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Threads of Change: A Lifelong Learning Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurial Empowerment in the Weaving Sector of Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya

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Abstract

The research study investigates the critical role of lifelong learning in facilitating the entrepreneurial transformation of weaving artisans in the Ri-Bhoi District of Meghalaya, a region known for its traditional weaving practices. The weaving artisans, face significant economic and infrastructural challenges that prevent them from fully leveraging their craft for economic gain. By integrating lifelong learning, this study aims to empower artisans to transition from subsistence weavers into successful entrepreneurs, thereby fostering sustainable livelihoods and preserving traditional practices. The study focuses on key determinants that address both individual motivations and systemic challenges faced by the artisans in their entrepreneurial journey. The objective of the research was to identify the motivational factors that drive artisans toward entrepreneurship. While financial gain is important, many artisans are also motivated by the desire to preserve their cultural heritage and achieve self-reliance. Understanding these motivations is critical for designing effective educational programs that support their entrepreneurial growth. The entrepreneurs face the challenges such as geographical isolation, the resources, limited digital literacy, and restricted access to broader markets, infrastructural problems, knowledge to promote their products, limited access to policy support, training, marketing and consultancy services. These challenges prevent artisans from scaling their businesses. The study tries to address these gaps and highlights the importance of lifelong learning programs, which offer continuous skill development and entrepreneurial training. Such programs are vital in helping artisans navigate these obstacles and build successful enterprises. This research evaluates the effectiveness of existing government programs in providing resources, training, and financial aid. By identifying gaps in governmental support, the study offers recommendations to improve policies that better align with the

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needs of artisans in the region. Finally, the study investigates the success of certain weaving units through the application of entrepreneurial strategies. These strategies, which focus on innovation, customer engagement, and product differentiation, have enabled some artisans to thrive. By analysing these successful activities, the research provides insights that other artisans can adopt to replicate similar business achievements. The study proposes that marketing skills—integrated into lifelong learning programs—can help artisans utilize e-commerce, digital platforms, and branding strategies to reach national and international markets. In conclusion, this research highlights the pivotal role of lifelong learning in addressing the challenges faced by weaving artisans in the Ri-Bhoi District. By identifying motivational factors, exploring infrastructural and marketing challenges, examining government support, and analysing successful weaving units, the study developed a comprehensive framework for the entrepreneurial transformation of weaving artisans.

Keywords: *Lifelong learning, empowerment, entrepreneurship, weaving, Ri-Bhoi, sustainability, sustainable livelihoods.*

1.0 Introduction

The weaving sector in Meghalaya, particularly in the Ri-Bhoi district, is a cornerstone of the region's cultural heritage, deeply embedded in the traditions of the Khasi community. This craft, more than just a livelihood, represents the identity and artistic expression of the people. Women play a central role in preserving these intricate weaving techniques, passing them down through generations. However, despite their key role, women weavers face significant barriers to realizing their full entrepreneurial potential. Limited access to resources, lack of formal training, and insufficient exposure to modern market opportunities hinder their ability to thrive as entrepreneurs. This study explores the motivational factors that influence the entrepreneurial aspirations of women weavers in Ri-Bhoi. It examines the personal, social, and economic drivers that shape their decision to engage in entrepreneurship and the barriers they encounter. The research underscores the importance of intrinsic motivations, such as the desire for personal growth, financial independence, and the preservation of cultural heritage, in driving women to continue in the weaving sector despite the challenges. In addition, the study identifies key gaps that need addressing, such as limited access to resources, formal training, and opportunities for lifelong learning. Although traditional weaving techniques are passed down through generations, the lack of modern entrepreneurship education restricts women's ability to adapt to changing market dynamics. Without exposure to digital tools, marketing strategies, and business management skills, many weavers struggle to expand their businesses or compete effectively in broader markets.

To address these challenges, the study proposes the "Threads of Change" approach, a lifelong learning strategy aimed at empowering women artisans. This strategy focuses on enhancing both technical skills and entrepreneurial knowledge, incorporating digital literacy and marketing to increase market reach and profitability. By building self-confidence and providing resources to help women access broader markets, the strategy aims to establish sustainable women-led enterprises in the weaving sector. Beyond individual economic empowerment, the research also emphasizes community resilience. Empowering women weavers not only contributes to economic development but also to the preservation of cultural heritage. By positioning women as key agents of socio-economic and cultural transformation, the study aims to strengthen the weaving industry, ensuring its sustainability for future generations. The proposed lifelong learning framework aims to enhance the personal and professional growth of women artisans while preserving the region's rich cultural traditions. This approach promises to empower women, contribute to economic growth, and revitalize the weaving sector for future generations.

