

## **CHAPTER VIII**

# **A BRIEF RESUME OF WOMEN HANDICRAFT PRODUCERS, SELLERS AND ENTREPRENEURS - SOME CASE STUDIES**

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### **Findings**

## CHAPTER VIII

### HANDICRAFT

## A BRIEF RESUME OF WOMEN PRODUCERS, SELLERS AND ENTREPRENEURS - SOME CASE STUDIES

Some case studies are presented in this chapter in view of envisaging the role i.e. women's involvement in handicraft production and selling which in turn contributed positively to strengthen the position of women in the society with self reliance as well as to supplement the family apart from performing household chores and other works for the family .

### 8.1 Case studies

The followings are some of the case studies which have been presented in support of the main study .

#### Case 1

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Name           | - Mrs. Dolma Tibetan                      |
| Sex            | - Female                                  |
| Age            | - 56 years                                |
| Community      | - Bhutia (Tibetan)                        |
| Marital Status | - Widow                                   |
| Education      | - Illiterate                              |
| Occupation     | - Involved in carpet weaving and knitting |
| Religion       | - Buddhist                                |



Mrs. Dolma Tibetan

Mrs. Dolma Tibetan has been living in *Chungthang* (North Sikkim) market area together with her two daughters. Her two sons are living in their work places. Educationally though illiterate but have knowledge in carpet (*den*) weaving and knitting woolen garments which she learnt traditionally from her mother. Her father was illiterate farmer and mother was illiterate housewife in Tibet . Her husband was shepherd and owned number of 'yak'. When she was relatively young her husband expired in *Mukhuthang* (North Sikkim) , and she had to shift from *Mukhuthang* to present place of *Chungthang* along with four children. After shifting to *Chungthang* , she sold all her 'yaks', and the money utilized to start one wine shop in *Chungthang* market , and at the same time she started the business of weaving carpet and woolen garments knitted by herself with the help of her elder daughter .

She used to weave three types of carpet like 3 ft. X 6 ft. ( making charge @ Rs. 1,200/- per piece) ; 2ft.X5 ft. (making charge @ Rs. 800/- per piece) ; and 1ft. X 1ft. (@ making charge Rs. 300/- per piece) . She used to weave on

Loom which was given by her mother. She used to purchase woolen yarn from *Chungthang* itself. But at present due to age factor as well as market situation she has left weaving of carpet. As per her experience that the people are now more inclined to have carpet with modern varieties and design and perfectly finished product available in GICI branches, cooperatives and the market instead of with Tibetan design in which she had has the expertise. Thus the demand of weaving carpet traditionally by her had has been gradually deteriorated day by day in the market. As a result she had to stop weaving carpet for commercial purpose and sold her traditional Loom. She has now concentrated herself more to do knitting woolen garments and woolen caps for selling the same in the local market. She is now producing hand knitted woolen garments as well as caps made of rabbit wool. She usually purchase woolen material for garment from the local market as well as from Gangtok. While rabbit wool she normally gets from German Angora Breed Rabbit Farm located at Ravom in North Sikkim. This Farm used to supply rabbit wools to her and pay Rs.25/- per cap as making charge. For knitting one cap she normally takes one day to finish the same. She also reported that the caps made of rabbit wool are more soft and shiny than that of caps made of sheep wool. Indeed, every day she used to spend 9 hours to 10 hours a day for knitting woolen garments.

The price of woolen garments according to size and item is as follows -

| Item                        | Size  | Days required for knitting to complete the item | Knitting Charge (in Rs.) |
|-----------------------------|-------|---|--------------------------|
| Full Sleeves Woolen Sweater | Big   | 10 days   | 400/-                    |
| Full Sleeves Woolen Sweater | Small | 8 days  | 200/-                    |
| Woolen Cap                  | Big   | 1 day   | 50/-                     |
| Woolen Cap                  | Small | 1 day (3 pieces)                                | 30/-                     |
| Gloves                      | Full  | 2 days  | 50/-                     |

Mrs. Dolma used to purchase wools from Gangtok @ Rs. 200/- to 250/- per kilogram. Apart from this, she used to get order for making caps of rabbit wool @ Rs. 25/- per cap as wage along with wool materials from Angora Breeding Rabbit Farm, Government of Sikkim, at *Ravong* of North Sikkim. The colour of such caps are white along with red or maroon border. She normally takes one day to complete the knitting of each cap. According to her, the cap made of rabbit wools is more soft and silky than that of cap made of sheep wools. It emphasizes that her involvement in handicraft production and selling has been gainful and that supplemented her family maintenance too after her husband's death and which helped her to become empowered in family maintenance.

