



7. Relevance of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on Women's Emancipation and Empowerment in Post-independence: Cases of Innovative Livelihood Options of Handicrafts

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Abstract

Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a believer in women's progress. He measured the progress of a community by the degree of the advancement, women achieved and stressed on education for their development. Empowerment envelops developing and building capacities of individuals and communities to make them part of the main stream society. Strong skills and critical capabilities are often held back to open doors for those who meet the empowerment criteria and also to elevate the economic position of women. That is possible by making capable of earning a living or self-dependent. He believed that education would be considered completed only when some skills would be associated with it and such skills would generate some employment for the person.

Obviously, innovation is very vital as the basic for skills through which the entrepreneurship activities pave the way for self-reliant. Empowerment no doubt leads to innovation further. A holistic education is the need of the hour where women think beyond just earning degrees or continue working but are not encouraged to think about money. Govt. of India has initiated a mission oriented policy framework for skill development to meet the challenge of skilling at scale with speed and standard (quality) and sustainability. In the present day the new trend of Innovation, as the name implies, is the art of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. In the wake of Sustainable Livelihood Approach developed at the end of 20th Century, the new participatory action research makes able to diversify livelihood earning options for local communities in the on-farm and off-farm activities. The broad areas covered for technological interventions based on new and evolving approaches and learner-centered experimental learning approach has improved the capacities of the individuals to analyse livelihood and conservation related problems in order to find out appropriate solution locally.

These are all explored in various arts and crafts of rural women, which have profound ingenuity in various arts and crafts, but they remain suppressed or subdued in opportunity due to patriarchal dominance owing to cultural barrier or constraint. But modern technology has given them opportunities in professional arts, crafts or design and in some cases traditional arts have been value-added, In case of traditional handicrafts the women survive on their products and Government interventions. Besides, other stakeholders like NGOs and civil societies have adopted lot of measures in making these marketable to provide sufficient income sources. These have helped them to be empowered and developed. The afore-



mentioned ideas have been verified in the empirical studies in the Tribal villages of Madhya Pradesh. The present paper is an endeavour to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's visions & thoughts and their relevance for women's emancipation and empowerment in post independent India.

Key words: Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, Women Empowerment, Emancipation, Innovation, Livelihood,

01. Introduction

1.1 Dr. Ambedkar's views on Emancipation and Empowerment

Bharatratna Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the frontier of Dalits (Depressed Classes), was a great intellectual of international repute, orator, erudite scholar, impeccable leader and prolific writer. The range of his writings includes education, economics, sociology, law, constitution, anthropology, political science, religion and philosophy etc. He took up the leadership to light the lamp of enlightenment and brought a new awakening and a sense of social significance and confidence among the deprived section of the society. He waged a relentless war against the Hindu social order for social equality, human dignity and politico-economic empowerment.

Dr. Ambedkar was fully aware of the pitiable and pathetic condition and the low status of women in the Indian society. He tried to uplift women generally and Hindu women in particular. According to Dr. Ambedkar, women were treated as mere tools to bear the burdens of the family and were restricted to the role of bearing children and fulfilling duties of a wife or mother. Division of labour is not in their favour, as a result Indian women have lost their identity. They have to face discrimination on the basis of gender and because of this, equal opportunity remains a dream for them. They have to endure poverty, illiteracy, lack of health, inequality and powerlessness. Traditional attitudes regard them as physically, intellectually and socially inferior to men and subject them to male exploitation and unjustified division of labour. Such a society, where women, comprising half of the population have no control over material and social resources. This is further compounded by lack of participation, opportunities for women, in the decision-making process of the family (Purohit and Joshi, 2003 :209.).

1.2 Role of Women in Social Emancipation through Education:

Being a true patriot and social reformer, Dr. Ambedkar was a strong supporter of women's education and was a believer in women's progress. He fought for human rights equally for both men and women. Addressing the Second All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference held on 20th July 1942 at Nagpur, he said, "I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieved. I shall tell you a few things which I think you should bear in mind. Learn to be clean; keep free from all vices. Give education to your children. Instill ambition in them. Inculcate on their minds that they are destined to be great. Remove from them all inferiority complexes" (Yeasmin, 2018: 2).

