International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)
E-ISSN: 2582-2160 ● Website: www.ijfmr.com ● Email: editor@ijfmr.com

Traditional Craftsmanship to Entrepreneurship: A case study of Atur Bamboo industry in Donkamukam, West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam

Ms. Birtalin Ingtipi

Teaching Assistant, Commerce, Rabindranath Thakur Vishwadiyala, Hojai

Abstract:
The bamboo handicraft sector is a vital, low investment rural industry in India that supports in millions of tribal and rural livelihoods while preserving indigenous skills across generations. Traditional craftsmanship plays an important role in preserving cultural heritage and supporting the livelihoods of local communities. Bamboo craftsmanship is central to Assam's traditional rural economy, providing household income and self-employment opportunities. Karbi Anglong is Assam's largest bamboo producer. Based in Donkamukam (West Karbi Anglong), small scale Atur Bamboo industry- founded by Aturson Teron, focuses on sustainable livelihoods and eco-friendly products. The study focuses on the contribution of artisans to local economic development, employment generation, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge. This study explores how traditional cane and bamboo craftsmanship can be transformed into entrepreneurial opportunities. The study emphasises the importance of safeguarding traditional craftsmanship and indigenous knowledge passed down through generations. This study examines how to convert traditional skills into modern activities using innovation, product development, and business management. While Assam's bamboo sector has strong commercial potential due to its cultural heritage, transitioning from traditional craftsmanship to sustainable entrepreneurship faces obstacles. Artisans face critical challenges such as limited financial support, modern technology, and competition from machine-made products. These hurdles can be resolved through government aid, modern skill training and better product design.

Keywords: Bamboo, craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, Karbi Anglong, Artisans

1. Introduction:

The bamboo industry is one of India's most valuable resources giving a vast diversity in its applicability for improvement of rural and tribal livelihoods and for the environment. Cane and Bamboo based handicraft sector is predominant in the Indian handicrafts, there are millions of people who depend on it as their source of livelihood. The ancient cane and bamboo craft is rural based industry involving a nominal investment and minimum infrastructure. Bamboo is a versatile natural resource widely used in the production of handicrafts, furniture, baskets, decorative items, constructions materials, and various other products. India has a rich tradition of bamboo craftmanship, with communities possessing indigenous knowledge and skills related to bamboo cultivation, harvesting, and product manufacturing. These

traditional practices have been passed down from one generation to another and continue to provide livelihood opportunities for artisans and small-scale entrepreneurs.

In Assam, the bamboo industry is an important component of traditional economy. Cane and bamboo craft carried out traditionally in almost every household in the rural areas. Many rural households are engaged in bamboo related activities, producing goods for domestic consumption and commercial markets. These activities help preserve traditional skills, generate income and support rural economy. The production and sale of bamboo products also create opportunities for self-employment and the development of local enterprises.

Karbi Anglong is the largest bamboo producer of Assam and holds one of the largest natural and planted bamboo reserves in the state, accounting for major share of forest-based and homestead bamboo distribution under the state's bamboo policy. Atur Bamboo industry is one of the small-scale Industry in Assam, located in the district of West Karbi Anglong at central part of Donkamukam town. The founder of the industry is Aturson Teron. This industry is a prominent eco-friendly enterprise and focusing on sustainable livelihoods and traditional cane and bamboo craftsmanship. The industry is a small-scale industry, the products are manufactured of some bamboo accessories like bamboo bed, sofa sets, dinning sets, almirah, etc.

2. Statement of Problem:

In Assam, cane and bamboo products have considerable potential for commercial development because of their traditional importance and diverse. However, transforming traditional craftsmanship into a sustainable entrepreneurial activity may involve several challenges.

Traditional craftsmanship may face challenges such as limited financial resources, inadequate access to modern technology, lack of marketing facilities, competition from machine-made products, and limited opportunities to reach wider markets. These challenges may affect the income, business growth, and long-term sustainability of traditional cane and bamboo enterprises.

