



## Promotions of Manipuri Garments – A Study on Garments Retailers of Sylhet City.

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**Abstract:** *The Manipuri tribe of Bangladesh mostly live in Sylhet division possesses a rich culture, history, and tradition. But nowadays, there is an excellent interaction between Manipuri and mainstream Bengali culture, such as; Manipuri traditional clothes (Sari, Blouse, Chador, Scarf, Muffler etc.) have gained huge popularity among common Bangladeshi people. Especially Manipuri sari has a great reputation like Dhakai Jamdani, Tangail Jamdani, Rajshahi Silk and Mirpur Silk. Though there is a huge potentiality of Manipuri garments in Bangladesh as well as abroad, its market size is very small and not much available due to some socio-economic and technological problems. However, there are not much more initiatives to search the hindrances and opportunities of this sector. The purpose of this study is to find out the promotional activities of Manipuri garments retailers in Sylhet city and their perceptions about the effectiveness of different promotional elements. This study is mainly based on primary data and some statistical measures such as frequency distribution and multiple regression analysis have been used to assess some important findings. We observe several promotional elements like TV Advertising, Digital Marketing, Online selling and Retail Outlet & Decoration have a greater effect on customer's attention to Manipuri Garments. We recommend that retailers of Manipuri Garments should emphasize more on these promotional elements.*

**Keywords** – Manipuri, Garments, Retailers, Market, Promotions, Customer Attention, Perception

### Introduction

Bangladesh is the 44th largest market-based economy and 32nd largest by purchasing power parity in the world (Tribune Desk, 2014). According to the IMF, Bangladesh's economy is the second fastest growing major economy of 2016, with a rate of 7.1%. The economy of Bangladesh is largely dependent on agriculture but the Ready Made Garments (RMG) sector has emerged as the biggest earner of foreign currency and in FY 2014-2015 Bangladesh's exports industry alone comprised USD 31.2 billion and out of 81.69% of which was made up of ready-made garments (Latifee, 2016). However, indigenous garments have no or very limited contribution to this mainstream RMG sector.

Bangladesh is a country with a rich cultural heritage and a land of variety and diversity. Majority people of this country are Bengalis but here also lives almost forty-five different indigenous communities who are distinctly different in their cultures, religions, traditions, customs, ethnic origin etc. (Sattar, 1971). These indigenous people lead a simple life and

are generally self-reliant, produce their own food and drink and wear distinct clothes (Ahmmed, 2006). They share physical or cultural characteristics that distinguish them from the dominant majority group and they have a strong sense of group solidarity (Schaefer, 1995).

Manipuri people mainly migrated from the Manipur State of India. Gradually they become one the prominent tribal community of Bangladesh. They are mainly living in Sylhet Division. 'Meitei', 'Visnupria' and 'Pangan' are the three segments of Manipuri tribe where Meitei and Visnupria are Hindus and Pangan are Muslims. Manipuri culture has a rich and colorful tradition and the most famous part of the Manipuri culture is the dance where they wear gorgeous and beautiful dresses. Manipuri people are mainly agriculturists. However, some are involved in small business, handloom work, carpentry etc. Both male and female tend to be accustomed to laborious activities. Although only a few women are involved in agriculture, most of them are engaged in handloom, which is regarded as their ancestral traditional



occupation. The beautiful hand-woven products of this Manipuri's reflect on the skills of the individual weaver artisans. The richness of material culture is also reflected in their colorful and attractive dress and costume (Reshma, 2014). Already in Bangladesh, Manipuri garments is classifying as one of the heritage product of Sylhet.

Promotion is the way to inform and convince buyers about any offers of sellers. There are some instruments of promotions. Each instrument of promotional mixes has its own features and specific functions and can be most effective in reaching a very specific communication target. The essential target of communicating in the field of clothing and fashion is to influence the consumer and direct his/her purchasing pattern (Bruno Završnik, 2007). However, integrated marketing communication can provide the greatest benefit to the Manipuri garments retailers, if they properly implement the individual elements of promotional mixes.