Though Mrs. Dolma is having no formal education, yet she has favoured women's education. According to her, educated women can get jobs and

even do business more efficiently. She regretted that if she was educated then she could have made more progress in her handicraft business. Though her elder daughter is not educated due to her lack of interest. But younger daughter has passed higher secondary examination and now serving as school teacher in government school in *Chungthang*. As she reported that earlier time it was very difficult for women due to scarcity of schools in the then Sikkim.

She has also favoured that women should be involved in gainful jobs. She emphasized that women should be given the share of family property equally with men. She also has opined that the women should be given due importance in the family decision-making and women should have final say in choosing their life partner for marriage. The age of marriage for women should not be below 20 years of age. At the same time she has also preferred that the women should have at least four number of children both son and daughter ( as she already had two daughters and three sons). In her case, though she got *Yak* owned by her parental family, but the cash and other properties were inherited by her brothers. She earns Rs. 2,000/- per month approximately. She does not have any bank account and do not make any savings. Normally she uses major portion of her earnings for family maintenance, and small portion i.e. Rs. 300/- to Rs. 400/- she used to keep for own expenses but not in all the month. She till now feels that the men are still getting more facilities and advantages than that of women in their society.

## Case 2

Name - Mrs. Tshiring Lepcha  
Sex - Female  
Age - 45 years  
Community - Lepcha  
Marital Status - Married  
Education - Graduate (B.Sc.) ,  
Occupation - Involved in tailoring privately  
and as instructor in tailoring.  
Religion - Buddhist



Mrs. Tshiring Lepcha

Mrs. Tshiring Lepcha has been living in Upper Sichay of Gangtok, East Sikkim. Indeed she has got 11 months training in tailoring from the institute namely 'War Widow Women Association', at New Delhi. At present she is working as a tailor privately and also as a instructor imparting vocational training for cutting and sewing in Scheduled Caste Entrepreneurs Service Cooperative Society Ltd. simultaneously. Her monthly emolument as a instructor is Rs. 2000/- per month. Besides, she also is doing the tailoring job privately on the basis of order received from neighbours, friends, relatives and so on and used to spend 5 hours daily for such work. The

materials/clothes are used to be supplied by the customers and she normally takes 'making charge/price' for cutting , stitching and preparing the dress only. The making charge according to items is , as follows -:

| Type of dress            | Making charge/price (in Rs.) |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Salwar Suit              | 50/- for small               |
|                          | 70/- for adult               |
| Nighty                   | 50/-                         |
| Blouse                   | 50/-                         |
| Night Dress for children | 50/-                         |

Earlier, she was a school teacher in Tezu of Arunachal Pradesh . But due to her husband's settlement in Delhi for courier service business she had to leave teaching job and thereafter she got this tailoring training there . After leaving Delhi along with her husband and their final settlement in Gangtok, Sikkim , she started this tailoring instructor job in Gangtok and also doing the tailoring job privately there at home since 1997 in view of more earning . Presently, she is living in a joint family. Though her father was class VIII passed and mother was illiterate, even then they supported her for education. She favours women education and feels that the 'education is the source of knowledge for a woman'. She also feels that 'education is the big property of woman'. She has stressed that women should be involved in gainful employment and should not remain idle. She has the aspiration to open a women's tailoring cooperative and to provide employment to a number of women in such cooperative apart from providing the vocational training on tailoring to the women. According to her, women should take part in family's decision-making process both financial and family affairs and women should be given family property equally with men. She opined that a family should have one girl child to make the family a complete form, and a mother should have maximum two child and the gap in between should be 3 years .

### Case 3

- Name - Mrs. Tina Pradhan
- Sex - Female
- Age - 27 years
- Community - Nepali (Newar)
- Marital Status - Married
- Education - Higher Secondary
- Occupation - Involved in knitting woolen garments privately .
- Religion - Buddhist



Mrs. Tina Pradhan

Presently, Mrs. Tina Pradhan is living in Phoodong of North Sikkim along with her father and sister. Educationally, Mrs. Pradhan's husband is school final passed, while her parents 'can sign' only. Her husband is working in West Bengal. Occupationally, her father was a farmer and mother as housewife. But she is engaged in knitting woolen garments privately for a woolen garments supplier in Gangtok. Though Mrs. Pradhan does not have any formal training in knitting woolen garments while learnt it traditionally from her mother. Indeed, the sample design and the wools are supplied by the supplier while she used to do knitting work on the basis of wage (knitting price) only. Besides, she is also engaged in 'crush' knitting for her family. But in case of relatives and neighbours/known persons she normally does such knitting on the basis of wage. She used to do knitting of woolen garments of varieties in size and design along with woolen gloves and caps. Her rate of knitting woolen garments according to size is given below.

| Type of woolen items according to size | No. of days Required | Making charge/price (in Rs.)                 |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Big size sweater                       | 7                    | 250/- , 350/- 400/-<br>(according to design) |
| Small size sweater                     | 5                    | 250/-  |
| Small baby set                         | 5                    | 250/-  |
| Cap                                    | Half day             | 50/-   |
| Gloves (one pair)                      | Half day             | 50/-   |

According to her, she is getting inspiration in knitting woolen garments privately always from her husband and parents. Her expertise in knitting woolen garments is well known and she used to get orders for production of woolen garments locally, from Gangtok, Jorethang and Namchi of Sikkim, and also from Delhi and Mumbai. She used to have monthly income Rs.1,500/- to Rs. 2,000/- on an average (as reported).

