leisure time for their household requirement. Baskets of various shapes and sizes are made according to their necessity and they have different names for them. For example narang is a basket woven in twill pattern with a square base of four legs, which is used for carrying paddy from the field, deserved special mention. Adi baskets are meant to render strenuous and hard service and to stand for rough use. They carry heavy loads of fuel, grains and water tubes through roughest of mountain paths and store agricultural products. So, durability and strength are more conspicuous in them than delicacy and art. The technique of Adi basketry is twill and hexagonal and both open and closed. Adi basketry are beautiful not only because of its fine texture but also because of their unusual shapes. Many a baskets have pleasing forms. There is defined correlation between the shape of the basket and the topography and climatic condition of the region. The angular and curvature nature of some of the baskets have definite functional value. Now-a-days, a good number of Adi basketry and cane hats are produced commercially and sold them through craft emporium or in the market inside or outside of the state.

Black smithy is another traditional crafts practiced by the Adis. They have considerable proficiency and preserve their age old knowledge and skills on this crafts. In every village there is a smith (Yongmo) who is an expert in metal work. The Adi blacksmiths are expert in iron tools like dao, knives, sword, arrow-head, spear head, items of

marriage ceremony (Tekom, Hurgen), metal disc worn by the girls (Beyop), smoking pipe, bangle, brass bracelets etc. They also manufacture most of their weapons used by themselves.

In Padam-Minyong area, the smith has a separate small structure or hut with stone walls and thatched roof which stand in a corner of the village. But the Galos have no separate hut for a smith, they use the ground below the varanda of their house. The Adi blacksmith is very simple with their indigenous implements and use typical Indonesian types of double cylinder bellows.

The Industry Department has however taken appropriate steps for revival and population of these crafts by introducing it in the different craft centre. The rich heritage of the area is sure to add colour to the cultural heritage of the country.

Present Scenario of Village Industries (VI) in the State: The industrial growth in the State is dismal and at a nascent stage despite its enormous potential for so. The Government of India has given tremendous thrust on the “Look East Policy” which itself calls for greater infrastructure for industries and trade. The North East Industrial Investment Promotion Policy-2007 (NEIIPP-2007) has been formulated by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, for industrialization and development of N.E. Region. Arunachal Pradesh with its huge hydropower potential of over 57,000 MW, which is being developed in a phased manner, will soon have surplus power to feed power intensive industrial units. Therefore, the State Government felt the need of reviewing the State Industrial Policy, 2001 in order to make it investor-friendly and to facilitate optimum utilization of locally available raw materials by encouraging setting up of appropriate value added industrial units. The Policy also aims at providing industry access to

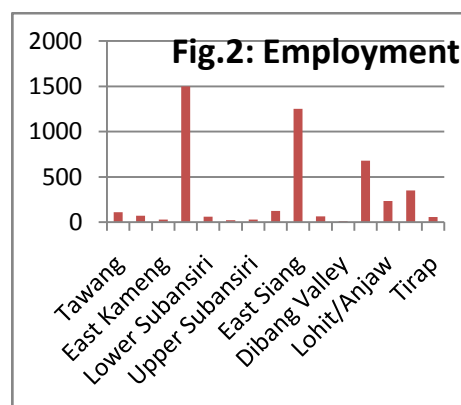
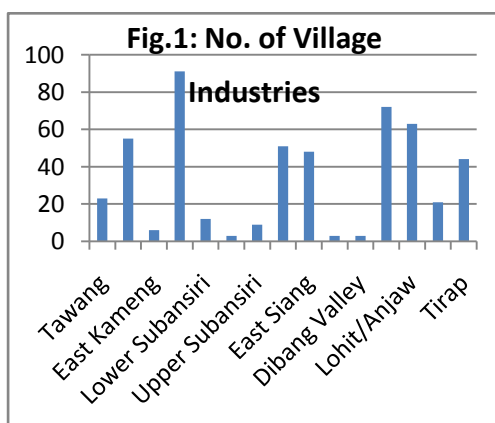
high quality infrastructure, extending institutional support for technology up-gradation, deregulating the business environment for an efficient, proactive and transparent administrative frame-work and catalyzing the entrepreneurial as well as creative capabilities of the human resources. Accordingly, the Industrial Policy, 2008 of Arunachal Pradesh has been formulated.

Present scenario of VI in respect of SSI and Medium Scale Industries and their employment, investment and annual production, activities of Textiles and Handicrafts, Craft centres etc. in the State is shown in the Table-1, Table-2 and Table-3 below.