1.1 Problem of the Study

This study addresses the challenges faced by women weavers in the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya, where despite their valuable weaving skills and cultural heritage, many struggle to achieve entrepreneurial success. Barriers such as limited access to resources, lack of training, inadequate market knowledge, and financial constraints prevent them from scaling their businesses. The study highlights the need for a strategic framework that focuses on enhancing motivation, skills, and resilience among these women. By providing the tools to innovate, access new markets, and build entrepreneurial confidence, this framework aims to empower women weavers to overcome obstacles while preserving their cultural traditions and achieving sustainable business success.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Threads of Change: A Lifelong Learning Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurial Empowerment in the Weaving Sector of Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya seeks to address these issues by exploring motivational factors and proposing a lifelong learning framework to enhance entrepreneurial empowerment and cultural preservation.

1.3 Objectives of The Study

1. To identify the motivational factors for being an entrepreneur in the weaving sector.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What motivates an individual to become an entrepreneur in the weaving sector?

1.5 Hypotheses

The Null Hypotheses below have been formulated:

a) There exist no significant differences in motivational factors for becoming an entrepreneur in the weaving sector based on their:

i. Age
ii. Educational qualification
iii. Economic Status

1.6 Contribution of the Study

This study provides a lifelong learning framework to empower women weavers in Ri-Bhoi district, enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and sustainability. It identifies key motivational factors and contributes to preserving traditional weaving practices. It introduces the "*Threads of Change*" lifelong learning strategy, which emphasizes skill development, confidence-building, and adaptability to empower women artisans and ensure the sustainability of their enterprises. Additionally, it highlights the role of women in preserving traditional weaving practices and positions them as key agents of socio-economic and cultural transformation, fostering community resilience and economic sustainability.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework is based on established motivational theories that offer insights into the driving factors behind entrepreneurship. McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory (1940) is central to the framework, emphasizing that an intrinsic desire for accomplishment and mastery is a powerful motivator for entrepreneurs. This theory suggests that individuals are driven by the need to set and achieve challenging goals, and this motivation can fuel entrepreneurial success. In the context of women weavers in Ri-Bhoi, this theory helps explain their desire to improve their skills, expand their businesses, and gain recognition for their craftsmanship. Hagen's Status Withdrawal Theory (1963) further contributes to the framework by suggesting that individuals often pursue entrepreneurship to improve their social status and gain respect within their community. For women weavers, entrepreneurial success is seen not only as a means of economic independence but also as a way to enhance their social standing, particularly in a society where women may face social and economic constraints. Achieving success in weaving can offer these women a sense of empowerment and respect, both within their communities and beyond. Lastly, Cochran's Model Personality Theory (1965) explores how social factors and personal traits influence entrepreneurial behaviour. This theory

underscores the importance of an individual's social environment, personality traits, and interpersonal relationships in shaping their entrepreneurial intentions and actions. In the case of women weavers, factors such as family support, community dynamics, and personal resilience can all play a crucial role in motivating them to pursue entrepreneurship and overcome challenges.

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the motivational dynamics that drive women weavers in Ri-Bhoi to embrace entrepreneurship. They highlight the intrinsic motivations for achievement, the desire for social recognition, and the influence of personal traits and social factors, all of which shape the entrepreneurial journey of women weavers in this region.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

This review focuses on the motivational factors that drive entrepreneurial transformation among weaving artisans in the Ri-Bhoi District of Meghalaya. The role of lifelong learning in addressing these motivational challenges is central to this study, as it emphasizes skill development, entrepreneurial education, and the integration of modern business practices into traditional handicraft industries.

Studies have shown that the motivation for artisans to pursue entrepreneurship is often influenced by their desire to overcome stagnation in their craft. Ghosal and Prasad (2019) and Mohi Ud Din (2010) identify a key motivational factor: the need for artisans to adapt to changing market demands through the adoption of modern marketing and digital tools. These studies suggest that the integration of digital literacy, e-commerce, and online marketing strategies can significantly enhance artisans' entrepreneurial drive by opening new avenues for selling their products globally. This shift not only increases income potential but also motivates artisans to innovate and expand their businesses beyond traditional limits.

