

# ROLE OF HANDICRAFTS IN SELF-EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF WOMEN: A STUDY ON JAMALPUR POURUSHAVA

S. M. Yusuf Ali\*

## ABSTRACT

Handicrafts (hand stitch) industry of Bangladesh has a great potential in economic development of the country. Although the handicrafts sector is the most decentralized and unorganized sector of the Bangladesh economy but this sector plays a major role in the economic development to the nation. The main objectives of the study are investigating the role of handicrafts (hand stitch) industry in self-employment of women and specific objectives are knowing the economic conditions of handicrafts workers, relationship with economic growth and recommendation for policy making for developing handicraft industry in Bangladesh. Quantitative method is used for the study and data are collected through structural interviews from the respondents. The study found that most of women who are engaged in handicraft work and business, they belong to less education status and their family income status is low, they also have changed their socio-economics status but that is not sufficient at present world like other developing countries. We need to effective policy for their development.

**Key Words:** Handicrafts, Self-employment, Economic Prosperity, Prospect, Women.

## INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh's handicrafts business, often known as hand stitching, has a lot of untapped potential in terms of contributing to the country's overall economic growth. Despite the fact that the handicrafts sector of the Bangladeshi economy is the most decentralized and unorganized sector of the economy, this sector plays a significant role in the economic development of the country. The many facets of the contribution that handicrafts bring to the growth of a nation, a rural region, or the people have a significant impact. The sector of handicrafts holds a tremendous deal of promise in terms of contributing to the country's economic growth and development, in terms of the amount of money and the number of jobs it can create. A piece of Bangladeshi handicraft may be classified as hand stitch, metal ware, pottery, matting, wood-work, or weaving, amongst other possible classifications. People's lives are improved as a result of it, and it also serves as a medium through which they can express themselves creatively. There was no clear delineation in ancient crafts between the production of aesthetically pleasing ornaments and functional items for day-to-day life. Starting a business in the field of handicrafts can be done from the comfort of one's own home with a low investment in either

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\*Department of Management, Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University, Jamalpur.

infrastructure or training. It makes use of existing skills and resources that are readily available in the area. The inputs that are required in it are not difficult to obtain, and these are more concerned with the customization of the product than with costly investments. The quality of the handicrafts that matters most is that they do not upset the cultural and social equilibrium of either the household or the community in which they are displayed. In times of drought, floods, famine, and poor harvest, agricultural craftsmen and pastoral communities are counting on their traditional craft skills as a backup source of income to see them through. Their proficiency in weaving and needlework presents them with a natural opportunity to achieve social and financial autonomy.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study is to investigate the role of handicrafts (hand stitch) industry in self-employment of women. The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

- To know the economic conditions of handicrafts workers of Jamalpur Pouroshava;
- To find the relationship between self-employment & economic prosperity of women;
- To know the economic contribution of handicrafts industry in Jamalpur Pouroshava;
- To analyse the problems and prospect this sector; and
- To provide recommendation for policy makers for ensuring the core facilities for women engaged in handicrafts.

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Agriculture plays a significant role in Bangladesh's economy. Around 80 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, either directly or indirectly. The growth of our economy, on the other hand, is heavily dependent on the agricultural sector. Yet, the development of agriculture on its own is not sufficient to bring about the entire development of the country. Agriculture, as well as industry and commerce, is a primary area of concentration for a number of the world's developing nations, including China. Specialty The growth of the country's economy is being significantly aided by the contributions of the nation's micro- and home-based businesses. Small business and cottage industries hold tremendous growth potential in Bangladesh. One of the many kinds of small business and cottage industries is handicraft, sometimes known as hand stitching. There is an indirect or direct connection between a fraction of Bangladesh's overall population

and the nation's vast array of homegrown cottage industries. The work for many Bengali women is known by the unique term "handicraft." Handicrafts provide an outlet for the Bengali women's long-held dreams, laughter, tears, sadness, delight, and joy and agony. The hidden tale of Bengali life is eloquently represented through a variety of handcraft designs as well.

