

Entrepreneurship on Indigenous Knowledge Among The Garos

Dr. Dorothy R. Marak
Assistant Professor
Captain Williamson Sangma State University

As per the various sources it can be defined that the entrepreneur 'as a person/organization who undertakes an enterprise/operates the risk for a business venture where capital and labour role is important at where the future conditions are uncertain but have high positive aspiration. Further the function of same entrepreneur is to revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting different invention'.

Therefore, here in this juncture, I take this opportunity to bring forth the Indigenous Knowledge of Garo Community. The Garos of North East India where different opportunities are available to think on entrepreneurship for bringing the revolution/evolution in society but yet we are far away from that mind set. In present time there is hype for entrepreneurship in all the sectors for the greater benefit of the society. But where do we stand? Have we thought on tribal culture and tradition? If we will say the best entrepreneurship used to help to run the enterprise progressively for maximum benefits; then what type of entrepreneurship/s is/are there on indigenous knowledge to uplift the Garo Community? Here in this traditional sector who should be the right choice entrepreneur? How much minimum cost is required? What types of risks are there besides the present risks for national or international competition? Who can be the right manager to manage this traditional venture? If we look in to our present scenario and compare with others, we may feel sad that our own tradition and culture is at the same place which badly calls every body to think over it and take it to proper height. This gap is happening due to different reasons. Out of those some points are as follows.

In many cases, the term 'Indigenous' is defined as 'local' and 'native', also Indigenous People are often referred to distinctive tribes of any groups or any society, such as the Khasi, Garo, Jaintia, Naga, Mizo, Boro, Kuki, and so on. However, the term 'Indigenous Knowledge' has a broader and more flexible scope of meaning. According to the Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Indigenous Knowledge is local knowledge unique to a given culture or society. It is the systematic body of knowledge acquired by local people through the accumulation of experiences, informal experiments, and intimate understanding of the environment in a given culture. Lori Ann Thrupp pointed out that Indigenous Knowledge systems are adaptive skills of local people, usually derived from many years of experience that have often been communicated through oral traditions and learned through family members and generations which neither have been placed in any policy plans nor have been taken as any enterprise.

Importance of Garo Indigenous Knowledge

The Garo tribe is one of the major tribal groups of North-East India. As other tribal groups, the ‘Garos’ have their own distinct social beliefs and practices that gave their healthy socio-cultural life. In the case of Garo community, Indigenous Knowledge is substituted by the term, ‘Local Wisdom’ or ‘Garo Wisdom’, which means the body of knowledge, abilities, and skills of Garo people accumulated through many years of experience, learning, development and transmission. It has helped solving the problems and contributed to the development of their people’s way of life in accordance with the changing time and environment. In the past two decades, however, Garo community’s economic and social development has not reached at national level development in the form of industrialization and technology, which depended too much on Western as well as some other indigenous knowledge. In some cases it is good but in some cases it is misguided the development and has brought along with several serious problems such as social imbalance, cultural and environmental destruction, pollution all of which affect the quality of life of the people. At the same time it has been discovered that the people of Garo community had pursued Western way of development at where they are the failure and trying to neglect their own indigenous or local knowledge, the splendid treasure that has played important roles in building the community’s unity and dignity. Now it is the time they should compare the rationality of their own philosophy with the philosophy of others.

Types of Garo Indigenous Knowledge

The research conducted by many of public and private institutions indicate that their indigenous or Garo knowledge can be categorized as many fields of knowledge, namely agriculture, manufacturing and handicrafts, Garo traditional medicine, natural resources and environment management, community business, community welfare, traditional art, organizational management, language and literature, religion and traditions and so on. Before Garo community adopted the educational system from the West, they had their own educational system which was informal and provided through institutions like home, Nokpante etc. Parents taught their children about family occupation, social values and traditions while Nokmas taught art and craft, morality, cultural practices, customary laws, humanity and religion. The Nokpante (the institution of bachelor’s dormitory) was the place where all kinds of community’s classical art were developed, preserved and taught for the bachelors. The distinctive features of indigenous education are, of course, learning by doing, learning through authentic experiences, individualized instruction, and happy learning, all of which are hardly found in the present schooling system of education.

