



The Impact of Cultural Heritage on Creative Industry Development in Nagaland

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Abstract

Cultural heritage plays a crucial role in shaping the creative industries, especially in regions rich in tradition and history, such as Nagaland. This research explores the impact of Naga cultural heritage on the development of creative industries, focusing on arts, crafts, fashion, and design. The study examines how traditional Naga art forms, rituals, folklore, and craftsmanship are integrated into contemporary creative ventures, fostering entrepreneurial opportunities in the region. Additionally, it investigates the challenges and opportunities faced by creative entrepreneurs in preserving and modernizing cultural expressions while ensuring economic sustainability. The paper further highlights the role of cultural tourism and local festivals in promoting these creative industries, and the potential of cultural heritage to attract investment and create jobs. Findings suggest that while cultural preservation is key to the identity of Nagaland, a strategic balance between tradition and innovation is necessary to ensure the long-term growth of the creative sector.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Creative Industries, Entrepreneurship, Tourism, Cultural Preservation and Innovation

Introduction

Cultural heritage plays a significant role in shaping the creative industries, particularly in regions with rich historical and artistic traditions like Nagaland. As a state in Northeast India, Nagaland is home to a diverse range of indigenous tribes, each with its unique cultural practices, traditional arts, and craftsmanship. The state's cultural heritage, characterized by vibrant festivals, traditional music, dance forms, textiles, and indigenous knowledge, provides a strong foundation for the growth of creative industries. However, despite its potential, the integration of cultural heritage into the modern creative economy presents both opportunities and challenges.

Creative industries are defined as sectors that generate value through the production and commercialization of creative content, such as arts, media, fashion, and design (UNCTAD, 2010). In Nagaland, these industries have the potential to not only preserve cultural traditions but also contribute to economic development by creating employment opportunities, generating income, and enhancing tourism. For instance, the Naga handloom and handicraft sector, including the production of traditional textiles, pottery, and woodwork, has garnered attention as an important creative industry (Bamboo, 2021). However, as these industries expand, there is a need to balance the preservation of cultural authenticity with innovation and modernization to meet the demands of global markets.

The impact of cultural heritage on creative industry development in Nagaland can be examined from multiple angles, including the role of indigenous knowledge, the influence of traditional art forms on contemporary creativity, and the potential for creative tourism. Additionally, understanding the challenges faced by creative entrepreneurs, such as access to funding, market competition, and cultural appropriation, is crucial for fostering sustainable growth. This paper aims to explore how cultural heritage can serve as both an asset and a challenge in the development of creative industries in Nagaland, and how these industries can contribute to the state's economic and social development.

Review of the Literature

The intersection of cultural heritage and the creative industries has been widely explored in global contexts, emphasizing the role of traditional art forms, folklore, and local craftsmanship in fostering economic development and cultural preservation (UNCTAD, 2010). However, there is limited research specifically examining this relationship within the context of Nagaland. This review synthesizes the existing literature on the impact of cultural heritage on creative industry development, with a particular focus on Nagaland, drawing on studies related to cultural entrepreneurship, indigenous arts, and the role of heritage in regional economic growth.

Cultural heritage refers to the practices, expressions, knowledge, and artifacts that are passed down through generations, and its integration into the creative industries is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for economic development (Baker, 2017). In many parts of the world, traditional art forms such as textiles, crafts, and music have been successfully incorporated into the creative economy, providing new avenues for entrepreneurship and regional development (Throsby, 2010). For example, the use of cultural heritage in the fashion industry, such as the incorporation of indigenous designs into modern clothing, has been found to create unique marketable products while preserving cultural identity (Okafor, 2018). This trend is particularly relevant for Nagaland, where local crafts such as Naga shawls, wood carvings, and traditional textiles hold significant cultural value.

