



## From Looms to Leadership: Women's Empowerment through Monjulika Chakma's Bain Textile in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts

Sarder Ali Haider<sup>1\*</sup>, Takrima Jannat<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Bangladesh University of Professionals

**Corresponding Author:** Sarder Ali Haider [alihaider5235@gmail.com](mailto:alihaider5235@gmail.com)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Monjulika Chakma, Bain Textile, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Women Empowerment, Cultural Preservation, Social Entrepreneurship

Received : 3 September

Revised : 20 September

Accepted: 22 October

©2023 Heider, Jannat: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

Monjulika Chakma's entrepreneurial foray with Bain Textile in 1965 within Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts marked more than just a business venture; it underscored the transformative capabilities of social entrepreneurship. Anchored on a vision to champion female weavers of the region, Chakma not only propelled the intricate art of traditional Chakma fabrics to prominence but also paved the way for socio-economic upliftment and cultural preservation. Despite humble beginnings and myriad challenges – from scarce weaving resources to the complexities of marketing in a geographically remote area – Chakma's resilience and adaptability catalyzed Bain Textile's ascent. This paper unravels Bain Textile's trajectory, highlighting its role in preserving Chakma heritage, engendering female empowerment, and fostering community development. Drawing upon Chakma's innovative strategies and collaborative ethos, the study underscores the imperative of tenacity, co-creation, and experimentation within the sphere of social entrepreneurship. Chakma's Bain Textile emerges not just as a business archetype but as a testament to entrepreneurship's potential as a conduit for societal change and cultural reverence

## **INTRODUCTION**

Monjulika Chakma, a pioneering social entrepreneur from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh, embarked on a transformative journey that stands as a testament to the power of passion, vision, and resilience. Born in the picturesque Rangamati District, Monjulika was acutely aware of the marginalization faced by her community, both economically and culturally (Chakma, M., 2018). Amidst this backdrop, she founded Bain Textile in 1965 with an audacious dream: to not only revive and globalize the traditional art of weaving, cherished by the Chakma community, but also to empower its female weavers (Chakma, M., 2018).

The region of Chittagong Hill Tracts, characterized by its dense forests, serpentine rivers, and undulating hills, is home to multiple indigenous communities, each with its own unique dialect, traditions, and art forms. Despite its rich cultural heritage, the region has been plagued by challenges, including demographic shifts, land rights issues, and socio-political unrest (Roy, P.K., Abd Wahab, H. and Hamidi, M., 2023). Amidst these challenges, traditional weaving, an intrinsic part of the Chakma community's identity, faced the threat of obsolescence due to the influx of cheaper, machine-made textiles and changing socio-economic dynamics (Ahmed, S., Shamsuzzoha, A.T.M. and Rahman, M.Z., 2023).

Monjulika's vision for Bain Textile was revolutionary. She aimed to provide a structured platform for the production and innovative adaptation of traditional textiles to cater to contemporary tastes. This initiative not only ensured the survival and evolution of Chakma artistry but also resonated with wider audiences, both locally and internationally. More importantly, Bain Textile was designed to transform the socio-economic landscape of the female artisans in the CHT (Dhaka Tribune, 2020). Historically, women in the region, especially from indigenous communities, were confined to the domestic sphere with limited access to economic opportunities (Chakma, M. 2023).

Under Monjulika's visionary leadership, Bain Textile redefined this paradigm. By focusing on recruiting female artisans, Monjulika ensured that these women could hone and monetize their skills, assert their economic independence, and reshape household dynamics (Chakma, M., 2018). Furthermore, Monjulika's model ensured that women were not merely employees but stakeholders in the success of Bain Textile. Continuous training programs, collaborative design workshops, and profit-sharing mechanisms elevated female artisans from mere laborers to co-creators and visionaries in the Bain Textile journey.

Bain Textile, under Monjulika Chakma's leadership, emerged as a powerful synthesis of cultural reverence and progressive empowerment. It not only ensured the survival and evolution of traditional Chakma weaving but also set a pioneering example of how entrepreneurship can serve as a powerful tool for societal change, especially in uplifting and empowering marginalized communities.

