International Journal of Education, Management, and Technology

e-ISSN : 3026-5444
p-ISSN : 3026-4200

Index : Harvard, Boston, Sydney University, Dimensions, Lens, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/IJEMT.v2i2.3514

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS: A CASE STUDY OF MITHILA THALI RESTAURANT BY CHEF SANTOSH SHAH

Binod Shah[*1], Rajesh Kumar Sah[2], Kiran Kumari Sah[3]
Ramswarup Ramsagar Multiple Campus, Janakpurdham, Tribhuvan University, Nepal
sah@rrmc.tu.edu.np; rajeshksah118@gmail.com

Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Jul 10, 2023	Jul 25, 2023	Jul 28, 2023	Jul 31, 2024

Abstract

This case study explores the entrepreneurial process behind the establishment and growth of Mithila Thali Restaurant, a culinary venture founded by renowned Chef Santosh Shah. Located in the heart of Nepal, Mithila Thali Restaurant has gained significant recognition for its authentic Mithila cuisine, a traditional food heritage from the Mithila region. The study examines the critical stages of the entrepreneurial journey, including opportunity recognition, business planning, resource mobilization, and strategic execution. Through in-depth interviews with Chef Santosh Shah and key stakeholders, along with a comprehensive analysis of business records and market data, the research highlights the challenges and successes encountered during the restaurant's development. Key findings reveal how Chef Shah leveraged his culinary expertise, cultural heritage, and innovative marketing strategies to create a unique dining experience that appeals to both local and international customers. This case study contributes to the broader understanding of

IJEMT Journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

entrepreneurial dynamics in the hospitality industry and provides practical insights for aspiring entrepreneurs aiming to navigate the complexities of starting and sustaining a successful restaurant business.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Mithila Thali Restaurant, Chef Santosh Shah, Culinary Ventures, Hospitality Industry, Cultural Heritage

INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurial process is a complex and multifaceted journey that involves recognizing opportunities, mobilizing resources, and executing strategies to establish and grow a business. In the hospitality industry, this process is often influenced by cultural, economic, and personal factors. Entrepreneurship, particularly through the creation of innovative new ventures, is widely regarded as a crucial contributor to economic development and societal wealth (Obschonka, Silbereinsen, Rodermund, and Stuetzer, 2011). According to Coduras Saiz-Alvarez & Ruiz (2016), the world's most dynamic countries are distinguished by both the quality and quantity of their entrepreneurial activities. This study delves into the entrepreneurial journey of Chef Santosh Shah, the visionary behind Mithila Thali Restaurant, to understand the intricacies of starting and sustaining a culinary venture rooted in traditional Mithila cuisine. Mithila Thali Restaurant, located in the culturally rich region of Nepal, serves as a beacon of traditional Mithila gastronomy. Chef Santosh Shah, a celebrated culinary expert with extensive experience in international kitchens, envisioned a restaurant that not only preserves but also celebrates the culinary heritage of Mithila. His journey from a chef to an entrepreneur is marked by significant milestones, challenges, and innovations that provide valuable insights into the entrepreneurial process within the hospitality sector.

The study focuses on several key aspects of the entrepreneurial process: the identification of a unique culinary opportunity, the development of a business plan that honors traditional cooking methods while appealing to modern tastes, the mobilization of resources including funding, staff, and ingredients, and the strategic execution that has led to the restaurant's success. By examining these elements, the research aims to shed light on the factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of a culturally themed restaurant in a competitive market.

This case study is particularly relevant given the increasing interest in cultural and heritage tourism, where culinary experiences play a pivotal role. It provides a detailed account of how Chef Santosh Shah navigated the entrepreneurial landscape, leveraging his culinary skills, cultural knowledge, and business acumen to create a thriving restaurant. The findings of this study are intended to contribute to the broader understanding of entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry and offer practical guidance for aspiring restaurateurs. Through this exploration, the study seeks to answer key questions about the role of cultural heritage in entrepreneurial ventures, the strategies for overcoming common challenges in the restaurant business, and the impact of innovative practices on business growth and customer satisfaction. The insights gained from Mithila Thali Restaurant's journey will not only enhance the academic discourse on entrepreneurship but also inspire future entrepreneurs to pursue their culinary dreams with a strategic and informed approach.