Nagaland's cultural heritage is deeply rooted in the practices of its indigenous Naga tribes, each with distinct art forms that reflect their history, spirituality, and way of life. These traditions, including weaving, pottery, and woodcrafts, are vital not only to the identity of the Naga people but also to the potential development of creative industries. Studies by Sema (2019) and Khape (2021) indicate that Naga arts are increasingly being recognized in global markets, with emerging entrepreneurs seeking to innovate by blending traditional motifs with contemporary design. For instance, the traditional Naga shawls, known for their intricate patterns and symbolism, have become popular in the fashion industry both within India and internationally (Khape, 2021). However, the challenge remains in preserving the cultural integrity of these traditional crafts while integrating them into commercial ventures.

The literature suggests that creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland face several challenges, including limited access to funding, a lack of marketing infrastructure, and the risk of cultural appropriation (Bamboo, 2021). In addition, there is often a tension between maintaining the authenticity of indigenous cultural products and adapting them to fit market demands. On the other hand, studies show that integrating cultural heritage into the creative industries can lead to job creation, skill development, and the promotion of cultural tourism (Baker, 2017). Cultural festivals and exhibitions, such as the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, serve as important platforms for showcasing Naga art and culture, drawing both domestic and international attention and creating new business opportunities (Sema, 2019).

Cultural tourism has emerged as a significant driver of creative industry development, particularly in regions rich in cultural heritage. According to the United Nations World

Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018), cultural tourism contributes to sustainable economic growth by promoting local heritage and creating opportunities for creative entrepreneurs. In Nagaland, tourism is closely tied to its cultural heritage, with visitors coming to experience traditional festivals, tribal dances, and indigenous crafts. However, the challenge lies in balancing the preservation of cultural authenticity with the demands of a global tourist market (Khape, 2021). The development of creative industries linked to cultural tourism could significantly contribute to local economies, as long as it is done in a way that respects and sustains the cultural values of the Naga people.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of Naga cultural heritage on the development of creative industries in Nagaland.

1. To analyze the role of traditional Naga arts, crafts, and cultural practices in shaping creative sectors such as fashion, design, and media.
2. To identify entrepreneurial opportunities within these creative industries.
3. To assess the economic impact of cultural industries on local growth and tourism.
4. To explore the challenges faced by creative entrepreneurs in preserving and commercializing cultural heritage.

Research Methodology

This study employs a secondary data research methodology to explore the impact of cultural heritage on the development of creative industries in Nagaland. It relies on existing literature, government reports, academic publications, and organizational data to examine how traditional Naga arts, crafts, and cultural practices influence sectors such as fashion, design, media, and tourism. Sources include publications from the Ministry of Culture, Department of Art and Culture, scholarly journals, books, and cultural organizations such as UNESCO. The data is analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes related to heritage-based entrepreneurship, commercialization, preservation challenges, and economic contributions. This approach allows for a broad understanding of the topic using reliable and diverse sources. However, as the study is based solely on secondary data, it is limited by the availability and scope of existing information. All sources used are properly cited to maintain academic integrity and ethical standards.

Result and Discussion

The analysis shows that cultural heritage significantly influences Nagaland's creative industries. Traditional crafts like weaving, pottery, and beadwork are central to fashion and design, offering economic opportunities, especially for women and youth. Cultural tourism and festivals, such as the Hornbill Festival, have enhanced visibility and demand. However, challenges remain limited funding, market access, training, and intellectual property protection. Despite these, cultural heritage holds strong potential for sustainable development if supported by effective policies, infrastructure, and skill-building initiatives.

The Role of Traditional Naga Arts, Crafts, and Cultural Practices in Shaping Creative Sectors such as Fashion, Design, and Media

Traditional Naga arts, crafts, and cultural practices play a significant role in influencing and shaping various creative industries, particularly fashion, design, and media. These elements form the foundation for unique, culturally rich products and content that resonate both locally and globally.