In many different ways, handicrafts have contributed to the expansion of Bengali women's creative capacities. Women in this area are subject to a number of unfavorable circumstances. In spite of the many challenges they have faced, Bengali women have earned the greatest acclaim possible for their creative abilities in all areas. In addition to this, there is a mix of intellectual process and natural ability. After removing her veil, the Bengali woman smiled. The practice of handicrafts can play a significant part in lifting this stigma associated with women. In addition to this, the production of handicrafts has been shown to significantly contribute to the empowerment and independence of women. In addition, the production of handicrafts has contributed to the prosperity, financial security, and dignity of women in our society. The once-abandoned women of Bengal have been given a second chance at life because of this enterprise. Having the capacity for survival.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sanjay (1982), carpet weaving is the primary kind of home-based business in India and provides employment for lakhs of craftspeople. He went on to say that the Bhadohi-Mirzapur belt in Eastern Uttar Pradesh had the major production, which was approximately 80%. He went on to say that the other major producing centres in India are Jammu and Kashmir, Agra, Jaipur, Amritsar, and Gwalior; however, they were responsible for a very small proportion of the remaining production and employment in the industry. According to him, the success of the carpet sector is determined by the actions of consumers on the international market. He went on to say that the impact of the carpet sector on the overall economic development can be broken down into two categories, which are the balance of payment and the number of jobs that are created. A substantial positive contribution from industry is made to the balance of payment at a time when the trade deficit is placing a demand on the capacity of the country. On another level, the fifty to sixty percent labour content in the carpet production contributes to employment and exerts an upward pressure on wages, which helps in the development of underdeveloped regions of the country.

Nayak (1997), in a study on "Role of Handicraft Cooperatives in Rural Development, Problems and Policy Options," found that the problems of handicraft co-operatives are due to a lack of leadership, general awareness among craftsmen,

political interference, lack of financial resources, raw materials technology up gradation, and mismanagement of funds. Additionally, it was found that the problems of handicraft co-operatives were due to a lack of financial resources.

Masihur and Abdullah (2019) conducted a study on “Influential Aspects of Women Engagement in Entrepreneurial Activities: A Study on Handicrafts Enterprise in Bangladesh” they showed that finance, Business Knowledge, socio-culture, family support and training program aspects directly influence women’s engagement in entrepreneurial activities of handicrafts enterprise in Bangladesh. They also found that socio-cultural aspects insignificantly affect women engagement in entrepreneurial activities of handicrafts enterprise. But our women face some difficulties in engaging in entrepreneurial activities of handicrafts enterprises in Bangladesh. These difficulties should be carefully handled for developing and amplifying women engagement in entrepreneurial activities of handicrafts enterprise in Bangladesh.

Oridi et al. (2016) had studied on “Prevailing Factors of Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Bangladesh: Evidence from Handicraft Business.” They indicate mainly two types of factors like- personal and psychological factors including economic and noneconomic motivation, risk-taking confidence, the urge for recognition, decision-making ability, passion, and creative design-making skills are important. These factors influence their willpower to enter the business world and successfully operate their business. The result also indicates that inadequate facilities and unorganized programs of supportive institutions generate financial, technical, and promotional complexities for the RWEs in the handicraft sector.

Sadia Tasneem (2014) conducted a study on “Role of Cottage Industry in the Economic Development of Bangladesh: An Empirical Study.” She showed that Economic development generally refers to the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy to promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area.

Zeba Sarmad and Saba Khan (2018) conducted a study on “Changing Status of Women in the Handicraft Industry.” They found the changing status of women in the handicraft industry in India across several decades to present scenario. The contribution of women workers of the handicraft industry is most significant for developing the economic condition of rural areas of different parts of India. A lot of people are directly engaged with this industry. For this reason, many individuals are able to change their economic conditions and social status.