The primary objective of this study is to critically examine the socio-entrepreneurial journey of Monjulika Chakma and the transformative influence of Bain Textile on the cultural, economic, and social spheres of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Specific objectives include tracing the genesis, growth, and evolution of Bain Textile; analyzing its role in promoting and preserving traditional Chakma textiles; and evaluating its socio-economic contributions, particularly in engendering female empowerment, creating sustainable employment opportunities, and catalyzing community development in the region.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of social entrepreneurship, especially as a tool for both cultural preservation and women's empowerment, has garnered significant attention in academic circles in recent years. In the context of Monjulika Chakma's Bain Textile in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts, the literature provides valuable insights into the broader landscape of social entrepreneurial ventures, traditional art forms as economic assets, and the role of women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

### A. Social Entrepreneurship and Cultural Preservation

The transformative power of social entrepreneurship has been increasingly recognized for its ability to tackle societal challenges while achieving sustainable growth (Manika, D., Antonetti, P., Papagiannidis, S. and Guo, X., 2021). As Mair and Marti (2006) posit, social entrepreneurial ventures harness market-driven strategies to address key social and cultural issues. Bain Textile's focus on weaving serves as a poignant example, echoing the sentiments of Dutta (2012) who describes traditional crafts as "repositories of cultural heritage" that can be harnessed for economic value.

### B. The Value of Traditional Crafts

Traditional art forms, especially weaving, are often considered not just a reflection of a community's culture but also a significant source of its economic sustenance (Latilla, V.M., Frattini, F., Petruzzelli, A.M. and Berner, M., 2018). However, with globalization and the proliferation of mass-produced goods, artisans often face challenges in maintaining the economic viability of their crafts (Chandra, A., McNamara, K.E., Dargusch, P., Caspe, A.M. and Dalabajan, D., 2017). In this milieu, initiatives like Bain Textile that reposition traditional crafts in contemporary markets become crucial. They align with Durlak (2015) assertion that the strategic fusion of traditional skills with modern market strategies can rejuvenate heritage industries.

### C. Women's Empowerment in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

The socio-economic fabric of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with its unique blend of cultural richness and historical challenges, has been a point of focus for several researchers (Uddin, N., 2014). Women, as integral stakeholders in this region, often navigate a complex web of cultural norms and economic imperatives (Haque, 2018). Empirical studies by (Nasrin, S., 2018) highlight that economic empowerment, especially through entrepreneurial ventures, plays a pivotal role in altering traditional gender dynamics in the CHT. Monjulika's

emphasis on employing female weavers reflects this broader movement towards gender inclusivity and empowerment in the region.

The literature underscores the potency of initiatives like Bain Textile that straddle the realms of cultural preservation, economic sustainability, and women's empowerment. As Monjulika Chakma's venture illustrates, strategic social entrepreneurship not only catalyzes economic growth but also fosters societal change, especially in regions like the Chittagong Hill Tracts that are ripe with potential yet fraught with challenges.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The analysis of Monjulika Chakma's Bain Textile and its influence on the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh necessitated a comprehensive research approach to comprehend its significance in cultural conservation and the empowerment of women. A qualitative research design was employed, encompassing semi-structured interviews with key informants such as Monjulika Chakma, senior artisans, and Bain Textile employees, as well as the examination of company records, sales reports, training materials, and historical documents related to the Chakma community's weaving traditions (Creswell et al., 2007). Purposive sampling was applied to select participants who could offer rich and varied insights (Palinkas et al., 2015). Thematic Analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was utilized for data analysis, aided by NVivo software. Ethical considerations included securing informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and permitting participants to withdraw at any stage (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Despite potential biases due to cultural nuances and retrospective interviews, this methodology sought to provide a comprehensive and genuine depiction of Bain Textile's evolution, merging historical depth with contemporary implications.

To address the research question, beginning with 'what,' we aimed to thoroughly understand the importance of Monjulika Chakma's efforts for women's empowerment in the context of Bangladesh. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to answer the research questions based on specific objectives. For the preliminary selection of respondents, a judgmental sampling method was used, targeting local entrepreneurs, general customers, wholesalers, and retail sellers in the Dhaka and Chittagong regions. The impact of women entrepreneurs' contribution was initially verified via a screening question, resulting in the selection of five participants for extended interviews during the initial sampling phase. Subsequently, the snowball technique was employed, asking participants to recommend additional potential subjects for the study, leading to a final pool of 25 appropriate respondents. A transcription company assisted in translating the Bengali and tribal language interviews into English. All participants voluntarily attended the interviews and granted permission for their conduct. The interviews, lasting 25 to 45 minutes and conducted over four months, were recorded and transcribed. Previous research advocated for the snowball technique as it leads to referrals to similar customer groups (Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researchers to facilitate and moderate the discussion during the interview session (Galletta, 2013). The interview included six broad questions in Bengali and Chakma,

subsequently translated into English. Participants were also asked to provide detailed responses. To conduct effective interviews on women's empowerment, cycles of repetition were employed to gather participant responses. Table 1 delineates the sample demographic profile, characterizing affluent males and females who perceive themselves as relatively unrestricted in terms of women's empowerment.