1. **Naga Arts and Crafts in Fashion and Design:** Naga textiles, such as the intricately woven shawls, garments, and accessories, carry deep cultural significance and have become central to the fashion industry in Nagaland. Designers incorporate these traditional materials and patterns into modern clothing, bridging the gap between heritage and contemporary style. For instance, traditional motifs from Naga weaving are frequently seen in both local and global fashion collections, helping preserve cultural heritage while attracting new markets.
2. **Influence of Naga Culture on Graphic and Product Design:** Naga crafts, including wood carving, pottery, and beadwork, are sources of inspiration for designers in fields such as interior design, product design, and graphic arts. These traditional practices influence modern design aesthetics, offering unique, handcrafted products that carry the cultural legacy of Nagaland. The use of symbols, patterns, and materials from Naga culture adds authenticity and distinction to contemporary designs, allowing artisans and designers to tap into niche markets for culturally inspired products.
3. **Naga Cultural Practices in Media and Content Creation:** Naga media, including film, music, and digital content, draws heavily from the region's cultural heritage. Folk music, dance, oral traditions, and storytelling have found a place in contemporary media formats, contributing to the rise of a unique Naga film industry and local music scene. Documentaries, films, and other media formats often focus on Naga cultural stories, rituals, and history, creating a bridge between traditional knowledge and modern entertainment.

In essence, the integration of Naga arts, crafts, and cultural practices into creative sectors like fashion, design, and media not only preserves the unique identity of Nagaland but also drives the growth of these industries in an increasingly globalized world.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in the Creative Industries of Nagaland

1. Fashion and Textile Design

- **Ethnic Fashion Lines:** Entrepreneurs can create fashion lines that incorporate Naga textiles, such as traditional shawls, handwoven fabrics, and beadwork. This could appeal to both local and international markets interested in sustainable, ethnic, and handcrafted fashion.
- **Naga-Inspired Accessories:** Accessories like jewelry, bags, and footwear inspired by Naga crafts and motifs could be marketed as unique, culturally rich products.
- **Traditional Clothing for Modern Audiences:** Reimagining traditional Naga garments for contemporary wear, including formal, casual, or fusion wear, could attract a broader customer base, both within India and abroad.

2. Handicrafts and Artisanal Products

- **Handcrafted Furniture and Home Décor:** Utilizing traditional Naga wood carving and pottery techniques, entrepreneurs could develop unique furniture and home décor items that reflect Naga cultural heritage. These products can cater to niche markets looking for authentic, ethnic designs.
- **Artisanal Goods for Export:** Traditional Naga crafts, such as woven baskets, pottery, and textiles, could be marketed to international markets as unique, handcrafted artisanal goods, targeting ethical consumers and cultural tourists.

3. Cultural Tourism and Event Management

- **Cultural Heritage Tours:** Developing specialized tour packages that highlight Naga culture, traditional villages, festivals, and local crafts could be a lucrative entrepreneurial opportunity, especially with the rising interest in experiential and heritage tourism.
- **Cultural Festivals and Exhibitions:** Organizing events such as the Hornbill Festival and smaller regional festivals that showcase Naga arts, crafts, and performances could attract both tourists and artists, offering opportunities for event management, promotion, and collaboration with local businesses.

4. Media Production and Content Creation

- **Film and Documentary Production:** Producing films, documentaries, or digital content focused on Naga folklore, history, and traditional practices can help preserve the region's culture while reaching broader audiences through platforms like YouTube, Netflix, or regional film festivals.
- **Music and Digital Media:** With Naga music playing a significant role in local traditions, entrepreneurs can create platforms for Naga artists, produce and distribute music, and explore opportunities in digital streaming services for local content.
- **Content Creation for Social Media:** Leveraging social media platforms to promote Naga cultural practices, including Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, could allow content creators to share the rich history and creativity of Nagaland, leading to brand partnerships, sponsorships, and product collaborations.

5. Education and Workshops:

- **Skill Development Programs:** Entrepreneurs can establish institutions or workshops to teach Naga traditional crafts such as weaving, wood carving, and pottery. These can be marketed to both locals and tourists interested in learning these crafts.
- **Online Crafting Courses:** Developing online platforms or courses that teach traditional Naga arts and crafts can help entrepreneurs reach a global audience and preserve these skills for future generations.

6. Cultural Consultancy and Branding:

- **Cultural Branding for Businesses:** Entrepreneurs can offer consultancy services to local businesses looking to integrate Naga cultural elements into their brand identity, from logos to product designs, helping them stand out in a competitive market.