Mirza B. and Mallya V. (2012), conducted a study on “Handloom and Handicrafts of Gujrat” found that handloom sector occupies a distinct and unique

position in the Indian economy. They also analysed that the handloom sector is indeed capable of exponential growth and development with proper identification of its needs, a reasonable level of resource input, and structural attention.

Rao, R. M. (1990): In his book on "Development of Handloom Industry," has worked out the socioeconomic overview of the weavers who operate in the handloom industry in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. In addition to this, he has provided a comprehensive analysis of the functioning of primary weavers' and co-operative organizations throughout the state.

## METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data are used for collecting data in this study. There are many workers who are directly and indirectly involved in handicrafts industry. The study is conducted on Jamalpur Pouroshava. All women workers of handicraft industries in Jamalpur Pouroshava are the population of the study. Stratified sampling is used for collecting data. Firstly, the workers of handicraft industries are listed into three categories like-design workers, stitch workers and both design & stitch workers. Secondly, the workers are chosen randomly. Data has been collected through questionnaire. These questionnaires were distributed among 160 workers but 140 workers responded. Data are analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science).

### Study Area

Jamalpur is 20th district in Bangladesh, part of the Mymensingh division. It was established in 1978. Jamalpur occupies 2031.98 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located between 24°34' and 25°26' North and between 89°40' and 90°12' East. There are about 26 lacs people in this district. Although a large number of people lead simple lives but they have a rich culture. The branding name of this district is 'Nakshi Kantha'. Jamalpur is a market center for local rice, sugarcane, jute, tobacco and mustard. The town's main exports are jute, tobacco, mustard seed, peanut, leather, egg, pulse, betel leaf and handicrafts. Making Nakshi Kantha (embroidered quilts) is a traditional occupation. An economic zone was established in Jamalpur by BEZA. A nakshi village is being set up in Jamalpur pouroshava. Five thousand crore tk. will be spent for the development of this village. It will provide employment to many people. The government will provide opportunities for domestic and foreign investors to invest here. Various facilities will be ensured for the employees. So, the researcher has chosen Jamalpur Pouroshava area for the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Due to lack of education and confidence, the women were reluctant and hesitant to answer but through conducive motivation they were convinced. The data were compiled in tables showing frequencies and percentages. Descriptive interpretation is also provided about data.

Table 1: Educational status of the respondents

SL	Level Of Education	No. of women	Percentage of women
(1)	Uneducated	57	40.71
(2)	Primary	46	32.86
(3)	SSC	22	15.72
(4)	HSC	10	7.14
(5)	Graduation	04	2.86
(6)	Post-graduation	01	.71
	Total	140	100