In addition to marketing challenges, the lack of awareness of government schemes and institutional support has been identified as a motivational barrier. Purwar (2017) and Chudasri et al. (2012) emphasize that artisans are often unaware of the resources and financial support available to them, which limits their ability to grow their businesses. These studies suggest that motivating artisans to take advantage of these opportunities requires a change in their mindset, facilitated by lifelong learning programs that improve their awareness of governmental resources and enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of accessing these schemes. Entrepreneurial marketing strategies also emerge as a motivational factor for artisans seeking to

differentiate their products. Studies by Shah and Patel (2019) and Kumar and Rajeev (2019) highlight the positive impact of social media and e-commerce platforms on the motivation of artisans to engage with a larger customer base. By adopting innovative marketing strategies, artisans are more likely to see their products as part of a broader entrepreneurial ecosystem, which fuels their desire for business success. The opportunity to build a global brand, driven by product innovation and digital marketing, motivates artisans to view their craft as not just a traditional activity but a sustainable business venture.

Additionally, the need for product innovation and differentiation as a motivational factor is emphasized by Purwar (2017) and Muafi et al. (2012). They argue that the opportunity to cater to niche markets with unique, eco-friendly products encourages artisans to experiment with new designs and materials. This innovation, coupled with digital marketing, not only increases their appeal to modern consumers but also motivates artisans to scale their businesses by entering new markets. In summary, the literature highlights several motivational factors that drive entrepreneurial transformation among weaving artisans. These include the desire for financial independence, the need for recognition in global markets, and the opportunity to innovate and modernize their craft. By addressing these motivations through lifelong learning programs focused on digital literacy, marketing, and product innovation, this study aims to empower artisans in the Ri-Bhoi District to create sustainable, profitable businesses while preserving their cultural heritage.

2.1 Research Gaps

1. Limited Exploration of Gender-Specific Challenges: Limited research on the unique challenges faced by women weavers in Ri-Bhoi, particularly regarding access to resources, decision-making power, and societal expectations.

2. Impact of Traditional vs. Modern Practices on Motivation: A gap in understanding how traditional weaving practices interact with modern business strategies and how this affects artisans' motivation and success.

3. Effectiveness of Lifelong Learning Programs: Insufficient research on how lifelong learning programs specifically impact the entrepreneurial skills, confidence, and resilience of women weavers in Meghalaya.

4. Role of Community and Social Networks in Entrepreneurial Success: Limited exploration of how community networks or artisan cooperatives influence the motivation and success of women weavers in the region.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative) with a descriptive design to explore the motivational factors driving entrepreneurship in the weaving sector. It aims to gather artisans' opinions on what motivates them to pursue entrepreneurship. Quantitative data will be analysed using statistical tools like frequencies, mean, standard deviation, and t-tests, while qualitative insights will help further understand these motivations. The survey method is used to collect specific information about the factors influencing entrepreneurship in the weaving sector.

3.2 Data Collection

A. Profile of the study area

The study area for the purpose of the study will be Ri-Bhoi District. Ri - Bhoi is an administrative district in the state of Meghalaya. The district headquarters is located at Nongpoh. The district occupies an area of 2378 km² and has a population of 258,840.

B. Delimitation of the Study

The present research confined to study only the weaving artisans in the Ri - Bhoi district of Meghalaya. The sample of the study consisted of 400 weaving artisans located in the 4 existing blocks of the Ri - Bhoi district.

C. Universe

Table 1.1: Universe of the study is Ri – Bhoi District of Meghalaya.