- **Cultural Sensitivity and Heritage Integration:** Offering consultancy on cultural sensitivity and integrating traditional values into modern business models can also be a growing niche, particularly for businesses aiming to serve the local market or tourism sector.

By capitalizing on these entrepreneurial opportunities, Nagaland can not only preserve its cultural heritage but also create thriving industries that contribute to the state's economic growth and global cultural exchange.

The Economic Impact of Cultural Industries on Local Growth and Tourism in Nagaland

Cultural industries play a significant role in driving local economic development and enhancing the tourism sector in regions like Nagaland. By leveraging the state's rich cultural heritage, there are substantial opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and the attraction of both domestic and international tourists.

1. Job Creation and Skill Development

- **Employment Opportunities:** The development of cultural industries in Nagaland, including fashion, arts, crafts, media, and tourism, creates diverse employment opportunities. From artisans and weavers to digital content creators and event organizers, cultural industries provide livelihoods to local communities. This helps reduce unemployment and enhances local economic stability.
- **Skill Development:** With growing interest in Naga traditional crafts, there is an increasing demand for skilled labor. Entrepreneurship in these industries helps build capacity, transfer traditional knowledge, and develop new skills, particularly in design, tourism, and digital media sectors. Workshops, training programs, and educational institutions focused on traditional crafts and modern creative industries further contribute to skill development.

2. Boosting Local Business and Entrepreneurship

- **Cottage and Small-Scale Industries:** The growth of cultural industries encourages the development of small-scale businesses, such as handloom weaving units, handicraft workshops, and local fashion brands. These businesses not only preserve the Naga cultural identity but also drive economic activity, creating a ripple effect throughout the local economy by sourcing raw materials, employing local labor, and fostering innovation.
- **Entrepreneurship Opportunities:** Cultural industries provide fertile ground for new entrepreneurial ventures. Entrepreneurs who focus on integrating Naga cultural heritage into products and services, such as fashion lines, home décor, or media content, can create unique market offerings that cater to both domestic and international markets.

3. Tourism Growth and Cultural Exchange

- **Cultural Tourism:** Nagaland's cultural heritage, including festivals (such as the Hornbill Festival), indigenous arts, traditional architecture, and ethnic cuisine, attracts tourists from around the world. Cultural

tourism brings both direct and indirect economic benefits, including revenue from entry fees, guided tours, accommodations, and local crafts. The promotion of Naga arts and crafts as part of the tourism experience adds significant value to local economies.

- **Destination Branding:** As cultural industries, such as traditional music, dance, and crafts, gain recognition, Nagaland can be marketed as a unique cultural destination, boosting the tourism sector. Increased visibility and the establishment of the state as a hub for cultural tourism also contribute to its global image, attracting more visitors and investors.
- **Cultural Festivals as Economic Drivers:** Major cultural events like the Hornbill Festival not only preserve Naga traditions but also bring significant economic benefits by attracting thousands of visitors. These events create short-term economic boosts through tourism-related services such as hospitality, transportation, and food services, while also providing long-term opportunities for local artisans and entrepreneurs to showcase their work to a wider audience.

4. Increase in Local and Foreign Investment

- **Investment in Infrastructure and Services:** As the creative and cultural sectors grow, there is an increased demand for better infrastructure, including hotels, roads, and transportation systems to accommodate tourists and business activities. Investment in infrastructure leads to job creation and boosts other sectors, such as construction and hospitality.
- **Foreign Investment and Export Potential:** Nagaland's unique cultural products, such as traditional handwoven textiles, jewelry, and handicrafts, hold potential for export. Entrepreneurs can create export channels for these products, attracting foreign investment and broadening the market scope. The development of cultural industries can thus lead to a growth in both local and international trade, fostering a more robust economy.

5. Sustainable Economic Development

- **Preservation of Cultural Identity:** By integrating cultural heritage into the creative industries, Nagaland can foster sustainable development, where economic growth does not come at the expense of cultural erosion. Sustainable entrepreneurship in the creative industries ensures that local traditions are preserved while contributing to the economic fabric of the state.
- **Eco-Tourism Opportunities:** Cultural tourism in Nagaland can be combined with eco-tourism, promoting the state's natural beauty while preserving its cultural heritage. This dual focus on culture and nature enhances the appeal of the region to environmentally conscious travelers, creating a sustainable and profitable tourism model.