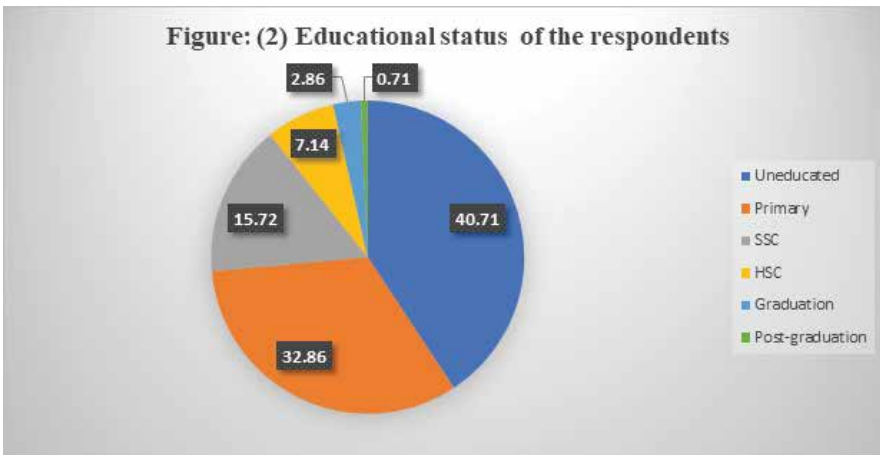
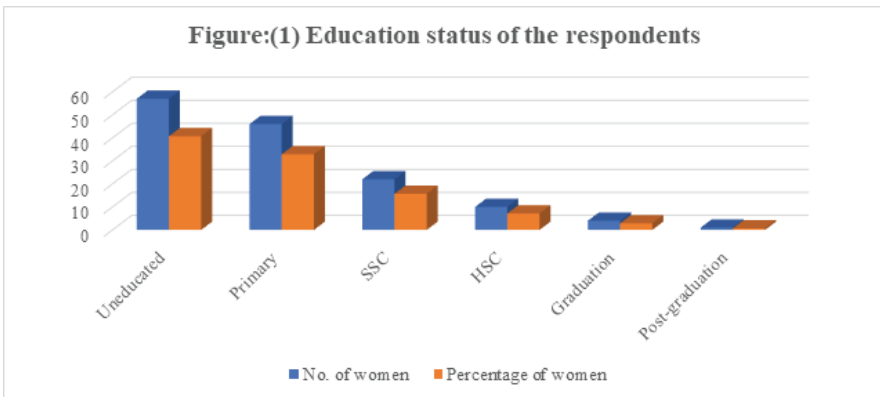
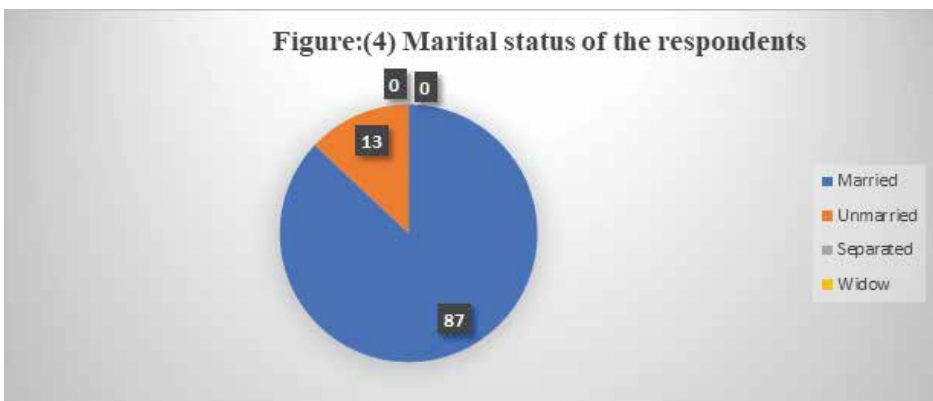
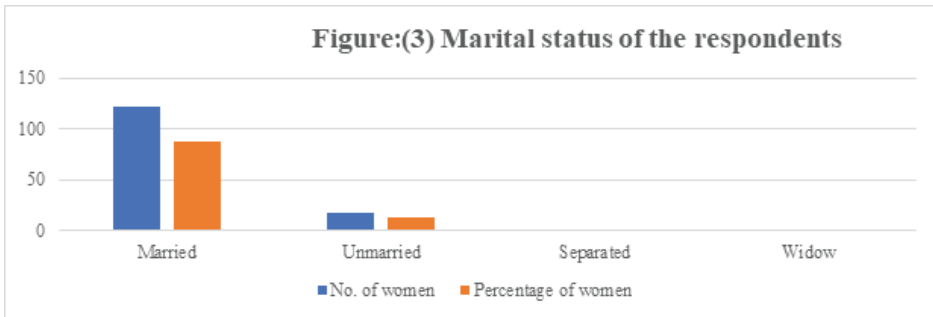


Table 1 and figures 1 & 2 indicate that 40.71% of the total respondents of the women are uneducated. Where 32.86% went to primary school for their primary education, 15.72% have just completed their secondary education and only 7.14% have received their higher secondary education. From the rest of the respondents only 2.86% have completed their graduation and 0.71% that means only one person has completed her post-graduation.

