

Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Livelihood through Traditional Crafts: A Case of Bhaktapur

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with a value, particularly responding to the opportunities available. It involves time, efforts and assumption of risk, with the expectation of receiving the rewards at the end. Nepal is the country rich in art and craft especially Kathmandu Valley. Traditional skills like wood carving, pottery, stone masonry, painting, etc have been handed down from centuries in Kathmandu Valley which are the main source of income for sustaining their living conditions. Lack of interest of younger generations and lack of strong base have been threatening the sustainability of tradition and culture of Bhaktapur. Existence and development of such activities in touristic areas lead to tourism development. The main objective of this research project is to study development of entrepreneurship of Bhaktapur for sustainable livelihood along with preservation of traditional crafts. To achieve this aim of research, specific objectives are as to explore the existing entrepreneurship practices of Bhaktapur, to identify the parameters for enlarging existing entrepreneurship practices and pave the way for new practice and to study the changing pattern and effects of entrepreneurship on their livelihood and society. The ontological stance of this project is lots of traditional crafts are going on in local level and if not preserved and promoted properly, those traditional crafts will gradually extinct. The qualitative research methodology was applied for the research and required quantitative data are collected through observations. Key-informant survey, semi-structured interviews accompanied by observation were used as methods of study. Traditional crafts have helped in increasing national economy through tourism development. This has directly or indirectly helped in preservation of place and society.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Livelihood, Traditional, Craft, Development

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Nepal is the developing country. Over a span of 8 years, Nepal's poverty curve has seen a downward movement. From 25 percent in 2010, Nepal's poverty percentage has decreased to 21 percent in 2018. This indicates the Nepal Government's success so far and its continued efforts towards sustainable development. However, a major chunk of its population lives below the poverty line [1]. With the growing increase in population, need for better opportunity has become the dire need for all the people and the same is leading people to change. Nepal is the country which is rich in art and crafts especially Kathmandu valley. Traditional skills like wood-carving, pottery, stone masonry, painting, etc. have been handed down for

centuries in the Kathmandu Valley. People are practicing these skills from generations to generations. These skills are predominantly practiced in the areas like Kathmandu Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square and Bhaktapur Durbar Square. These are also world heritages sites of Nepal which is famous among tourists. Existence and development of such activities in touristic areas helps in promoting tourism development.

These popular traditional skills are the main source of income for sustaining their living conditions. That is to say they are livelihood opportunities for people engaged in it. But with the passage of time, these types of activities are becoming less and new generations are not much involved in it as it lacks strong base so they get low return for their work. This is threatening the sustainability of tradition and

culture of Bhaktapur. In order to preserve it, entrepreneurship can be best option which may be small or medium. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic development and income growth. Along with it, it has major part in developing sustainable livelihood of the people. Inclusive growth and ensuring the future with quality jobs are the basic concerns of entrepreneurship. Nowadays they are depending on out sources when they already have possibilities within their area themselves. Earthquake 2015 has affected the lifestyle of people of traditional craftsmen like wood carvers and potters as they are displaced from original areas which have affected their working environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

Bhaktapur, also known as 'Khowpa' is a world heritage site, renowned as the city of ancient monuments, industries, art and culture. It is an ancient Newa city in the east corner of the Kathmandu Valley, where people are still engaged in their traditional occupation and livelihood activities. Being one of the traditional settlements, Bhaktapur has different traditional livelihood activities which they perform daily as means of their livelihood like pottery, woodcarving, stone carving and juju dhau (Curd). But with the passage of time, these types of activities are becoming less and new generations are not much involved in it. Another factor is that due to lack of strong base, they get low returns for their work. This is threatening the sustainability of tradition and culture of Bhaktapur. Thus, in order to preserve it, entrepreneurship can be best option which may be small or medium and people can be trained about it. Nowadays they are depending on out sources when they already have possibilities within their area themselves

Various organizations conducting training programs, workshops and conferences related to entrepreneurship development in Bhaktapur. With the support of Qatar Charity Nepal, Rural Development Centre Nepal successfully conducted "Livelihood Support Project- Entrepreneurship Development in Kathmandu valley" in 2018 for the enhancement of livelihood and improve the economic status of poor, needy, vulnerable people Bhaktapur districts [2]. Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee has the motto of creating entrepreneurship in Bhaktapur's tourism industry and creates awareness among the tangible and intangible culture by exploring the

Bhaktapur city [3].