She favours education of women and feels that only the education can make the upliftment of women in the society. According to her, women should take part in family's decision-making process both financial and family affairs, and women should be given family property equally with men. She has opined that women should be involved in gainful employment. She has saving bank account on her name singly and make transaction by herself. Besides using 40% of her income for family maintenance and her son, she also used to keep 20% for self expenditure and rest 40% in saving bank account for future every month. She also feels that women should join politics. She has also opined that the family should have at least one girl child and maximum two children. The gap between the child is necessarily to be 5 to 6 years. According to her that there has been still some sort of discrimination in between a girl child and a male child persisting in Nepali society.

**Case 4**

Name - Ms. Kitchen Lachungpa  
 Sex - Female  
 Age - 39 years  
 Community - Bhutia  
 Marital Status - Unmarried  
 Education - Class VI passed  
 Occupation - Involved in carpet weaving  
 Religion - Buddhist



Ms. Kitchen Lachungpa

Ms. Lachungpa belongs to Lachung of North Sikkim . She is having only primary education and could not continue schooling due to unavailability of high school there and her parents were not in a position to send her to Gangtok for further schooling, as a result she had to be dropped from schooling. Educationally, her father was school final passed and mother was class VI passed. Both of them were farmer.

In fact , she took two years training in carpet (*den*) weaving from GICI at Gangtok. After completion of training she returned to Lachen and started carpet weaving privately . The loom (*tan*) made locally by a carpenter in Lachung was bought by her brother . She usually produces 3ft by 6ft sized carpet and sells the same locally @ Rs. 3000/- each . For carpet weaving she normally work 6 hours daily. After doing such carpet weaving business continuously for 2 years at a stretch , she joined the GICI Chungthang branch (carpet section) in its master role as a carpet weaving instructor permanently . At present she draws salary of Rs. 8,000/- approximately per month and is satisfied with her work .

She has aspired to get more education which she could not get due to her untimely death of parents as well as financial inability. But she used to spend her leisure hours in book reading in Bhutia/Tibetan language to increase her general knowledge as well as by knitting woolen garments for own use as well as for other family members. She favours that the children should be given higher education at least post-graduation . She also greatly favours women's education which has been most crucial for women in present day society. She feels that the women should be involved in gainful employment including business which has become utmost necessity for women in present day society . Besides, she also opined and favoured that the women is to be given share of the family property equally with male . In her case she did not get any share of family property. She used to contribute Rs. 3000/- per month to her family (living with brother) and used

to keep Rs.1000/- to Rs. 3000/- per month in her single savings bank account . The rest of the amount she keeps for own expenses . According to her that women should be given due importance in family's decision making process , women should be consulted in family related affairs . She has emphasized that woman should have final say in choosing her life partner . She has also opined that the size of any family is required to be 4 with 2 children . According to her that even in her society the boys are preferred more than that of girls .

### Case 5

Name - Mrs. Manmaya Chhetri  
Sex - Female  
Age - 55 years  
Community - Nepali  
Marital Status - Married  
Education - Class VI passed  
Occupation - Involved in handloom weaving and production of Lepcha handicrafts  
Religion - Hindu



Mrs. Manmaya Chhetri

Mrs. Chhetri has been living in Pakyong of East Sikkim . Her father was agricultural labourer and mother was housewife and both of them were illiterate . At present Mrs. Chhetri is working as a Field Level Organiser in GICI branch at Pakyong and getting salary @ Rs. 1200/- per month since June 2002. Indeed, she had taken training from GICI during the year 1963 to 1965 . At that time the name of GICI was 'Palsung Thendup Institute' during Chogyal's regime . After her marriage she left Sikkim and started living with husband (army personnel) in Bangalore . In Bangalore, she started production of *Lepcha Bag* ( price of each bag was Rs. 2/- to Rs. 2.30/-) and *Lepcha Belt* ( price of each belt was Rs. 1/- to Rs. 1.30/-) and used to sell these privately . Such production and selling privately she had continued for 11 years there in Bangalore .