Table 2: Marital status of women

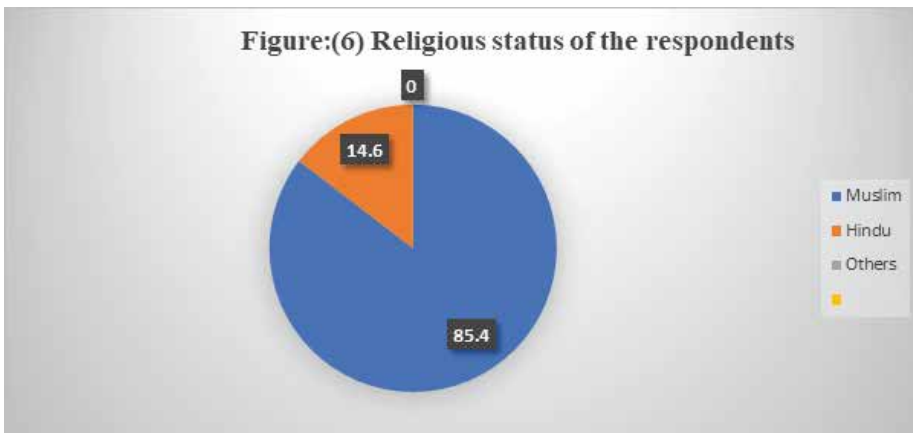
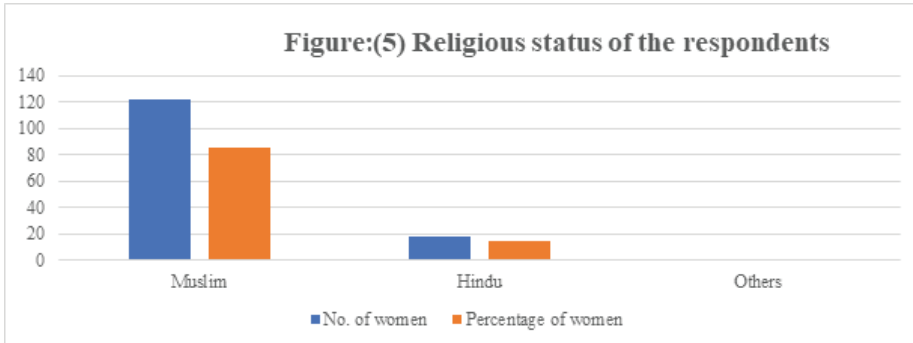
SL.	Marital status	No. of women	Percentage of women
(1)	Married	122	87
(2)	Unmarried	18	13
(3)	Separated		0
(4)	Widow		0
Total		140	100



In table 2 and figures 3 & 4, the respondents' marital status has been shown. 87% of total respondents are married and rest of the 13% were single. While collecting the information regarding their marital status it has been found that there are no separated and window women in this business arena.

Table 3: Religious status of the respondents

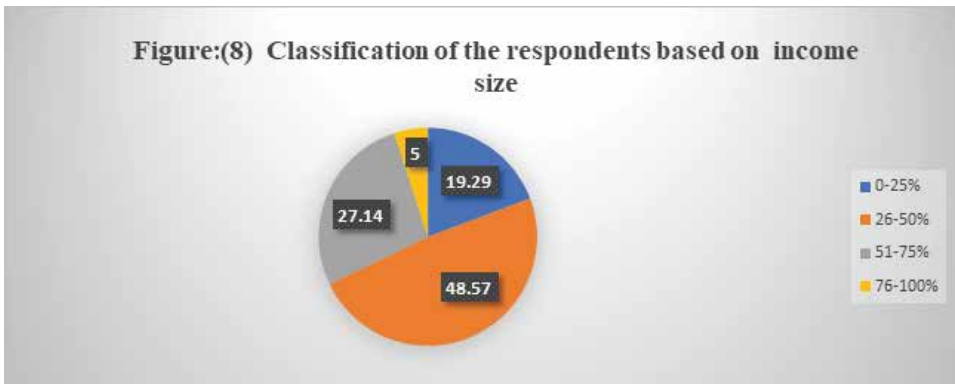
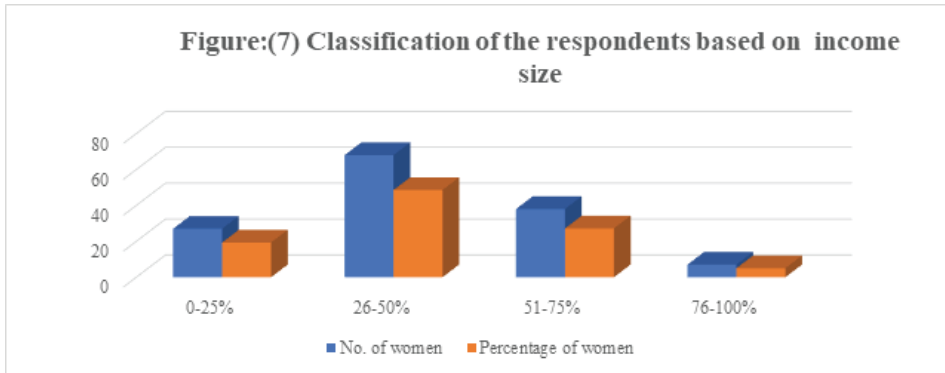
SL.	Religion	No. of women	Percentage of women
(1)	Muslim	122	85.4
(2)	Hindu	18	14.6
(3)	Others		00
Total		140	100



