

**LOCAL CRAFTS AND DESIGN BUSINESS  
STRATEGIES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
BATIK CRAFT PRACTICE AT *ALUVIHARE*  
HERITAGE CENTRE (AHC)**

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Degree of Master of Science (by Research)

Department of Integrated Design

University of Moratuwa

Sri Lanka

April 2023

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Thesis/Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
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## Declaration

I declare that this is my own work, and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any University or Institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the Acknowledgment is made in the text. Also, I hereby grant University of Moratuwa, the non-exclusive right to reproduce and distribute my dissertation, in whole or in part in print, electronic or other medium. I retain the right to use this content in whole or part in future works (such as articles or books).

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## Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the key business strategies employed by Ena de Silva, a renowned artist in the field of Batik craft, at *Aluwihare* Heritage Centre (AHC) in *Matale*, Sri Lanka. Craft producers often face challenges in successfully marketing their products due to limited access to markets and lack of demand. To address this, the study employed naturalistic, shadowing, covert, and participatory observation, as well as narrative approach interviews to identify the business strategy practices and challenges faced by the Batik craft business in marketing their products. By observing the contextual factors, resources, and attributes that influence the business, the study revealed that contextual factors have contributed to improving the quality of the products by constantly enhancing existing designs and preserving the essence of the craft. Craft manufacturers perceive their products as unique and of superior quality. However, small businesses encounter obstacles in generating demand and identifying target customers. Therefore, it is crucial for craft manufacturers to identify their target market and understand customer needs in order to develop an effective business plan. The study also discussed the involvement of designers or creative individuals in the knowledge management process for creative products, with specific reference to AHC.

### **Keywords:**

Business strategy; Batik Craft; Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); Creative Knowledge Management (CKM); Creative Economy; Design Business

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## CHAPTER 01 – INTRODUCTION

Culture, as an industry, plays an instrumental role in nourishing the economy of a country. In fact, the creative industry is recognised as an important sector and a significant contributor to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in most countries. The essence of human creativity is considered to be the source of cultural and creative industries goods and services.

The emerging creative economy involving craft-based businesses plays an important role in the overall economy of contemporary Sri Lanka. There are both traditional as well as contemporary craft-based businesses that are established in the Sri Lankan society.

In research from Perera et al. (2014), in Sri Lanka, nearly 238,586 individuals are employed in the identified creative occupations. Approximately 62% of these creative workers are engaged in the craft sector. It should be highlighted that Sri Lanka has also taken a position to make many of these emerging aspects of its economy to be sustainable and ethical. Among the craft-based businesses in Sri Lanka, Batik based crafts are a prominent industry with sustainable craft practices.

Since creative industries are one of the most important contributors to any economy, a proper understanding of their design business strategies is important. It helps both policymakers and industry professionals to communicate key concepts, frameworks, share reliable data and pave the way for greater innovations in the creative sector.

Taking one of the pioneers in the local batik-craft industry, the prestigious *Aluvihare* Heritage Centre in *Aluvihare, Matale* as the context of interest, this paper herewith explores the key design business strategies that strengthen the longevity of Batik Craft-Based businesses in Sri Lanka and explores how design affects craft-based business mechanisms. Therefore, understanding the ethical and sustainable business systems that were indigenous to more traditional Sri Lankan communities such that within that context with their inherent respect for social structures and the environment, is of utmost relevance to this study.

## 1.1. Context and Background

The concept of cultural industries was not born yesterday. It has long grown and evolved along, adapting to technological advancements and the growing nature of media, at times with sophisticated, authentic production processes, sticking to the tradition and large-scale distribution methods, in order to reach global markets.

“Horkheimer and Adorno first used the term ‘Culture Industry’ in their critique of the commercial production of mass culture. From their point of view, the culture industry was one entity composed of all forms of commercial cultural productions: “The entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms” (Adorno, 1991, p.87). Their discussion did not differentiate between what we would consider different cultural industries; rather, it was focused on a complex critique of the role of capitalist forms of production in the cultural realm. In their work, Horkheimer and Adorno critically discuss the trend toward commercial cultural production at the expense of traditional “art for art’s sake” (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002)

UNESCO encourages the use of UNESCO’s Framework for Cultural Statistics developed by the Institute for Statistics as a starting point. The proposed definition is broad. According to UNESCO, the cultural and creative industries are:

“Those sectors of organized activity that have as their main objective the production or reproduction, the promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services and activities of content derived from cultural, artistic or heritage origins.” (Pessoa et al., 2009)

Justin O’ Connor’s ‘The cultural and creative industries: a literature review (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) “explores both the history of the ideas of the cultural industries and how this has changed and developed our current interest in the creative economy” (Connor J. O., 2010).

The emerging creative economy is an important aspect of the overall economy of contemporary Sri Lanka. Most of the equipment and tools that the ancient Sri Lankans made in cottage level have turned into cultural industries at present. Furthermore, they have developed into a way where a profit can be earned economically. For an example, craft practices such as earthenware, rush and reed products and textiles have become into industries that could even contribute towards the country's economy. Today, in the global context, cultural industries with creative inputs play a major role on the creative economy. To be briefly stated, "Creative economy is about the relationship between creativity and economics. Creativity is not new and neither is economics, but what is new is the nature and extent of the relationship between them and how they can be combined to create value and wealth" (Suciu, 2008). As a country with agriculture based economic background, Sri Lanka can be considered to be still novel to the concept of "Creative Economy".

The author John Howkins has written a book named, "The Creative Economy: How people make money from ideas" on this regard. Further, "Creative economy is the ideas business: it asks to turn ideas into products" (Suciu, 2008). The main point that can be derived through these facts is that a country where its people are enriched with creative ideas has a longer way forward in an economic sense. Sri Lanka has also started focusing on earning an economical profit through creative practices. As identified in the creative industries mapping report

"Creative and Cultural Industries in Sri Lanka" (Creative and cultural industries in Sri Lanka, 2020) industries such as Arts and Crafts, Music, Architecture, Design, Performing Arts, Film industry, Advertising, Video games and Photography can be considered to be examples for this. Local crafts have received a prominent place here. Local craft communities and groups with both traditional and cultural values embedded within them have been continuing their industries even at present. It can be observed that these artisans strive to maintain the persistence of their industries despite of any social, economic or political impacts. Both the government and non-government organizations conduct different projects to uplift the local based industries

as well as the livelihood of these artisans. A major factor that should be taken into consideration at this point is that it is important to thrive these communities while preserving their unique characteristics and their knowledge.

However, Sri Lanka has also taken a position to make many of these emerging aspects of its economy to be sustainable and ethical. Therefore, understanding the ethical and sustainable business systems that were indigenous to more traditional and cultural craft communities is very important. ‘*Aluvihare* Heritage Centre’ (AHC) in *Matale* which is also known as “*Aluvihare* Workshop” established in 1982 by Ms. Ena de Silva *Aluvihare* is such an ongoing art, craft and design-based business practice in Sri Lanka. At the time AHC was established, Ms. Ena was living in Colombo with her family.