3. Significance of the study:

This study will help in understanding how traditional skills and indigenous knowledge can be transformed into entrepreneurial opportunities. Cane and bamboo craftsmanship is significant part of India's traditional heritage and provides livelihood opportunities to local artisans. The study will help understand the importance of preserving traditional cane and bamboo craftsmanship, indigenous knowledge, and skills passed down from one generation to another. The study will examine how traditional craftsmanship can be developed into an entrepreneurial activity through innovation, product development and business management. The study will highlight the potential of the cane and bamboo industry to create employment opportunities for local people, particularly artisans and rural communities. The study will help understand how the Atur bamboo industry contributes to local economic development by generating income and supporting the livelihoods of artisans. The study will examine the marketing practices, challenges, and opportunities associated with cane and bamboo products. It may also identify ways to improve product promotion and expand market reach through digital platforms. The study will identify the major challenges faced by the Atur bamboo industry, such as limited financial resources, inadequate marketing facilities, competition from machine-made products.

4. Review of Literature:

This study presents a review of various concepts in Cane and Bamboo industry. The existing research studies are reviewed.

Sundriyal (2011) studied the bamboo trade and traditional artisans in Uttarakhand, India. The study highlighted bamboo's role in rural livelihoods, employment, and income generation. It emphasized improving product quality, market access, and government support to promote bamboo-based entrepreneurship and rural development.

Majumdar (2020) highlighted the challenges faced by bamboo artisans, including low income and poor marketing. They suggested skill development, entrepreneurship, and improved marketing to promote sustainable growth in the bamboo craft industry.

Bhattacharya (2022) examined Kantha embroidery and Madur mat weaving in West Bengal. The study highlighted the role of traditional crafts in promoting sustainable livelihoods, women's empowerment, environmental conservation, and community resilience.

Santus Kumar Deb (2022) examined how local traditions and culture can promote family businesses in the handicraft sector. The study highlighted the importance of promotional, economic, and motivational factors in handicraft business adoption, contributing to local economic development and community empowerment.

Abrar Ali Saiyed (2023) examined entrepreneurial marketing strategies in Indian craft-based microenterprises. The study found that these businesses prioritise product creativity and positioning while adapting products to customer needs. It highlighted the importance of innovative marketing strategies for the growth of craft-based businesses.

Arunava Dalal (2024) examined the major marketing challenges faced by artisan entrepreneurs in emerging economies. The study identified key barriers to effective handicraft marketing using qualitative analysis and the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). It highlighted the importance of addressing these challenges to improve handicraft businesses and support sustainable livelihoods.

Mishra (2025) discusses traditional bamboo and cane crafts as an important part of indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage. It highlights their role in supporting rural livelihoods, preserving traditional craftsmanship, and promoting sustainable development. The study also emphasizes the potential of bamboo and cane crafts to create entrepreneurial opportunities and improve the economic condition of local artisans.

Jiang (2025) studied the transformation of traditional bamboo weaving through sustainable design. The study highlighted product innovation, branding, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship while identifying challenges related to technology, market acceptance, and skill development. It concluded that combining traditional craftsmanship with modern design can promote sustainable development.

Roy (2025) examined sustainability challenges in Tripura's handloom and handicraft industry. The study highlighted problems such as limited market access, inadequate infrastructure, and raw materials scarcity. It recommended skill development, design innovation, digital marketing, and better policy support to promote sustainable growth and improve artisan livelihoods.

Sarmah (2026) examined the influence of Assamese cultural values on entrepreneurial innovation. The study found that collectivism supports networking, while risk tolerance encourages proactive behaviour. It recommended capacity-building initiatives and cooperative networks to promote sustainable entrepreneurship in Assam.

5. Research gap:

Although several studies have examined the bamboo and cane industry in India and Northeast India, limited research has specifically focused on the transformation of traditional craftsmanship into entrepreneurship in Atur Bamboo industry, Assam. Existing studies mainly discuss bamboo production, marketing challenges, and the economic importance of bamboo products. However, there is insufficient understanding of the industry's entrepreneurial practices, marketing strategies, financial challenges, employment opportunities, and potential for business growth. Therefore, this study aims to examine how traditional craftsmanship contributes to entrepreneurship, livelihood generation, and sustainable economic development, with special reference to Atur Bamboo industry.

6. Research Objectives:

1. To assess the present status of the Atur Bamboo industry in West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam.
2. To examine about the transformation of traditional craftsmanship into entrepreneurship of Atur Bamboo Industry in West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam.
3. To identify the challenges faced by the artisans of Atur Bamboo industry in West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam.