Table-1: District-wise SSI/ Medium Scale Industries, Employment / Investment & Annual Production

District	No. of VI and SSI units registered permanently (functioning) as on 31-03-2006	Total No. of employment as on 31-03-2006	Total investment during 2005-06 (₹ in Lakhs)
Tawang	23	110	25.20
West Kameng	55	70	105.00
East Kameng	6	30	12.50
Papum pare	91	1500	2500.00
Lower Subansiri	12	60	50.00
Kurung Kumey	3	20	11.00
Upper Subansiri	9	30	21.00
West Siang	51	125	151.00
East Siang	48	1251	300.00
Upper Siang	3	62	95.70
Dibang Valley	3	12	10.00
Lower Dibang Valley	72	679	350.00
Lohit/Anjaw	63	234	280.00
Changlang	21	350	582.37
Tirap	44	58	300.00
Total in A.P.	504	4591	4793.77

Source: Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh 2006



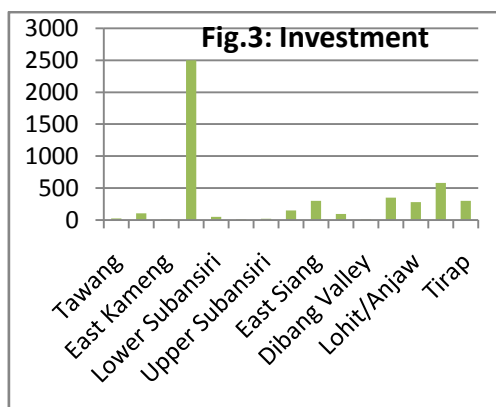


Table-2: Textiles and Handicrafts in Arunachal Pradesh

Year	Craft / Weaving Centre (in nos.)	Trainees in Craft & Weaving Centre (in nos.)	Handloom Development Centre and Quality Dyeing unit (in nos.)	Value of Production of cloth/crafts (₹)	No. of Emporia	No. of Showrooms cum Sales Counters	Annual sale proceeds of emporia & sales counters (credit & cash in ₹)
2000	88	673	-	2759000	-	-	3150000
2001	88	480	6	9750000	18	5	3383000
2002	88	347	6	3371508	15	3	3980114
2003	88	303	6	3095191	16	5	4009000
2004	88	303	6	2858515	18	5	4497446
2005	88	886	6	7420080	18	5	3718316
2006	88	886	6	1677827	18	6	3362053
2007	88	384	6	1565907	18	6	2174094
2008	88	344	6	1426570	18	6	2363476

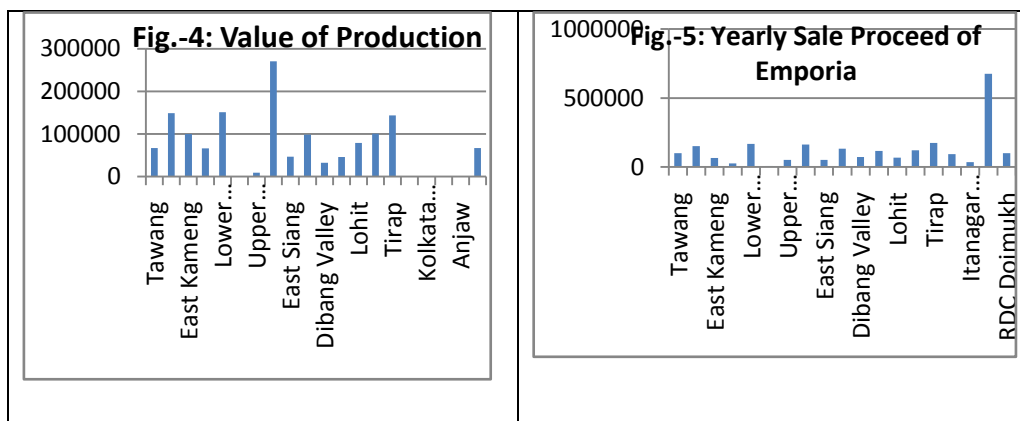
Source: Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of A.P., Itanagar, Compiled from Statistical Abstract of different years

Table-3: District-wise Crafts/Weaving Centres and Other Activities in A.P. as on 31.03.2008

District	Nos. of Craft/Weaving Centres	Nos. of Trainees in Craft & Weaving Centres	Nos. of Handloom Development centre & quality dyeing unit	Value of production of cloth/crafts during the year (in ₹)	No. of emporia	No. of showrooms cum sale counter	Yearly sale proceed of emporia & show room sale counters (credit & cash during the year 07-08 (in ₹)