In 1962, 40-year-old Ena de Silva moved into the unique courtyard house that Architect Geoffrey Bawa had built for her in Colombo and started to experiment with batik making. Assisted by Laki Senanayake and her son Anil, she established Ena de Silva Fabrics and went on to produce such masterpieces as the ceiling of Bawa's *Bentota* Beach Hotel and the banners that hang in front of Sri Lanka's parliament. In 1982 she returned to her ancestral home in the hills above *Matale* and founded a women's cooperative to make batiks and needlework along with a brass foundry and wood-carving workshop. The cooperative has now existed for more than a quarter century and continues to make modern fabrics and carvings, which are inspired by traditional Sri Lankan designs. (Robson, 2008)

*Aluvihare* Heritage Centre (AHC) is considered to be one of the best resources to study the local craft-based business models. As a bridge narrowing design and business, it is also a good example to comprehensively elaborate how the business potentials of arts, crafts and designs can be identified and used into the development of the economy of a country. In order to maintain a sustainable design business while managing the traditional and cultural values, as well as the human resources, one must definitely possess a strategic and a proper management skill. Such strategic approaches can be identified when the system of the AHC was examined. Several strategies that should

be taken into consideration while carrying an art, craft and design related business in the local context, was studied through this research.

## **1.2. Problem statement**

In the dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of the creative economy, local craft-based businesses have emerged as resilient contributors to cultural heritage and economic growth. One such exemplar of sustained success is the AHC in Sri Lanka. This unique establishment, deeply rooted in the traditional craft of batik, stands as a testament to the enduring power of design-driven enterprises. Amidst globalization, technological advancements, and shifting consumer preferences, AHC's ability to thrive demands closer examination. At the heart of this investigation lies the critical question: what is the intricate interplay between design and the long-term triumph of AHC, and what precise factors have propelled its sustained achievements over the years?

AHC's journey encapsulates a fusion of cultural legacy and strategic adaptation. As the creative economy continues to evolve, the role of design is increasingly recognized as a linchpin in shaping both aesthetics and functionality. How has AHC harnessed design as a catalyst for its longevity? What strategies has it employed to bridge traditional craftsmanship with contemporary market demands, ensuring not only relevance but also resilience in the face of change?

## **1.3. Objectives**

- To identify and record a sustainable craft-based design business model that is suitable for the Sri Lanka context.
- To recognize the strategic business approaches that have been used to continue the AHC as a sustainable business throughout the time.
- To examine the social, cultural and political tools/values that impact on the sustainability of a community-based craft design business.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

- What is a craft-based design business?
- What strategies AHC has implemented for the sustainability of its craft-based business?
- What role has design played in the process?

#### **1.5. Scope and limitations**

The involvement of crafts in businesses within Sri Lanka can be observed to a considerable level as there are businesses ranging from small-scale to large-scale. All such craft businesses that are carried out by brands, labels, individuals or companies have taken different business approaches which are also unique to each business. AHC was used as a special reference in this study in order to examine the involvement of local crafts and business strategies related to its practice.

Practicing several crafts within the AHC is a unique aspect that is being observed. They are Batik, Hand Embroidery, Patchwork, Appliqué, Brassware and Carpentry. These crafts have been practiced by people coming from the *Aluwihare* region in *Matale*, located in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Batik was one of the main crafts Ms. Ena de Silva herself has experimented and practiced. She was the pioneer who introduced Batik crafts to women of *Matale* area, trained and brought them up as skilled artisans for the industry. Studying only the Batik craft-based business strategies at the AHC was seemed to be timely appropriate when considering the time frame of the research.

#### **1.6. Methodology and Research Design**

The research is carried out through a mixed method research approach whereas it has given more prominence towards qualitative survey measures over quantitative survey measures. The Batik craft community that was directly linked with the AHC and the



personnel that worked along with Ms. Ena de Silva to carry this out as a business, were mainly used for data gathering purposes. Additionally, a publication by AHC and some written documents with information related to Ms. Ena de Silva were also used. The research was conducted under 04 main phases.

**Phase 01: Context Study (CS)**

**Phase 02: System Identification (SI)**

**Phase 03: Business Strategy through Design approaches (BS)**

**Phase 04: Analysis, Discussion and Conclusion (ADC)**

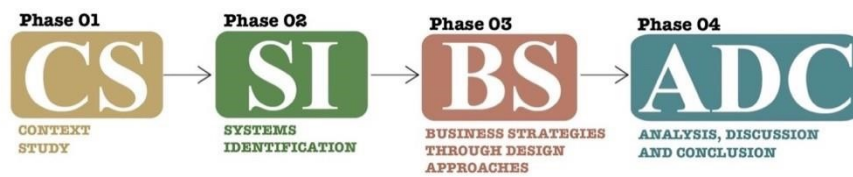


Figure 1 - Major Phases of the research design. Created by author

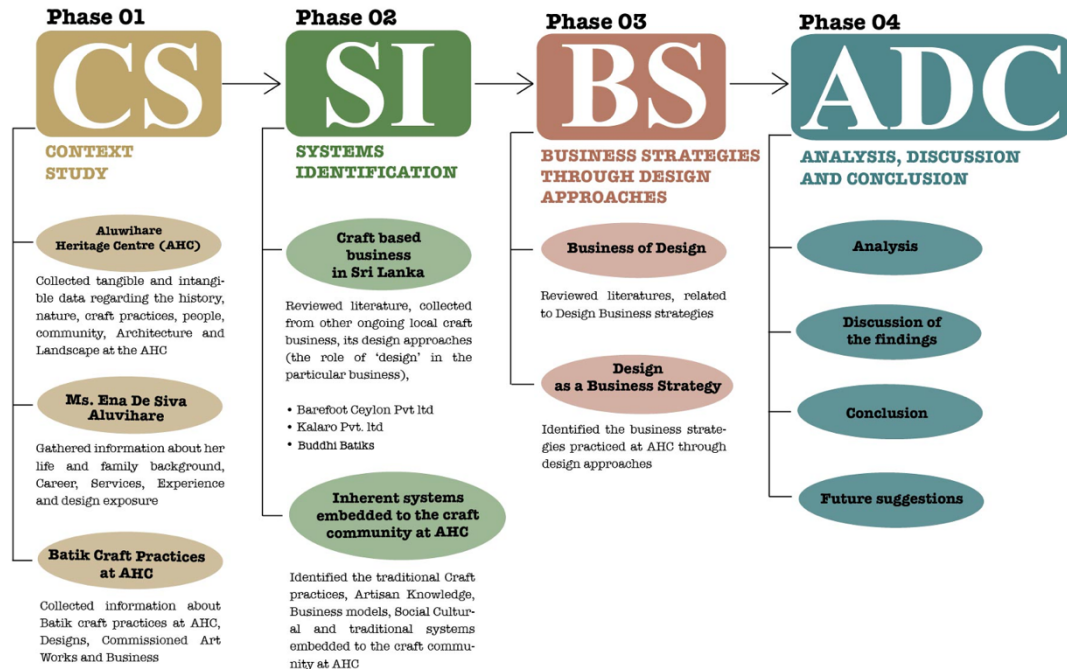


Figure 2 - Summary of the research Design. Created by author.

All the data were gathered from appropriate and accurate sources, which directly link with the major cases. Formal and informal interviews, written evidence and preserved documents played a major role in data gathering.

As a part of the background study, literature was reviewed, with the focus on key disciplines such as theories of design business strategies, philosophy of the AHC and local craft practice. According to the relative prominence of different craft practices at AHC, the case study analysis was mainly focused on batik craft practice of *Aluvihare* workshop.