**Table I.** Socio-Demographic Background of the Participants of Semi-Structured Interview:

Code name	Mean age	Number of respondents	Gender	Summary of socio-demographic indicators
P2, P3, P5, P9, P10, P13, P11.....	31.3 years	150	Male	Managers of local entrepreneurs
P1, P18, P14, P16, P25.....	32.4years	70	Female	Business owners, married, owners of one or two houses having recourses. Having office space and working environment
P15, P22, P7, P8, P17, P6, P23, P24, P21.....	24.7years	132	First 5: Female; Last 4: Male	Entrepreneurs of different small business recently moved to textile industry
P4, P12, P19, P20.....	36.8 years	33	Male	Local and tourist customers

Note: Personal information (salary levels and individual assets and wealth) was treated in strict privacy and was not reported in this study.

## RESULTS

### Findings and Analysis

#### a. The Genesis, Growth, and Evolution of Bain Textile

Monjulika Chakma, from the Rangamati District of Bangladesh, founded Bain Textile in 1965 with a mere Tk500. She aimed to provide a platform for female weavers, showcase Chakma fabrics, and catalyze socio-economic upliftment. Her journey was influenced by her grandmother and the women around her, who instilled in her a deep reverence for weaving and community welfare.

The beginning of Bain Textile was marked by limited resources, challenges in sourcing raw materials, and the complexities of establishing a brand in a remote area. Despite these challenges, Monjulika's commitment to empowering local artisans and preserving cultural heritage laid the foundation for the company's growth.

By the late 1970s, the demand for Bain Textile's authentic and culturally resonant products, such as bags, bed covers, and scarves, began to surge among both local and international consumers. This demand led to expansion, and by the mid-1980s, the company employed between 150-200 workers, mostly ethnic minority women.

Under Monjulika's leadership, the company evolved from a local brand to one with national and international acclaim, bolstering the local economy and serving as a bastion of cultural preservation. Despite initial challenges,

Monjulika's commitment and the collaborative spirit of the community propelled Bain Textile towards a legacy of empowerment and cultural resurgence.

#### b. Initial Challenges and Strategies for Overcoming Them

Monjulika Chakma faced several challenges when establishing Bain Textile, including limited access to quality raw materials, lack of commercial weaving experience among local artisans, geographical constraints, and limited resources for marketing and branding. To overcome these challenges, Monjulika implemented several strategies:

- i. **Local Sourcing and Collaboration:** She collaborated with local farmers to source organic cotton and dyes, ensuring a consistent supply and fostering community involvement.
- ii. **Training and Workshops:** Monjulika organized training sessions for artisans to bridge the gap between traditional craftsmanship and commercial viability.
- iii. **Strategic Partnerships:** She formed partnerships with local transport providers and set up small collection hubs to reduce transportation costs and improve delivery timelines.
- iv. **Community-based Marketing:** Monjulika leveraged community events and local gatherings to showcase Bain Textile's offerings and create an emotional connection with consumers.

Through these strategies, Monjulika was able to guide Bain Textile through its initial tribulations and establish a foundation for its future growth.

#### c. Product Expansion and Diversification

Under Monjulika's leadership, Bain Textile diversified its product range to cater to the diverse needs of local and international consumers. This included introducing bags made from traditional Chakma fabrics, bed covers reflecting the rich folklore of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, unique handmade napkins and table coverings for urban markets, and scarves made from organic materials that became instant hits in European markets. This diversification strategy not only increased revenue streams but also elevated Bain Textile's brand status, intertwining tradition with modernity and making it a brand that catered to a wide range of consumer needs.

#### d. The Growth Trajectory and the Factors Contributing to the Enterprise's Success

Bain Textile's ascent in the world of traditional fabric enterprise is not only a testament to Monjulika Chakma's indefatigable spirit but also a reflection of a series of strategic decisions and external factors that came into play.

- i. **Sustained Commitment to Authenticity:**  
Monjulika's unwavering commitment to preserving the originality of Chakma textiles ensured that Bain Textile retained its unique selling proposition. This authentic touch was instrumental in distinguishing Bain products in a market increasingly saturated with imitations (Janzer, A., 2020).