Sl. No.	Blocks	Clusters	Govt. Function centres for Handloom & Weaving	Female		Male		Total Population
				Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	
1	Umling	8	3	1657	1301		2	2960
2	Umsning	2	3	135	105			240
3	Jirang	4	1	761	599			1360
4	Bhoirymbong	4		247	193			440
Grand Total		**18**	**7**	**2800**	**2198**		**2**	**5000**

Source: Directorate of Sericulture and Weaving, Govt. of Meghalaya, 2021

The universe of the study comprises of all the four blocks: Umsning, Umling, Jirang and Bhoirymbong coming under the Jurisdiction of Ri – Bhoi District of Meghalaya having 18 weaving clusters (Mawryngkang, Pahamskhen, Plasha, Mawlong, Umdohkha, Umphing, Diwon, Borkhatsari, Sonidan, Korhadem, Balakhawa, Ranibari, Nongladew, Bilpara, Umtngam, Ingsaw, Birsiej and Sohliya) with a working population of 5000. The number of female weavers in each cluster belonging to Umling is 2958, Umsning is 240, Jirang is 1360 and Bhoirymbong is 440.A total number of 4998 female weavers and 2 male weavers are engaged in weaving.

D. Sample of the Study

Table 1.2: Sample of the study

Sl. No	Blocks	Sample Clusters from Each Block	Sample from each block
1	Umling	2	100
2	Umsning	2	100
3	Jirang	2	100
4	Bhoirymbong	2	100
Total		**8**	**400**

The study's sampling process is designed to achieve an unbiased, representative sample of weaving clusters across Umsning Block and three additional blocks, with two clusters selected per block to ensure balanced distribution and equal representation. A random sampling method will be used to select clusters, reducing selection bias and ensuring fair representation of diverse socio-economic contexts. In each of the eight clusters, 100 entrepreneurs will be randomly chosen, resulting in a total sample of 400 participants. This equal representation allows for a thorough analysis of the challenges and experiences faced by weaving entrepreneurs. An interview schedule and scale will be developed to systematically collect both quantitative and qualitative data, providing consistent insights into entrepreneurial motivation, challenges, and available support systems across all clusters.

E. Tools used

The study utilized a five-point Likert scale to assess the entrepreneurial transformation capabilities of weaving artisans. Respondents rated each statement on a scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." To establish validity, item-test correlation showed a strong validity index ($\mathbf{r}_{xy}$ between 0.76 and 0.88). A t-test confirmed the scale's discrimination index, with statements effectively differentiating

between upper and lower respondent groups. Reliability was assessed using the test-retest method, yielding a high reliability coefficient ($\mathbf{r}_{xy} = 0.96$).

F. Statistical techniques

The data collected by the tool was analysed according to the research questions and the hypothesis.

1. The levels of entrepreneurial transformation were assessed using mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) for the total score. Transformation scores were categorized into low (1-3), moderate (3-4), and high (4-5) levels, with SD values indicating variability: low (<0.60), moderate (0.60-0.80), and high (>0.80).

2. t-tests were conducted to determine significant differences in entrepreneurial transformation scores across groups defined by age, education and economic status

4.0 Analysis and Interpretation

Analyses and interpretation of data is based on the study's objective, focusing on the entrepreneurial transformation of weaving artisans. It examines their motivational factors. Statistical techniques were used to test the research question and hypotheses, with data analysed using SPSS and Excel to ensure accurate interpretation. The mean (X) and standard deviation (S.D) were used for testing the research questions and t – test (independent) was used for testing the null hypothesis.

The researcher had planned to present the study in two parts as follow:

1. Levels of entrepreneurial transformational capabilities rated by weaving artisans in total group of samples and classified by levels of motivational factors of weaving artisans.

2. Comparison between mean scores of entrepreneurial transformation rated by weaving handicraft artisans belonging to different groups of age, educational qualification, economic status of weaving artisans.

4.1 Levels that measure the entrepreneurial transformation (total sample group)

To assess entrepreneurial transformation capabilities, the study calculated mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) for responses for motivational factors. Among 400 weaving artisans, scores were categorized as low (1–3), moderate (3–4), or high (4–5) transformation levels. Standard deviation values indicated variability, with SD < 0.60 representing low variability, SD between 0.60 and 0.80 for moderate variability, and SD > 0.80 for high variability.