1.3 Objective

The main objective of this research project is to study development of entrepreneurship of Bhaktapur for sustainable livelihood along with preservation of traditional crafts. To achieve this aim of research, specific objectives are as follows:

- To explore the existing entrepreneurship practices of Bhaktapur.
- To identify the parameters for enlarging existing entrepreneurship practices and pave the way for new practice.
- To study the changing pattern and effects of entrepreneurship on their livelihood and society.

1.4 Rationale

Bhaktapur is the city rich in ancient arts, religious values, fabulous cultural traditions, architectural masterpieces and ancient sculptures, is also known as an open museum. Bhaktapur is the traditional settlement with traditional Newari architectural characteristics with lots of traditional occupation and activities. Traditional skills of Bhaktapur are famous not only in Nepal, but all over the world.

These socio-economic activities (traditional skills) of the inhabitants need to be preserved in order to conserve its unique features for long period of time and for future generation. Entrepreneurship at community level plays the vital role in economic development and income growth which will eventually lead to the sustainability of livelihood. This study will help to understand the problem of area, gather information and explore the different sustainable approaches for entrepreneurship in order to achieve sustainable livelihood. For any historic traditional town, tourism can be the base for development. We should develop the city by preserving our cultural values and tradition. This also helps in tourism development and preservation of tradition of Bhaktapur. This is an opportunity to explore the pattern of livelihood of inhabitants and effect of their traditional occupation in their daily life.

1.5 Limitations

Although Bhaktapur is renowned for different activities like pottery, woodcarving, stone carving,

juju dhau (Curd) and agriculture, the research is mainly on two activities: pottery and wood carving (craftsmanship). It does not include whole Bhaktapur, rather the certain areas of Bhaktapur where these traditional activities are being carried now predominantly until now. Sustainable entrepreneurship is linked with tourism so I studied effect of entrepreneurship on tourism development to some extent but detail process of tourism development is not focused.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship is the carrying out of new combinations we call enterprise. “The new combination focuses on five aspects: The introduction of new goals, new methods of production, opening up of new markets, new sources of supply of raw material and new industrial organizations”. Entrepreneur is the people who get ideas for creating a new business, bring that business into existence and then carry on the work of the enterprise. Entrepreneurship is a human activity which plays a major role in economic development. Its history is as old as human history. It indicates to the spirit of enterprise such a spirit transform the man from a nomad to a cattle rearer, to a settled agriculturist, to a trader and an industrialist.[4]

Entrepreneurship, which is one the most powerful economic force known to humankind, is empowering individuals to seek opportunity where others find intractable problems. Entrepreneurship is the symbol of business tenacity and achievement; it is a vital source of change in all facets of society. Entrepreneurship can be summed up as nothing but the process of creating something new with a value, particularly responding to the opportunities available. It involves time, efforts and assumption of risk, with the expectation of receiving the rewards at the end. The rewards can take any form- monetary or non-monetary (personal contentment) [5].

In defining entrepreneurship, the following can be included: innovation, recognizing opportunities, risk management, action, resource use, added value. However, it can be suggested that regional variations in the level of entrepreneurial activity are influenced by cultural values. Cultural and economic factor can be argued as the determining factors. Entrepreneurship can be defined by focusing on “desire, motivation and skills” as traits “necessary to start and manage a successful business”. Some state

that “the definition of entrepreneurship varies based on what opportunity is defined as”. The identification of entrepreneurship can be emphasized by innovation so it is argued that innovation is the driving force not only of capitalism but also of economic progress in general and that entrepreneurs are agents of change in the economy. In this context, the function of the entrepreneur can be defined as a combination, in an innovative way, of several factors, to generate value for the customer, superior returns for firms, wealth for the economy, through creating jobs and developing innovations [6].