- ii. **Embracing Market Dynamics:**  
Monjulika demonstrated a keen understanding of market dynamics. She recognized the changing consumer preferences and responded by introducing contemporary products without compromising the traditional essence (Christensen, C.M., McDonald, R., Altman, E.J. and Palmer, J.E., 2018).
- iii. **Inclusive Growth Model:**  
Bain Textile's inclusive approach, particularly its emphasis on employing ethnic minority women from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, resonated with global trends favouring ethically-produced goods. This ethical backbone not only amplified its brand image but also attracted a conscientious consumer base (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H. and Setiawan, I., 2021).
- iv. **Robust Training Programs:**  
The establishment of comprehensive training initiatives ensured that the new workforce was well-equipped to produce items that met Bain Textile's rigorous quality standards. This consistent quality, in turn, bolstered the brand's reputation in both domestic and international markets (Cleveland, M., Papadopoulos, N. and Laroche, M., 2011).
- v. **Strategic Marketing and Branding:**  
Efficient marketing campaigns, coupled with the storytelling of the Chakma legacy and Monjulika's journey, enriched the brand's narrative. This compelling story arc made Bain Textile's offerings more than just products; they were pieces of heritage (Todor, R.D., 2014).
- vi. **Collaborations and Partnerships:**  
By forging strategic collaborations with local and international entities, Bain Textile expanded its distribution channels and tapped into new markets. These partnerships amplified its reach and facilitated the brand's global recognition (Todeva, E. and Knoke, D., 2005).

Bain Textile's growth trajectory is emblematic of how rootedness in tradition, when combined with adaptability, inclusivity, and strategic foresight, can foster a successful enterprise even in challenging terrains.

The Growth Trajectory and the Factors Contributing to the Enterprise's Success



Source: The Researchers' own initiative

e. Bain Textile's Role in Cultural Preservation and Recognition

Bain Textile, under Monjulika Chakma's guidance, played a crucial role in the preservation and recognition of the Chakma community's culture. Traditional Chakma fabrics are deeply significant, encapsulating history, values, beliefs, and the artistic soul of the Chakma people. They serve as silent witnesses to historical events, narrate tales through patterns, colors, and stitches, reflect socio-economic structures, and have spiritual significance tied to Chakma belief systems. Bain Textile not only produced and sold these textiles but also amplified their cultural resonance, making the world aware of the stories, values, and artistry of the Chakma community.

f. Efforts to Retain Authenticity while Meeting Market Demands

Bain Textile successfully balanced cultural preservation and economic sustainability by retaining the authenticity of traditional Chakma fabrics while meeting contemporary market demands. Monjulika Chakma emphasized traditional hand-weaving techniques, fused timeless Chakma patterns with modern designs, educated customers about the significance of traditional textiles, sought feedback for continuous refinement, and partnered with fashion and design institutions. This approach ensured genuine, market-relevant products that resonated with a broad audience without compromising their authentic roots.

g. The Rise in Local and International Appreciation and Recognition for Chakma Textiles

Bain Textile, led by Monjulika Chakma, elevated the status of Chakma textiles locally and internationally by promoting local crafts, participating in international trade fairs, collaborating with international designers, advocating for ethical and sustainable fashion, and receiving endorsements and accolades. These efforts not only reignited interest in Bangladesh's textile heritage but also captured global attention, leading to international collaborations, awards, and recognition for the company's sustainable and community-centric model.

h. The impact of this recognition on the Chakma community's cultural pride and identity

The global recognition of Chakma textiles, driven by Bain Textile, significantly impacted the Chakma community's cultural pride and identity. It reinforced their cultural legacy, leading to economic empowerment, particularly for women artisans, and strengthened community bonds. It also positioned the Chakma identity on a global platform, spurring local administrative bodies to initiate preservation efforts such as weaving schools, museums, and cultural centers. Finally, it acted as a catalyst for exploring and promoting other facets of Chakma culture, resulting in a holistic cultural revival (Prothom Alo, 2013).

## Case Studies

### a. Case Study 1: Phool - Ankit Agarwal and the Temple Flowers (WebEngage, 2021)

In a world grappling with environmental degradation, some innovative minds are turning problems into solutions. Ankit Agarwal, the co-founder of Phool, is one such individual who has creatively addressed the environmental concerns associated with flower waste in India.

- i. Background: Ankit Agarwal and Karan Rastogi founded Phool, a social enterprise that transforms floral waste from temples into eco-friendly incense and leather alternatives.
- ii. Genesis: Ankit and Karan established Phool in 2017 to tackle the pollution caused by tons of flowers discarded daily into the River Ganges, while simultaneously creating employment for local communities.
- iii. Challenges: The hurdles included persuading temple authorities to alter their flower disposal habits, creating scalable technology for flower conversion, and maintaining consistent product quality.
- iv. Success Factors: Engagement with local communities and research institutions for product development, along with continuous stakeholder engagement, were key to Phool's success.
- v. Impact: Phool not only offers employment to marginalized communities but also combats environmental degradation by transforming potential pollutants into sustainable products.