Retailers are those persons who buy a large amount of product from companies/intermediaries and resale it into small quantity to end users. The Manipuri retailers mainly buy Manipuri clothes and accessories from some intermediaries and resale it to the tourists and local people. In Sylhet Division, we can easily locate them in Lamabazar, Dorga Gate, Zindabazar and also some other districts near Sylhet like Moulovibazar, Sunamgonj etc.

### Literature Review

Though Manipuri garments have the potentiality on the socio-economic development but in Bangladesh, research on this segment is not very common.

The human race universally wears articles of clothing also known as the dress, garments, or attire on the body in order to protect it against the adverse climate conditions (Balagopal, 2010). A style of dress, including garments, accessories and hairstyle, especially as characteristic of a particular state/country, period or people is known as the costume (Grover, 2005). Understanding the antecedents and consequences of involvement in clothing is important, as clothing occupies a focal position in the lives of many people and, as

such, has both significant social and economic value in many societies (O'Cass, 2004). The rich textiles and costumes of Manipur show the great heritage of traditional and indigenous garment making in the whole of North-Eastern region of India. It has the potential to become an established cottage industry and even go further into realms of large-scale merchandising (Devi, 1998).

The Manipuri females usually wear blouses with traditional Lahing/Chakshabi (a coarse cloth with lengthwise stripes and embroidered on both sides lengthwise) with an Enaphi (Single or multi-color coarse cloth with laces on both ends) and an Angei or blouse. The extreme beauty of women dress is the design of Moirang, a special and artistic type of embroidery which is done by the weavers. A married woman wears Muror Futi or vails and takes special care of their hair. They paste sindoor on the forehead and also wear kharou or Shakhas like the Bengali Hindus. The traditional dress used by the males is called Pachhati - it's about five feet long cloth manufactured by them which worn around the waist, held tight by a Gunja, a fold in the back; shorts or shirts are used in the upper body. Panjabi's are used on the Feichoms. The males of the higher classes and distinctive status use a headdress called Koyet or turban, and an upper garment on the shoulder called Lemper Futi using artistic designs (Singha, 2004).

Marketing communications consist of all the promotional elements which involve the communications between an organization and its target audiences on all matters that affect marketing performance (Fill, 2002). Activities identified as elements of the promotional mix vary. Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by any identified sponsor (T. O'Guin, 2006). It is mainly used to build up the awareness of the brand's existence, keeping in clients' minds that the product is available on the market. Its aim is also to show a given product in comparison to the competitors' products (Olszowy, 2005). Effective communication using a media assortment and advertising can distinguish a firm from its less focused competitors (Jody, 2004). Sales promotion is Short-term incentives to encourage the trial or purchase of a product or service, such as discounts for



access to a database over a limited time period (Roddy M., 2004). Public relations and publicity are the programs designed to promote and/or protect a company's image, or those of its products, including product literature, exhibitions and articles about organizations' products in professional or even in consumer publications (Belch G. E., 2016). Personal selling is face-to-face interactions with one or more prospective purchasers, for the purpose of making sales. In business-to-business marketing, sales are generally the primary means of selling business goods and services (Završnik, 2003). Direct marketing is a channel-agnostic form of advertising that allows businesses and nonprofits to communicate directly to the customer, with methods such as mobile messaging, email, interactive consumer websites, online display ads, fliers, catalog distribution, promotional letters, and outdoor advertising (Louis Boone, 2011). Nowadays, physical markets coexist with virtual markets based on online promotion and e-commerce. The interactive nature of the internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn) enables marketers to gather valuable personal information from customers and prospects and to adjust their offers accordingly. Another advantage of the internet is that it provides marketers with the capability to more closely and precisely measure the effects of their advertising and other forms of promotion (Belch G. E., 2016).

Marketing communications in the clothing industry represent the network of relationships that forms between the manufacturer, retailer and customer. An enterprise should follow a specific marketing concept, and marketing communications are a very important part of addressing that concept. (Bruno Završnik, 2007).