Thereafter , in the year of 1980 she came back to Sikkim with her husband particularly after her husband's retirement from Army . According to her, even after returning to Sikkim she had has to continue production of such handicraft items for earning and self-sufficiency . Because her husband has been a great drunker/ addicted to alcohol and he used to spend all his money behind drinking alcohol. Resultantly , she is required to have one income source to maintain the family . Besides, she is greatly desired to be involved in working particularly in handicraft production. According to her this handicraft work has made her independent and self sufficient . As reported that she had participated in various Exhibitions organised in different

places of India like in Kolkata (1983) , Mumbai (1984) , Delhi (1984) , Bangalore (1985), Chennai (1985) , Pune (1986 ) , Vishakhapatnam (1986) and Chennai (1987) . After 1987 she did not participate in exhibition of handicrafts while joined to GICI and later got job in Master Role i.e. permanent job as a Field Level Organiser there . Apart from doing job in GICI, she also usually do knitting and stitching job for 2 to 3 hours for herself and other family members.

Mrs. Chhetri has no doubt favoured women's education and feels it as utmost necessity, as the educated women can do any kind of job. Besides, education helps the women to become well mannered and educated women can educate her children properly . She has lamented that parents never encouraged her to continue education as they were illiterate and resultantly neglected her education. She feels that the women's involvement in gainful occupation is also the utmost necessity. But according to her that the women have been still lagging behind, and the woman should come forward in every field particularly in the economy. Mrs. Chhetri has opined that the women should get equal share of the family property, and in her case she did not get any share of her parental property. She does not have any bank account as she had has to spend her entire earnings in family maintenance and children's education due to her husband's spending his earning in alcohol drinking . Moreover, she usually purchases according to her own decision . She has insisted that women should be given due importance in family's decision-making process and other family affairs equally with male members.

She feels that a family should have 2 child including one girl child and the gap between one to another child is required to be 1 to 2 years . She has the feeling that the girl child is more supportive to parents than that of male child . According to her that though no discrimination between man and woman in present day Nepali society is visible , even then there has been a subtle discrimination between men and women in present day society

### **Case 6**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Name           | - Mrs. Pasong Doma Sherpa                       |
| Sex            | - Female  |
| Age            | - 35 years                                      |
| Community      | - Bhutia (Sherpa)                               |
| Marital Status | - Divorcee                                      |
| Education      | - Class VIII passed                             |
| Occupation     | - Involved in Knitting woolen garments/business |
| Religion       | - Buddhist                                      |



Mrs. Pasong Doma Sherpa

Indeed, Mrs. Sherpa has been in difficulty as her husband (working in Power Department, Government of Sikkim) left her and married another woman and living in Ravongla with 2<sup>nd</sup> wife. Due to this problem she started production of woolen garments on the basis of making-price as well as selling of woolen garments. From such production of woolen garments she used to earn Rs. 800/- to 1000/- per month as reported. Moreover, she owns one and half acre of land which she used to cultivate by employing farmer and under her supervision. Whatever she earns, she used to utilize that for family maintenance. Though her husband sometimes help financially for family maintenance and also for her three children's education. She normally does knitting of woolen garments 5 to 6 hours daily for 5 days and 2 days she used to do farming in a week. Indeed, she does not have any formal training in knitting woolen garments. But she has learnt knitting of wools from mother traditionally. Her rates for making hand knitted woolen garments are as followed :

| Type of garment               | Size     | Making price in Rs.      |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Sweater                       | Big      | 200                      |
|                               | Medium   | 150                      |
|                               | Small    | 100                      |
| Cap                           | Standard | 50 – 60 ( as per design) |
|                               | Small    |                          |
| Shock                         | Small    | 40 – 50 ( as per design) |
| Gloves                        | Standard | 50                       |
| Shawl (crush and needle made) | Standard | 80                       |

Mrs. Sherpa has stressed that women's education has been must, because educated women can do service and business in better way and also can be engaged in any gainful employment. She even has desired to get further education if she gets the opportunity in this regard. She has stressed that women's engagement in gainful employment is also must in the society for their self reliance and confidence. She has also emphasized that women should get equal share of the family property. She though received some money from her parental family but not the equal share of the family property because sharing of family property has been mainly by male section in the society. After divorce she used to make financial transaction according to her own decision, but before that she had to consult with husband in which husband's decision was final.

She also has favoured that the women should make savings of money in the bank. Besides, she also has emphasized that women should be consulted in family's affairs and due importance to women should be given in family's decision-making process equally with men. According to her the age of marriage for girls should be within 18 years and women should have final say in choosing life partner. She has opined that a family should have 2 to 3 children and size of the family is to be maximum 4 to 5. And the gap between one to another child must be 3 years to 5 years. She

has the opinion that a family should have one girl child as the girls are much cooperative, helpful and supportive to parents. Mrs. Sherpa feels that till today in her society there is overall discrimination between men and women and emphasized that a man always gets some more facilities from family as compared to woman .