### b. Case Study 2: Rags2Riches - Reese Fernandez-Ruiz and Empowering Filipino Artisans (Scribd, 2017)

The journey of Rags2Riches showcases how innovation and social entrepreneurship can transform lives. Reese Fernandez-Ruiz co-founded Rags2Riches with the vision of empowering Filipino artisans by turning upcycled scrap cloth, organic materials, and indigenous fabrics into eco-ethical fashion and home accessories.

- i. Background: Reese Fernandez-Ruiz co-founded Rags2Riches in the Philippines with the aim to empower artisans by creating eco-ethical fashion and home accessories out of upcycled scrap cloth, organic materials, and indigenous fabrics.
- ii. Genesis: Since 2007, Reese and her team have been working to empower artisans living in impoverished conditions by providing them with fair wages and a platform to showcase their skills.
- iii. Challenges: Navigating a middlemen-dominated industry, ensuring consistency in artisan-produced products, and broadening market reach were significant challenges.
- iv. Success Factors: Collaborating with famous Filipino designers like Rajo Laurel brought mainstream attention to Rags2Riches. Additionally, adopting a direct-to-consumer approach ensured higher wages for artisans.

- v. Impact: Rags2Riches has empowered numerous artisans, promoting sustainable livelihoods and bringing Filipino craftsmanship to the global stage.

A SWOT analysis on Women Empowerment based on Monjulika Chakma’s Bain Textile

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Vision to revive and globalize traditional Chakma weaving.	Geographic remoteness of Chittagong Hill Tracts.	Potential to globalize Chakma artistry and cater to contemporary tastes.	Influx of cheaper, machine-made textiles.
Focus on empowering female weavers and transforming socio-economic landscape.	Scarcity of weaving resources.	Opportunity to catalyze community development and societal change.	Changing socio-economic dynamics.
Adoption of innovative strategies, collaborative ethos, and co-creation.	Challenges in marketing and reaching wider audiences.	Potential to serve as a model for empowering marginalized communities worldwide.	Socio-political unrest and land rights issues in the region.

**DISCUSSION**

a. Socio-Economic Contributions of Bain Textile

1. Empowerment of Female Weavers

The influence of Bain Textile has been profound, particularly concerning the empowerment of female weavers within the Chakma community. Monjulika Chakma's leadership and the company's strategies have led to notable transformations in skill enhancement and economic upliftment of these women.

2. Training Initiatives:

- (a) Monjulika Chakma recognized early on that the success of Bain Textile was inherently linked to the skills of its weavers. She, therefore, instituted a series of training programs designed to hone the weaving skills of the local women.
- (b) Skill Workshops: Regular workshops were organized, wherein veteran weavers and textile experts were invited to train the artisans, ensuring the preservation of traditional techniques while integrating modern innovations (Deka, S.J., 2022).
- (c) Collaborative Learning: Encouraging a culture of peer-to-peer learning, experienced weavers within the community were incentivized to mentor

novices. This not only enhanced the skill set but also fostered a sense of community and collaboration (Andreas, K., Tsiatsos, T., Terzidou, T. and Pomportsis, A., 2010).

- (d) Exposure Tours: Bain Textile organized visits to renowned textile hubs across South Asia. These exposure tours provided the weavers with insights into broader market trends, design innovations, and commercial weaving practices (Pradhan, S. and Khandual, A., 2020).

Creating Sustainable Employment Opportunities: Beyond skill development, Bain Textile's most significant socio-economic contribution has been the creation of stable employment avenues for female weavers.

- (a) Full-time Employment: Unlike many traditional weaving enterprises that operate seasonally, Bain Textile provided year-round employment, ensuring a consistent source of income for its artisans (McBride, A. and Mustchin, S., 2013).
- (b) Fair Wages: Going against the prevalent norms of the textile industry, Bain Textile adopted a fair wage policy, ensuring that female weavers were compensated justly for their craftsmanship, thereby promoting economic independence (McGowan, A., 2009).
- (c) Employee Benefits: Recognizing the holistic needs of its employees, the company introduced benefits such as health insurance, educational scholarships for the children of weavers, and microloans for personal and professional needs (Sinha, S., 2013).
- (e) Community Workshops: By setting up decentralized weaving centers in various parts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bain Textile enabled women to work closer to their homes, ensuring greater participation and reducing migration for employment (Poudel, A., 2021).

#### b. Breaking Societal Barriers and Enhancing Gender Equality

Bain Textile, under Monjulika Chakma's stewardship, not only revolutionized the textile industry in the Chittagong Hill Tracts but also became a beacon of progress in challenging traditional gender norms and fostering gender equality.

