A Study on Consumer Awareness of Handloom Products with Special Reference to Dimapur District-Nagaland

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ABSTRACT

The handloom sector plays a very major role in the country's economy. The relevance of the handloom sector in the agrarian economy is enormous because of its linkages with crucial and sensitive sectors like agriculture. It uses agricultural products as raw materials and, therefore, provides an ever-ready market for agricultural produce. Therefore, in an economy where majority of people rely on agrarian sector for their source of revenue the significance of handloom is well understood. It also gives employment to a lot of women and, thus, plays its job in women empowerment.

If the importance of the handloom sector is of such immense character then the question to be asked is why this particular sector is facing so many troubles? Handloom weavers today are not a happy lot and are facing a series of problems ranging from unorganized nature of their business to threat from cheap imports. The problems that the weavers confront have compounded in the recent times. This has led to closure of many handloom units and thus has resulted in massive unemployment. In this context, the present study is an effort to analyze the consumer awareness while buying and using handloom products. Also study the various factors that influences the buying behavior of handloom customers. The present study has been conducted in Dimapur District of Nagaland. The data required for the present study has been collected from primary sources. A sample of Two hundred fifty respondents (Handloom Customers) has been selected by using stratified random sampling from various areas of Dimapur District. Appropriate graphical and statistical analysis is used to derive the interpretations. The data received were analyzed and the findings of the study were generalized with the aid of percentage, simple bar diagram and chi-square test of independence of attributes. Conclusions were also provided. It has attempted to throw a light of customers of Dimapur district in Nagaland about their significance or insignificant relationship on various factors on awareness and satisfaction on handloom products.

Keywords: Consumer, Consumer Awareness, Satisfaction, Handloom, Power loom.

INTRODUCTION:

Handloom forms a part of the heritage of India and exemplifies the artistry of the weavers, richness and diversity of our country. Indian handloom sector of the textile industry is ancient and has served the economy well in terms of employment. At present juncture, it can play a major role in the quota free trade regime by getting rationalized and supported for bringing out with value added and customized products for consumers all over the world. For this a right type of support by the Government becomes inevitable.

Handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in the country. The sector is very important from the point of view of its size and employment potential. It provides direct and indirect employment to over 13 million weavers and is the largest economic activity second only to agriculture. Indian handloom products are known for their unique designs and finesse. The trend is to mix old designs with new techniques and create original products.

Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC) is a statutory body constituted under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, to promote the export of all handlooms products such as fabrics, home furnishings, carpets and floor coverings. HEPC was constituted in 1965 with 65 members, and its present membership is about 2,000. In order to provide financial assistance in an integrated manner to the handloom weavers and strengthen the design segment of the fabric, Government of India had taken new initiatives in addition to ongoing other schemes and programmes by launching new scheme, namely, Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana and set up a National Centre for Textile Design (NCTD) recently. The Government of India is implementing Weavers Welfare Schemes that includes Health Package Scheme (1993), Thrift Fund Scheme (7th Five-Year Plan) and New Insurance Scheme for handloom (1997-98). The importance of the handloom sector in the national economy is well recognized. On account of having the advantage of flexibility of production in small batches, uniqueness, constant scope for innovation, eco friendliness, adaptability and, above all, the element of rich artistry, this sector has the potential to contribute towards export earnings in a big way. Therefore, export of handloom products has been identified as a "Thrust Area" for the overall development of the sector. The Government is exploring the possibility of making optimal use of the resources to enhance production capabilities of exportable handloom products. A provision of Rs. 26.00 crores was made to implement the Handloom Export Scheme during the 10th Five-Year plan. The Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing, since its inception in the year 1976, various schemes for the promotion and development of the handloom sector and providing assistance to the handloom weavers in a variety of ways. Some of the major programmes relate to

   i.   Modernization and up gradation of technology
  ii.   Input support
 iii.   Marketing support
  iv.   Publicity
   v.   Infrastructural support
  vi.   Welfare measures
 vii.   Composite growth oriented package
viii.   Development of exportable products
  ix.   Research and development

Handloom Sector in Nagaland:

The art of hand weaving is very popular in Nagaland, amongst the Naga women particularly in the rural areas. The Nagas are best known for their shawls in which various pieces are woven disjointedly and then stitched together. In recent years however, mill made yarn, is steadily replacing the thread spun locally. Indigenous spinning has gradually become extinct. Weaving becomes continuous to be popular. Two types of looms are prevalent in Nagaland. The loin loom and the fly shuttle loom. Most of the women in villages possess loin loom and the weaving is done on these looms. The local indigenous population of Nagaland design unique patterns on their shawls, clothes and other decorative items made up of cloth which reflects their cultural heritage. The local weavers involved are facing a number of problems like expensive fibers, unavailability of yarns, highly priced end product to name a few. Thus, there is a need to preserve the traditional art of weaving of Nagaland along with improving the socio economic status of the weavers.

The Nagaland Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd. was set up in the year 1979 as Government of Nagaland undertaking with the main objective of promotion and development of vibrant traditional handloom and handicrafts products indigenous and unique to the state of Nagaland. The corporation is having its head office at Half Nagarjan, Dimapur, Nagaland and has 10 (ten) sales emporium within and outside the state. The corporation is also having a production center at its head office complex where it produces both handloom and handicrafts products to be sold through its emporium. The corporation also distributes raw materials to the registered group of artisans/weavers to enhance production of fixed rate basis. Further, procurement of finished goods from the registered members are being carried out for sales through its own outlets i.e., emporiums, organizing various exhibitions, fairs and crafts bazaars within and outside the state are actively being carried out to provide a platform to our artisans/weavers for promotion of their products and also to educate them about the intricacies of marketing world.

The corporation is also being implementing several other welfare activities being sponsored by the Govt. of India for the welfare of the artisans & weavers with a view to improve their socio-economic conditions. Nagaland government is promoting the state's handloom sector by hosting exhibitions that enable rural weavers a wider market reach.

Recently, a handloom expo was held in Dimapur, which was jointly organized by the Union Ministry of Textiles and the Development Commissioner of Handlooms, Dimapur. Dimapur is the main commercial hub and one of the three municipalities in the State of Nagaland. More than 40 stalls at the expo attracted a large number of visitors and provided a platform for the state's rural weavers and artisans to sell their products to them. Handloom fairs and exhibitions not only helps the rural weavers to sell their products but also helps them get a feel of the market trend and customer demands, according to Hokiye Yeputhomi, Manager and Organizer of the Dimapur fair. The handloom and handicrafts sector is a source of livelihood for over 200,000 families in Nagaland. The hand-woven and handmade items have demand both within and outside the country and are an important contributor to the state's economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Kumudha,A, and M, Rizwana, (2012) have found that handloom is a traditional cottage industry offering millions of employment opportunities to millions of weavers in India but recently the industry is finding lot of problems and goving towards the decline stage.

Pappeswari and Rajalkshmi (2013) have found that the consumer satisfaction was medium (56%) while the opnion on level of satisfaction of the respondents is independent of age, sex, educational qualification, occupation and monthly income.

Rani and Bains (2014) have observed various factors impact the customer behavior and fond out this industry gives employment opportunities to poor people.

Tanusree (2015) aims to understand the various problems of handloom weavers of Varanasi in UP and the study findings revealed that handloom weavers of Varanasi lost their prestigious traditional industry. It has occurred due to the industrialization in all over India. The capitalist production, invention of power loom, increasing price of yarn, low wages and labour problems are pushed to handloom to an end.

Anumala and Dr. GVRK (2015) have found that the handloom industry has been adequately facing huge competition from power loom and miller-made sector. Apart from that inadequate infrastructure, poor marketing support and weakening distribution network has depleted an already fragile supply chain system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the objectives framed for the study:
  i.   To study the level of consumer satisfaction regarding handloom products
  ii. To study the sources of customer awareness about handloom products.
  iii. To study the factors which influencing the buying behavior of handloom products.
  iv. To study the people who persuade of purchasing decision of handloom customers.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The limitations of the study are the following:
  i)   Study is geographically restricted to Dimapur District only.
  ii) In this study only those consumers are considered who are off and on buying and using handloom products.
  iii) Findings are based on sample survey through questionnaire method and hence, there is a scope for the respondents to be biased.
  iv) The study is limited to 250 respondents of Dimapur district of Nagaland during the period January-February of 2018

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Nature of Research:
The present study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive and Inferential statistics have been used to measure the handloom products of consumer awareness with special reference to Dimapur district of Nagaland.