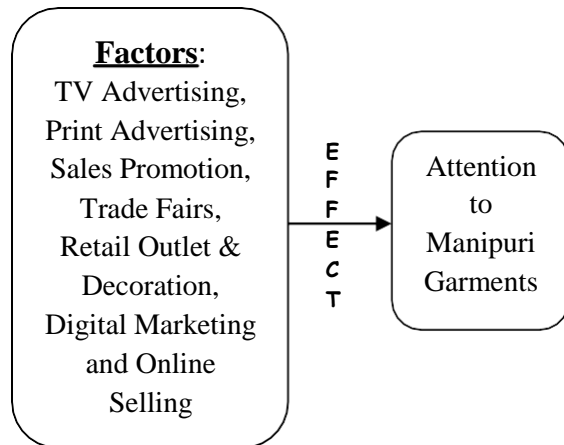
**Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify the communication mixes practiced by garments retailers to promote Manipuri garments.
2. To analyze the perception of retailers about the effectiveness of different promotional elements to attract customers.

**Theoretical Framework:**

To develop a theoretical framework we had conducted an in-depth interview with a retailer from Lamabazar, Sylhet to gain an insight about Manipuri dresses and the promotional elements.



**Research Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis is stated in a null form:

**H01:** Promotional activities have no effect on customer's attraction to Manipuri garments.

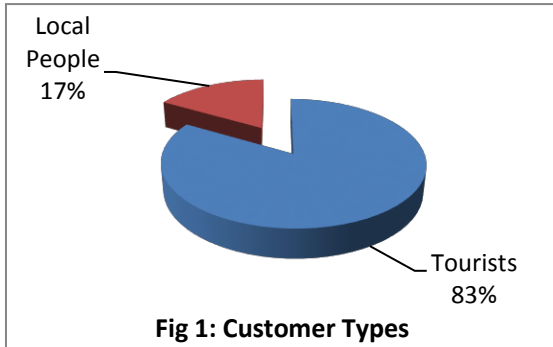
**Methodology of the study**

This study has been conducted in Sylhet city from July to September, 2016. The results offered in this paper are related to a sample of 30 respondents. All the interviewed respondents were the owner or employees of different retail shops that sell Manipuri garments. This study adopted exploratory and survey research design. Both secondary and primary sources of information have been used in the study. A structured questionnaire was used as the main tool for collecting the primary data with using 5 points Likert's scaling technique. Collected data were analyzed through frequency distribution and multiple regression analysis. Statistical software SPSS was used for data analysis.

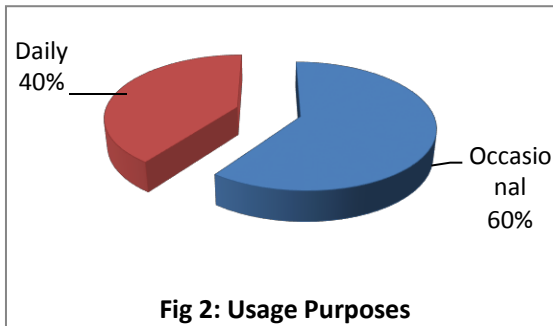




**Data Analysis and Findings**



83.3% customers are tourists and only 16.7% customers are local people of Sylhet.



60% of total customers buy Manipuri garments for different occasional purposes and only 40% buy it for daily usage.

**Table 1: Uses of promotional elements**

Promotional elements		Frequency	Percent
Use of TV Advertising	Valid Yes	2	6.7
	No	28	93.3
	Total	30	100.0
Use of print Advertising	Valid Yes	8	26.7
	No	22	73.3
	Total	30	100.0
Practice of sales promotion	Valid No	30	100.0
Attending in trade fairs	Valid Yes	6	20.0
	No	24	80.0
	Total	30	100.0
Use of digital Marketing	Valid Yes	2	6.7
	No	28	93.3
	Total	30	100.0
Practice of online selling	Valid Yes	7	23.3
	No	23	76.7
	Total	30	100.0

Table-1 represents that TV advertising, sales promotions and digital marketing are not greatly practiced by the retailers. Only 26.7%

retailers use print advertising, 20% attend different trade fairs where as only 6.7% practice TV advertising and 23.3% retailers use market space to sell their products.