Statement of the Problem

The entrepreneurial journey in the hospitality industry, particularly in culturally rich regions, is fraught with unique challenges and opportunities. Despite the growing interest in cultural and heritage tourism, many culinary ventures struggle to balance authenticity with modern business demands, resulting in high failure rates. This is especially true for restaurants that aim to preserve and promote traditional cuisines while adapting to contemporary market trends.

Mithila Thali Restaurant, founded by Chef Santosh Shah, represents a distinctive case of entrepreneurial success rooted in the authentic culinary traditions of the Mithila region in Nepal. However, the specific processes, strategies, and factors contributing to its successful establishment and growth remain underexplored. There is a need to understand how Chef Shah identified and seized the entrepreneurial opportunity, navigated the challenges inherent in launching a culturally themed restaurant, and implemented innovative practices to ensure sustainability and growth. The central problem addressed in this study is the lack of comprehensive insights into the entrepreneurial process within the context of a culturally themed restaurant. Key questions include:

- How did Chef Santosh Shah recognize and capitalize on the opportunity to promote Mithila Thali?
- What strategic steps were taken to develop and sustain the business?

- How can these insights inform and support future entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector?

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore and analyze the entrepreneurial process behind the establishment and success of Mithila Thali Restaurant by Chef Santosh Shah. This overarching goal is broken down into the following specific objectives:

- To examine how Chef Santosh Shah identified the market opportunity for a restaurant specializing in Mithila cuisine.
- To investigate the steps taken to develop and sustain the business.
- To contribute to the academic discourse on entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the entrepreneurial process behind Mithila Thali Restaurant, founded by Chef Santosh Shah. The methodology includes a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial journey. A qualitative case study design is chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena within their real-life context. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring the multifaceted entrepreneurial process of Mithila Thali Restaurant. Semi-Structured Interviews were conducted with Chef Santosh Shah to gain insights into his entrepreneurial journey, including opportunity recognition, business planning, resource mobilization, and strategic execution. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to understand different perspectives on the restaurant's operations and success factors. Thematic analysis was used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the data, focusing on the identified themes such as opportunity recognition, business planning, resource mobilization, challenges, and strategies The first draft of the research paper was sent to chef Santosh Shah for his view on it. He reviewed it and suggested a few ideas which are incorporated in final research paper. Hence, the authenticity of the information shared in research paper assured by the researchers.

Significance of the Study

The study on the entrepreneurial process behind Mithila Thali Restaurant by Chef Santosh Shah holds significant value for multiple stakeholders, including academic researchers, aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers, and the hospitality industry at large. The following points highlight the importance and contributions of this research:

- This study adds to the existing body of knowledge on entrepreneurship by providing an in-depth case analysis of a culturally themed restaurant. It contributes to the understanding of how traditional cultural elements can be successfully integrated into modern business practices.
- By focusing on a restaurant in Nepal, the study offers valuable insights into the entrepreneurial dynamics in a developing country context, which is often underrepresented in entrepreneurship literature.
- The use of qualitative methods, including interviews and observations, enriches the methodological diversity in entrepreneurship research, demonstrating the value of in-depth, context-specific analysis.
- The detailed examination of Chef Santosh Shah's entrepreneurial journey provides a practical blueprint for aspiring restaurateurs, particularly those interested in starting culturally themed culinary ventures.
- By identifying common challenges faced during the establishment and growth phases, the study offers practical advice on how to anticipate and overcome obstacles, thereby reducing the risk of business failure.
- The study underscores the potential for cultural heritage to be a unique selling proposition in the hospitality industry. It demonstrates how cultural authenticity can attract and retain customers, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of hospitality businesses.
- The findings can inform policymakers about the importance of supporting cultural enterprises. Policies that provide financial, technical, and marketing assistance to such ventures can help preserve cultural heritage while promoting economic development.

- The success of Mithila Thali Restaurant can inspire local communities to leverage their cultural assets for economic development. It demonstrates how cultural pride and economic success can go hand-in-hand.
- This study offers valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in the field of entrepreneurship and hospitality.

Limitation of the Study

As it is case study, there are several limitations of this study. Some major limitations can be presented as follows:

- As a qualitative case study, the research may be subject to the subjective interpretations of the researcher.
- Findings from a single case study may not be generalizable to all entrepreneurial ventures in the hospitality industry.
- This study is mainly based on the information provided by the owner.
- The company under study is newly established due to which it has not experienced the ups and downs.
- This study mainly considers entrepreneurial process, not about overall performance of business.