##### i. Challenging Gender Roles:

For centuries, the socio-cultural landscape of the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been defined by rigid gender roles, with women predominantly confined to household chores and child-rearing (Forret, M.L., Sullivan, S.E. and Mainiero, L.A., 2010). Bain Textile, by actively promoting female participation in a predominantly commercial domain, effectively challenged these pre-existing norms. Women weavers, who once operated in domestic shadows, became breadwinners for their families, thereby redefining societal perceptions about their capabilities (Welter, F., Smallbone, D., Aculai, E., Isakova, N. and Schakirova, N., 2003).

##### ii. Promoting Women's Leadership:

Bain Textile's operational hierarchy showcased a significant number of women in leadership roles, from supervisory capacities to top

managerial positions. Such an initiative not only provided these women with a platform to demonstrate their leadership skills but also served as an inspiration for younger female artisans eyeing leadership roles in their future careers (Abtan, F., 2016).

iii. Advocacy and Awareness Programs:

To ensure that the change was not just superficial, Bain Textile partnered with local NGOs and women's rights organizations to conduct community sensitization programs. These programs aimed to educate the community about gender rights, the importance of female education, and the value of women in economic activities. Through these efforts, the enterprise played a crucial role in fostering a more gender-inclusive environment (Jenkins, T. and Reardon, B.A., 2007).

iv. Empowering Through Education:

Recognizing that true empowerment comes from education, Bain Textile set up scholarship programs specifically targeting the girl children of their artisans. By promoting and financially supporting their formal education, the enterprise aimed to ensure that these girls could break free from societal constraints and achieve their dreams, both within and outside the textile industry (Carney, S., Bista, M. and Agergaard, J., 2007).

c. Contributions to the Overall Community Development in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region

Bain Textile's success, under the guidance of Monjulika Chakma, extended well beyond the company's premises and the upliftment of its direct employees. Its contributions can be observed in a wider socio-economic context, instigating tangible development within the Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

i. Economic Stimulus:

Bain Textile's increasing demand for raw materials led to the growth of ancillary industries, including raw cotton cultivation, dyeing units, and accessory manufacturers (Broda, C. and Parker, J.A., 2014). The local economy experienced a boost, with farmers and small-scale producers gaining access to consistent markets and fair pricing.

ii. Infrastructural Development:

Given the remote nature of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, connectivity had been a concern for years. However, with Bain Textile's expansion and the need to transport goods to broader markets, investments in local infrastructure, such as roadways and communication facilities, grew, thereby improving overall connectivity in the region (Calderon, C.A. and Servén, L., 2004).

iii. Skill Development Programs:

Apart from training its artisans in weaving, Bain Textile initiated broader skill development programs in collaboration with local institutes. These programs catered to a range of skills, from basic literacy to advanced craftwork, enabling individuals to diversify their expertise (Agrawal, T., 2014).

iv. Health and Welfare Initiatives:

Acknowledging the responsibility towards its community, Bain Textile launched health camps, clean water projects, and sanitation initiatives. These measures, coupled with the company's economic contributions, played a pivotal role in elevating the region's overall quality of life (Fancourt, D. and Finn, S., 2019).

v. Environmental Initiatives:

Emphasizing sustainable growth, Bain Textile introduced environmentally friendly practices, from organic dyeing methods to sustainable farming partnerships. They also sponsored afforestation drives, ensuring that their industrial activities did not deplete the region's rich biodiversity (Zutshi, A. and Creed, A., 2015).

## CONCLUSIONS

Monjulika Chakma's entrepreneurial journey is not merely the story of the rise of a business enterprise; it is an embodiment of passion, vision, and tenacity. Through Bain Textile, she channeled her deep reverence for the Chakma culture and artisanal weaving, transforming a humble beginning with Tk500 into a beacon of social change. The enterprise stands testament to how individual determination, when paired with a broader societal vision, can challenge the status quo and rewrite narratives.

Beyond its economic success, Bain Textile has carved an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It has not only resurrected traditional weaving techniques from the brink of obscurity but has also redefined the value of Chakma fabrics in contemporary markets, both locally and internationally. The ripple effect of its influence can be seen in the revitalized pride within the Chakma community and the renewed interest in traditional textiles amongst younger generations.