Sources of Data, Area of the Study and Size of Sample:
The study has been carried out by using both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected with detailed formulated structure questionnaire as well as interview. The primary data for the study has been collected from the 250 customers from different areas in Dimapur district of Nagaland by using stratified random sampling during the period Jan-Feb. of 2018. Secondary data has been collected from the existing literature such as research papers, website, books, journals, articles, and statistical report etc.

Statistical Tools:

In carrying out this study, the data and information were collected from the questionnaires which were edited, summarized, analyzed and interpreted with the aid of descriptive statistics such as classification, tabulation, total score, percentage and simple bar diagram and also with inferential statistics such as chi-square test of independence of attributes to draw inferences about significant or insignificant relationship about the consumer satisfaction and awareness on handloom products with special reference to Dimapur district of Nagaland.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Detailed information of the respondents is shown with the aid of percentages and simple bar diagram as follows:

Table 1: Level of Customer Satisfaction

Sl.No.	Attributes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Highly Satisfied	46	18.4
2	Satisfied	160	64
3	Neutral	44	17.6
4	Dissatisfied	Nil	0
5	Highly Dissatisfied	Nil	0
	Total	**250**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Figure 1: Level of Customer Satisfaction
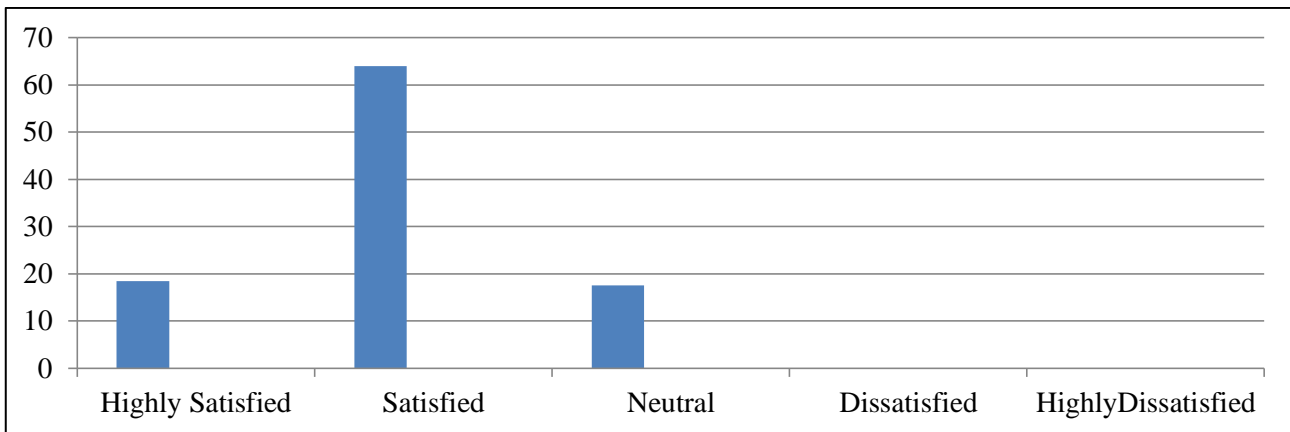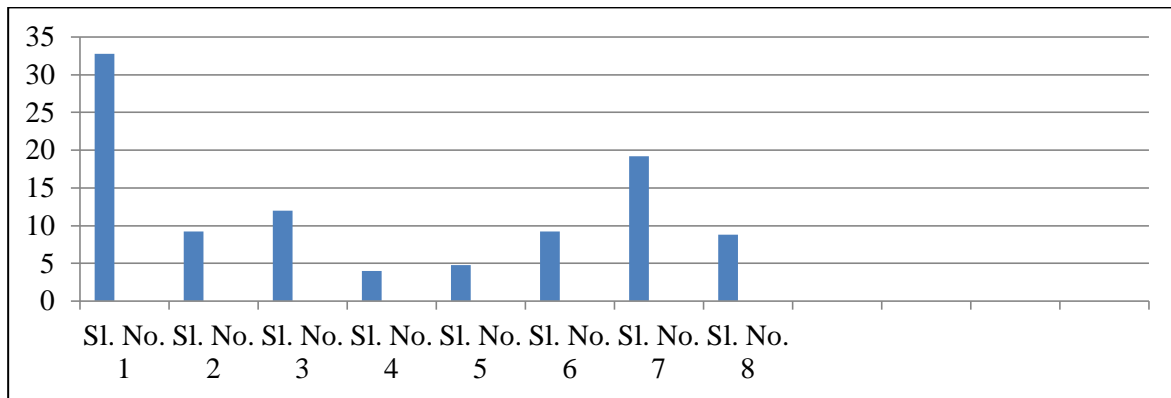