<b>Phase No/ Phase Name</b>	<b>Research Area and Research Plan</b>	<b>Data gathering Methods</b>
Phase 01  <b>Context Study (CS)</b>	<b>Ms. Ena De Siva Aluvihare</b> (Gathered information about her life and family background, Career, Services, Experience and design exposure)	<p><b>Published documents</b> (Books, Research publications, Online publications)</p> <p><b>Formal Interviews</b> (Conducted formal interviews with resource persons which has a direct link with the AHC - Archt. Channa Daswatte, Mr. Lucky Senanayake, Archt. Amila De Mel, Ms. Chandra Aluwihare, Mr. Keerthi Wickramasooriya)</p> <p><b>Informal Discussions</b> (Had informal discussions with Aluvihare Artisans)</p>

	<p><b>Aluwihare Heritage Centre (AHC)</b> (Collected tangible and intangible data regarding the history, nature, craft practices, people, community, Architecture and Landscape at the AHC)</p>	<p><b>Formal Interviews</b> (Conducted formal interviews with resource persons which has a direct link with the <i>Aluwihare</i> Workshop (Archt. Channa Daswatte, Mr. Lucky Senanayake, Archt. Amila De Mel, Ms. Chandra Aluwihare, Mr. Keerthi Wickramasooriya)</p>
	<p><b>Batik Craft Practices at AHC</b> (Collected information about Batik craft practices at AHC, Designs, Commissioned Art Works and Business)</p>	<p><b>Informal Discussions</b> (Had informal discussions with <i>Aluwihare</i> Artisans)</p> <p><b>Formal Interviews</b> (Conducted formal interviews with recourse persons)</p> <p><b>Case Studies</b> (<i>Bentota</i> Beach Hotel Ceiling, Oberoi Hotel Flags, Parliament Flags)</p> <p><b>Craft product analysis</b> (Batik products from the AHC)</p>
<p>Phase 02</p> <p><b>Systems Identification (SI)</b></p>	<p><b>Craft based business in Sri Lanka</b> (Reviewed literature, collected from other ongoing local craft business, its design approaches (the role of ‘design’ in the particular business),</p> <p>Barefoot Ceylon Pvt ltd</p> <p>Kalaro Pvt. ltd</p> <p>Buddhi Batik</p> <p><b>(Investigate answers for Research Question 01)</b></p>	<p><b>Formal Interviews</b> (Formal interviews with</p> <p>Barefoot Ceylon Pvt ltd – Mr Dominic Sansoni</p> <p>Kalaro Pvt. ltd – Mr Priyantha Subasighe</p> <p>Buddi Batik – Ms.Darshi Keerthisena</p> <p><b>Published documents</b> (Books, Research publications, Online publications)</p>

	<p><b>Inherent systems embedded to the craft community at AHC</b> (Identified the traditional Craft practices, Artisan Knowledge, Business models, Social Cultural and traditional systems)</p>	<p><b>Informal Discussions</b> (Had informal discussions with Aluvihare Artisans)</p> <p><b>Participatory case study</b> (Reproduction of the <i>Bentota</i> beach Ceiling)</p>
Phase 03	<p><b>Business of Design</b> (Reviewed literatures, related to Design Business strategies)</p> <p><b>(Investigate answers for Research Question 01)</b></p>	<p><b>Published documents</b> (Books, Research publications, Online publications)</p>
<b>Business Strategies through Design Approaches (BS)</b>	<p><b>Design as a Business Strategy</b> (Identified the business strategies practiced at AHC through design approaches)</p> <p><b>(Investigate answers for Research Question 02)</b></p> <p><b>(Investigate answers for Research Question 03)</b></p>	<p><b>Case Study Analysis</b> (<i>Bentota</i> Beach Hotel- Batik Ceiling, Oberoi Hotel Flags, Parliament Flags)</p> <p><b><i>Alu</i> Kitchen and Traditional food culture, Landscape and Architecture of the AHC</b></p>
Phase 04	<p><b>Analysis, Discussion and Conclusion</b></p>	
<b>Analysis, Discussion and Conclusion (ADC)</b>		

Table 01 – Research Design by author

## **Chapter 02 – Creative Industries and Craft related Design Businesses in Sri Lanka**

### **2.1. Craft as a Cultural Industry**

Nowadays, the phrase "Creative Industry" is frequently utilized. The Labour Government of Great Britain offered the most accurate description of a creative sector in 1998, defining it as a "collection of economic organisations that utilise individual creativity, skills, and abilities in order to produce income and jobs" (Gibbon, 2011).

Craft can be understood as a process and as “an approach, an attitude or an action ... a way of doing things” underpinned by particular ways of thinking which are constructed in response to an array of cultural, economic, political and societal frameworks as well as physical forces which form the context for craft.” (Brown, 2014).

According to research from Lawrence and Phillips (2002), cultural products are, to put it simply, goods and services that are prized for their "meaning." Because they keep consumers warm or get them from Point A to Point B, cultural products are not valued. Instead, they are valued because they can be interpreted by the consumer or by others in a way that the consumer values.

Horkheimer and Adorno initially referred to the term culture industry in their critique of the commercial production of mass culture. From their perspective, the culture industry was one entity composed of all forms of commercial cultural production: “The entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms” (Adorno, 1991, p. 87). Their discussion did not differentiate between what we would consider different cultural industries; rather, it was focused on a complex critique of the role of capitalist forms of production in the cultural realm. In their work, Horkheimer and Adorno critically discuss the trend toward commercial cultural production at the expense of traditional “art for art’s sake.”

“It is crucial to distinguish between creative and cultural industries. The two concepts are deeply related, the main difference being obvious CI orientation towards profits by employing creativity and cultural heritage” (UNCTAD, 2004). They showed that contrary to creative industries, cultural industries seek to lessen social exclusion, form a national identity, preserve and secure cultural heritage (32 Creative Economies in Action, 2013) or aim toward other non-economic goals.

The United Nations Council for Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) tariff classification defines crafts as those manually produced items that embody artistic features. (United Nations Council for Trade and Development, 1979). At the 1997 UNESCO/ITC International Symposium on Crafts and the Definition International Market: Trade and Customs Codification, crafts were defined as created by artisans, either entirely by hand or with the assistance of hand-tools or even mechanical means, as long as the artisan's direct manual contribution remains the most substantial component of the finished product." These are produced in unlimited quantities and with raw materials derived from renewable resources. The uniqueness of artisanal products stems from their distinguishing characteristics, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant.

## **2.2 Craft Practices and Creative Businesses**

### **2.2.1. External (Social, Cultural and Political) Influences on Craft Practices**

Crafts and visual arts are highly influenced by country-specific factors, which include socioeconomic, traditional, and political factors, small local markets, a lack of support and training, and a lack of skills to develop these enterprises in terms of exchanges and sustainable trade relationships within the region and into international markets.

Some of the characteristics of handicrafts, according to Yavari (2010: 8), include performing some basic production stages by hand, supplying the majority of raw materials from local sources, having cultural significance, not requiring significant

investment, the applicability of its products, having a high value-added quality compared to other industries, having the ability to create and develop in different areas (urban, rural, and tribal communities), mobility of experiences and production secrets, and oral tradition of bringing down the craft from teacher to the student.

#### ***2.2.1.1. Lifestyle and Preferences of Consumers***

A case study on the creative industry claims that the rise of urbanization, separation from real values, and immersion in a large portion of the soulless and pointless life might work as a way to bring back the graceful past and create a connection between man and his lost identity. On the other hand, bioenvironmental issues and dangers that affect the human race, other species, and ecosystems are becoming more prevalent in the universe, (Dabiri, et al; 2007) and it is necessary more than ever to reconsider our lifestyle and to pay special attention to increasing trend of environmental threats.

According to (Shojanoori et al., n.d.), handicrafts that originate from nature, culture and history and religion can act as a way to revive the elegant forgotten past and establish a link between man and its lost identity. On the other hand, the universe has been increasingly encountering bio-environmental problems and threats that affect the human race and other creatures and ecosystems.