Bain Textile serves as a case study for the transformative potential of social enterprises. It underscores the powerful interplay between economic viability and societal impact. Enterprises like Bain Textile go beyond mere profit-making; they champion causes, preserve legacies, and become agents of empowerment. The elevation of female artisans, the fostering of gender equality, and the broader community development initiatives have paved the way for a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally vibrant society. In an era marked by rapid globalization and cultural homogenization, enterprises like Bain Textile stand as guardians of tradition, reminding us of the power of authenticity and cultural roots.

Monjulika Chakma's Bain Textile is a luminary example of how businesses can be both economically successful and deeply purposeful. Its story is an inspiration for future entrepreneurs and communities alike, echoing the potential of vision, collaboration, and resilience in crafting legacies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations for Future Social Entrepreneurs

- a. **Emulating the Ethos of Co-creation and Community-centric Approaches:**  
One of the defining pillars behind the success of Bain Textile was its unwavering commitment to the community it served. Monjulika Chakma's endeavor was not a solitary journey; it was co-authored by every artisan, every worker, and every member of the Chakma community. Future social entrepreneurs must realize that sustainable change can only be achieved when the community is at the heart of the solution. Engaging local stakeholders in decision-making, design, and implementation processes ensures that initiatives are aligned with the community's needs, aspirations, and values (Armstrong, J.L., 2021).
- b. **The Importance of Adaptability in Diverse Markets:**  
In a constantly evolving marketplace, rigidity can be a significant impediment. As witnessed in Bain Textile's journey, adaptability was paramount in navigating the diverse and often tumultuous terrains of local and international markets. Entrepreneurs must cultivate a mindset of agility, learning to pivot strategies, tweak product offerings, and innovate solutions based on market feedback and trends (Yang, D., Wei, Z., Shi, H. and Zhao, J., 2020).
- c. **Harnessing the Power of Local Culture and Heritage for Global Impact:**  
Bain Textile's ascent on the global stage underscores the universal appeal of authenticity and cultural narratives. In an increasingly globalized world, there remains a deep-seated appreciation for the local, the unique, and the genuine. Future social entrepreneurs should view local culture and heritage not as limiting factors but as potent differentiators in a crowded marketplace. Telling a compelling story, rooted in local traditions and values, can resonate with global audiences, fostering a sense of connection and trust (Martin, J.B., 2021).
- d. **Recommendations for Implementation:**
  - i. **Engage Local Stakeholders:** Regularly host community forums and workshops to gather input and ensure alignment with grassroots needs.
  - ii. **Continuous Market Research:** Stay informed about market dynamics, trends, and customer feedback. Be prepared to iterate and evolve as necessary.
  - iii. **Storytelling Workshops:** Invest in building a brand narrative that beautifully intertwines the business's purpose with its cultural roots. Engage in storytelling workshops and marketing strategies to effectively communicate this to a global audience.

## FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to carry out further research on the topic *From Looms to Leadership: Women's Empowerment Through Bain Monjulika Chakma Textiles* in order to perfect the research and increase insight for researchers

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S., Shamsuzzoha, A.T.M. and Rahman, M.Z., 2023, Developing Inclusive Tourism in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT): A Case Study on Sajek Valley, Bangladesh.
- Andreas, K., Tsiatsos, T., Terzidou, T. and Pomportsis, A., 2010. Fostering collaborative learning in Second Life: Metaphors and affordances. *Computers & Education*, 55(2), pp.603-615.
- Abtan, F., 2016. Where is she? Finding the women in electronic music culture. *Contemporary Music Review*, 35(1), pp.53-60.
- Agrawal, T., 2014. Skill development in India: an examination. *Journal of Education and Work*, 27(6), pp.629-650.
- Armstrong, J.L., 2021. History and Belonging: A Phenomenological Study of Participatory Public Art Murals in Colorado (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado Colorado Springs).
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), pp.77-101.
- Broda, C. and Parker, J.A., 2014. The economic stimulus payments of 2008 and the aggregate demand for consumption. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 68, pp.S20-S36.
- Chakma, M., 2018. 'Asol Pioneer kintu amar maa'. *Kaler Kantho*. Available at: <https://www.kalerkantho.com/feature/kothaikothai/2018/11/09/701283> [Accessed 6 September 2023].
- Chakma, M. (2023) Interview about Bain Textile and female empowerment. Interviewed by [Assistant professor Takrima Jannat]. Personal Interview. 6 September 2023.).
- Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Clark Plano, V.L. and Morales, A., 2007. Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The counseling psychologist*, 35(2), pp.236-264.
- Christensen, C.M., McDonald, R., Altman, E.J. and Palmer, J.E., 2018. Disruptive innovation: An intellectual history and directions for future research. *Journal of management studies*, 55(7), pp.1043-1078.
- Cleveland, M., Papadopoulos, N. and Laroche, M., 2011. Identity, demographics, and consumer behaviors: International market segmentation across product categories. *International Marketing Review*, 28(3), pp.244-266.