In table 3 and figures 5 & 6, the religious status has been shown where most of the percentage belong to the Muslim women which is 85.4% and the other women were Hindu and their number is 14.6 %.

Table 4: Classification of the respondents based on income size

SL.	Family Income	No. of women	Percentage of women
(1)	0-25%	27	19.29
(2)	26-50%	68	48.57
(3)	51-75%	38	27.14
(4)	76-100%	7	5.00
Total		140	100



In table 4 and figures 7 & 8 shows that from the 140 respondents 27 (19.29%) women contributed 0-25% in their family income where 68 women (48.57%) contributed more than 25-50% of their total family income. From the rest of the respondents, 38 women (27.14%) contributed most of their income in their family which is about 51-75%. Moreover 7 women (5%) have also contributed 77-100% in their family income.

Table 5: Years of experience and change in economic conditions

SL.	Years of experience	No. of women	Percentage of women	Change in economic conditions		
				Much Improved	Little bit	No change
(1)	0-5	21	15.00	14	06	01
(2)	6-10	43	30.71	33	08	02
(3)	11-15	40	28.57	26	13	01
(4)	16-20	27	19.29	20	07	00
(5)	Above 25	9	6.43	07	01	01
		140	100	100	35	05

From the table 5, it can be seen that, the women who have been doing their business in this field have many years of experience. 21 number of women (15%)

have 0-5 years of experiences and in this level of experiences their economic conditions have also changed. Out of 21 women, 14 women’s economic conditions have much improved, 6 women’s economic condition have changed little and 1 women’s economic conditions have not changed. 43 (30.71%) women have 6-10 years of experience and from this level of experience 33 women’s economic conditions have been much improved, 8 women’s economic conditions have been changed a little bit and 2 women’s economic conditions have not been changed yet. The women who have 11-15 years of experiences they are 40 in number and 28.57% in total number where their 26 women’s economic conditions have been much improved, 13 women’s economic conditions have been changed a little bit and 1 women’s economic conditions has not been changed. 27 women have 16-20 years of experience. Having 16-20 years of experience 20 women have been able to change her economic condition and 7 women have tried to change her economic condition. From the rest of the respondents 9 women have more than 25 years of experience in this field. Out of 9 women (6.43%), 7 women have changed their economic condition on a large scale and 1 woman has changed a little bit and another woman could not change her economic conditions.