Concerning the poll held in Denmark in 2008, based on the choice for sustainable practices of crafts, the implementation and planning of green management solutions were preferred by 82% of respondents. This reflects that a majority of people are lenient on adopting sustainable practices in the field of arts and crafts. The success of applied handicrafts may be attributed to its historical and cultural roots, its sensitivity to nature, and the growing interest consumers have shown in it. (Sustainability, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (Custom TextbookX B&W Printing), n.d.)

#### ***2.2.1.2. Popularity gained by branding and advertising***

Advertising and branding processes seem to be having a particular influence on the creative economy. It should be considered that keeping the quality for marketing the

market is an important decision. Thus, the most critical thing is quality rather than price because customers always pursue high quality. World Trade Organization (WTO) states that a high-quality handicraft not only is reminder of good memories in the mind of a traveller or tourist, but it can also motivate others to pursue such product and even purchase it by any means.

Brojeni (1999) believes that the lack of package, small volume of production, limited range of promotional activities and lack of quality of some commodities are some weaknesses of handicrafts and the exports of such commodities should be prevented, and many attempts should be made to enhance the quality.

Malekjani (1999) also underlines the lack of advertisement and presents some suggestions as the government support of the presence of handicrafts in international markets, advertisement through public media, creation of handicraft showcases and exhibitions in residential and tourism centres and all the centres capable of attracting visitors.

Finally, UNESCO (2005) recommends some other strategies including border festivals, exhibitions, cultural touring programs, paving the way for enhancing culture and tourism.

### ***2.2.1.3. Political factors***

The most common form of government actions for encouraging or prohibiting each work is law (Osborn, 2005, 353). The strengthening of cultural industries requires a unified political development. In increasingly growing economies, the governments have invested on doing studies and research and development of political actions that contribute to further development of creative and cultural industries. However, in many of developing countries, cultural and creative industries do not take advantage of a distinguished place within the framework of national planning and development strategies (UNESCO, 2007: 3).



### 2.2.2. Creative knowledge management within a Craft Practice

“Strictly speaking, knowledge resides only in our brains. The human brain creatively combines old ideas, frameworks, concepts, skills, memories, and so on, and develops new ideas, concepts, principles, models, frameworks, guiding principles and skills. Expression of these ideas, through verbal and non-verbal means, is a way of sharing with other human beings these new insights and the practical products based on them. Although such skills originate and reside in the human brain, they can be manifested by using the hands. Hand–eye–brain coordination is critical.” (Marketing Crafts and Visual Arts: The Role of Intellectual Property a Practical Guide, n.d.)

Knowledge management and transfer are popular topics in several extant literatures including strategic management and organizational theory as well as information systems (De Massis et al., 2016; Joia and Lemos, 2010; Ajith Kumar and Ganesh, 2009; Foss and Pedersen, 2002; Alavi and Leidner, 2001).

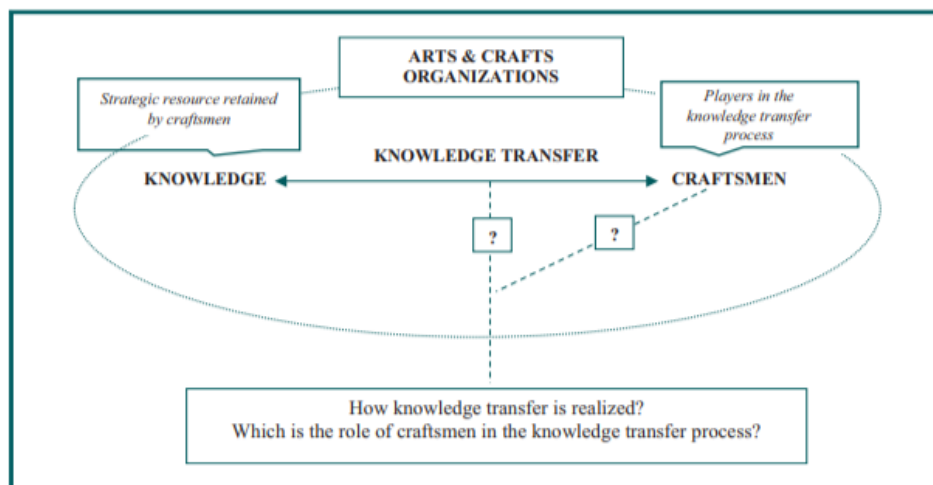


Figure 3 - Evidence from an exploratory multiple case-study analysis.

Source: Journal Article; Knowledge management and knowledge transfer in arts and crafts organizations (Latilla, Frattini, Petruzzelli, & Berner, 2019)

According to Pulic (1998), organizations must effectively capture, share, and utilize their knowledge and skills to maintain competitiveness. Seltzer and Bentley (1999) similarly emphasized the importance of knowledge as a primary resource in the current "creative age," and Osterloh and Frey (2000) identified knowledge and its generation

and transfer as crucial for gaining competitive advantages. Chen and Fong (2015) added that knowledge management can impact organizational competitiveness and innovation, while Pentland (1995) explained that managing organizational knowledge involves developing new content or replacing existing content in both explicit and tacit knowledge.

In the context of arts and crafts organizations, knowledge transfer occurs mainly through the movement of members and tools. Scholars studying organizational decision-making processes have highlighted the relevance of knowledge transfer and the crucial role of craftsmen in this process (Argote and Ingram, 2000). The knowledge in arts and crafts organizations is primarily tacit, pertaining to organizational traditions and long-standing community practices passed down orally from generation to generation (Messeni Petruzzelli and Albino, 2012; Shils, 1981).

It is important to facilitate and enable the transfer of craftsmen's knowledge as this becomes a unique and powerful source of organizational performance, allowing arts and crafts organizations to leverage their reservoir of knowledge, traditions, and craftsmen's skills to foster growth and market visibility (Kotlar et al., 2018; Messeni Petruzzelli and Savino, 2014; Heeley and Jacobson, 2008).

Craftsmen play a central role in knowledge creation and transfer in arts and crafts organizations, and their interactions help generate new organizational artefacts, visible, audible, and tangible aspects of organizational culture resulting from employee knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Pratt and Rafaeli, 2001, 1997; Kaufmann, 2004). Craftsmen's knowledge is primarily tacit, validated and transferred through time, making their work unique and exclusive (Sennett, 2008). Knowledge-based activities of craftsmen have a significant impact on creating competitive advantage through the development of exclusive artefacts.

In arts and crafts organizations, the knowledge-based activities of craftsmen and their unique skills and capabilities are primary functions with a huge impact on creating competitive advantage through the development of exclusive handmade artefacts. Effective management and transfer of knowledge as a strategic organizational resource

can lead to building a solid and recognizable corporate and brand identity, leveraging a unique heritage of quality and creativity (Davenport and Prusak, 2000). The knowledge retained by craftsmen becomes crucial for the survival and profitability of arts and crafts organizations in the long term, and the emergence of the importance of craftsmen within these organizations is evident in their high value to colleagues, customers, and society at large.

### **2.2.3. Inspirations for Innovations**

Style-based industry uses stylistic innovation strategy for the product development process (Tran, 2010).

Cappetta, Cillo and Ponti (2006) and Cillo and Verona (as cited in Tran, 2010, p. 133) identified two types of innovation strategies within style-based industries, which are market-driven stylistic innovation and identity-driven stylistic innovation.

In fashion firms, the selected strategy depends on the market segment (Tran as cited in Tran, 2010, p. 136) and the style orientation (Cillo and Verona as cited in Tran, 2010, p. 136). Considering the context of traditional souvenir craft industries, the selected strategy depends on buyer style (i.e. tourist or other purchaser for special event) and the degree of authenticity.