Discussion:

It reveals from the table 1 and figure 1 that 64% of the respondents are satisfied, 18.4% are highly satisfied while 17.6% are neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) with the handloom products. It is also cleared that no respondents are dissatisfied/ highly dissatisfied with the handloom products. This indicates that handloom customers have some sort of strong inclination towards handloom products because of their unique designs and finesse.

Table 2: Sources of Customer Awareness on Handloom Products

Sl. No.	Sources of Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Sales Personnel, Advertisement, Friends and Relatives, Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	82	32.8
2	Sales Personnel, Advertisement, Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	23	9.2
3	Advertisement, Friends and Relatives, Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	30	12
4	Sales Personnel, Friends and Relatives, Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	10	4
5	Advertisement, Friends and Relatives	12	4.8
6	Advertisement, Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	23	9.2
7	Friends and Relatives, Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	48	19.2
8	Sales Personnel	22	8.8
	Total	**250**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Figure 2: Sources of Customer Awareness on Handloom Products
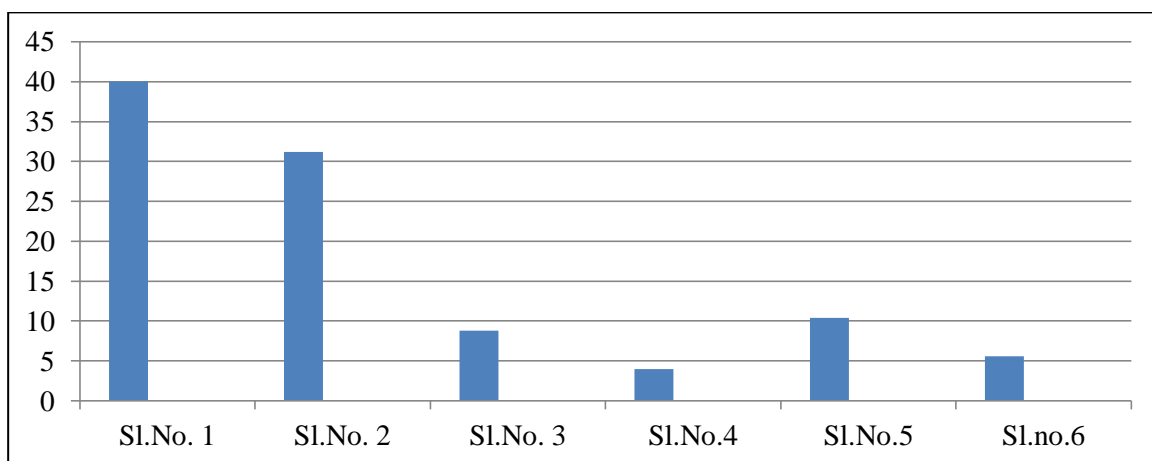

Discussion:

Table 2 and figure 2 shows that 32.8% of the respondents are getting handlooms awareness from the sales personnel, advertisement, friends and relatives, trade fairs/exhibitions; 19.2% of the respondents are getting awareness from friends and relatives, trade fairs/exhibitions; 12% of the respondents are getting awareness from the advertisement, friends and relatives, trade fairs/exhibitions etc. It is cleared that most common cases are advertisement, trade fairs/exhibitions from where respondents are getting information with the handloom products.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Buying Decision

Sl.No.	Factors Influencing Buying Decision	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Price, Quality, Comfort, Location	100	40
2	Price, Quality, Comfort	78	31.2
3	Quality, Comfort, Location	22	8.8
4	Comfort, Location	10	4
5	Quality	26	10.4
6	Comfort	14	5.6
	Total	**250**	**100**