For the regression analysis, seven variables (TV Advertising, print Advertising, sales promotion, trade fairs, retail outlet and decoration, digital marketing and online selling) have been considered as independent variables and customer's attraction towards Manipuri garments as the dependent variable. From table- 2 (Appendix-A), the R value is 0.910, which represents the simple correlation and therefore, indicates a high degree of correlation between promotional activities and customer's attraction to Manipuri garments. The R-square value indicates how much of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. In this case, 82.9% can be explained, which is large.

ANOVA table (table- 3, Appendix-A) shows that the significance value is .000; which means the model allows for further regression analysis.

From table- 4 (Appendix-A), different promotional activities have illustrated different regression coefficients with customer's attraction to Manipuri garments. From the regression coefficient table, TV advertising, retail outlet and decoration, digital marketing and online selling proved significant which are .000, .008, .006 and .001 respectively, that indicates the null hypothesis (**H01**) is partially rejected for these four promotional activities. On the other hand, sales promotion and trade fairs proved insignificant which are .643 and .824 respectively, that indicates the null hypothesis (**H01**) is partially accepted for these two promotional activities. Only for print advertising, the significance level is .054 which is marginally significant.

The perception of Manipuri garments retailers is that TV advertising, print advertising, retail outlet & decoration, digital marketing and online selling can better influence the customers than other promotional elements.





## Conclusion and Future Directions

In the name of globalization and urbanization, the extinction of indigenous cultures has come to a great extent. We have already lost some indigenous cultures, their traditions and languages from this earth. As a developing populace country, we are not much concern about the protection and nurture of our indigenous cultures. We earn lots of foreign currency from garments sector but our economists or entrepreneurs are not seemed much concerned about Manipuri garments, though it is a potential sector. A few number of Manipuri people is trying to protect this industry by their traditional handlooms. As the profit margin is very low, some weavers are switching to another occupation. Some govt. banks and NGOs provide loans but it is not adequate. Our study revealed that local people are not much interested about Manipuri garments which indicate a very bad sign. Only proper planning, branding and also the use of modern technology can make it a profitable industry. Therefore, the govt. and also the entrepreneurs should come

forward to make it an important part of our garments sector. The marketers should not only focus Manipuri cloth's attributes but also its culture, heritage, history, tradition to persuade the customers. We can thus conclude that though there are various reasons which may act as the factors responsible for the extinction of Manipuri garments; promotions is an important way and hence the considerable efforts have to be put for the betterment of the Manipuri garments. However, the key success factor for entrepreneurs and retailers in the clothing industry is the proper development and implementation of their marketing promotional mixes.

There are possibilities to conduct more studies in this field such as a number of respondents can be increased for the more effective result, researchers can measure the perceptions of customers about retailers' promotional activities, reasons behind the less interest of local residents can find out.

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## Appendix – A

## Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the
1	.910(a)	.829	.774	.38115

a Predictors: (Constant), Online selling, Retail outlet and decoration, Print Advertising, Sales promotion, TV Advertising, Trade-fairs, Digital marketing

Table 3: ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.471	7	2.210	15.213	.000(a)
	Residual	3.196	22	.145		
	Total	18.667	29			

a Predictors: (Constant), Online selling, Retail outlet and decoration, Print Advertising, Sales promotion, TV Advertising, Trade-fairs, Digital marketing

b Dependent Variable: Attraction to Manipuri Garments

Table 4: Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2.074	.573		3.616	.002
	TV Advertising	-.743	.122	-.743	-6.068	.000
	Print Advertising	.207	.102	.286	2.033	.054
	Sales promotion	-.040	.085	-.052	-.470	.643
	Trade-fairs	-.026	.117	-.032	-.225	.824
	Retail outlet and	.363	.123	.322	2.944	.008
	Digital	.385	.125	.467	3.076	.006
	Online selling	.463	.119	.596	3.888	.001

a Dependent Variable: Attraction to Manipuri Garments