- Carney, S., Bista, M. and Agergaard, J., 2007. 'Empowering' the 'local' through education? Exploring community-managed schooling in Nepal. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(5), pp.611-628.
- Calderon, C.A. and Servén, L., 2004. The effects of infrastructure development on growth and income distribution. Available at SSRN 625277.
- Dhaka Tribune, 2020. 5 eminent women named for Begum Rokeya Padak 2020. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/232834/5-eminent-women-named-for-begum-rokeya-padak-2020> [Accessed 6 September 2023].
- Durlak, J.A. ed., 2015. *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice*. Guilford Publications.
- Deka, S.J., 2022. Vocational education and training for Women: A gender Divide perspective. In *Research Anthology on Vocational Education and Preparing Future Workers* (pp. 794-808). IGI Global.
- Forret, M.L., Sullivan, S.E. and Mainiero, L.A., 2010. Gender role differences in reactions to unemployment: Exploring psychological mobility and boundaryless careers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(5), pp.647-666.
- Fancourt, D. and Finn, S., 2019. What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.
- Galletta, A., 2013. *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication* (Vol. 18). NYU press.
- Haque, T. (2018). Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh: From Policy to Reality. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 13(2), 193-214.
- Manika, D., Antonetti, P., Papagiannidis, S. and Guo, X., 2021. How pride triggered by pro-environmental technology adoption spills over into conservation behaviours: a social business application. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 172, p.121005.
- Mair, J., Wolf, M. and Ioan, A., 2020. Governance in social enterprises. *Advances in corporate governance*, pp.180-202.
- McBride, A. and Mustchin, S., 2013. Creating sustainable employment opportunities for the unemployed. *Policy Studies*, 34(3), pp.342-359.

- McGowan, A., 2009. *Developing Traditions: Preservationist Design and the Independent Artisan*. In *Crafting the Nation in Colonial India* (pp. 103-148). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Martin, J.B., 2021. Harnessing local and transnational communities in the global protection of underwater cultural heritage. *Transnational Environmental Law*, 10(1), pp.85-108.
- Pradhan, S. and Khandual, A., 2020. Community, local practices and cultural sustainability: A case study of Sambalpuri ikat handloom. *Sustainability in the textile and apparel industries: Consumerism and fashion sustainability*, pp.121-139.
- Poudel, A., 2021. Migration, youth workshops and forestry: Case studies from Nepal. *Trees, Forests and People*, 3, p.100057.
- Roy, P.K., Abd Wahab, H. and Hamidi, M., 2023. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Bangladesh. In *Positive and Constructive Contributions for Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 161-180). IGI Global.
- Roberts, L.D. and Allen, P.J., 2015. Exploring ethical issues associated with using online surveys in educational research. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 21(2), pp.95-108.
- Scribd (2017) *Study of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystems in South East and East Asian Countries*. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/352105169/Rags2Riches-Case-Study> (Accessed: 6 September 2023).
- Sinha, S., 2013. Supporting Women Home-Based Workers: The Approach of the Self-Employed Women's Association in India. *WIEGO Policy Brief (Urban Policies) No, 13*, pp.1-16.
- Todor, R.D., 2014. The importance of branding and rebranding for strategic marketing. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Economic Sciences. Series V*, 7(2), p.59.
- Todeva, E. and Knoke, D., 2005. Strategic alliances and models of collaboration. *Management decision*, 43(1), pp.123-148.
- Uddin, N., 2014. Paradigm of 'better life': 'development' among the Khumi in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. *Asian Ethnicity*, 15(1), pp.62-77.

- WebEngage (2021) PHOOL, an Indian social impact startup, increases its revenue by 23%. Available at: <https://webengage.com/resource/case-study/phool-increases-its-revenue/> (Accessed: 6 September 2023).
- Welter, F., Smallbone, D., Aculai, E., Isakova, N. and Schakirova, N., 2003. Female entrepreneurship in post Soviet countries. New perspectives on women entrepreneurs, pp.223-239.
- Yadav, M. and Rahman, Z., 2017. Measuring consumer perception of social media marketing activities in e-commerce industry: Scale development & validation. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), pp.1294-1307.
- Yang, D., Wei, Z., Shi, H. and Zhao, J., 2020. Market orientation, strategic flexibility and business model innovation. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 35(4), pp.771-784.
- Zutshi, A. and Creed, A., 2015. An international review of environmental initiatives in the construction sector. *Journal of cleaner production*, 98, pp.92-106.