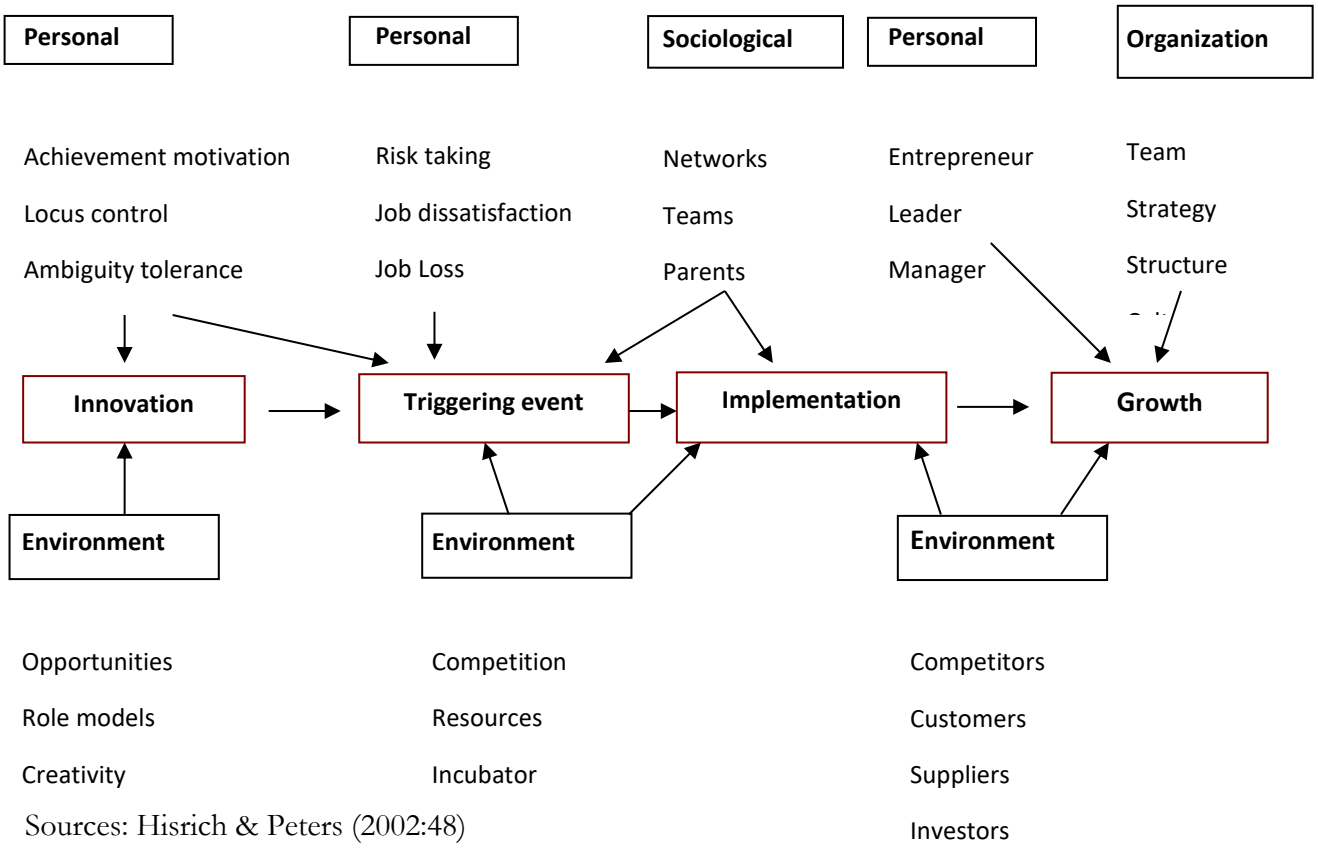
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The entrepreneurial process: Theoretical perspective