He was clear that if half of the country's population remains uneducated, then India, even no country in the world can progress. He was well aware that for the progress of the society and



the development of the country, it is very important for women to be educated. Ambedkar observes “Education is as necessary for females as it is for males. If you know how to read and write, there would be much progress. As you are, so your children will be mould their lives in virtuous way, for sons should be such as would make a mark in this world” (Bhagwan, 1999: 23). He wanted to liberate women from their suffering and economic dependency. In order to give economic rights and freedom to women, Ambedkar demanded educational rights, equality and right to property for women. He hoped that the Depressed Class women would also contribute to the progress of the community, if, after performing their household duties faithfully, they snatched some time from their daily life and devoted it to the uplift of their fellowmen. To educate women, he asked co-education for women with men. Through education, he believed, that women would think independently which will lead to their intellectual and mental development (Waghmare, 2016:15).

Dr. Ambedkar's life and work gave profound inspiration for the creation of a just and gender-neutral world. He also played an important role towards empowering to women. His contribution through idea of women's education and freedom in society, critique of caste and Manuscript, equal fundamental rights in constitution are remarkable in history. Dr. Ambedkar has made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He was first Indian to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar spent his life for the betterment of women, even involved in bad practices and professionals like prostitutions. He created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and *devdasi* system. He tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocabulary and constitution of India. He insisted on Hindu Code bill suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly.

1.3 Education and Women Empowerment

Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism. Empowerment is the process of obtaining the basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by the people or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging and developing the skills for self-sufficiency with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. It is a process which enables the individuals/ groups to the full access of personal/collective power, authority and influence and also to employ that strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society. In other words, Empowerment is not giving people power; people already have plenty of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificent. It encourages people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately help them to develop themselves or the society. Empowerment envelops developing and building capacities of individuals or communities to make them part of the main stream society. Strong skills and critical capabilities are often held back to open doors for those who meet the empowerment criteria.

1.4 Job-oriented and Skill-based Education



An important aim of education is to make a person capable of earning a living or making him self-dependent. Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged that employment or earning livelihood is very important in a person's life. He believed that education would be considered completed only when some skill would be associated with it and such skill would generate some employment for the person. Hence, he emphasized on technical education and considered it necessary for the rise of the deprived and backward classes in the society.

02. Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihood

One of the things that prevent so many women from transiting from poverty and raising their standard of living through creativity is their lack of access to quality functional education. Obviously, innovation is very vital as the basic for skills through which the entrepreneurship activities pave way for self-reliant. Empowerment no doubt leads to innovation further. When women are empowered through functional education and skills acquisition in small and medium enterprises, they can contribute to their well-being and that of their family and the development of the society in general. Empowerment is a process or a way of improving the quality of lives of women at the same time meeting their basic needs. It is a means of helping or encouraging them to have the means of finding their own solutions especially through economic empowerment. Women empowerment as defined by Mbachu and Diepiribo (2013) means the process by which women collectively come to recognize and address the gender issues which stand in the way of their advancement. Women empowerment entails throwing off the habits of female subordination and patriarchal message which were unconsciously internalized during schooling. Women empowerment as explained by Dilemma (2006) entails identifying gender inequalities and discrimination which were previously accepted as "natural" or "normal" and learning how to take action to end gender Discrimination. Maduwesi and Maduwesi (2006), explain that empowering women ensures the development of a sustainable and equitable society. No society can reach this goal without taking both women's productive and reproductive roles into account. Both aimed to ensure that policies and programmes at all levels incorporate a gender perspective and address women's lives and their needs. Obviously, Nigerian women can be empowered through functional education programmes, skills acquisition or both.

A holistic education is the need of the hour where women think beyond just earning degrees or continue working but are not encouraged to think about money. We need to strive continuously to pursue those matters which are considered only as man's work to achieve comprehensive women education in India.