The concept of Sustainable Livelihood (SL) is an attempt to go beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty eradication. These had been found to be too narrow because they focused only on certain aspects or manifestations of poverty, such as low income, or did not consider other vital aspects of poverty such as vulnerability and social exclusion. It is now recognized that more attention must be paid to the various factors and processes which either constrain or enhance poor people’s ability to make a living in an economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable manner. The SL concept offers the prospects of a more coherent and integrated approach to poverty [7].

Traditional crafts are an important part of local identity and efforts are being made to preserve them and even promote them to foreign tourists, attracted by the charming air and high quality of hand-made products. A craft or trade is a pastime or a profession that requires particular skills and knowledge of skilled work. Handicraft is the “traditional” main sector of the crafts, it is a type of work where useful and decorative devices are made completely by hand or by using only simple tools. Usually the term is applied to traditional means of making goods [8].

Wood carving is a form of woodworking by means of a cutting tool (knife) in one hand or a chisel by two hands or with one hand on a chisel and one hand on a mallet, resulting in a wooden figure or figurine, or in the sculptural ornamentation of a wooden object. The phrase may also refer to the finished product, from individual sculptures to hand-worked mouldings composing part of a tracery. The making of sculpture in wood has been extremely widely practiced, but survives much less well than the other main materials such as stone and bronze, as it is vulnerable to decay, insect damage, and fire [9].

Pottery is the term derived from French word 'Poetic' or Latin word 'Potium'. The literary meaning of it is the drinking vessel. All the objects made from clay and hardened by fire at high temperatures is termed as pottery. It is unique art of making artifacts from clay. It has been indispensable part of human life from beginning of the human history [10].

Pottery Construction to qualify as "Traditional" [11]

- Must be hand made by the "coil" (or "pinch pot") method (key to the traditional style)
- Local hand mixed clay
- Slips and paints from natural materials
- Handmade traditional tools
- Pit fired

Exceptions

- Everything except items first three points above
- Ceramics (molded pots), wheel made and traditional pots with poster paints are acceptable for the collection but are not as "traditional"
- Modern tools are acceptable
- Kiln fired is acceptable (same reason)

3. Methodology

Since this project is about studying entrepreneurship for sustainable livelihood through traditional works taking the case of Bhaktapur, I explored the different parameters needed to study, analyze and describe them thoroughly in order to get to the core of the study. The ontological stance of this project is lots of traditional crafts are going on in local level and if not preserved and promoted properly, those traditional crafts will gradually extinct so a methodology was prepared for finding epistemological reasoning. The people from case area and literature studies from past researches, articles, reports and papers from different organizations were the source of information (epistemology) of the research. This study is based on social reality of the area which was studied through exploratory and descriptive approach. The qualitative research methodology was applied for qualitative data and required quantitative data were

collected through observations. This is complemented by information gained through observation, key-informant survey, discussions and interviews. This is explored through social and questionnaire survey and data was collected on the basis of the knowledge and understanding of people involved with traditional works like pottery and wood carving. Around 10 people from both pottery and wood carving (total 20) were interviewed. They are the people who are doing pottery and wood carving from long period of time.

The research is done under pragmatic paradigm which is focused on the present scenario of the case area and prospects of entrepreneurship in the case area. Study is done interlinking social, cultural and economic aspects of the area. Literature study is done before immersing in case area. The logical approach for the research is abduction and inductive. The research is started with observation followed by discussion with the stakeholders. Photography, audio recording and field notes were used as tools. Framework was prepared for the collection of data in order to fulfill research objectives.

4. Findings

In order to collect the required data to fulfill the research objectives, field study was carried out as per the prepared framework for the research. Entrepreneurship which also means innovation and innovation in pottery and woodcarving was analyzed in terms of raw material aspect, product aspect and economic aspect. Analysis was further done in terms of technology, innovation and business change.