Source: Field Study

**Figure 3: Factors Influencing Buying Decision**

Discussion:

Table 3 and figure 3 shows that 40% of the respondents in which price, quality, comfort, and location are the base for their buying decision; 31.2% of the respondents in which price, quality, and comfort are the base for their buying decision; 10.4% of the respondents in which quality is the base for their buying decision; 8.8% of the respondents in which quality, comfort and location are the base for their buying decision; 5.6% of the respondents in which comfort is the base for their buying decision; and only 4% of the respondents in which comfort and location are the base for their buying decision with the handloom products. It is indicated that most common cases in which comfort is the base for their buying decision with the handloom products.

Table 4: Persuasion of Purchasing Decision

Sl.No.	Persuasion of Purchasing Decision	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Self, Children Spouse, Parents	84	33.6
2	Self, Children Spouse	16	6.4
3	Self, Children, Parents	10	4
4	Self, Spouse, Parents	20	8
5	Self, Spouse	14	5.6
6	Self, Parents	36	14.4
7	Self	60	24
8	Parents	10	4
	Total	**250**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Figure 4: Persuasion of Purchasing Decision
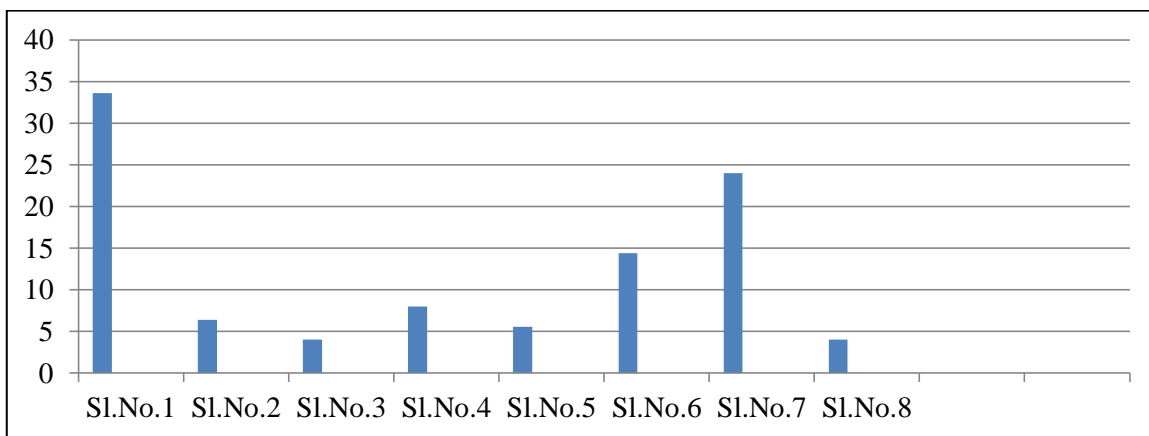
Interpretation:
Table 4 and figure 4 shows that 33.6% of the respondents are tempted by self, their children spouse and parents to purchase the handloom products; 34% of the respondents are self influenced to purchase the handloom products; 14.4% of the respondents are influenced by self, and their parents to purchase the handloom products while 8% of the respondents are tempted by self, their spouse and parents to purchase the handloom products etc. It is indicated that most common case is self which persuades to purchase their handloom products.

ANALYSIS WITH CHI-SQUARE OF INDEPENDENCE OF ATTRIBUTES:

The chi-square (i.e., symbolically χ^2) test is used to test the consistency of the respondents opinion regarding satisfaction level, awareness on handloom products, factors influencing their buying decision and also people who temptation the purchasing decision of handloom customers.
The test statistic is

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where, O= Observed frequency,
E =Expected frequency

This is a right tailed test. The calculated value of χ^2 is compared with the table value for a certain level of significance (generally 5%) at a certain d.f. If this calculated value falls within the acceptance region (determined for a certain level of significance) then the calculated value is insignificant and the test has provided no evidence against the null hypothesis. If calculated value falls outside the acceptance region, it will be significant and then reject the null hypothesis at the level of significance adopted. In short, if the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the tabulated value, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, otherwise accepted.