Govt. of India has initiated a mission oriented policy framework for skill development to meet the challenge of skilling at scale with speed and standard (quality) and sustainability. One of the biggest challenges of skill development in our country is that 93% of the workforce is in informal or unorganized sector. Consequently, it is difficult to map existing skills in the unorganized sector and gauge the skilling requirement in the sector. On the other hand, the rate of job growth in informal sector is estimated to be twice that in formal sector. This is utmost necessary to promote the traditional knowledge and skills to develop small-scale entrepreneurship.

03. Innovative Livelihood options and Women's Capacity Building



In the present day the new trend of Innovation, as the name implies, is the art of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Basically, Innovation is the production of anything that could be an idea, a tangible product, or a performance. It develops capacity or skill through a process in order to continuously improve ideas and find unique solution to problems. Innovative people as explained by Yvonne (2012) are curious, self-confident, optimistic, flexible, and visionary, with a good sense of justification. Innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved products, service or process that creates value for business, government or society. It is a deliberate, specific change which is thought to be more efficacious in accomplishing the goals of a system.

Innovation has three inter-dependent disciplines, each having a different way of thinking:

1. Art emphasises ideas, feelings, and visual qualities.
2. Craft emphasises the right use of tools and materials. It is an activity involving skill in making things by hand. In very popular terms these are Handicraft, artisanal handicraft or handmade, i.e. "Items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and are generally artistic and/or traditional in nature. They are also objects of utility and objects of decoration" (Shilpa and Rajesh, 2007).
3. Design emphasises planning, problem-solving and completion, using drawing as a means of thinking

In the wake of Sustainable Livelihood Approach developed at the end of 20th Century, the new participatory action research makes it possible to diversify livelihood earning options for local communities in the on-farm and off-farm activities. Rural innovative technology becomes widely recognized as one of the major determinants of socio-economic development, and the idea that the transfer of technology from lab to field/land immediately results in growth or productivity and thereby poverty has been alleviating. As a result of these efforts, a number of farmers and other stakeholders, including NGOs have adopted some of the potential rural technologies at various levels. Income generation from off-farm activities as well as conservation and efficient management of existing natural resources while developing/improving appropriate technologies and disseminating them for sustainable rural development. The broad areas covered for technological interventions based on new and evolving approaches include improvement in agricultural productivity (protected cultivation), off-farm technologies, use of organic composting and other supporting technologies (Singh et al. 2006; Rawat et al. 2010). This learner-centered experimental learning approach improved the capacities of the farmers to analyse livelihood and conservation related problems in order to find out appropriate solution locally. Before initiating the programme, an in-depth participatory rural appraisal survey was carried out in few selected cluster of villages of the region in order to identify and select progressive farmers interested to receive sustained training and exposure at demonstration sites. Participatory learning and sharing of knowledge was the method adopted during the present field based capacity building programme. An understanding of the relationship between existing capacities and human resource development was considered critical for making cost-effective technology transfers that help minimize poverty (Maikhuri et al. 2011; Negi et al. 2011). Available useful technologies and



partly providing opportunities (institutional, financial, social, micro-credit, skill etc.) that support access to marginalized communities to building community's capacity/skill to make these choices means not just bringing new rural technologies to their doorstep, but addressing their organizational capacities and opening new channels of information and knowledge.

As evident a top-down approach in the past of pushing new technologies for sustainable rural development without transfer of adequate knowledge and building capacities to local communities mostly failed to achieve the desired objectives (Palni 1996; Rawat et al. 1998; Joshi et al. 2006; Sah et al. 2007). Therefore, formal institutions have to ensure effective people's participation applying bottom up approaches to be effective as has been done during the present intervention. Participatory action research and on-site demonstration and dissemination have built up the capabilities of user groups/local farmers, extension workers, NGOs and government organizations (GOs) involved in transfer of rural technologies in this region. It has also verified that local people and institutions not only adopt technologies but also strengthen their capacities to further upgrade/renovate/redesign introduced technologies based on the ecological set up and resource availability, with the goal of bringing change over a period of time, leading to socio-economic improvement, generation of employment opportunities and promotion of sustainable use of bio-resources.

04. Objectives of the paper:

On the basis of above thoughts and ideas, the paper focuses on :

1. To discuss Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's views on Women's Emancipation and Empowerment
2. To assess relevance of Dr Ambedkar's thoughts in this respect in post independence.
3. To explore the innovative livelihood options in traditional arts and crafts.

05. Relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts in Present Day Scenario

Dr. Ambedkar's introduced few articles into the Constitution of India that helped the women of Indian society to improve their position and to compete with their male counterparts. For example Article 14 – "All are equal in the eyes of law and equally protected by the law". It means equal rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex. Article 15(3) enables positive discrimination in favour of women. Article 16 mentions there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office without any discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed and sex. Article 24 prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines or in any other hazardous employment. Article 39 and 39(d) state "Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work". As per article 41 the state shall guarantee within its economic limits to all the citizens, the right to work, to education and public assistance in certain cases. In Article 42 the state makes provision for Human conditions of work and maternity relief. Under article 44, the state provides a uniform Civil Code to all the citizens throughout the territory of India. In Article 46 – "The state to promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of weaker section of people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation". Under Article 47 –



“The state to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health and so on”. Article 51 (A) (C) – Fundamental duties to renounce practices, derogatory to the dignity of women. Article 243D (3), 243T (3) & 243R (4) provides for allocation of seats in the Panchayati Raj System (Yeasmin, 2018)

Swami Vivekananda says that “Education is the manifestation of perfection, which is already in man”. So education plays an important role in the development of a nation whether it is social or economic growth. A nation can be developed in the real sense of the term, when its entire population is educated. Women section is important stakeholder in development of a country. So women’s education is important for the development of each house as well as for the development of the nation. In India now-a-days you will see that women are working together with men in every field. This is happening because of the women education. Over the years, India’s literacy rate has improved manifold from 12% in 1947 to 74.4% in 2011 (as per Census of India). Even though, the literacy rate is still below the average of 84% around the world. As per 2011 census report, out of 77,84,54,120 individuals who are considered literate in India, 44,42,03,762 of them are male and 33,42,50,358 are female. If you look at the percentage of educated people, there is a huge gap between male (82.14%, in 2011) and female (65.46%, in 2011) literacy rates in India. Low women literacy rate has a huge negative impact on the overall growth and development of the society – where women are majorly responsible for child care and development. As per research results, it is proved that children who are taken care by educated mother are well-nourished and have all-rounded development. Though slow, in the last decade (2001-2011) the gender gap is seen to be narrowing rapidly – women literacy rate has been growing at 11.8% and men at 6.9% (Census of India 2011). With 65.46% female literacy rate as per the 2011 census, women’s education in India is still a point in question. It is still below the world average of 79.7%. India is ranked 105 amongst 128 countries in its Education for All Development Index. There is much work to be done to enhance education in India; particular attention is warranted to women’s access to education. An attempt has been to be made to remove the social, psychological and structural barriers, for the participation of the majority of women in education. Even though the Government and various voluntary organisations are engaged in several attempts to sensitise the local population to the need for women education, unless parents of the girl child see value and merit in sending the girl child to school, they will resist doing so and instead prefer to use her help in household chores or agricultural activities. It is absolutely vital that we incorporate the belief among women that they must stand on their two feet and the only feasible way to achieve this is through education and its proper utilisation. One way to make the families more interested is by making the school come to them rather than sending their girls to school far away from home by implementing more mobile schools across rural India.

We assume that schooling has become a norm now and imagine that every child by the age of 3 starts some form of schooling. But in many rural areas, if the child is a girl then there are many hindrances to her access to education in India. Women’s education in India is still perceived as an unnecessary indulgence in many parts. While Kerala tops the charts with



92.07% female literacy (and 94.00% overall literacy), Bihar scores much lesser with 51.50% of female literacy (and 61.80% overall literacy).

When the parents cannot afford education for their kids, the son is always given preference over the daughter, if at all they try and send them to school. The daughter stays at home and cooks, cleans, and helps her parents in doing the chores, or she might even be employed as a helper somewhere, which is child labour and illegal as per law.

If the daughter wants to go for higher studies it becomes a matter of discussion among parents, relatives, neighbours, (along with long lost aunts) on if there is a need for the same! If the son wants to go for higher education, then it is seen as an achievement and opportunity for the boy to settle well and would be lauded among the same set of people.