4.1 Pottery

Pottery is one of the traditional activities of Bhaktapur. Over the recent year, we can see that pottery is moving towards new direction while different new innovative techniques are being carried out in order to improve the pottery business. Potters of Bhaktapur use the black clay called "Dyo Cha" i.e. Clay of God. In the past, they used to dig the clay themselves once or twice a year from the place called Jagati and only Prajapatis were allowed to do so. It is hard and risky work, even life-threatening, as people have to dig down to more than 10-12 feet for obtaining the clay suitable for best pottery. But at present, the potters of Bhaktapur buy the clay from suppliers. Such clay can be found in the area of Harisiddhi, Sanku and Sanga now.

Potters used to make household pots more in the past but now pottery has been commercialized so potters are more tending towards object of interest that people or visitors prefer. Pottery products, being made of mud, it is difficult in terms of transportation as well as it is very prone to breaking. In order to compete in the market, where introduction of new products is obvious, it is very much necessary for potters to think new strategies for flourishing their work. Pottery products used to be very much popular in the past but with time, people are finding their easy way out. As per the need and requirement of the locals, visitors and client, the design of pottery products are changing which can be seen in case area. We can see lots of shops with small mud items and also miniature products. We can take the example of flower vase. In the past, we can only see the round vase, but now there are varieties in the products like round, circular, rectangular, square, etc.

The major pottery products in the past are

- Ghutruke i.e. Piggy bank
- Gamala i.e. Flower Vase
- Hadi
- Ghampo
- Dhupauro
- Ghaito
- Aunti
- Kataro
- Pala, etc.

As the new innovation is going on, along with these, the major pottery products today during my visit to case area are

- Ghalcha
- Surayi
- Jhalar
- Cup
- Glass
- Miniatures products of animals and masks
- Statues of Gods
- Different Decorative Pieces

Potters who were interviewed are doing the pottery long period of time; largest is the 60 years which shows that they were earning livelihood for themselves and their families through it. For the continuous economic benefit, it is necessary to have continuous improvement in the process as well as new technology must be applied. Potters of Bhaktapur seem to be well aware of it. Most of the potters now

are using the electric wheel rather than traditional wheel. It is saving them energy as well as time which they can use in making more number of products. They are able to make 60-80 numbers in a day if it is medium size product and upto 400-500 if it is small size products. Daily income is different as per the season. September, October and November is major touristic season when they are able to sell the products of Rs. 5000-10000 daily but in normal days, they sell from Rs.1000-5000 daily. For the miniature products, they are able to develop the key themselves and miniaturization has become new aspect in Bhaktapur. They used to ash firing kiln in the past but now they have different firing place for firing the pots after drying which is more healthier and it also do not affect the quality of pots.

4.2 Wood Carving

Thinking from the product perspective, wood carvers are tending to flourish their business by innovating new products. In order to compete in the market, where introduction of new products is obvious, it is very much necessary for wood carvers to think new strategies for flourishing their work. Wood carved products are being popular nowadays greatly mainly as souvenir products, gift and decorative products. Wood carvers seem to keep in mind about addressing the needs of people while keeping the local design and traditional technology intact. As per the need and requirement of the locals, visitors and client, the design of wood carved products are changing which can be seen in case area. We can see lots of shops with miniature products.

The major wood carving products in the past are

- Doors
- Windows like Tiki Jhya, Gajhya, Sajhya and Peacock Window

Along with these, the major wood carving products today during my visit to case area are

- Miniatures of doors and windows
- Photo Frame with window design
- Miniatures products of animals
- Playing items for kids
- Statues of Gods
- Different Decorative Pieces
- Masks
- Key rings

- Jewellery and Puzzle Box
- Piggy Bank
- Chair (Imported from India through Suppliers)

There is sufficient economic benefit in this field as they are constantly working in it for the long period of time. In past, they used to supply to China, America, Europe but now they do not export to other country. They now export within through country and sell through middleman. During the Handicraft Mela organized in Bhaktapur and Bhrikuti Mandap, they sell in great quantity. The sale of product is becoming less and sometimes they cannot even sell a product in a day. During the tourist flow season, they sell two or three products in a day. Tourist used to pay more in the past but now they don't.