Tawang	2	16	1	66911	1	-	100860
West Kameng	3	9	-	148592	1	-	150050
East Kameng	8	34	-	100050	1	-	64383
Papum Pare	5	4	1	65940	2	-	26264
Lower Subansiri	3	14	1	151473	1	-	167637
Kurung Kumey	5	Nil	-	-	-	-	6090
Upper Subansiri	6	35	1	9098	1	-	50354
West Siang	12	61	1	270447	1	1	162651
East Siang	4	7	-	46636	1	-	49906
Upper Siang	6	33	-	98756	1	2	132920
Dibang Valley	2	3	-	32470	1	-	72738
Lower Dibang Valley	3	27	-	45614	1	-	116685
Lohit	5	13	1	79000	1	-	67006
Changlang	6	25	-	101115	-	-	119880
Tirap	18	59	-	143247	1	1	173449
N. Delhi Emporia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kolkata Emporia	-	-	-	-	1	1	93244
Itanagar Emporia	-	-	-	-	1	-	34159
Anjaw	-	-	-	-	1	-	675070
RDC Doimukh	-	4	-	67218	-	1	100130
Total for A.P.	88	344	6	1426567	17	6	2363476

Source: Department of Textiles and Handicrafts, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar



Relevance of VI in the Socio-Economic Development in the Study Area:

VI offers enormous prospects for employment generation and enhanced income in the State as the people here have a rich tradition of craftsmanship. The researcher think, Arunachal Pradesh is a promising land in fulfilling what Mahatma Gandhi wanted through rural industrialization. Revival and revitalization of the traditional handlooms, handicrafts and best utilization of locally available raw-materials should be the basic aims of the VI programme. In every district VI can be applied as efficient tools for rural development. So, Arunachal Pradesh Khadi & Village Industries Board (APKVIB), nodal agency for the matter needs to play an effective role of facilitator. Regrettably some districts of the State are yet to open account of the KVI activity. There is also a wide dispersion in numbers of VI units assisted in districts. Therefore, APKVIB need to focus on rational distribution of funds. In spite of abundant natural resources available in the State the scope for large scale industries is very less due to inherent conditions and so hope is SSI or VI. Also establishing of VI units is easier. The Department of Textile & Handicrafts is another agency involved in promotion of this sector in dispersed areas of the State.

Industrial Position in East Siang District: The DIC is located at Pasighat. The district got 14 registered SSI Units, 1 Industrial Growth Centre (at Niglok, in implementation stage), 1 Industrial Estate and 3 Citronella Oil Distillation Plant (1 unit run by the department & 2 by individuals) with annual production 274 metric-ton, worth ₹ 1.17 lakhs. Department of Textile & Handicrafts has 4 Craft Centres, 2 Sericulture firms, 1 Eri Weaving & Training Centre and 1 Emporium in the district.

Handicrafts of Cane and Bamboo

The life of the people of this state is also intricately woven around the forest especially bamboo, canes and their products and thus one cannot imagine rural life without the use of these species (Sarkar & Sundriyal, 2002). The commercial aspect of the bamboo resource is also very high and it is fast emerging as the most viable wood alternative in the world over and can be effectively used to revive the closed down plywood units of the state. To make such products, bulk of the supplies of bamboo is collected from the forest freely and from species cultivated in their own selected plots. Bamboo plays an important role in the socio economic development of the indigenous communities. People raise large quantities of bamboo in and around their homesteads as well as rice fields. There are a number of bamboo species available in the reserve forest as well. In many parts of the State, it is used as a food, fodder, primary construction materials and for making variety of useful items. Traditional construction techniques of use of bamboo in flooring, roofing, as post and beam, and also in the false ceiling and fencing remain largely undocumented (Sundriyal *et al.*, 2002). Arunachal Pradesh has a rich tradition of Bamboo and Cane Handicrafts. The products reflect the rich and varied culture of the tribes inhabiting this enchanting State and the products featured are representative of the wide range of Handicrafts produced in the State. The Department of Textile & Handicraft(s) has been set-up to develop this sector to uplift the economic condition as well as to provide self employment opportunity to the weaver and artisan of the State through various Development Schemes/Projects. The traditional Cane Bamboo product is mainly available in the State which represents high premium on design, quality, local technology and focus cultural identity.



Tools and Implements used: The only tool, which is commonly used for the manufacture of baskets and various other objects manufactured, is a sort of long knife, popularly known as *dao*. Besides the dao and knife, iron and bone needles are required in coil basketry. The needles are thin, round with tapering ends. Among some tribes, two different types of needles are found. One of them is used for finer work and the other for rough work. Bone needles are extremely rare. The socio-religious significance of dao is as important as its utilitarian value. The importance of *dao* in the socio-economic life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh can be gauged only when the peculiar topographical and socio-political conditions are taken into account.

Socio-Religious Significance: Cane and bamboo figures extensively in the complete material culture of Arunachal Pradesh. With the use of cane and bamboo as raw materials, the basketry technique naturally occupies a very important place in the technological development. It has already been stated that the use of basketry technique is not confined to the manufacture of baskets only. It is employed for all purposes from building of cane

suspension bridge to religious paraphernalia. Even the small articles of personal adornment such as calflets, leglets, necklaces, etc., are also made of basketry-work. The plaiting of dao handles and making dao sheath are noteworthy examples of varied use of basketry technique. Hence cane and bamboo work constitute the major cottage industry in Arunachal Pradesh. In Arunachal, there is no economic surplus but because of careful division of labour, there is immense leisure enjoyed for menfolk, which is utilized in productive work. Therefore, the national life is extremely productive and artistically well developed.