7. Research Methodology:

The study adopts an exploratory and descriptive research design. The study is based in Donkamukam area where the cane and bamboo are used for crafting. The sample size used for the study is 20. The study is based on primary data which were collected from 20 crafters through a structured interview and distributing questionnaires. Descriptive statistics like percentage is used to analyse the data collected.

8. Results and Discussions:

8.a: Demographic Profile of the Respondents:

Table 1 highlights that in terms of age, the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-35 years with the percent of 75, followed by those in the age group of below 25 years is 25 percent. Further, in terms of educational qualification, a significant number of respondents possess Higher Secondary qualification, followed by the respondents having educational qualification of HSLC (50%), Secondary education (25%)and Primary education (25%) respectively. So, it can be inferred that the crafters are predominantly young adults who possess a basic to secondary level of education.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents:

SI.no	Factors		Respondents	Percentage
1	Age	Below 25 years	5	25
		25-30 years	15	75
		30-40 years	0	0
		Total	20	100
2	Educational Qualification	Primary education	5	25
		Secondary education	5	25
		Higher Secondary education	10	50
		Graduate	0	0
		Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey,2026

8.b: Analysing the current status of the Atur Bamboo industry:

The study highlighted the present status of the Atur Bamboo industry from table 2 which are:

1. **Employee engagement:** The study found that the level of employee engagement is 20.
2. **Manufacturing:** The raw materials that are primarily used for production process is locally available bamboo.
3. **Types of products:** The customers that mostly purchase the product are sofa set with 75%, Dining tables with 10%, almirah with 5%, and decorate accessories with 10% each respectively.
4. **Festive season:** Durga Puja, Karbi Youth Festival, Karbi Lammet Amei, Diwali and Christmas are the festive season that mostly sales the product.
5. **Export Destination:** The raw materials have been exported to Middle Assam (Hojai, Nagaon, Guwahati and Haflong) with 100%.
6. **Bamboo Species:** The type of bamboos that mostly used for a product are Bhaluka bamboo and Jati bamboo with 50% each respectively.
7. **Market Destination:** The products of the industry primarily sell in districts market with 100%.
8. **Financial Condition:** The main source of business capital are personal savings and family contributions with 50% each respectively.

Table no.2: Current status of the Atur Bamboo industry:

SI.no	Factors		Respondents	Percentage
1	Employee engagement	10-20	20	100
		20-30	0	0
		30-40	0	0
		40-50	0	0
		Total	20	100
2	Manufacturing	Locally available bamboo	20	100
		Cane	0	0
		Other natural materials	0	0
		Total	20	100
3	Types of Products	Sofa Set	15	75
		Dining tables	2	10
		Almirah	1	5
		Decorate accessories	2	10
		Total	20	100
4	Festive season	Durga Puja	0	0
		Karbi Youth Festival	0	0
		Karbi Lammet Amei	0	0
		Diwali	0	0
		Christmas	0	0
		All of the above	20	100

		Total	20	100
5	Export Destination	Upper Assam	0	0
		Lower Assam	0	0
		Middle Assam	20	20
		North Assam	0	0
		Barak Valley	0	0
		Total	20	100
6	Bamboo Species	Bhaluka bah	10	50
		Jati bah	10	50
		Muli bah	0	0
		Koko bah	0	0
		Total	20	100
7	Market destination	Local markets	0	0
		District markets	20	100
		State markets	0	0
		National markets	0	0
		International markets	0	0
		Total	20	100
8	Financial condition	Personal savings	10	50
		Family contributions	10	50
		Government assistance	0	0
		Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey,2026

8.c: Examining the transformation of traditional craftsmanship into entrepreneurship of the Atur Bamboo industry.

The study highlighted the transformation of traditional craftsmanship into entrepreneurship of the Atur Bamboo industry from table 3 which are:

1. **Craftsmanship skills:** The artisans had learnt the bamboo craftsmanship through formal training and self-learning with 50% each respectively.
2. **Establishing factors:** The main motivation behind establishing the bamboo industry is the employment opportunities with 100%.
3. **Market identification:** The traditional craftsmanship helped the industry establish its identity in the market to some extent with 100%.
4. **Growth factors:** The major factors contributing to the growth of the industry are quality of products, customer demand, product innovation, marketing strategies and availability of raw materials with 100%.
5. **Marketing Channels:** The marketing channels that are used to sell the products are direct sale to customers and online platforms with 50% each respectively.

