



**Eloni Hepuni**  
Tribal Artist  
**Weaver**

**‘Learnt skills from my mother’**

For Eloni Hepuni from Tobumai village at Manipur, a small house in the village has been all her life, but she waits to explore the world of e-commerce. Eloni picked up basic traditional skills such as weaving, making shawls, bags and necklaces from her mother, aunts and cousins in her younger days. While she has not taken any professional or skill training in this field, she loves to work on the traditions passed on to her by her family. However, over the last 15 years, she has been exploring her traditional craft as a business on a small time basis. But, for her, her entrepreneurial journey started over the last three years, and thus she trains some people from our society in the skills that she already has.

“I plan to start a fully fledged entrepreneurial venture with four to five people once they are trained well,” said Eloni.

Currently, Eloni is the only person from her family indulging in weaving, making shawls and jewellery, which is why she is preparing and training a team of women, who can empower themselves.





Considering her skills, she was recently selected to attend the Tribal Entrepreneurship Development Program (TEDP) workshop organized by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and the National Industry Body, ASSOCHAM.

On having been selected for the program, she received trainings on how to use digital marketing as a tool to amplify her business.

However, she says that she is still facing several challenges to take her products online fully fledged and intends to do so to reach customers in bigger towns and cities once she has partners and more helping hands.

“All these years, I have been working by myself from my home, and I provide these products on order basis to friends, cousins and others, whom I can reach out to. Also, we live in a very small house in the village, so it becomes a problem to work or carry out the business in monsoon from a small village,” said Eloni.

While Eloni says that the idea and learnings from the online and e-commerce course have opened up new avenues for her, it would be long way until she can finally make it into a reality.

“Our entire state and especially the village, considering it is in the interiors, have been affected because of the lockdown. So not much has opened up. What we can do is make products only on order basis,” said Eloni.

