

"A man is
great by
deeds, not by
birth"

-Chanakya

Welcome to IIMK



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT KOZHIKODE



Case Study

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'AASU' Mallesham

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‘AASU’ Malleasham¹

Chinthakindi Malleasham was born in a weavers’ community in Sharjipet village, Nalgonda District of Telangana State, India. His mother, Lakshmi, used to work hard for the family. She even helped her husband, Naranna, in weaving. These weavers mainly knitted Pochampally sarees, which involves a critical phase known as the Aasu process. This process involves moving hand across a panel for about 9000 times to make one saree (Exhibit – I). On a typical day in the process of weaving, Laxshmi used to perform Aasu for two sarees and that involved heavy physical effort. By the end of the day, she experienced unrelenting backache and severe pain in her hand. Seeing this Malleasham at a very tender age became determined to relive his mothers’ implacable pain. Observing the root cause of the pain to be the Aasu process, he wanted to replace the physical effort with a machine. After working hard, carrying out lot of experimentation, and exhausting his savings for several years, he finally invented a machine in 2001 (Exhibit – II). This machine not only relieved his mother’s agony, but also changed the course of weaving Pochampally sarees by reducing human labour, improving the efficiency, and increasing the income of weavers. Dr. Anil Gupta of National Innovation Foundation and Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, acknowledged the innovation along with Brigadier Ganesham (Ex-Army employee and currently in charge of Honey Bee Network, Hyderabad). They together named the machine after Malleasham’s mother as *Lakshmi Aasu Machine*.

Since 2001, Malleasham sold about 800 units and impacted many weaver families. He observed that the potential to influence such families is abundant. However, he was not sure about the ways in which the influence can be scaled up owing to poor economic conditions of the weavers and their lack of awareness about the utility of the machine, and these reasons acted as a hindrance in purchasing the machine.

POCHAMPALLY SAREE WEAVING

Pochampally is a town in Nalgonda District of Telangana State, India. In the town, there are approximately 10,000 weaving households that accounted for nearly half of the total population, which signifies the fact that handloom is one of the primary means of earning livelihood. In several villages, there are cooperatives with 250 to 400 active weavers as members. There are many weavers who work independently and are not member of the cooperative. Weaving is a family activity where all the members contribute; albeit in varied proportions. On an average, a typical weaver family produces about six to seven sarees in a month and generates a net revenue of about Rs. 3000/-. Generally, each household has two pit looms and normally constituted of five family members.

¹ Report submitted in completion of SGRP 2013/16. Sincere thanks to IIM Kozhikode for funding this project. The project would have been incomplete if I do not thank Brig. Ganesham and Mr. C. Malleasham.

The case was prepared by Dr. Guda Sridhar, Associate Professor, IIM Kozhikode, India. This case is written not to illustrate effective or ineffective handling of a context, but as the basis for class discussion.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This draft is yet to be approved by the innovator Mr. Malleasham and the Honey Bee Network. Hence, request not to quote the case.

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