Tran identified three characteristics of stylistic innovation. Symbolic value is the first, inter-subjectively negotiated and co-created construct is the second, and time-driven construct is the third (Tran, 2010). The first and second qualities are comparable to the souvenir quality. The meaning of souvenirs must be symbolic, and the sort of buyer (such as tourist type or demographic background) will determine what they mean. However, timing considerations in the souvenir sector are less swift and tight than in the fashion industry. There are three primary steps in the stylistic innovation process, which may be used to both market-driven and identity-driven strategies: creative sensing, stylistic orchestrating, and agile synchronization. Analytical and intuitive techniques are used to find and analyse creative potential. Observation, experience,

analytical reasoning, gut instinct, personal beliefs, and inner lights of mind or aesthetic perception make up creative sensing.

### **2.3. Business of Design: Balancing creativity and profitability**

The modern business world, with its highest rates of competitiveness, frequently claims to be a battlefield. Sun Joe addresses this in his writings, claiming that the modern business world is more severe than traditional wars. According to ancient Chinese philosophies, a nation's military strategy represents their people's attitude toward difficulties; thus, surviving and maintaining a competitive position in the modern business world is only possible with a suitable business model (Teece,2010).

The economic value of any valuable technology, craft, or practice was not revealed until it is commercialized through a proper business plan, according to research done in the field of business. These research works also show that an excellent technology commercialized through a medium grade business plan is always inferior to a medium grade technology.

'The meaning of good business plan lies at its ability to allow the business to achieve its consistent goals, irrespective to their nature. One business may have its goals to maximize profits, while some other aims to be more environmentally or socially sustainable” (Casadesus-Masanel & Ricart, 2010). A business model, in the opinion of Shafer, Smith, and Linder, is moreover a tool that is employed to explain the company's strategic decisions as well as its underlying philosophies.

According to studies on describing the business model, experts have determined that a business model has three primary components, including aspects, elements, and function. Each business model has two components: internal and external components that align the company in the market with respect to the strategic decisions made by that specific company.

According to research by Abd Aziz, Fitzsimmons and Douglas have found fifty-four different factors that might potentially be included in a business model, which is not

as straightforward as its characteristics. With these many components, business models cover a vast range, and in the process, it causes complexity when establishing characteristics linked to various components. The Nine Element Business Canvas, which summarizes all of the many aspects and clearly identifies each element's qualities, puts an end to this uncertainty.

According to Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010), there are nine elements belonging to the canvas of a business model: namely, Customer segment, value proposition, Distribution channels, Customer communications, Revenue streams, Key sources, Key activities, Key partners and the structure of costs.

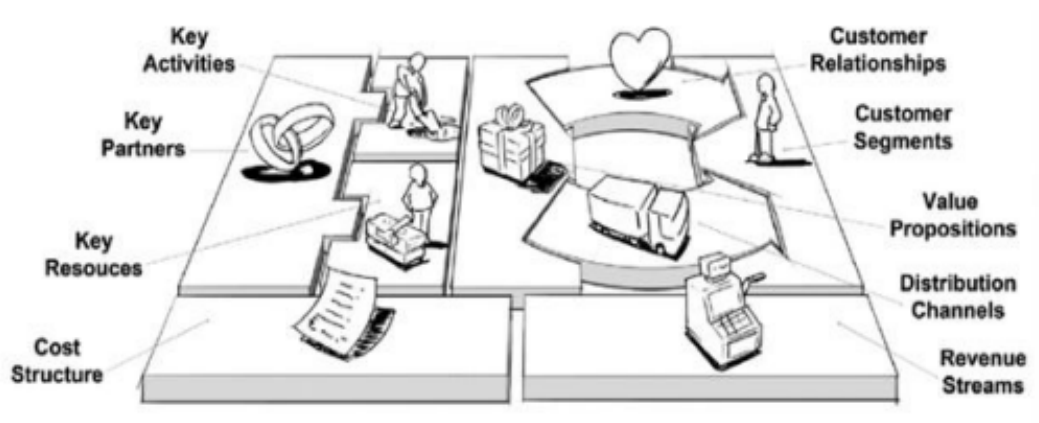


Figure 4 - Nine Element canvas of Business Model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010)

These components are explained in the above source as follows:

- Customer segments were groups of individuals or organizations that a business aspires to reach and maintain.
  - The value proposition is a good or service that adds value for a specific customer.
  - Businesses interacted with customers through distribution channels.
  - Client communications were all the communications a business establishes and maintains with a certain customer group.
  - Revenue streams were a company's revenue from each type of consumer.
- Entrepreneurship, Business, and Economics Journal.

Key source were the assets needed to provide and deliver the elements mentioned above.

Key activities: those that go into delivering the aforementioned components.

Key partners: a network of suppliers and partners that helps the business model's execution.

The cost structure: expenses related to putting a company plan into action (Bezerra Barquet, de Oliveira, Román Amigo, Cunha, & Rozenfeld, 2013).

It was feasible to pinpoint three key business model functions in a model made from the nine components. A business model's primary purpose is to offer a means of expressing and categorizing company, and it always serves as the setting for scientific study in an organization. The third and last recognized job is giving creative directors directions based on a commercial strategy. With reference to these three roles and nine components, it is once more demonstrated that building a business model includes more than merely understanding the relationship between conventional internal components and external components.

An awareness of the relationship between this historically acquired technique and its aspects with the outside parts of the modern business world, where financial problems are addressed at the apex, is therefore essential in the craft-based sector.

### **2.3.1. Craft Involved Design Businesses**

Given this demographic spread, in exploring the complex ways craft and designer maker careers can unfold across people's lifetimes, it is useful to reflect on the profiles of practitioners developed in the report, *Craft in an Age of Change* (BOP Consulting 2012), commissioned by the Crafts Council, Creative Scotland, the Arts Council of Wales and Craft Northern Ireland. Four key pathways into professional craft practice were identified:

- Craft careerists: committed to the idea of craft as a career, they move to start their businesses shortly after finishing their first (or second) degrees in craft-related subjects.
- Artisans: do not have academic degrees in the subject but nevertheless have made craft their first career.
- Career changers: begin their working lives in other careers before taking up the craft as a profession, often in mid-life.
- Returners: makers who trained in art, craft or design, but who followed another career path before ‘returning’ to craft later on.

### 2.3.1.1 Role of a Designer

According to Wu-Tung(n.d.), both designers and craft artists practice innovative design behavior, uphold the design goal of improving life, and work to create goods that are useful, beautiful, and affordable.

But there exists a difference between the roles of the designer and craftsperson as mentioned in Sennett (2008). According to the source, the craftsmanship role ends with a finished product, but the designer does not create a finished object every time. It is because most of the time the design process of a designer ends with sketches, prototypes and concepts.

The other differences between the craftsman and designer can be seen in the table that summarized from Risatti (2007).

	<b>Craftsman</b>	<b>Designer</b>
Product	Singular, handmade, unique object	Identical Objects, mass production
Material	Engages with material in the process of giving it form extensive knowledge of the related materials	Understands the properties of materials and material-production method relation
Process	Dialogical/ dialectical process (This process includes both idea-concepts and form-concepts in the hand through making activity.)	Conceptualization of form is separated between designing stage and making stage.
Prototype	Prototype is the artefact	“Prototype” may be made to test design and production possibilities

Table 02 - Craft and Design Differences (Risatti, 2007)

#### **2.4. Craft communities, groups and their practices in Sri Lankan context**

Strategic planning is crucial in response to the widespread micro-entrepreneurship initiatives in Sri Lanka, initiated by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. These micro-entrepreneurs are essentially craftspeople who work with various materials, such as leaf fibre, palmyrah, rush, reed, and textiles, to create a range of products. However, despite the significant investment made in creating these micro-entrepreneurs, the supply chain remains unsupported, which is similar to the situation faced by the larger craft community.