Table no.3: Transformation of traditional craftsmanship into entrepreneurship of the Atur Bamboo industry.

SI.no	Factors		Respondents	Percentage
1	Craftsmanship skills	From family members	0	0
		From traditional artisans	0	0
		Through formal training	10	50
		Through self-learning	10	50
		Total	20	100
2	Establishing factors	Family tradition	0	0
		Interest in traditional craftsmanship	0	0
		Employment opportunities	20	100
		Total	20	100
3	Market identification	To a great extent	0	0
		To some extent	20	100
		Very little	0	0
		Not at all	0	0
		Total	20	100
4	Growth factors	Quality of products	0	0
		Customer demand	0	0
		Product innovation	0	0
		Marketing strategies	0	0
		Availability of raw materials	0	0
		All of the above	20	100
		Total	20	100
5	Marketing channels	Direct sale to the customers	10	50
		Exhibitions and trade fairs	0	0
		Online platforms	10	50
		Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

8.d: Challenges faced by artisans of the Atur Bamboo industry.

The study highlighted the challenges faced by artisans of the Atur Bamboo industry from table no.4 which are:

Challenges: The major challenges faced in marketing are Strong competition from machine made products with (5%), High transportation costs with (10%), and Government assistance with (5%) each respectively.

Table no.4 Challenges faced by artisans of the Atur Bamboo industry.

SI.no	Factors		Respondents	Percentage
1	Challenges	Limited market access	0	0

		Strong competition from machine made products	5	25
		Lack of advertising and promotion	0	0
		High transportation costs	10	50
		Government assistance	5	25
		Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

9. Conclusion:

Atur bamboo industry plays a significant role in preserving traditional craftsmanship promoting entrepreneurship in Assam. It reflects skills, creativity, and cultural heritage of local artisans who transform natural materials into useful and decorative products. The industry also creates employment opportunities, support livelihoods, and contributes to the local economy. However, the industry may face challenges such as high transportation costs, inadequate financial support, and lack of modern technology. These challenges can be addressed through government assistance, skill development, improved product design, and entrepreneurial training.

10. Limitation of the study:

The study is based on responses from 20 respondents which is limited number of artisans due to time and resource constraints. The accuracy of the findings depends on the willingness of respondents to share information about their business activities and challenges. The study focuses only on the Atur Bamboo industry; therefore, the findings may not represent other bamboo industry.

References:

1. Abrar Ali Saiyed, A. S. (2023). Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategy in Craft-Based Businesses in an Emerging Market: A Qualitative Interpretivist Approach. Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship, 279-302.
2. Arunava Dalal, S. B. (2024). Hurdles to Handicraft Marketing for Artisans Entreprenuers in an Emerging Economy. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 74-94.
3. Bhattacharya, A. B. (2022). Role of Traditional Crafts in Sustainable Development and Building Community Resilience: Case stories from India. Culture, Society, Economy, Politics, 38-50.
4. Jiang, R. (2025). Research on the Modern Product Transformation of Traditional Bamboo Weaving Craft from the Perspective of Sustainable Design. Social Sciences and Humanities, 50-62.
5. Majumdar, S. H. (2020). Strategy for Bamboo craft in Rural and Semi-Urban Central India (A case study from Betul, Central India). Performance Improvement, 24-32.
6. Mishra, P. G. (2025). Bamboo and Cane Craft: Indigenous Craft Practices of Assam. International Journal of Applied Home Science, 682-687.
7. Roy, S. D. (2025). Sustainability Challenges and Opportunities in Tripura's Handloom and Handicraft Industry: A Review. International Journal of Applied Management Research, 175-191.
8. Santus Kumar Deb, P. M. (2022). Promoting Family Business in Handicrafts Through Local Tradition and Culture: An Innovative Approach. Journal of Family Business Management, 213-231.
9. Sarmah, D. S. (2026). Heritage to High- Tech Cultural: Pathways to Entrepreneurial Innovation. International Journal of Recent Trends in Multidisciplinary Research, 166-176.

10. Sundriyal, M. S. (2011). Bamboo Trade and Future Prospects in the Central Himalaya: A case study of the traditional artisans of Uttarakhand, India. Ethnobotany Research & Applications, 445-454.