**Case 7**

- Name - Mrs. Binita Rai
- Sex - Female
- Age - 46 years
- Community - Nepali
- Marital Status - Married
- Education - B.A., L.L.B.
- Occupation - Government employee and also doing business of woolen garments privately .
- Religion - Hindu



Mrs. Binita Rai

Mrs. Rai's father was a school teacher and educationally B.A. , B.Ed. While mother was illiterate housewife. Her husband has been involved in business. Presently, Mrs. Binita Rai is living in Gangtok of East Sikkim . She is doing business of selling woolen garments and engaged four women to do the knitting job for making woolen garments on wage basis. She used to purchase woolen yarns from Siliguri and Delhi and same are given to those women for making woolen garments as per requirement. The price of the woolen garments ranges Rs. 800/- to Rs.900/- depending on size and design. Besides, she also has opened one shop of selling ready-made garments of both woolen and clothes and sarees as well in Deorali of Gangtok, and the name of that shop is 'Maitighar'. Mrs. Rai also herself do the knitting job for making the woolen garments. Everyday she used to spend 3 hours in that shop and 9 to 10 hours in a week for knitting wools. The wages for knitting wool she used to give to those four women employees are, as follows -:

| Type of woolen items according to size | No. of days Required | Making charge/price (in Rs.)              |
|--|----------------------|---|
| Big size sweater                       | 7                    | 250/- , 350/- 400/- (according to design) |
| Small size sweater                     | 5                    | 250/-                                     |
| Small baby set                         | 5                    | 250/-                                     |
| Cap                                    | Half day             | 50/-                                      |
| Gloves (one pair)                      | Half day             | 50/-                                      |

Besides, she used to give salary @ Rs. 900/- per month to her sales-women in her readymade garments shop 'Maitighar'. As per Mrs. Rai, women's education is very necessary which has been the only instrument to uplift women from their social and economic backwardness. It is a power that gives them confidence to fight against social injustice. Education to women she feels is the education of mother, daughter, sister and wife who are the pillars of the family and society. She still aspires to get more education and aspires higher technical education for her children. She greatly favours and feels that the women should be gainfully employed to supplement the family as well as to be a self-reliant. According to her that women should be given equal share of the family property, though she is not interested to get this because of her better educational and economic background. She has favoured that women should be given equal importance like their counterpart in the society and women necessarily be consulted in family affairs including women's participation in family's decision-making process equally with male counterpart. She has interest in politics and feels that women should join politics. In her opinion that a family may have three children and a family should have one girl child for completion of the family. She has also agreed that while girl child do the household chores the boys are allowed to play. But according to her that the boys also should be involved in doing household chores along with girl.

### Case 8

Name - Ms. Tshering Keepa Chhoten  
Sex - Female  
Age - 20 years  
Community - Bhutia  
Marital Status- Unmarried  
Education - Illiterate  
Occupation - Involved in tailoring  
Religion - Buddhist



Ms. Tshering Keepa Chhoten & Ms. Temba Doma

She belonged to a poor family in Mukuthang village, a very remote village located about 10 hours journey from Mangan by jeep including walking in North Sikkim. She is at present residing with her cousin (namely Ms. Temba Doma aged 26 years, unmarried, belong to Bhutia community, who is also illiterate and belonged to the Mukuthang village and from poor family, parents were also illiterate) in Mangan Bazar area. Education she is illiterate, as she could not go through the formal educational facility due to unavailability of school in Mukthang village. Her parents were also illiterate and were shepherd by occupation. She indeed took training on cutting and tailoring from a Training Center run by Tibetans in Namnang area of Gangtok along with her cousin Ms. Doma during the period 2000 – 2002 and during training course both of them received Rs. 500/- per month as

stipend . At present , she is involved in cutting and tailoring business in a rented house located in Mangan Bazar. In fact , she and her cousin together purchased two sewing foot-machines and started this business. The tailoring materials she and Ms. Doma used to purchase from Gangtok and sometimes from Mangan Bazar too . She along with her cousin Ms. Doma produce various dresses on the basis of making price according to size, item and design. And the orders for sewing of various dresses she and Ms. Doma usually get locally and also from surrounding villages of Mangan Bazar . The details of making-price normally charged by both Ms. Chhoten and Ms. Doma is given below :-

| Item of dresses  | Making price (in Rs.) |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Bokkhu</i> ( long skirt of woman )  | 110/-                 |
| <i>Hanju</i> (Blouse)  | 40/-                  |
| <i>Pangden</i> ( a piece of coloured apron which is usually hanged from waist to knee particularly for married woman as a symbol of married) | 20/-                  |
| Gent's shirt   | 100/-                 |
| Sikkimese <i>Bokkhu</i> for woman  | 500/-                 |
| Gent's <i>Bokkhu</i>   | 250/-                 |

She and Ms. Doma work 8 hours daily for making various dresses. Apart from tailoring Ms. Chhoten is also a carpet (*Den*) and blanket weaver, which she learnt traditionally from her mother . For this purpose she usually purchases 'fur' from her traditional village Mukuthang @ Rs. 50/- per kg. And uses the same for preparing woolen yarn in view of making carpet and blanket . She requires 4 kg. 'fur' for preparing blanket and 5 kg. for carpet .