Significant international advancements in legal infrastructure in the last two to three decades have had a noticeable impact on Sri Lanka in the past ten years

In 2000, the World Intellectual Property Office put together an Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC). The IGC is still currently working towards developing an international legal instrument that can offer effective protection and empower indigenous and other local communities to benefit from ownership of their cultural expressions and traditional knowledge. Since the 1980s, UNESCO has also taken steps to extend protections for traditional cultural expressions (including handicrafts and the traditional knowledge associate therein). Relevant documents were the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore and the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

A watershed moment occurred in 2003 when UNESCO adopted the Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), marking a departure from most cultural policy norms that only conceptualize cultural heritage as its tangible aspect (i.e., locations, monuments, physical objects associated with craft, folklore, etc.). Sri Lanka has an important relationship with these international trends: currently the country holds one of only four seats available to countries of the Asia-Pacific region and is also a signatory to the 2003 Convention on ICH. Sri Lanka is also currently in the midst of putting together a national policy on ICH, with UNESCO



already having commissioned two reports on ICH, one in 2011 and another in 2015 (UNESCO 2011; Denister de Silva, unpublished, 2015).

The following table by the National Crafts Council in Sri Lanka, identifies types of craft products in Sri Lanka.

<b>Types of craft</b>	
Art & Sculpture traditional	Lacquer and Sesath**
Batik	Mask and Muppet
Cane and Bamboo	Metal Based
Carving Masks	Miscellaneous Handicrafts
Clay Work	Musical Instruments
Coconut, kithul and palmyrah based	Souvenirs
Dumbara*	Stone Based Handicrafts
Fiber, Leaf and grass work	Textile and Textile Based
Jewellery	Wooden Based Handicrafts
Lace	Leather Items

Table 03 - Handicraftsmen Directory

Source: Official Website of the National Crafts Council, Sri Lanka, <http://craftscouncil.gov.lk/>

## **2.5. Craft-based Design businesses in Sri Lanka**

### **2.5.1. BAREFOOT Ceylon Pvt. Ltd**

Barefoot is a textile design company based in Sri Lanka, which exports its clothing and soft furnishings globally. Barefoot has two retail stores in Colombo and one store in Galle.

#### **2.5.1.1. Business model**

The concept of “Barefoot” originated as a response to the need for a rehabilitation program for young Sri Lankan women with limited education and skills. Over time, BAREFOOT has evolved into a premier textile design company that exports exquisite hand-woven and hand-made products globally. The artisans at Barefoot are highly skilled weavers and needlewomen who are committed to producing premium quality workmanship, without the time constraints of mass production. Importantly, Barefoot Sri Lanka takes a strong stance against exploitative practices, ensuring that each artisan

is paid a fair wage that allows them to support themselves and their families with dignity and self-respect. This program gives young Sri Lankan women with limited schooling and skills the opportunity to gain and develop these skills to produce this exquisite hand-woven and hand-made products worldwide. The business model of Barefoot reflects a more diversified and innovative business. Barefoot has a **craft and design-based business model** where creative entrepreneurs operate in a crowded marketplace and differentiation, such as targeting consumer segments or creating unique products, can help gain competitive advantage.

Barefoot is segmented for a niche market and target local craft hobbyists and tourists mainly. They often conduct workshops and exhibitions during weekends and seasonal holidays. This way, the network of clientele become a loyal circle of clients. Therefore, it is important to give prominence to **connections** in such a business model.

At this stage of business growth, manufacturers are not essentially partnering of Barefoot. This is related to the value proposition of producing handcrafted, local items. This may alter as the company grows. To keep the fundamental value offer but simultaneously upgrading, the company may collaborate with a suitable local manufacturer in the future.

They further increase their unique selling proposition by accumulating the taste of local art to the Barefoot Garden Café, Bookshop and Gallery.

#### ***2.5.1.2 Designer Involvement***

At Barefoot, the designer gathers knowledge about current trends and the market through research, makes the level best to conserve craft practices and comes up with concepts. In order to materialise the concept created, by the designer, the knowledge and practice of craftsmanship is accumulated. (Barefoot Ceylon | Established 1964, n.d.)



Figure 05 – Barefoot Showroom  
 Source: Official website of Barefoot Ceylon <https://barefootceylon.com/>

System identification was as follows. It was observed that designers absorb craft expertise, preserve it, and then practice the craft with craftspeople. Designers’ executive inventive solutions with the craft, and use products such as cloths, sarongs, linens, purses, and toys that are sold. In the Barfoot store. In addition, there is a café, a bookshop, and an art gallery to make the shop more engaging without the involvement of designers. All this information was gleaned through interviews and other sources. The identification of systems is crucial in the research.

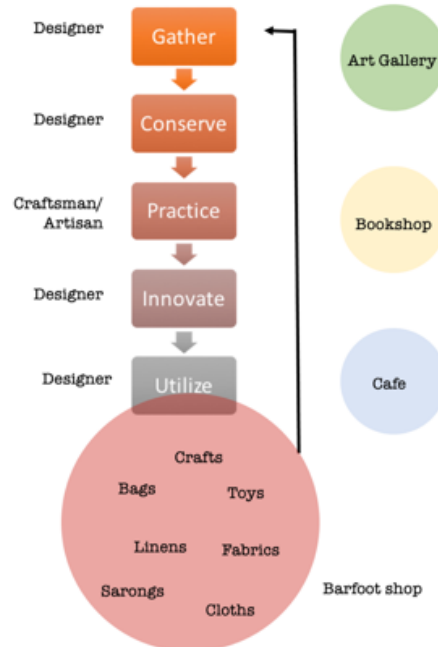


Figure 06 – Identified business structure of Barefoot Barefoot Ceylon Pvt Ltd.  
 Source: Interview 01- Mr. Dominic Sansoni, Director, Barefoot Ceylon Pvt Ltd

### 2.5.2. Buddhi Batiks

“Buddhi Batiks is an ethical fashion business designing and manufacturing both handmade batik fabric, apparel, and accessories, as well as scanning and digitally printing these designs on recycled fabric using dyes that make no use of water” (Buddhi Batiks, 2021).

According to the article by Good Market, since 1972, Buddhi Batiks has been producing handcrafted batik cloth in the *Koswadiya* area. Through the years, they have created a cutting-edge design studio that uses cutting-edge textile and apparel design to conserve traditional arts and crafts. Their batik apparel and accessories have been displayed in foreign exhibits and on the catwalks. Waste minimization and social and environmental responsibility are important to Buddhi Batiks. To cut down on consumption, they provide a special 2-in-1 sari and a line of accessories that are manufactured entirely out of leftover fabric and sample pieces.