It is a well-known fact that most Indian families spend more on their daughter's wedding when compared to her education. And the daughters-in-law are mostly expected to take care of the family rather than continuing their studies or having a steady career. Because of this reason, women are said to have jobs and not careers.

We live in a society where the upbringing of children still depends largely on the mother. What good are we going to pass on to the next generation if that mother is illiterate. The chances are that her own daughter might become an illiterate mother one day, thus continuing the vicious cycle. So the crux of the points comes out as follows:

1. Male-sections are preferred in selecting performing arts, due to cultural constraint, security.
2. In the early life, in middle and upper middle class interests are created in the minds for music and dance, but the interests are not being sustained in the later age.
3. The patriarchal dominance is prominent in the classical culture.
4. Clear biasness is occurred in awarding in the performing arts.

06. Arts and Handicrafts in Traditional Livelihood

India's industrialization and participation in the modern world economy is decades old. Nevertheless, millions of Indians still depend on indigenous modes of production, traditional skills and techniques to make a living based on handmade products. These crafts people and artisans are the backbone of the non-farming rural economy.

Despite some instances of well-known design houses using hand-made products and successful crafts-based businesses such as FabIndia and Anokhi, the majority of craft production remains unorganized and informal with its full market potential untapped, especially by the artisan, who more often than not struggles for sustenance. Propelled by loss of markets, declining skills and difficulty catering to new markets, a large number of artisans have moved to urban centers in search of low, unskilled employment in industry.

Ancient Indian folk paintings and art styles have been passed down from generation to generation, and are still practised in different parts of the country. Here's a look at what makes 10 of these folk art forms unique passed down from one generation to another, Indian folk art is still alive in many parts of the country. Being culturally diverse and distinct, a variety of art forms have evolved over the years; some untouched by modernisation, some adapting to new paint colours and materials. Each depicts religious epics or Gods and Goddesses mostly, but they are all unique, admirable and inimitable in their own right. In



the days of yore, they were made with natural dyes and colours made of soil, mud, leaves and charcoal, on canvas or cloth – giving it a sense of antiquity, vintage nostalgia. Here’s a look at 10 folk painting forms that are still practiced in select parts of the country. These are Madhubani, Miniature paintings, Phad, Warli, Gond, Kalamkari, Tanjore and so on.

One of the biggest issues in India is that our markets do not recognize the true value of craft. When this value is recognized, and people become willing to pay a higher price for craft-based products, it would translate into higher wages for weavers and crafts people and act as a boost to millions of rural-based livelihood opportunities associated with this sector. The economics however is not as simple, as finally it comes down to the conflict between pricing and sales. If you out-price goods, you sell only a limited number. If you don’t give crafts people enough work, it kills the craft. Sustainable livelihoods will ultimately depend on finding a fine balance between the two. For example: Fabindia follows an inclusive model of capitalism, placing craft at the center of the quest for profitability and growth.

These artisan products have also become marketable and good economic benefits derived to the tribal women developing marketing channels and selling the products with the help of different stakeholders and good outcomes are shown at the state and National levels. The tribal handicrafts are specialized skills which are passed on from one generation to another and these handicrafts are means of livelihood of the artisans. However, in absence of any organized activity in this sector and the products not being adequately remunerative, there is a possible likelihood of the artisans taking up alternate livelihood options (which may involve migration as well). In such a case this age-old activity will die its own death. At this stage it is very imperative to understand the problems faced by this sector and suggest the strategies for development of tribal handicraft based on which certain policy level interventions need to be taken by the government to sustain the traditional tribal handicrafts. With this objective, Socio Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS), entrusted by Planning Commission carried out research study on the “Status Study of Tribal Handicrafts- An Option for Livelihood of Tribal Community in the States of Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Arunachal Pradesh”.