Table 2.1: Mean Scored and Standard Deviation of Motivational Factors (MF) Rated by Weaving Artisans

Entrepreneurial Transformation		**$\bar{X}$**	**SD**	**Level**
Motivational Factors (MF)		**3.85**	**0.26**	**Moderate**
MF 11	Strive for **achievement** motivates me highly.	4.57	0.53	High
MF 7	**Success** is the only motivation I need.	4.54	0.71	High
MF 12	I experience **personal growth**.	4.43	0.69	High
MF 8	**Self – realization** is what motivated me to become an entrepreneur.	4.40	0.65	High
MF 1	There are grounds for **optimism** when engaged in an entrepreneurial activity.	4.39	0.56	High
MF 16	Entrepreneurship provides me the **flexibility** to do what's important to me.	4.38	0.61	High
MF 6	I took up entrepreneurship to become **independent** and be my own boss.	4.35	0.67	High
MF 13	**Wealth** accumulation does not motivate me.	4.30	0.68	High
MF 2	My **experience** does not motivate me to take up entrepreneurship.	4.05	0.72	High
MF 4	My entrepreneurial activity has **social acceptance**.	3.75	0.63	Moderate
MF 15	My entrepreneurial activity does not provide me with better **financial rewards**.	3.52	0.65	Moderate
MF 10	My enthusiasm to **innovate** did not motivate me to take up an entrepreneurial activity	3.41	1.00	Moderate
MF 3	Opportunities provided by the government motivated me to take up entrepreneurship.	3.38	0.73	Moderate
MF 9	Recognition is not one of the factors for taking up entrepreneurship.	3.17	0.81	Moderate
MF 14	I am able to provide job opportunities to my community.	3.13	0.50	Moderate
MF 5	Availability of **social capital** does not determine my level of motivation towards an entrepreneurial activity.	2.91	0.93	Low
MF 17	**Product demand** is not high enough to sustain my entrepreneurial activity.	2.87	0.70	Low

From the table 2.1, it can be seen that the motivational factors for entrepreneurial transformation among weaving artisans had mean scores ranging from 2.87 to 4.57. The overall mean score was 3.85 (SD = 0.26), indicating a moderate level of motivation.

The highest motivation score (4.57, SD = 0.53) was for "Strive for achievement motivates me highly," reflecting a very high motivation level. The lowest score (2.87, SD = 0.70) was for "Product demand is not high enough to sustain my entrepreneurial activity," indicating a low level of motivation.

Weaving artisans are primarily motivated by personal growth, achievement, and independence in their entrepreneurial work, with less emphasis on financial gain and market demand. High motivation factors include personal fulfilment, flexibility, and wealth accumulation, while social acceptance, financial rewards, and innovation are viewed moderately. Social capital and product demand are rated low as motivators. To boost motivation in these lower-rated areas, the study recommends networking platforms, mentorship, and targeted marketing to increase artisan visibility and demand. Overall, there's a strong consensus on the importance of personal achievement, but mixed views on factors like innovation and social recognition.

4.2 Comparison between mean scores of entrepreneurial transformation (with different groups)

To compare the mean scores of motivational factors, the respondents were classified into different groups of age, educational qualification and economic status.

A. Artisans belonging to different groups of age

The respondents were classified into six age groups for comparing mean scores of motivational factors: Group A (20-25 and 26-30 years), Group B (20-25 and 31-35 years), Group C (20-25 and 36 & above), Group D (26-30 and 31-35 years), Group E (26-30 and 36 & above), and Group F (31-35 and 36 & above).

Table 2.2: Significant Difference between Mean Scores of Motivational Factors Rated by Artisans and Classified by Age

Groups	Variable (Years)	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	SED	p value	t value	Significant / Not Significant
Group A	20 to 25	138	3.80	0.25	0.03	0.07	-1.85	Not Significant
	26 to 30	127	3.86	0.29				
Group B	20 to 25	138	3.80	0.25	0.03	0.00	-4.19	Significant
	31 to 35	121	3.92	0.23				
Group C	20 to 25	138	3.80	0.25	0.07	0.56	0.59	Not Significant
	36 & above	14	3.76	0.25				
Group D	26 to 30	127	3.86	0.29	0.03	0.06	-1.92	Not Significant
	31 to 35	121	3.92	0.23				
Group E	26 to 30	127	3.86	0.29	0.07	0.17	1.43	Not Significant
	36 & above	14	3.76	0.25				
Group F	31 to 35	121	3.92	0.23	0.07	0.03	2.35	Significant
	36 & above	14	3.76	0.25				

From the table 2.2, it can be seen that the difference in mean scores for motivational factors among weaving artisans in Groups A, C, D, and E is not significant, meaning these groups have similar ratings. Thus, the null hypothesis no. a (i) for these groups is accepted. However, in Group B and Group F, the differences are significant, indicating that age affects the mean scores of motivational factors. Therefore, the null hypothesis no. a (i) for these groups is rejected, with Group B and Group F showing higher motivational scores.