6. Social and Community Development

- **Community Empowerment:** As local communities engage with the cultural industries, they experience empowerment through participation in entrepreneurial ventures and cultural preservation. By nurturing local

talent and businesses, cultural industries contribute to greater community cohesion, pride, and social development.

- **Cultural Pride and Social Integration:** The growth of cultural industries fosters a sense of pride among the local population, especially the youth, by providing avenues for creativity and cultural expression. This encourages greater social integration and cultural understanding both within Nagaland and beyond, promoting a unified local identity.

The economic impact of cultural industries in Nagaland is profound, driving local growth, creating employment, fostering entrepreneurship, and enhancing tourism. By capitalizing on its rich cultural heritage, Nagaland can continue to build a sustainable creative economy that not only preserves its traditions but also contributes to long-term economic prosperity. The integration of cultural industries into the state's broader development strategy will ensure that Nagaland remains a culturally vibrant and economically resilient region.

Challenges Faced by Creative Entrepreneurs in Preserving and Commercializing Cultural Heritage

Creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland, like in many other regions, face several challenges when it comes to preserving and commercializing cultural heritage. While the potential for economic growth through the creative industries is significant, the process of integrating traditional cultural elements into the modern marketplace comes with a range of difficulties.

1. Cultural Preservation vs. Commercialization

- **Balancing Authenticity and Market Demands:** One of the biggest challenges for creative entrepreneurs is striking a balance between preserving the authenticity of cultural heritage and meeting the demands of modern markets. Traditional crafts and art forms often carry deep cultural significance, and commercializing them without losing their essence can be difficult. Entrepreneurs must navigate the tension between innovation and authenticity, ensuring that cultural products remain true to their roots while appealing to contemporary consumer preferences.
- **Cultural Appropriation Concerns:** When traditional cultural elements are commercialized, there is a risk of cultural appropriation, where outsiders exploit cultural symbols for profit without understanding or respecting their significance. This can lead to the erosion of cultural identity and cause tensions within the community. Entrepreneurs must be sensitive to these issues while navigating the global market.

2. Limited Access to Funding and Resources

- **Lack of Financial Support:** Many creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland struggle to access funding to start or expand their businesses. Traditional forms of financing, such as loans or grants, may not be readily available, particularly for businesses in the creative industries. The absence of investor interest in niche cultural products can further limit entrepreneurial opportunities.

- **Access to Raw Materials:** Entrepreneurs relying on traditional craftsmanship may face difficulties in sourcing quality raw materials. For example, some materials used in Naga textiles or woodwork may be scarce or difficult to obtain due to environmental factors or lack of infrastructure, adding to production costs and limiting scalability.

3. Market Access and Promotion

- **Limited Local Market:** The local market in Nagaland may be too small to support a thriving creative industry. While there is demand for traditional crafts and arts within the region, expanding to larger national or international markets can be challenging due to limited marketing resources, distribution networks, and market knowledge.
- **Lack of Branding and Visibility:** Many creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland struggle to create strong brands that resonate in national or global markets. Without professional marketing strategies, clear branding, and effective promotion, even high-quality cultural products may fail to attract attention. This limits the commercial success of culturally rich products that could appeal to global audiences.

4. Infrastructure and Technology Constraints

- **Limited Digital Infrastructure:** Many creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland face technological challenges, including poor internet connectivity and limited access to digital platforms for marketing and e-commerce. The lack of an established online presence or the technical skills to leverage digital tools hinders their ability to reach wider, more diverse markets.
- **Lack of Modern Production Facilities:** While traditional crafts thrive in small-scale settings, scaling production for wider markets often requires more advanced facilities and equipment. Entrepreneurs may lack access to such resources, which makes it difficult to expand operations or maintain high production standards.