Entrepreneurial process results creation of new venture. Enterprises are the outcome of the efforts of entrepreneurs. At start-up, the entrepreneurship process is a course of action that involves all functions, activities and actions associated with identifying and evaluating perceived opportunities and the bringing together of resources necessary for the successful formation of a new firm to pursue and seize the said opportunity (Bygrave, 1997 :2, cornwal & Naughton, 2003:62). Once set up, the process of entrepreneurship becomes effectively a cyclical progression of opportunity targeting and making strategic decisions

regarding the allocation of scarce resources in pursuit of value adding opportunities (Glancey, 1998:18; Kodithu wakhu & Rosa, 2002 : 443)

Bhave (1995:223) identifies four stages namely opportunity identification, technology set up, organization creation and the exchange stages. This is supported by Hisrich & peters (2002:40) who articulate four stage of the entrepreneurial process namely identifying and evaluating the opportunity, developing the business plan, determining the resources required, and managing the resulting enterprise which can be illustrated by following figure:



Sources: Hisrich & Peters (2002:48)

Figure 1: Entrepreneurial process model by Hisrich & Peters

Rwigema & venter (2004 : 28) identify five specific steps, namely identify, measuring and refining an opportunity from multiple ideas, formulating a business plan, marshalling the resources, organizing and mobilizing a team, and overseeing the new venture creation and growth. Ardichvili et al (2003 : 107) illustrated five step path from market needs to a successful enterprise. The study integrates of all the activities in the entrepreneurial process as articulated by the authors (Bhave 1995 : 223, Kodithuwakhu & Rosa, 2002 : 443, Hirsrich & peters, 2002 : 48, Ardichvili, 2003: 107)