Women’s role in tribal livelihoods is very much significant but in supporting their traditional economy, they adopt several secondary non-farming occupations. Of then handicrafts are very much important. In utilization of their forest resources they produce various forest products as the outcome of their indigenous knowledge or traditional culture. These are leaf-plates, mats or brooms, ropes etc. in non-timber forest management. Later in the participatory or Joint Forest Management making these handicrafts played an important role in livelihoods development. Once the women who were head loaders, became involved in the small and micro-enterprises through self-help group formations and subsequent skill or capacity building measures. These new livelihood options helped in poverty reduction in the fringe forest villages. Thus new forest products such as dona-pattal (leaf-plates), baskets, bags, wooden crafts, bamboo crafts, carpets, dry flowers, all from natural resources and ornaments, brooms, tribal jewellery, tribal weaves, embroidery, tribal paintings, all form non-natural resources are being made.

Every year a national fair of tribal artisans known as “Aadishilp” is being organized by Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED) at Dilli Haat in New Delhi Unique and exquisite tribal artefacts of more than 90 tribal artisans from all over the country are being exhibited in this Exhibition. Hand crafted items, handloom products, and lot more is being exhibited at the venue. Design and quality inputs are given to the artisans wherever required for overall improvement and better marketing prospects of their products and so on

07. Experimental Learning and Relevance:

In conformity with the above narrative the author intended to explore various cases which would able to illustrate the relevance of Babasaheb’s thoughts and ideas in the post-independence situation. Finally the attempt has been successful to develop the following two cases to place participatory process of women’s emancipation and empowerment. The method adopted here were the quantitative and qualitative techniques of social sciences with simultaneous application of participatory tools.

Case 1: **Convergence of indigenous knowledge and government schemes in Sericulture activities in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh**

Guvasen forest village is situated at a distance of about 40 km from Betul in Chicoli range under West Betul forest division of Betul district of Madhya Pradesh. The village is situated near the main road. The village is dominated by the Korkus, a Scheduled Tribe. There are about 300- 400 House-holds (HH) of Korkus and 25 HH of Yadavs and about 10-12 HH of Gonds. Table 1 gives a profile of the village

Table 1. Profile of Guvasen Village

Total population	Male		Female		Sex ratio (1000)					
	399	49.6 %	405	50.3%	1015					
Occupation	Agriculture		Agri-Labour		Non-agri-Labour		Forest collection			
	78	60%	32	24.62%	22	16.9%	40	30.8%		
Land holding	Landless		Marginal		Small		Medium		Big	
	13	10%	78	60%	39	30%	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Education	Lit		Primary		Secondary		Grad		PG	
	326	40.5 %	260.82	32.4%	228.2	28.3%	Nil	Nil		

In the year 2012 the forest department under the UNDP-GEF project initiated an income generating activity for the women Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) members of the village. A Self-help Group (SHG) of 20 women was formed for the activity of extracting threads from the silk cocoons. Ten machines



Fig 1: Women members busy in extracting threads from cocoons



were purchased by the JFMC fund of Guvasen FPC which was formed in 1996. These women were provided with training by the sericulture department. The Sericulture Department gives cocoons to the women members and purchases the silk thread from them. The payment is based on the grades of thread extracted.

The women members involved in this activity earn monthly income of Rs 4000-6000. This activity was done in collaboration with the Sericulture department of Madhya Pradesh Govt. The Department of sericulture provides cocoons to the women. In one day women weave about 100-200gm of cocoons.

This activity is undertaken in the room provided by the Forest Department at the free of cost. The Department has provided them the infrastructure and the Department of Sericulture provides them trainings to undertake this activity.

The women who are involved in this activity are very happy and satisfied with the work and the income earned. This has greatly reduced their dependency on forest resources and the migration has also declined considerably. Women members have become more confident and feel more secured and independent. About 70% of the women were confident that they had the ability to demonstrate their skill to other women. Women were very proud of their skills and ready to demonstrate it to others. Women members come as far as Bhopal to sell their products in Van melas.

Case 2: **An innovative income generating activity of Paper mesh craft making in Bamnai, ObedullahGauge Forest Division of Raisen district in Madhya Pradesh**

Bamnia forest village is about 30-35 km from Obdullaganj Forest Division under Dahod range in Raisen district. This village is situated near the Bhopal –Indore main Road. The village is a multi-ethnic Tribal village of Gond, Korkus and Basods. The Eco-development committee of Bamnai was formed in 2006. This EDC come under Ratapani Wild life sanctuary .The village is surrounded by rich miscellaneous forest of Teak, Saja and other species. Table 2 gives a profile of the village.