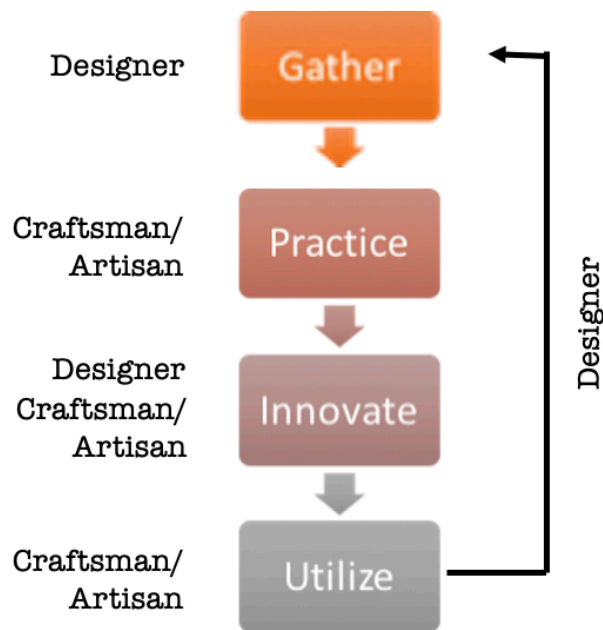


Figure 07 – Identified business structure of Buddhi Batiks.  
Source: Interview 03 – Director, Buddhi Batik, Ms.Darshi Keerthisena

From the interview carried out with Darshi Keerthisena, the Creative Director of Buddhi Batiks, it was discovered that craft knowledge is gained by the designer and practiced by the craftspeople, who develop and use it as the designer gathers that information and practice.

Buddhi Batiks has an Art and Craft business model. Unlike barefoot, but similar to general batik businesses, Buddhi Batiks has sourced its own set of loyal employees who have perfected the art of batik through learnings from its workshop. The business has also recruited learned Fashion Designers who contribute in design conceptualization after a deep study of the markets locally and internationally. After conceptualization, the implementation of the design is done by the workshop staff. The business is known to produce unique garments that would not be replicated again. They also cater to the needs of a niche audience of loyal customers and design to their requirements.

### **2.5.3. Kalaro Pvt. Ltd**

KALARO, - “A stream of art” that specializes in hand-knitting and crochet, was Established in the year 2007 as a Sole Proprietorship by Priyantha Subasinghe. The organization was converted to a limited liability Company in early 2017.

Since its beginning, KALARO has produced hand knitted and hand crocheted clothing and accessories of the finest caliber, with unmatched originality and design, making the best use of its resources.

According to Kalaro (2016), the business has created collections in collaboration with top worldwide designers and manufacturers of yarn to highlight the yarns and patterns of our clients.

In 1979, a group of local businessmen partnered with a Norwegian Yarn Manufacturing Company to establish a joint venture aimed at training women in rural Sri Lankan communities in the Scandinavian method of circular knitting. This was a

ground-breaking move since the method was previously unknown in the country. This initiative marked the inception of commercial hand-knitting for export in Sri Lanka. Over time, the business grew and expanded, with the opening of knitting studios in other rural communities on the island. This expansion brought opportunities for women in these rural areas, providing them with sustainable livelihoods and empowering them economically. Today, Sri Lanka is renowned for its high-quality hand-knitted products, which are in demand globally.

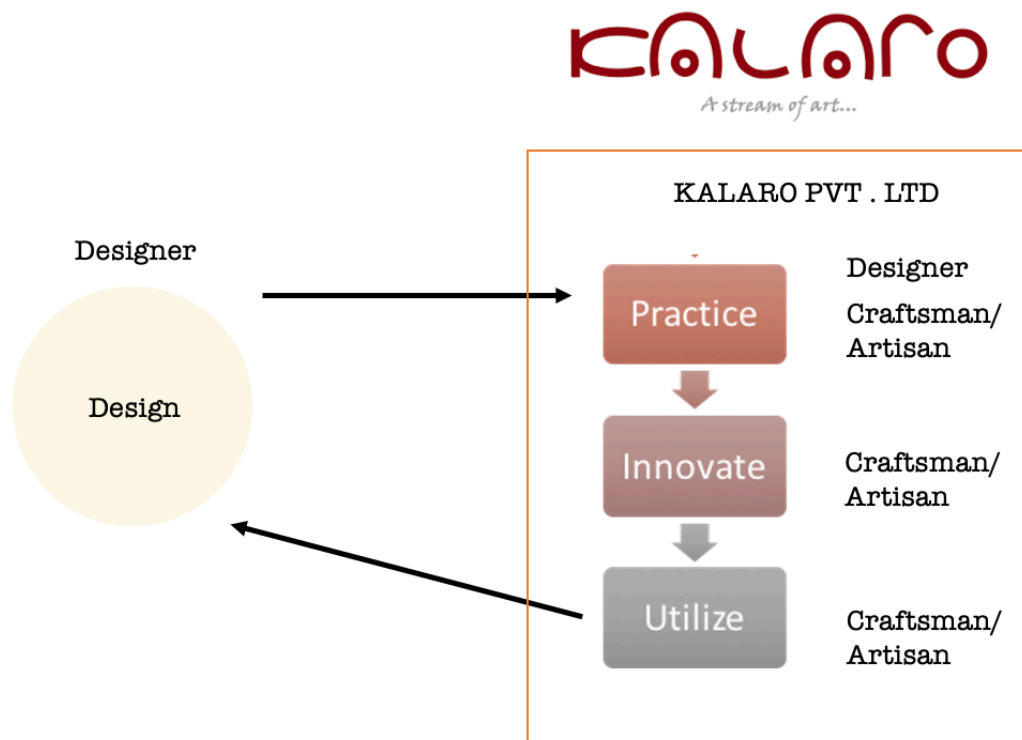


Figure 08 – Identified business structure of KARO (Pvt). Ltd.  
Source: Interview 02 – Director, KALARO (Pvt). Ltd.

Kaloro, as a business strategy, mainly follows the process of other crafts where after a design is given to the in-house designer, it is being innovated and utilized by the artisans. Kaloro carries out a craft-based business model, where the authentic knowledge of the designer and artisan both are incorporated into the design from what they have practiced in their art.

## **Chapter 03: Craft practice at the *Aluwihare* Heritage Centre (AHC)**

### **3.1. Ena de Silva and Her Landmark of Local Craft and Design Business**

The pre-modern feudal system of Sri Lanka is said to have been heavily influenced by a rich legacy of arts and crafts. Many of the crafts were used to create ceremonial objects for a culture that was clearly caste-based and competitive. Its long-term survival was in fact greatly aided by the particular castes that carried out their responsibilities to the chieftain and temple hierarchies. Craft was a kind of worship of the Buddha and the gods who guarded the land. Of course, there were also domestic items and useful items that were ornamented in accordance with the craftsman's way of thinking.

The materials in the Colombo Museum and the V and A in London's collections provide evidence that the nation's crafts were of an exceptionally high calibre. Traditional crafts began to decline even in the early 20th century due to the gradual dissolution of the feudal order under the influence of the changing economy brought on by industrialization, the plantation economy, and the profusion of industrially manufactured items. In his open letter to the Kandyan chiefs, Ananda Coomaraswamy appeals to them to use whatever means at their disposal to support and assist the artisans so that their knowledge might be passed down to future generations. His notably fundamental work, *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, is unquestionably one of the best records of its sort found anywhere in the world. It captured the art and crafts of the nation as they were at the turn of the 20th century.

Ceylon gained independence from the British Empire in 1948, and to commemorate the occasion, an exhibition was conducted where a variety of the nation's industrial products were on display. Osmund de Silva and his wife Ena, the Central Province area's commissioner of police, were given charge of collecting from the Kandyan areas. Together, they visited the many artisans in their villages and amassed a remarkable collection of artefacts that demonstrated how well-preserved the traditions and these crafts were even at the time.