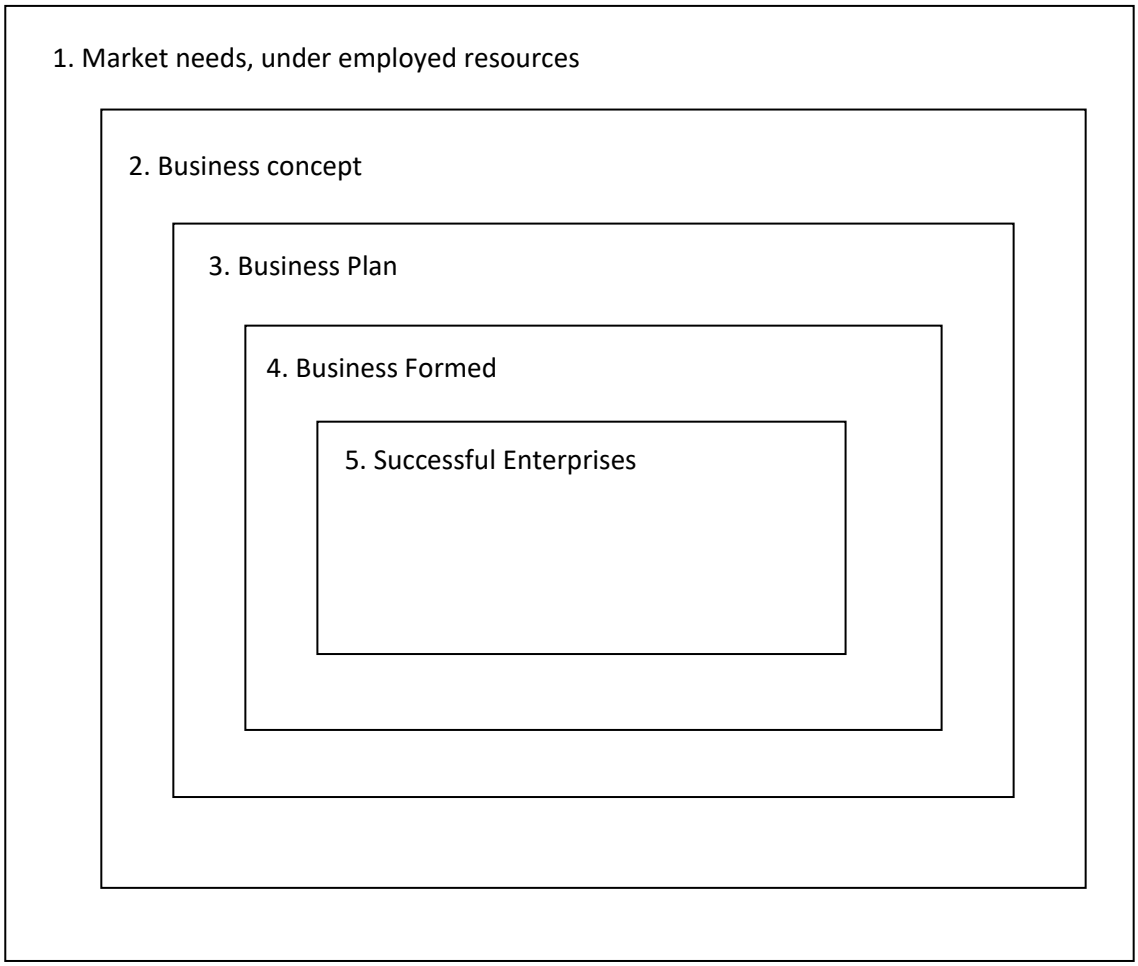


Figure 2: The entrepreneurial process by Ardichvili et al

Sources: Ardichvili et al (2003 : 107)

Venture creation process of Mithila Thali Resturant by Chef Santosh Shah

The firm Mithila Thali Resturant By Chef Santosh Shah established in 2023 is situated in heart of Mithila i.e. Janakpurdham at Prime location Ramanand Chowk. Mithila Thali is one of a kind of dining experience crated by local Mithila Chef and Master Chef Winner Santosh Shah. Its authentic Mithila Cuisine is made from locally sourced ingredients and prepared according to traditional recipes ensuring a taste of the regions culinary heritage. It established with the commitment to support local talent and showcasing the works of Mithila's artists and craftsmen. It also provides luxurious room facility with beautiful Mithila art, providing a complete cultural immersion.

Biography of Chef Santosh Shah

Santosh Shah was born on 5th November, 1985 and raised in a small village Karjanha, Sirha, Nepal. Santosh's inspiration and amazing dishes come from the ingredients from his childhood such as terrine made from calacasia leaf, a spinach like leaf with a deep earthy flavour. One of his signature dishes the 'Tandoori Octopus' has the element of calacosia leaf, as he was growing up this leaf used to grow in his mother's garden during rainy season.

Santosh is the youngest of seven siblings. All his siblings or moved away for work, he grew up with just his mother. At age of 14 years he moved from Nepal to India with friends from the village to work as a commis in a five star restaurant. He always had a dream to become a big chef and now he is here in London as an Executive chef. It took Santosh eighteen years of working his way up through the kitchen ranks. In 2011, he relocated from Gujarat, India to London, UK, where one of his first jobs was at Brasserie Blanc, owned by Raymand Blanc.

Idea generation for Mithila Thali

After winning master chef, the professional rematch 2022, Chef Santosh Shah came to Janakpurdham for receiving blessing of Goddess Sita in Janki temple. When chef was in Janakpurdham, his friend took him to a food joint. As he wanted to have something light, Shah ordered 'Jeer rice', but he was disappointed with what was served. It was state and bland. A few months after that, another event in Janakpurdham made him realize how the city doesn't have eateries that serve clean, fresh and tasty food.

Chef Shah taking a rickshaw asked the driver to recommend a good place to eat. The rickshaw driver was taken aback by the question and responded after a few minutes of thinking. "There was a place that served great food. I'm not sure if they're maintained the quality till today". The chef was surprised that the man couldn't name any other restaurants known for good food.

These events compelled Shah to open his own restaurant in the city. He believes Janakpurdham has delicious food, but the eateries do not maintain the quality of their restaurant, the city's delicacies remain underrated. He also points out how varied the food items and flavors are and how everything is quite healthy so, he got to work and has now launched his own restaurant.

Establishment of Mithila Thali by Chef Santosh Shah

Chef Santosh Shah was highly enthusiastic to share about the ideas and incidents related with this establishment. When he visited Mirchiya municipality where his elder brother chef Dilip Shah operating restaurant which also serving authentic Mithila Khana. Chef Santosh Shah was very empressed with such food and shared ideas to establish Resturant in Janakpurdham as Mithila Thali as it is centre place for origin of such authentic food. His brother convinced and they started preliminary activities for establishment of such restaurant which will serve the authentic food with brand Mithila Thali.