Table 5: Summary of Test of Hypotheses with the Help of Chi-Square

Sl. No.	Hypothesis(H_0)	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	Calculated value of χ^2	Tabulated value of χ^2	Result
1	H_0 :There is no significant difference among the opinions of handloom customers towards their satisfaction level	0.05	3-1=2	105.82	5.991	H_0 Rejected
2	H_0 :There is no significant difference among the various sources of customer awareness regarding handloom products	0.05	8-1=7	122.86	14.067	H_0 Rejected
3	H_0 :There is no significant difference among the various factors which influences the buying behavior of handloom customers	0.05	6-1=5	170.94	11.07	H_0 Rejected
4	H_0 :There is no significant difference among the various people who persuade the purchasing decision of handloom customers	0.05	18-1=7	166.12	14.067	H_0 Rejected

Interpretation:

Opinions Of Handloom Customers towards their Satisfaction Level:

H_0: There is no significant difference among the opinions of handloom customers towards their satisfaction level.

Here, the computed value of χ^2 is larger than the tabulated value of χ^2 and hence the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference among the opinions of handloom customers towards their satisfaction level.

Customer Awareness regarding Handloom Products:

H_0: There is no significant difference among the various sources of customer awareness regarding handloom products.

Here, the computed value of χ^2 is larger than the tabulated value of χ^2 and hence the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there exists significant a difference

among the various sources of customer awareness regarding handloom products.

Factors Influencing Buying Decision:

H_0 : There is no significant difference among the various factors which influences the buying behavior of handloom customers.

Here, the computed value of χ^2 is larger than the tabulated value of χ^2 and hence the hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference among the various factors which influences the buying behavior of handloom customers.

Persuasion of Purchasing Decision:

H_0 : There is no significant difference among the various people who tempt the purchasing decision of handloom customers.

Here, the computed value of χ^2 is larger than the tabulated value of χ^2 and hence the hypothesis is rejected. . Therefore, it can be concluded that there exists significant difference among the various people who persuades the purchasing decision of handloom customers.

SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the results of the study, the following simple, concrete and practical recommendations are forwarded:

1. It is suggested that co-operative societies, handloom traders and master weavers have to take center of attention more on sales personnel and also other promotional activities to provide more awareness on handloom products.

2. Co-operative societies, handloom traders and master weavers have to conduct more awareness programmes to differentiate the handloom products from power loom and other mill made products and also to increase the customer awareness and the level of customer satisfaction.

3. It is strongly suggested that concerted efforts are to make through the schemes and programme to enhance production, productivity, and efficiency of the handloom sector and enhance the income and socio-economic status of the weavers by upgrading their skills and providing infrastructural support and essential inputs. In these contexts, local government, state and central have to take the initiative to protect the handloom products from the power loom and other mill made products.

4. It is also suggested that local government, state and central should come forward to lend a hand the traders and weavers by providing loans, conducting training programs and subs diarized raw materials.

5. The central government needs to recognize the value of the handloom sector in sustainable development. On its own, the government would never be able to provide employment to such a large workforce. Going by the logic of liberalization itself, the government in turn ought to formulate, promote and encourage policies that sustain this employment.

6. It is suggested that there is a need to preserve the traditional art of weaving of Nagaland along with improving the socio economic status of the weavers. To uplift of the status of weavers and handloom industry of the state, required steps have to be taken and it is necessary to involve the youth of nation to come forward and give their contribution for the same cause.

CONCLUSION:

1. Majority of the handloom customers (i.e., most common) are getting awareness on handloom products through advertisement, trade fairs/exhibitions from where respondents are getting information with the handloom products followed by sales personnel, friends and relatives.

2. Quality and comfort are the most major factors (i.e., most common) which influence the buying decision of handloom customers followed by price and location.

3. Self decision is the most major persuasion (i.e., most common) which influences the buying decision of handloom customers followed by parents spouse and children.

4. There exists a significant difference among the opinions of handloom customes towards their satisfaction level, among the various factor which influences the buying behavior of handloom customers, among the various sources of customers awareness regarding handloom products and also among the various people who persuades the purchasing decision of handloom customers. These concluded that majority of the customers are not very much aware about the handloom products.

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