They used to have their workshop in their home or surrounding area but after the earthquake 2015, their houses were damaged so now we can mostly saw the shops selling wooden carved items as they have shifted their workshop to Suryabinayak. Wood carvers working in the workshop gets the daily wage of Rs. 1500. Apart from different views, among the wood carvers I talked, they said they are able to get their payback and gain profit. As per the size and details, price of each products differ.

Miniaturization of products can be the major improvement in terms of wood carving. For the ease of transportation and because of size, nowadays wood carved products are found in pieces which can be joined later for final product. This type of products are made if the visitors or customers especially order such products. For tourists, packing is the major problem. This new innovation has made it possible for tourists to take the wood carved products from one place to another easily.

5. Analysis and Discussion

Pottery and wood carving both are the identity of Bhaktapur from long period of time and these crafts are boosting the tourism of the area. Both pottery and wood carving are individual crafts. But during 70s-80s, when Bhaktapur Development Project was carried out, carpenters cooperatives were introduced in Bhaktapur and after this, wood carving gradually became group work rather than individual crafts. Number of wood carvers started to form group and carried out their skills forming workshop. Start of cooperatives assisted carvers in production level and

material level and it gradually led to enough marketing and social development. Whereas pottery can be still seen as individual craftsmanship and it could not go on cooperatives level in term of production and material. But some joint effort can be seen in terms of sales and display level. Through this, we can know that if traditional crafts are to be flourished, it must be done with joint effort of number of people.

- The traditional crafts like pottery and wood carving, people of Bhaktapur are doing it from very longer period of time. The generation involved in it got their knowledge and skills from the ancestors but at recent time younger generation of the family does not seem to be interested in these traditional crafts. This may be because of increasingly wide variety of economic opportunities available to the younger generation. This poses the challenges to the continuation of these crafts.
- Plastic, ceramic and terracotta products are taking lots of market as they are cheaper and light in weight than handmade products. This is posing threat to traditional crafts and making lots of replacement in the market. Although tourists often buy the more decorative items-such as the elephants and other small statues, locals are the primary market for this pottery. While the market for souvenir items has increased slightly in the past few years, the primary market for the local people has declined. Aluminum and plastic are replacing pottery because they are more reliable, lighter to carry, and cheaper. This change was quite obvious from my perspective.
- In terms of pottery, different process innovation like electric kiln, new firing place has turned out to be positive innovation. Electric wheel has ensured that work is easier, safer and less time consuming. Production is much faster with the electric wheel, and it also does not require as much human energy to spin the wheel; in the most basic sense, it is simply easier and faster to use. On the other hand, there are many reasons why potters choose to continue using the traditional method in past. The electric wheel is far more expensive, and electricity in the Kathmandu Valley was unreliable and nonexistent at some points throughout the day.

In addition, the electric wheel must be plugged in inside the potter's home. Many families did not have enough room in their home for an electric wheel, so the traditional wheel is a better option, as it can be used pretty much anywhere, including in the streets or town square.

- Development of new firing place has made innovation in terms of health as ash kiln pollutes the environment making effect in potters' health. Better environment and healthy life is the positive aspect. This has lead the society in innovative way. Modern kiln takes only 2 days whereas ash kiln takes 4 days for firing pots. New firing kiln helps in saving time.
- Bhaktapur Handicraft Institution is providing different training programs for wooden carver. Bhaktapur is recently declared best district for handicraft. For the improvement of wood carving, some wood carvers of Nepal had gone in Handicraft Mela in different countries like Singapore, Malaysia, China, Bangladesh and Mumbai. This shows that our craftsmanship is flourishing all over the world.
- Talking about the raw materials, the black clay called "Dyo Cha", potters of Bhaktapur could get free of cost in the past but now they have to pay for it. Portions of the land from which the clay comes are privately owned. The potters used to be able to take clay freely from this property for religious reasons, as most religious statuary and other objects are made from clay. Now, younger generations are not as religious as past generations, and they do not see this as a valid reason to take clay freely from this piece of land. This has increased their cost whereas given employment opportunities to another group of people. That group is the one digging the clay and making it useful for pottery.
- Import of Indian wooden product to Nepal has helped Indian manufacture to capitalize their product which is not beneficial to Nepal. These are actually the skills of traditional area of Nepal and their machine made products are misuse in the name of craftsmanship.
- The products are sold to agents, the middlemen, who then sell these products in their shops. These middlemen are part of the reason why