5. Intellectual Property and Protection of Cultural Heritage

- **Intellectual Property Issues:** In the creative industries, protecting the intellectual property (IP) of traditional art forms and crafts is a significant concern. Many traditional crafts in Nagaland are passed down orally or through practice, with no formal documentation of their origin or ownership. This leaves creative entrepreneurs vulnerable to exploitation or imitation by larger companies who may take advantage of these traditional designs without permission or compensation.
- **Lack of IP Education:** Many local artisans and entrepreneurs are unaware of intellectual property rights and how to protect their creations from misuse. This lack of education in IP law further complicates efforts to safeguard traditional cultural products and commercialize them.

6. Cultural Sensitivity and Ethical Issues

- **Ethical Dilemmas:** Entrepreneurs working with cultural heritage must be mindful of ethical considerations, such

as the appropriation of sacred symbols or customs that may be considered private or sacred by indigenous communities. Ignoring these sensitivities can result in backlash, loss of credibility, and potential harm to the culture being represented.

- **Community Consensus:** In many indigenous cultures, including Nagaland, traditional knowledge and cultural practices are collective, not individual, property. Entrepreneurs must navigate the complexities of securing permission or gaining consensus from the community before commercializing certain aspects of their culture. This process can be time-consuming and contentious, particularly if there is disagreement on what can be shared and commercialized.

7. Educational and Training Gaps

- **Limited Business and Marketing Knowledge:** Many creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland, especially those from rural backgrounds, lack formal training in business management, marketing, and entrepreneurship. This limits their ability to effectively navigate the commercial landscape and expand their businesses. Without adequate education in entrepreneurship, many are unable to scale their enterprises or effectively manage finances, marketing, and operations.
- **Traditional Skills vs. Modern Demands:** While traditional crafts and art forms are central to Nagaland's cultural heritage, they may not always align with the demands of modern design aesthetics or mass production techniques. Entrepreneurs often face the challenge of updating or adapting traditional skills to fit contemporary markets without diluting the cultural essence of their work.

8. Government and Policy Challenges

- **Insufficient Government Support:** While there is growing recognition of the potential of cultural industries in Nagaland, there is still limited governmental support for creative entrepreneurs in terms of grants, subsidies, or policy frameworks. Without government-backed initiatives, it becomes difficult for entrepreneurs to sustain long-term growth or compete with larger, non-local businesses.
- **Lack of Cultural Industry Infrastructure:** The absence of institutions, incubators, and creative industry hubs in Nagaland limits the ability of entrepreneurs to access mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities. A lack of supportive infrastructure further hinders the growth of the creative industries.

The challenges faced by creative entrepreneurs in Nagaland in preserving and commercializing cultural heritage are multifaceted, ranging from the difficulty of maintaining authenticity while meeting market demands, to accessing necessary resources such as funding, technology, and infrastructure. Overcoming these barriers requires a combined effort from local communities, entrepreneurs, government, and educational institutions. By addressing these challenges, Nagaland can unlock the full potential of its cultural industries, ensuring both the preservation of its heritage and the development of sustainable creative enterprises.

Conclusion

Nagaland's rich cultural legacy offers a distinctive platform for the growth of the creative industries, presenting substantial chances for social empowerment, economic expansion, and cultural preservation. The Naga people's varied traditional crafts, music, dance, and indigenous customs have the capacity to spur creativity and entrepreneurship, opening doors for regional craftspeople and business owners to succeed in domestic and international marketplaces.

But there are drawbacks to the commercialisation of cultural heritage, especially when it comes to maintaining sustainable growth, safeguarding intellectual property, and striking a balance between authenticity and consumer desires. Fostering a supportive environment with sufficient funding, skill-development initiatives, infrastructure, and laws safeguarding and advancing regional culture is crucial to overcoming these obstacles. By combining traditional knowledge with contemporary commercial methods, the Naga cultural heritage will be protected and developed into a prosperous industry that helps the community. Nagaland may leverage the potential of its cultural industries to boost economic growth and strengthen its reputation internationally by supporting strategic initiatives like government assistance, hubs for the creative industry, and access to international markets. In the end, the culturally heritage-based creative industries have the potential to be crucial in establishing a resilient and sustainable future for Nagaland, where economic growth and cultural preservation coexist.

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