Here we may point out certain bright examples, like; No international/national demand for “Dakmanda” indigenous dress comparative to the other tribes dress material.

Strong and sustained and also endangered Garo medicine has not yet reached to the common people globally.

Community business has not been changed as per the present market behavior. Still it is same as before 50/100 years back.

Garo Drum tune has not been reached at public market which may be developed from the Wangala festival to the Bolly wood/Hollywood and to common man.

Today, there is ecological threat due to our greed driven economic enterprise only for a little benefit in the modern society. Here in Garo Hills daily truck full of coal and limestone are carried out with the unscientific methods and creating terrible pollution of air and water, etc. Can we say it is a venture where only a few people are benefited and in opposite brings bigger threat to the society? Can this unorganized sector be changed in to better enterprise for the larger benefit of the society?

Among the Garo Community the traditional farming (JHUM CULTIVATION) is there which is producing a little healthy organic products but is unable to reach at the gap in between supply and demand. So can it be changed into modern enterprise? There are so many organic products which do not have right market, such as-plenty of pine apple, jack fruit, ginger, litchi, cashew nut, mango, maize, pumpkin, beetle nuts and so many others which has big demands in national and international market but unfortunately there is no such local venture which can help the local farmer to get right value of that. Besides those, there are some unique fruits available here in this region which are hardly available in the other parts of the globe but having high nutrition and medicinal values, such as critrus fruit (me·mang narang) te·patang, sokmil, so·kua, etc.,

The Regression of Indigenous knowledge

In retrospect, there are three main reasons why Garo indigenous knowledge is going to fade away from their own of life. First, in the present system of market oriented education, there is little scope for indigenous knowledge. Second, there is the lack of modern and market oriented research on indigenous knowledge. Most of the research both in educational and research institutes is conducted in the fields of modern science which are hardly cope-up with traditional knowledge. Third, the value of Garo indigenous knowledge is yet to be considered for the mass of public.

Suggestions for entrepreneurship on Garo traditional Knowledge

The University department of Garo may collaborate a research work with various Management departments in a multi-venture strategy in order to created various entrepreneurship.

The community awareness programme must be created for different entrepreneurship on traditional knowledge by operating different learning centers.

Garo community research-based policy may be encouraged by the State cabinet and allow for immediate implementation the same through different mode of operandi such as:

=>Establishment of Garo Knowledge Council, this may involve different Garo specialists along with other stake holders.

=> Establishment of the community Research Institute on Garo Knowledge for better entrepreneurship.

=> Honor and Reward for specialist, local community those who venture some enterprise with their own expertise and also encourage them to act as mobility resource person for other indigenous people so that others may be encouraged to set up their own entrepreneurship as per the present need of the society.

=> Formation of the Garo indigenous knowledge Information Network System to collect and disseminate information on Garo knowledge for better entrepreneurship. The network will also be a channel that can communicate and exchange information through the internet system.

The Garo community being a traditional community shall have the right to conserve or restore their customs, local knowledge, arts or valuable culture of their community and participate in the management, maintenance, preservation and exploitation of natural resources and the environment but at the same time, this indigenous people need to be prosper and establish their height with other people of the world.

Conclusion

The indigenous knowledge or local wisdom enables lifelong learning in society. It is not only strengthens the community's economic situation on the basis of self-sufficiency, but also reinforces moral values, and local culture among community people. In the globalize world, it is certain that most of the ventures are focused on the Western knowledge, ideas, and culture. However, "we have to think globally but needs to act locally". If we are unable to promote the learning of local knowledge, our future generations will be in danger. Therefore a balanced integration on entrepreneurship in between the global and indigenous knowledge is essential.

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