For weaving blanket and carpet she uses a loom (*tan*) given by her mother and that she has kept in her Mukuthang village . When she visits Mukuthang village and stay there for 2 to 3 months , during that time only she weaves carpet and blanket there both for personal use and also for selling . She used to sell 3ft by 6ft sized carpet @ Rs. 1000/- per piece . Besides, she takes Rs.800/- for weaving a blanket . Particularly during rainy season she along with her cousin frequently go to their native village Mukuthang . In fact, she usually helps her mother financially by sending cash as per requirement .

Even being illiterate she has desired to get education and stressed that woman's education is necessary . According to her that women should be given equal share of the family property like male , and women should be involved in family's decision making process . Involvement of woman in gainful employment is a necessity for earning as well as to get self-reliance . She has planned to open her single savings account in State Bank of India branch in Mangan . She has the aspiration to get children highly educated

at least graduate and above after her marriage . She also feels that a family should have one girl child for completion of that family, because girls are good friends to parents and help them always . According to her that the male child is much preferred even in her society and the girl child is usually neglected . Ms. Doma also have the similar feelings like Ms. Chhoten

### Case 9

Name - Ms. Suku Doma Sherpa  
Sex - Female  
Age - 23 years  
Community - Bhutia (Sherpa)  
Marital Status - Unmarried  
Education - Class III passed  
Occupation - Involved in Carpet Weaving privately  
Religion - Buddhist



Ms. Suku Doma Sherpa

Ms. Sherpa is living in Lingzo Bustee about 2 kms. away from Kewzing of South Sikkim . Educationally she is class III passed and having training in carpet (*den*) weaving from GICI Branch at Kewzing . Her father is class VI passed and mother is illiterate . Both of her parents are involved in farming, and she also normally works in farming too . Her parents are having 3 acres of farm land in the village . Ms. Sherpa at present is working as carpet weaver in FLO Section (carpet) of Kewzing GICI Branch\_ from 9.30 am to 3.30 pm. After producing each carpet she used to get Rs. 1080/- as wage per carpet. Apart from this , she also weaves carpet privately in her house particularly during 6.30am to 8.30 am and 4.30 pm to 5.00 pm on weekdays and usually spend more hours for weaving carpet on Sunday and State holidays. For weaving carpet privately she purchases woolen yarn from Kalimpong @ Rs. 230/- per kg. She generally weaves 3ft by 6ft sized carpet at home and sells the same privately @ Rs. 3,700/- per carpet .

She contributes 50% of her earning in the family and 40% usually keeps for self expenses , and rest she used to keep in her savings bank account which has been jointly with her parents . According to her the woman should be given equal share of the family property. And in her case she would not get any share due to having brothers. Because , in her society the family property goes to son only . She has emphasized that the women should be involved in gainful occupation . She has also stressed the necessity of woman's education in present day society. She feels that in family's decision-making process and other family affairs woman is required to be consulted and deserves that due importance should be given to women equally with male counterpart. According to her that the final decision in

choosing life partner should be taken by the woman herself. She has opined that the mother should have 3 to 4 children along with at least one girl child who would help mother in every context, and the gap in between the two children is to be 2 years. According to her feeling that the working women are accepted in her society. But still there has been some overall discrimination in between man and woman in the society.

#### Case 10

Name - Mrs. Gouri Lama  
Sex - Female  
Age - 50 years  
Community - Bhutia  
Marital Status - Married  
Education - Class V passed  
Occupation - Involved in Knitting and secretary of a cooperative  
Religion - Buddhist



Mrs. Gouri Lama

Mrs. Lama is the secretary of 'Denzon Women Handloom Cooperative Society Limited' in Super Market of Gangtok town. She is living in Namnang area of Gangtok with her husband, son, daughter-in-law and grand-daughter. She informed that in earlier periods the education was not necessary and compulsory in Bhutia society while weaving and knitting had been traditionally must. But in the present scenario education has become necessary in Bhutia society too. Though her father was a graduate but she could not read more while left schooling after class V and later got married. Indeed, she desired to do some work in view of becoming self-sufficient as well as to help other women by engaging them in work. Therefore, she established one cooperative namely 'Denzon Women Handloom Cooperative Society Limited' where women are engaged in knitting woolen garments. Actually, though she does not have any formal training in knitting woolen garments but learnt it traditionally from her mother. She used to work in the cooperative from 10.00am to 5.00 pm.