many of the potters and wood carvers are no longer able to rely on pottery production as their sole source of income. The shopkeepers are able to sell the objects for much more than the purchase price, which creates a problem for the potters. This problem could be avoided by cutting out the middleman and selling the objects on their own. One solution that the families have implemented collectively is to fix prices for their products. Under these constant prices, the agents are not able to undercut prices from one to another, and whenever someone wants to raise the price of products, the whole community gets together to discuss the change. This idea seems to be working quite well for the community of Bhaktapur.

- Some potters and wood carvers are doing these crafts for feeling of satisfaction. They are emotionally and psychologically attached to it and they considered it as their love for traditional craft.
- Although the earthquake took a significant toll on potters and wood carvers, they are showing their resiliency and dedication to their craft through their efforts to rebuild and continue their way of life.
- These traditional crafts have helped in increasing national economy through tourism development. This has directly or indirectly helped in preservation of place and society.

6. Conclusion

The research achieved the targeted goals and objectives through findings, analysis and discussion from the major data collection methods like literature review, field survey and research framework. Entrepreneurship is an innovative solution which can serve as outlet to provide positive focus and change in the life of traditional craftsmen, people of society and as a whole community itself.

Pottery and wood carving can be taken as the identity of Bhaktapur along with Bhaktapur Durbar Square. The introduction of new materials that are cheaper and more practical is quite obvious, but there is another major reason for its decline as well. Within the Newari caste system, these traditional craft is a family occupation. Children begin learning this craft at a very young age, as early as four or five years old.

Family occupations have been very important within their social system, but they are becoming less important today. It is now more acceptable for a family member to leave their family's profession to pursue another. Addressing the modern needs and requirement, new innovation must be made keeping the authenticity intact for the sustainable livelihood of people of community. This helps in social, economic and cultural sustainability of the whole community.

7. Recommendations

Based on the observations, study carried out through the field survey and literature review, the followings are the suggested recommendations for the sustainable livelihood through the development of entrepreneurship.

- Young generation must be encouraged to continue these crafts. Nowadays, there is the thinking in people that educated people should not be involved these types of craftsmanship. Such thinking must be eradicated as young educated people will be able to make innovation and introduction new technology due to the knowledge they have gained. this will be able to lead to social development, tourism development and cultural sustainability.
- Younger generations are mainly unsure about taking craftsmanship in professional level due the lack of strong base. So government should make policies for promoting and preserving these craftsmanship in order to flourish these crafts as real profession in the society.
- Integration of local tradition and modern technology into the business environment can be adapted to integrate local cultural flavor. Introduction of the product qualities in accordance with tastes and necessities of markets which is traditional skill combined with new product design could be more sustainable.
- Understanding the market demand and requirements is most necessary. So some observations and research can be done by craftsman themselves regarding the design relevance and current need or trend. This will help in marketing of their crafts and understand the need of present so that new innovation can

be made and they will be able to get their economic return.

- Tradition of middleman should be discouraged as it reduces the profit for actual craftsman raising the benefits of middleman. People of certain locality can fix the same price for products so that middleman can not get more profit.
- Buyers should be aware that rather than buying from middleman, they can buy from actual craftsman for boosting their economy and helping them to preserve our traditional crafts.
- Although the traditional technology of craftsmanship is very much important, it is necessary adapt new innovation and technology with the passage of time in order to compete in the market. So craftsman should gradually adapt to new innovation and technology preserving their tradition at the same time. This is the major essence of craftsmanship. Change to black pottery from red pottery is also one of the innovation done in the past.
- In order to recognize our products in market either national or international, business aspect must be flourished and business model for the development of such crafts should be prepared in both government and local level.
- Idea of cooperatives should be encouraged in production, material, product and marketing level so that the problem regarding these crafts will not individual problem and can be solved in effective way.
- Training at local level can be provided for people to boost up their knowledge and skills.

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