Tabl.2. Profile of Bamnai Village

Total population	Male		Female		Sex ratio (1000)					
	398	51%	383	49.0%	962					
Occupation	Agriculture		Agri-Labour		Non agri-Labour		Forest collection			
	108	60%	108	60%	90	50%	36	20%		
Land holding	Landless		Marginal		Small		Medium		Big	
	69	38%	111	62%	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Education	Lit		Primary		Secondary		UG		PG	
	572	73.2%	343.20	43.94%	286.00	36.62%	Nil	Nil	Nil	

In Bamnai women have grouped themselves into a SHG and are engaged in making toys and handicrafts from paper mesh/waste paper. The Forest Department imparted training for this activity through some NGOs or institutes. These toys are sold at herbal melas (van melas) organized by the Forest department, which are held regularly at different places of the state. These are also exhibited in Delabadi Ecotourism center. This is a very cost innovative marketing mechanism initiated by the Forest Department. The Forest department provides them raw material like waste paper, gum etc required for making toys. Their products are sold by the Forest Department and women members engaged in this activity get about Rs. 80/day. During the initial years this activity was a success and members engaged in this activity were appreciated and recognized for their work. This activity is running in a full swing under the initiation of the beat guard Ms Ganga Thakur since 2008. Besides their daily chores and other activities, they do this activity in their own convenient time sitting at home. As per the demand they make the materials and supply it either to the forest department or to individuals



Figure 2 : Figure Women making toys of paper mesh

Due to the active involvement of the beat guard in this activity the percentage of women members acquiring his training has also increased considerably. This activity has helped in increasing the income of the women members and reduced their dependency on forest resources to a great extent. Women are more confident about the skill acquired. They go along with the beat guard to Bhopal *melas* (fair) s to sale their goods and demonstrate their skills.

Earlier, working women members were involved in fuelwood selling, now this has decreased completely. Women members have started taking interest in JFM activities.

08. Conclusion:

Dr. Ambedkar was fully aware of the painful condition and the low status of women in the Indian society. He tried to uplift women generally and Hindu women in particular. He emphasized over and again discrimination and urged for equal opportunity. He mentioned endurance of poverty, illiteracy, lack of health, inequality and powerlessness. He was first Indian to break down these barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. Dr Ambedkar considered education as an important tool for the emancipation of women and simultaneously to build up skills and capacities to stand on their own feet in economic front. Dr. Ambedkar put lot of emphasis on education to elevate the economic position of Dalits, especially women. Dr. Ambedkar believed that through education and knowledge Dalits will gain self-motivation and self-confidence which will give them power and strength to fight



against the unjust social order. He was also in favour of making education relevant to livelihood. His objectives of education were the same as his social, economic and political objectives.

In this paper, on the basis of Dr, Ambedkar's visions, thoughts and ideals, it has been shown the innovative approaches for livelihood development through that of handicrafts sector utilizing locally available resources. In the development of handicrafts sector. Employment opportunities can be categorized in three segments namely (1) Self-Employment (2) Regular Employment (3) Daily Waged. Employment efforts shall be made to engage the un-employed tribal youth for providing them Self-Employment through various development schemes on priority basis.

Various financial institutions have identified financing promotion and development of Rural non-Farming Sector as one of its thrust area and have introduced several measures to enlarge and diversify the credit and developmental activities in the field of Rural Development. They have been providing refinance to banks against the loan for manufacturing, processing and service activities in small, tiny, cottage and village industries including handicrafts.

At the same time, a large number of NGOs have realized the importance of income generating activities for rural, poor and have diversified into enterprise promotion through training and saving and credit programme through groups. They have been able to develop a close and enduring relationship with the rural people. These NGOs articulate the local people's needs and aspirations and translate them into effective action/plans and implements them with people's active participation.

The synergic approach and planning between tourism industry and handicrafts sector can create new milestones in the prosperity and economic growth of the country.

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