Table 6: Years of experience and change in living standard

SL.	Years of experience	No. of women	Percentage of women	change in living standard		
				Much Improved	Little bit	No change
(1)	0-5	21	15.00	13	07	01
(2)	6-10	43	30.71	30	12	01
(3)	11-15	40	28.57	27	12	01
(4)	16-20	27	19.29	18	07	02
(5)	Above 25	9	6.43	08	01	00
		140	100	96	39	05

From the table 6 states that 21 women have been doing their business in this field for 5 years, 15% of women’s living standards have been changed. Out of 25 women 13 women’s living standard has been improved, 7 women’s living standard has been changed in a little bit for 1 woman’s living standard has not been changed, of all 43 (30.71%) women have 6-10 years of experiences and from this level of experiences 30 women’s living standard have been much improved, 12 women’s living standard have been changed a little bit and 1 woman’s living standard has not been changed yet. The women who have 11-15 years of experience are 40 in number and 28.57% in total where 27 women’s living standards have been much improved, 12 women’s living standards have changed a little bit and 1 woman’s living standard has not been changed yet. 27 women (19.29%) have 16-20 years of experience. Having 16-20 years of experience 18 women have been able to change her living standard and 7 women have tried to change her living standard and other 2 women could not change her living standard. From the rest of the respondents 9

women (6.43%) have more than 25 years of experience in this field. From 9 women, 8 women have changed their living standard on a large scale and 1 woman has changed a little bit.

Table 7: Years of experience and change in family income

SL.	Years of experience	No. of women	Percentage of women	change in family income		
				Much Improved	Little bit	No change
(1)	0-5	21	15.00	16	4	1
(2)	6-10	43	30.71	30	11	2
(3)	11-15	40	28.57	27	9	4
(4)	16-20	27	19.29	19	7	1
(5)	Above 25	9	6.43	6	3	0
		140	100	98	34	8

Table 7, states that women who have been doing their business in this field for 5 years 15% of women family income have changed. From 21 women 16 women's changes in family income have much improved, 4 women's family income has changed a little bit and 1 women's family income has not changed. 43 (30.71%) women have 6-10 years of experience and from this level of experiences 30 women's family income have been improved much, 11 women's family income have changed a little and 2 women's family income conditions have not changed. The women who have 11-15 years of experience are 40 in number and 28.57% in total number. Where 27 women's family income have improved much, 9 women's family income have changed a little bit and 4 women's change in family income has not been visible. 27 women (19.29%) have 16-20 years of experience. Having 16-20 years of experience 19 women have been able to change their living standards and 7 women have tried to contribute to their family income so that their family income improves. Where 7 women's family income have changed a little bit and 1 woman's income condition of her family did not change. From the rest of the respondents 9 women (6.43%) have more than 25 years of experience in this field. From 9 women, 6 women have changed their family income condition on a large scale and 3 women have made a little bits of change in their family income and other 0 women's family income conditions have not changed.

## CONCLUSION

The unique art of hand stitch weaving done by the skilled weavers produced unmatched quality that raised the attention of the world. Already the handicrafts industry proves that it has a great role & contribution in the economic development of our country. The study shows the performance of the handicraft (hand stitch) industry and how it helps in the economic development and becomes the prime agent in the path of development of a country. Nakshi Kantha is probably

the unique among the other handicraft industries. It is contributing the immense value of foreign currency to the country that strengthens our economy. Sample handicrafts have increasing growth in their production and earnings, employment opportunities, saving and standard of living. The Bangladeshi handicraft (hand stitch) has proved its efficiency to compete with the world due to its unique weave. The ever-increasing growth in terms of value of export indicates the high potential of sustainability of this industry in the coming future. This industry has a capacity to employ the millions of rural unemployed women and becomes the best instrument of removing the regional disparity from the country. They need easy finance, development of transport and communication, marketing facilities and some other infrastructural facilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for motivating the handicrafts producers, the following steps need to be taken:

- (1) Popularizing their products through arranging local exhibition and fair in district level;
- (2) Product development and diversification must be made to capture the local demand;
- (3) Cost control, quality control and prize control steps should be made by the entrepreneurs;
- (4) Local banks should advance for their working capital at liberal rates of interest; and
- (5) Women entrepreneurs must be trained to develop their entrepreneurial skills and responsibility to achieve their mission and vision.

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