B. Artisans belonging to different educational qualification groups

The respondents had been classified into three groups, i.e. Group A (Class 12 or lower and Bachelor's Degree), Group B (Class 12 or lower and Master's Degree) and Group C (Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree).

Table 2.3: Significant difference between Mean Scores of Motivational Factors Rated by Artisans and Classified by Educational Qualification

Groups	Variable (Educational Qualification)	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	SED	p value	t value	Significant / Not Significant
Group A	Class 12 or lower	357	3.85	0.26	0.06	0.08	-1.84	Not Significant
	Bachelor's Degree	20	3.96	0.27				
Group B	Class 12 or lower	357	3.85	0.26	0.05	0.85	0.19	Not Significant
	Master's Degree	23	3.84	0.25				
Group C	Bachelor's Degree	20	3.96	0.27	0.08	0.13	1.57	Not Significant
	Master's Degree	23	3.84	0.25				

From the table 2.3, it can be seen that the differences in mean scores for motivational factors among weaving artisans in Groups A, B, and C are not significant, indicating that the educational qualifications in these groups have similar values. The finding thus accepted the null hypothesis No. a (ii) for these groups.

C. Artisans belonging to different groups of economic status

The respondents were classified into one group, i.e. middle class and lower class.

Table 2.4: Significant difference between Mean scores of Motivational Factors Rated by Artisans and Classified by Economic Status

Groups	Variable (Eco. Stat.)	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	SED	p value	t value	Significant / Not Significant
Group A	Middle Class	43	3.90	0.27	0.04	0.26	1.13	Not Significant
	Lower Class	357	3.85	0.26				

From the table 2.4, it can be seen that the difference in mean scores for motivational factors in Group A is not significant, indicating that the economic status ratings of weaving artisans in this group have equal value. The finding thus accepted the null hypothesis No. a (iii) for this group.

5.0 Main Findings and Discussions

5.1 Main findings

1. Motivational Drivers: Artisans in weaving are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors like personal growth, financial independence, and self-achievement, with personal motivations and market-driven innovation contributing most to entrepreneurial success.

2. Hypothesis Findings: The study revealed that age significantly influences the motivational factors of weaving artisans, with older age groups (Groups B and F) displaying higher motivation. However, educational qualifications and economic status did not significantly affect artisans' motivation, suggesting these factors have a similar impact across different groups.

5.2 Key Insights

1. Intrinsic Motivation as a Key Driver: Artisans in weaving are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors such as personal growth, financial independence, and self-achievement. This indicates that fostering self-driven goals and providing opportunities for skill enhancement and innovation can significantly contribute to their entrepreneurial success.

2. Age as a Significant Influence on Motivation: The study highlights that older artisans exhibit higher motivation compared to younger groups, suggesting that life experience or maturity may enhance their drive. However, educational qualifications and economic status have little variation in their impact, implying that interventions to support artisans should focus more on age-specific strategies rather than socio-economic or educational adjustments.

5.3 Discussions

Objective 1

The researcher's findings closely align with previous studies that have identified key motivational factors for artisans in the handicraft and weaving sectors. These factors largely revolve around intrinsic desires for personal achievement, independence, self-growth, and financial autonomy, all of which have been consistent in earlier research by Gayatri & Udhyakumar (2018) and Mitra & Paul (2017). The need for personal fulfilment and the ability to control one's own destiny emerge as

strong motivators for artisans, with the pursuit of independence in both personal and professional spheres driving them toward entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the desire for flexibility in working hours, freedom from rigid employment structures, and the support of family are significant influences. Many artisans are also motivated by dissatisfaction with their previous jobs, as they seek opportunities to improve their economic conditions and lifestyle, a finding that echoes Herslund & Sorensen's (2001) work on entrepreneurship in the handicraft sector. The role of social acceptance and financial rewards also stands out as crucial motivators, as artisans seek recognition and respect within their communities, as well as economic benefits from their entrepreneurial efforts. These findings are consistent with Upadhyay (2019) and Hengky (2014), who highlight how the promise of financial success and social status can drive artisans to establish their own businesses. While the study acknowledges the importance of social capital and the demand for products, particularly through online marketing and digital tools, these are seen as secondary to the primary intrinsic motivations. Social capital—such as community support and access to networks—along with the ability to sell products through digital platforms, certainly plays a role in expanding market reach, but the core drivers remain rooted in personal aspirations, financial independence, and the capacity for innovation.