Mrs. Lama is in favour of women's education because educated women do not depend on others as they can be involved in gainful employment as well as she can fight against all odds. She has also stressed that the women should be given equal share of the family property and should be involved in the decision-making process of the family as they have to maintain the family chores mainly. According to her a woman should marry in the age between 25 to 30 years and should have final say in choosing her life partner. She is also in favour that a family should have one girl child because girls support the parents i.e. family in all type of family's requirement. As per her opinion the gap between one to another child should be 4 to 5 years. She has preferred that a family should have one

child , because it is beneficial and the parents can give more attention to the only child . She has a feeling that in Bhutia society men and women are equal .

### **Case 11**

Name - Mrs. Pabitra Sharma  
Sex - Female  
Age - 39 years  
Community - Nepali  
Marital Status - Married  
Education - Matric (class X ) passed  
Occupation - Involved in tailoring and cutting  
Religion - Hindu



Mrs. Pabitra Sharma

Mrs. Sharma is living in Nopgaon near Pakyong of East Sikkim . Actually she got training in cutting and tailoring for six months from Nepal where her parents were living . Thereafter, she also got such training for six days from Kalyani of West Bengal and participated in a workshop there on the theme 'cooperative' along with her 8 students . Her husband is B.E. in education and working in Dhanbad Mining College . Educationally , her father could sign only and mother was illiterate and both of them were farmer .

Mrs. Sharma is indeed having the training and expertise in cutting and tailoring and also she is expert in making fabric design on various types of clothes. In the year 2002 (April) she along with few educated women in her area together opened one women cooperative , where they teach knitting of wools , cutting and tailoring , toys making, fabric painting on clothes as well as sell the produced handicraft items . Besides they also make various dresses according to demand/orders on the basis of fixed making- price according to type of dresses mainly for women and children. Mrs. Sharma is the executive member and instructor as well of this cooperative. Actually, each student/trainee used to pay Rs. 150/- per month of which Rs.75/- is taken by Mrs. Sharma and the rest Rs. 75/- used to be deposited in cooperative fund.

Mrs. Sharma feels that the educated girls' future is always bright and they have equal status with men . According to her that the women should be involved in gainful employment and should get equal share of the family property. She has single bank account and operated by her only and used to make financial transaction according to her own decisions. She has also favoured that the women should make savings of money which she does normally in the bank . Besides, she used to spend earnings for her family maintenance too. She has stressed that women should be consulted in family's affairs and due importance to women should be given

in family's decision-making process equally with men . According to her the age of marriage for girls should be not below 25 years and women should have final say in choosing life partner . She also opined that a family should have not more than 2 children and the gap between one to another child must be 4 to 5 years. She has the opinion that a family should have one girl child as the girls are much cooperative, helpful and supportive to parents . Mrs. Sharma feels that till today in Nepali society there is discrimination between men and women and emphasized that a man always gets more favour from family as compared to woman .

## Case 12

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Name           | - Ms. Bimala Rai                                   |
| Sex            | - Female   |
| Age            | - 28 years   |
| Community      | - Nepali   |
| Marital Status | - Unmarried  |
| Education      | - Class VIII passed                                |
| Occupation     | - Involved in woolen garments producing / business |
| Religion       | - Hindu  |



Ms. Bimala Rai

Ms. Rai is living in Ravongla Bazar of South Sikkim with her younger sister and brothers . She is gainfully involved in knitting and selling of woolen garments . For doing such handicraft business she has one shop in a rented house on a monthly rent of Rs. 1500/- in the Ravongla Bazar . Ms. Rai started this shop since April, 1996 and the name of her shop is 'Nawa Knitting Center' . Even her parents encouraged she left schooling after she failed in class IX.

Educationally, her father can sign only and is a farmer . Her mother is illiterate and housewife . Indeed, Mrs. Rai took training in knitting of woolen garments on machine from 'Nehru Yuvak Kendra' at Namchi . But for producing hand knitted woolen garments she got the 'know how' from her mother traditionally and do not have any formal training in this regard. After completion of training she took an amount of Rs. 42,000/- as loan from Handicraft and Handloom Industry, Jorethang for the term of repayment within 5 years and with minimum monthly installment of Rs. 1000/- . In her shop along with woolen garments she also sells cosmetics, napkins, ornaments etc. She normally purchases wools from Siliguri in West Bengal @ Rs. 200/- to Rs. 400/- per kg. She used to sell both machine knitted as well as hand knitted various woolen garments including gloves, caps etc. The rates of various woolen garments according to size and machine /