Chef Santosh Shah established 'Mithila Thali Restaurant By Chef Santosh Shah 'on 20 may, 2023 to serve authentic food and luxurious lodging facility. It established at prime location of Ramanand Chowk, Janakpurdham with investment of Rs. 1,80,00,000 with the vision to extend the local Mithila Thali of Janakpurdham as international food brand. The restaurant operating from 10 am to 10 pm. Day by day, it is becoming more popular and taste of Mithila Thali is appreciated by various visitors. The authentic Mithila Thali served with various local dishes at price of Nepalese Rs. 300 in Janakpurdham. Tastes of Mithila indulge in the rich and vibrant flavors of Mithila cuisine. The aromatic species to the unique blend of ingredients, each dish tells a story of tradition and culture. The restaurant provided employment opportunity to local people and artist to provide presence of Mithila authenticity. Chef Santosh proudly explained that the 'Mithila Thali' is a brand of Janakpurdham which will be extended to 500 branch in five years.

Growth of Mithila Thali restaurant

At present time, Mithila Thali By Chef Santosh Shah completed 13 month period. In such period, restaurant of Janakpurdham is well set and becoming popular day by day. This year, chef aims to establish five branch at national and international level. Next branch already established and inaugurated in Jhamsikhal, Lalitpur on 19 May, 2024. Partnering with his brother Dilip Shah and Chef Laxman, Chef Santosh invested approximately fifty lakh rupees to bring flavour of Mithila to the heart of Kathmandu. The next target is Gaushala, Kathmandu, Birgunj, Biratnagar, Ayodhya and Qatar in the same year. Such trend shows positive growth of Mithila Thali.

CONCLUSION

This case can be the influencing factor for the future researchers and writers. It has presented the conceptual and empirical findings about the stages applied and applicable to entrepreneurial process. The case of Mithila Thali restaurant By Chef Santosh Shah started with single restaurant in Janakpurdham with local food branding 'Mithila Thali' and such food branding is now in the process of getting popularity and expanding nationally and also will grow internationally in near future. The most admirable aspect of chef Santosh Shah is that he promoted local food brand, even he is winner of international master chef, U.K. He is expert of international food and taste. This motivates innovation to do something new with promoting their local authencity in new way. This study can be applied in national planning, specifically in the field of hotels and tourism in Nepal.

Conflict of interest

The present study is conducted for own purpose as well as generalization of knowledge. It is not conducted for specific organization for their organizational purpose. So, there is no conflict of interest to any parties for the investigation conducted under study.

Acknowledgement

The research paper would not have come out without help of many well-wishers, expert advisors, respondents and restaurant owners' support. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to chef Santosh Shah for his cooperation and providing relevant information and data for the study. We are grateful to Dr. Suresh Kumar Sahani for his valuable guidance throughout this work.

REFERENCES

Alderich, H.E. & Martinez, M.A. (2001). Many are called and few are chosen: A evolutionary perspective for the study of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship Theory and practice.

Baumol, W.J. (1968). Entrepreneurship in economic theory. American Economic Review

Behave, M. P. (1994). A process model of entrepreneurial venture creation. Journal of Business Venturing, 9(3), 223-249.

Bird, B. (1988). Implementing entrepreneurial ideas: The case for intention. Academy of Management Review, 13(2), 442-453.

Bygrave, W.D. & Hofer, C. (1991). Theorizing about entrepreneurship and practice.

Coduras, A., Saiz-Alvarez, J.M., & Ruiz, J. (2016). Measuring readiness for entrepreneurship: An informational proposal. Journal of Innovation and knowledge, 1: 99-108.

Harvey, M. & Evaus, R. (1995). Strategic windows in the entrepreneurial process. Journal of Business Venturing.

Holt, D.H. (1992). Entrepreneurship. New Venture Creation. Englewood clifs, NJ : Prentic Hall.

Joshi, N. C. (1977) "Developing Entrepreneurship in Nepal, Nepal industrial Digest (1977), NIDC Kathmandu

Obschonka, M., Silbereisen, R.K., Rodermund, E.S., & Stuetzer, M. (2011). Nascent entrepreneurship and developing individual: Early entrepreneurial competence in adolescence and venture creation success during the career. Journal of Business Venturing, 79:121-133.

Ranke, N., & Luthje, C. (2004). Entrepreneurial intentions of foreign employment returnees: A benchmarking study. International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management, 1(3), 269-288.

Shrestha, J. B. (1982), "Role of Entrepreneurs and Managers in Nepal". Emerging Concepts in Nepalese Management, CEDA, Kathmandu