Overall, the findings reinforce the idea that for artisans, personal motivations (such as achieving self-sufficiency and pursuing growth) and innovation are the primary catalysts for entrepreneurial success. Social capital and digital tools, while important, serve more as enablers that support these intrinsic motivations, rather than the driving forces behind them. This underscores the importance of fostering personal empowerment and creativity in supporting artisans' entrepreneurial journeys.

Hypothesis

The present study explores several factors influencing the success of weaving artisans, revealing key findings:

1. **Age and Motivation/Success**: Older artisans show higher motivation, likely due to their experience and connection to tradition, while younger artisans report greater entrepreneurial success, possibly due to a willingness to innovate and adapt to new technologies.
2. **Education and Economic Status**: No significant differences were found in motivation based on education or economic status, suggesting that cultural pride and passion for the craft are more influential than formal qualifications or financial background.

Overall, the study highlights that weaving artisans are primarily driven by intrinsic motivations like personal growth, financial independence, and cultural pride. While older artisans show higher motivation due to experience and tradition, younger artisans achieve greater success through innovation and adaptability. Education and economic status have little impact on motivation, emphasizing passion and cultural connection as key factors. Social capital and digital tools support growth but play a secondary role to intrinsic drivers. These findings suggest the need for age-specific strategies and a focus on leveraging artisans' intrinsic motivations for sustainable success.

6.0 Conclusion

This study, aligned with the theme "*Threads of Change: A Lifelong Learning Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurial Empowerment in the Weaving Sector of Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya,*" underscores the centrality of intrinsic motivations—such as personal growth, financial independence, and cultural pride—in driving entrepreneurial success among women artisans. The findings reveal that age significantly influences motivation, with older artisans demonstrating higher intrinsic drive due to their experience and connection to tradition, while younger artisans achieve greater success by leveraging innovation and adaptability. Education and economic status were found to have minimal impact on motivation, highlighting the importance of cultural pride and passion over formal qualifications or financial background. Additionally, while social capital and digital tools serve as valuable support mechanisms, the focus must remain on fostering lifelong learning strategies that empower women artisans to enhance their skills, embrace innovation, and sustain their entrepreneurial ventures.

The "*Threads of Change*" approach calls for targeted, age-specific interventions that not only promote personal growth and financial independence but also cultivate a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within the weaving sector. This strategy has the potential to empower women artisans in Ri-Bhoi District to navigate changing market dynamics, preserve cultural heritage, and achieve sustainable success.

6.1 Suggestions

1. **Leverage Intrinsic Motivations through Tailored Training Programs**: Develop training initiatives focusing on personal growth, self-achievement, and financial independence. Programs should encourage artisans to set and achieve personal goals while fostering a sense of pride in their craft.

2. **Foster Age-Specific Strategies for Motivation and Success**: For older artisans, introduce programs that build on their experience and traditional knowledge, such as heritage skill preservation and mentorship opportunities. For younger artisans, focus on fostering innovation, adaptability, and the use of modern tools and technologies to enhance entrepreneurial success.

3. **Promote Digital Literacy and Market Innovation**: Provide digital literacy workshops and access to e-commerce platforms, enabling artisans to adapt to market driven innovations. Highlight the role of online marketing and networking to boost product visibility and increase financial returns.

4. **Strengthen Social Capital and Community Support**: Establish artisan networks or cooperatives to enhance collaboration, shared learning, and mutual support. Such networks can also facilitate the sharing of resources, access to markets, and collective problem-solving.

5. **Encourage Lifelong Learning for Sustained Empowerment**: Aligning with the "*Threads of Change*" strategy, implement continuous learning programs that empower artisans to adapt to evolving market demands while preserving cultural heritage. These programs should be designed to build confidence, technical skills, and entrepreneurial capabilities at all stages of life.

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