handmade as well as quality of the wool and thickness , is cited below :-

| Type of garment                    | Size         | Machine/hand made | Price in Rs. |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Sweater                            | Big          | Machine made      | 250 to 280   |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 400          |
|                                    | Medium       | Machine made      | 140 to 150   |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 200 to 250   |
|                                    | Small        | Machine made      | 130 to 140   |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 200 to 240   |
| Baby set including caps and gloves |              | Machine made      | 200          |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 250 to 250   |
| Cap                                | Big          | Machine made      | 50           |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 60 to 70     |
|                                    | Small        | Machine made      | 20           |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 30 to 35     |
| Glove                              | Big/standard | Machine made      | 30 to 35     |
|                                    |              | Hand made         | 50           |
|                                    | Small        | Machine made      | 20           |

Actually, Ms. Rai's younger sister helps her to produce hand knitted and machine knitted woolen garments and whatever earning she used to have after selling the produced garments , both of them share that earnings equally .

Ms. Rai feels that the education for girls is must. According to her the women should be engaged in gainful employment for self reliance and confidence and should get equal share of the family property. Though in her case she is sure that the family property would be shared by brothers as the sharing of family property has been only by male section in the society. She has a single bank account and usually operated by herself only and makes financial transaction according to her own decisions. She has also stressed that the women should make savings of money which she does normally in the bank . Besides, she spends her earnings for family maintenance too. She also has emphasized that women should be consulted in family's affairs and due importance to women should be given in family's decision-making process equally with men . According to her the age of marriage for girls should be in between 28 years to 30 years and women should have final say in choosing life partner . She has opined that a family should have not more than 2 children and the family size maximum 4 to 5 . And the gap between one to another child must be 4 to 5 years. She has the opinion that a family should have one girl child as the girls are much cooperative, helpful and supportive to parents . Ms. Rai feels that till today in Nepali society there is discrimination between men and women and emphasized that a man always gets some more facilities from family as compared to woman .

## **Findings**

The case studies discussed in this chapter reveals that their gainful involvement in handicraft mainly carpet, woolen , handloom , tailoring and stitching, fabric paintings , toys making etc. items production and/or selling in turn contributed positively to strengthen women's position in the society with self reliance as well as to supplement the family apart from performing household chores and other works including agriculture for the family .

It is observed from the preceding cases that unmarried women are now living separately alone and independently in distant place from their parents for their gainful involvement in handicraft production.

It is also found from the presentation made in the case studies that involvement of woman in handicraft production and selling has been gainful and that helped them to look after her family too even after husband's death, separation from husband due to 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage of husband/divorce and also living separately due to husband's employment in long distant place , husband's reluctance to maintain family due to his acute addiction and consumption of alcohol and resultant entire expenditure of his earning , etc. Such gainful involvement has no doubt helped women to become empowered in family maintenance.

All the cases favoured women's education , having aspiration to get more education if get scope though being low educated and could not continue due to parent's death, poverty , neglect from parents' end etc. and aspires higher education for children. They stressed that women should be gainfully employed to supplement the family as well as to be a self-reliant and not remain idle. Emphasized that women should be given the share of family property equally with men while in reality the women used to get gift from parents at the time of their marriage and in their cases they did not get any share of family property. According to them , women should be given equal and due importance in the family decision-making , women should take part in family's decision-making process both financial and family affairs like their counterpart in the society, women should have final say in choosing their life partner for marriage , the age of marriage for women should not be below 20 years of age while should be between 21-30 years , a family should have one girl child to make the family a complete form and because girls are good friends to parents and help them always, and a mother should have maximum two child and the gap in between should be 3 - 6 years , having interest in politics and feels that women should join politics .

All the cases of women earn money substantially from handicraft productions and or selling , handicraft business which they utilize for family maintenance , self-expenses and also for savings . The also produce handicraft items for own family use and thus supplement the family income . They are having saving bank account either singly or jointly with parent and operate transaction by themselves and make savings in the saving bank account too, favoured that

the women should make savings of money . They usually purchase according to their own decision i.e. used to make financial transaction according to their own decisions.

The cases are observed as self-reliant in collecting and purchasing raw materials from different markets for handicrafts production , dealing with the customers, collecting orders and selling too. They participate in various Handicraft Exhibitions organized in other states including different places within Sikkim .

Though men and women are more or less equal in the Sikkimese society . as reported earlier, even then according to feeling of the cases presented in this chapter a subtle discrimination like, the men are still getting more facilities and advantages than that of women in the society, while girl child do the household chores the boys are allowed to play , the male child is much preferred than that of girls . All they agreed that the working women are accepted in their society .