The social significance of the objects of basketry-technique depends mainly on the symbolic value. The symbolic value is focused through: (i) basketry as item of dress and (ii) basketry as an object of political tribute. All the religious structures such as altars, effigies, etc are constructed for performance of religious ceremonies and rituals are made of and decorated with objects of basketry technique. Effigies representing deities and spirits found among the Apatanis, Nyishis, Adis are made of split bamboo in basketwork.

Basketry Technique/ Basketry Patterns: The technique and habitat are directly interlinked. Therefore, the techno-typological study of basketry becomes meaningless if the nature of the topography, the climate and the ecology is not taken into account. Therefore, there exists a technological balance in between the mountain topography, the shifting and terrace cultivation and a bamboo and cane based material culture. Basketry, as an aspect of traditional industry has definite bearing on the economy. Further, the socio-political condition of a particular group of people is also reflected on the economic life. Hence, the functional study of basketry is bound to reflect the social, political and economic life of the group. Many social phenomena such as division of labour on craft basis, ceremonial weaving of matting as the basis of tribal solidarity, material object like basket as the form of tribute and political authority are dynamically interrelated with the functional aspect of basketry of Arunachal Pradesh. Besides the symbolic value attached to certain baskets, (such as the basket used in Mopin festival of the Adis and 'Ozealle' dances of the Wanchos) and other cognate objects have a definite functional orientation.

Classification of Baskets in Respect to their Shapes

Semi- conical Carrying Basket: The carrying baskets of Padam, Miniyong, Pasi, Digaru, Mishmi, Sherdukpen, etc., who inhabit the foothills and flat valleys, reveal a uniformity in shape; they are not perfectly conical. Though these baskets have tapering outlines, yet they invariably have flat bases. Some of the baskets such as *bye* of the Padams and *Egin* of the Miniyong are provided with four short legs at the base. On the other hand, Digaru Mishmi carrying basket such as *thee* has a

short flat bamboo stand secured around the base by means of cane strips.

Cylindrical Basket: These baskets are of straight outline and have perfectly flat bottom. They are used for storing as well as for carrying articles. The baskets used for storing grain in the granary have uniformity in shape all over in this region. They have a flat base, round and straight outline. Normally these baskets are 3 to 4 feet in height and about 4 feet in diameter. Since the utility is restricted to the houses, this type of basket with a flat base and straight outline has its own advantage. Womenfolk for carrying light loads such as vegetables, seeds, etc., normally use them.

Flat Basket: Distribution of this type of carrying basket seems to be indicative of the influence of the climatic factor, as far as the state is concerned. The best examples to illustrate this point is the indigenous haversacks or flat wallets like baskets commonly found among the Tagins, Hill Miris and Adis. This basket is flat and carried by means of two shoulder straps. The outer surface of some of the Adi haversacks, such as the *nara* is slightly concave. This makes the baskets little more spacious. The very shape of this basket renders a natural protection against the rain. It prevents water from accumulation on the surface of the basket and helps the water to trickle down slowly and gradually. They are sometimes lined with a kind of bark to make it doubly sure that the water is not absorbed inside. To make it rainproof, *tama* fibres are fitted on to the outer surface. Because of the flat nature of the basket, the *tama* fibres are more effectively used to render the basket complete waterproof.

Basket with constricted mouth: Most of the smaller baskets found among the Hill Miris, Adis, Mishmis and Tangsas have usually constricted

mouth in relation to the size of the body. They are almost round in shape. A good example of such a basket is the *husak* of the Galos. The height of the basket is about 10 cm and maximum girth is about 20 cm. The diameter of the mouth is 5 cm.

Conclusion:

The district in the state is endowed with plenty of natural resources, the Central as well as State Government may give special attention for the all round development of Handloom and Handicraft units which would accordingly may bring ample of employment opportunity and thereby bring all round development of the State. Handloom and Handicraft units as an environment friendly pursued in decentralized mode is so an appropriate tool to reach-out the masses with developmental mandate. This occupies an unique position in rural economy of this State by contributing substantially not only towards strengthening the economic base of the villages but also by effecting utilization of the vast natural resources untapped hitherto and employing a significant chunk of the manpower. The policy should best fit to the holistic development of the sector. The Gandhian model of economic development is especially useful and relevant in the state where resources are still unutilized.

It is necessary to extend the facilities to the rural areas to promote agro-based and locally available raw material based industries in the locality and ensure markets for their products. Therefore, the authority should conduct research surveys to guide the prospective entrepreneurs. The sector holds much prospect and affords good opportunities for the rural entrepreneurship to flourish in the State.

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