The patronage of the crafts, however, only decreased as society changed quickly and the last traces of the feudal system were finally eliminated by new land ownership rules introduced in the 1950s. The availability of new work, the changes brought about by the provision of free education, and the other opportunities that rural people in the newly independent country had exacerbated this further. Craft was no longer a viable source of income, and what little was left was only sustained in some way by the support of the government and its craft sales facilities. The work of Ena de Silva and the AHC fits within this new post-independence character of Sri Lankan crafts. The following chapter is an analysis of the context of the study: the AHC; its creative attributes and how the Batik craft developed under the very roof crediting to the passionate patronage of Ena de Silva.

### **3.1.1. Ms. Ena De Silva Aluwihare**

#### ***3.1.1.1. Biography***

Ena de Silva was born in 1922, into a prominent Kandyan family. Her mother was Lucille Moonemalle, and her father was Richard *Aluwihare*, whose ancestors had served as guardians of the well-known *Aluwihara* temple. In the British public service, Richard *Aluwihare* rose to become the first "native" Inspector General of Police and was later knighted. Ena eloped with Osmund de Silva, a police officer who ultimately advanced to the position of Inspector General, in 1941 when she was nineteen years old, shocking polite society by being married outside of her caste.





Figure 09 – Ena de Silva, a life in pictures  
Source: GILDING THE LILY celebrating Enna De Silva by Rajiva Wijesinha.

### ***3.1.1.2. Social Association***

Through her marriage, she developed a profound respect for her country's arts and crafts, particularly those of the region where she was born, the former Kandyan Kingdom. Her husband was an obsessive craft collector, and living with them became an important part of their lives. This awareness of tradition comes to the fore in the house she designed for her family with architect Geoffrey Bawa, which may be the first contemporary Asian house to honour its own great construction traditions. This she filled with all of the amazing items she had accumulated over the years.

Ena's passion in crafts, on the other hand, developed in a very different way. Looking for activities for her artistically minded kid, she decided to experiment with the resist-coloured procedure known as Batik. Despite severe warnings from a spouse who was terrified of his mother and son burning down the house, she continued with the experiments that had been undertaken. Ena de Silva studied resist dying techniques with her friend, artist Laki Senanayake, and together they developed a form of batik that is distinctive to contemporary Sri Lanka.

Its exuberant embrace of traditional patterns and motifs that the artists were not hesitant to transform and adopt to their own ends on the one hand, and the contemporary artistic inputs of Anil and Laki on the other, gave it a distinctively Sri Lankan flavour. While it connected with the art movements of the 1960s through its use of bold colour and pattern reminiscent of the work of Mari Mekko and Emilio Pucci as well as some of the work done in Australia among the aborigines, Ena was the envy of many eyes with her highly developed sense of style and her exceptional looks, thus many of these were originally created for herself and frequently appeared in the public eye in the fashion sections of the newspapers.

Ena held a pavement sale of her fabrics under the street side veranda of her house on Alfred Place in 1963, urged by her friends who were inspired by her aesthetic. With various products and textiles developed by Laki or Anil, the style was immediately embraced, and to fulfil the demand that followed, Ena and Laki formed the company Ena de Silva Tapestries to commercially produce the fabrics.

With the passage of time, several commissions from her friend, architect Geoffrey Bawa, came in, the first of which was his commission to construct the ceiling of the Bentota Beach Hotel, and the company was forced to grow its workforce. Other big commissions included the flags in the atrium of the Lanka Oberoi in 1974 and the flags at the Lowes Anatole hotel in Dallas, Texas, designed by SOM.

Ena sold her house in Colombo in 1979 after her husband died and the company closed and went on to work on a United Nations assignment teaching crafts in the Virgin Islands. When she returned to Colombo in 1981, it was to her ancestral home in

*Aluvihare*, which she inherited from her father after his death in 1976. This she transformed into one of Sri Lanka's great interiors in her own inimitable style, and she went on to live and work from there. To continue her work, she founded the Co-operative with many of the craftswomen who had previously worked with her in her company. The *Aluvihare* crafts cooperative was then established. The cooperative received perhaps its most important commission in 1982, when they were asked to design and manufacture the magnificent flags that adorned the forecourt of Parliament, which had recently been completed by Geoffrey Bawa at its state opening. The flags were used for numerous state openings after that until they were finally retired and are now housed in Sri Lanka's National Archives.

The craftswomen run the cooperative, and Ena serves as an honorary design consultant. The cooperative continues to keep a great contemporary tradition alive by having a passion for the crafts and helping to keep it alive through an equally steadfast loyalty to a band of village women.

### ***3.1.1.3. Design Involvement***

Ena de Silva *Aluwihare* was named the Spirit of Lanka during the 1948 Pageant of Lanka, which marked the country's independence. This was a prelude to her influential role in the revival of Sri Lanka's unique heritage in architecture and related crafts. In the 1960s, Ena de Silva approached Geoffrey Bawa to design a house for her family. Unimpressed by the Western-influenced homes prevalent at the time, which didn't reflect traditional Sri Lankan dwellings, she sought a more authentic design.

The dwelling featured a multitude of opulent textures and inventive elements. It could be argued that, for the first time in postcolonial Asia, the synthesis of Eastern and Western influences, interior and exterior spaces, and traditional and contemporary design elements were genuinely transcended.

Ena pursued a career in design and production, collaborating with exceptionally creative artists such as Laki Senenayake and her son Anil Gamini Jayasuriya. Her initial and prominent focus was batik, and her designs in this art form are still

considered the most innovative and distinctively unique in Sri Lanka. Her work in traditional embroidery, along with her exquisite cushion covers and dramatic bedspreads, have continued to be highly sought-after and unrivalled in their quality and design.

According to Jayasuriya and Ramanayake (2008), the textile collages of the *Aluwihare* Heritage Centre have been utilized in various buildings and offices in Sri Lanka, including the Mobitel Office (1993), Vanik Incorporation (1993), and ANZ Grindlay's Bank (1994), which were designed by Nela de Soyza. Additionally, the co-operative also provided skilled occupation for young men during the second southern insurgency of the late eighties, which helped prevent them from turning to violence. The Carpentry Training Centre was established in 1989, followed by the Brass Foundry in 1992. These initiatives contributed to the production of large village people and almost life-size elephants on wheels for the Kandalama Hotel, designed by Geoffrey Bawa (Jayasuriya & Ramanayake, 2008).

Ena de Silva returned to *Aluwihare*, her parents' bungalow, in 1981 and transformed it into her own unique space with her sense of style. She added exotic artefacts to the central living hall, which featured a spectacular circular dining table that was often adorned with extravagant paper flowers created by the Heritage Centre. Each bedroom had its own distinct mood and character, achieved through a combination of heirloom furniture, old and new fabrics pinned on walls and ceilings, and idiosyncratic groupings of everyday objects and trinkets. The use of paper, paste, and paint was extravagant yet disciplined, and the entire interior showcased Ena de Silva's powerful creative potential and reflected her enjoyment and experience.

### **3.2. *Aluwihare* workshop and *Aluwihare* Heritage Centre (AHC)**

According to (*Carrying on Her Legacy at the Aluwihare Heritage Centre*, n.d.), Ena turned her father's house in *Matale* into a heritage centre in the 1980s, where she taught carpentry, needlework, brass foundry, and batik making. By doing this, she not only improved the lives of the women she employed, also the crafts themselves. She

frequently took on young school dropouts, teaching them not only skills but also empowering them to become self-sufficient people who could contribute to society and hold their own.

“Celebrated for her batik art, Ena de Silva has taught not just batik techniques but numerous crafts, generously imparting her experience and knowledge to the many young women she worked with, who today proudly carry on her legacy at the AHC in *Matale*.” (*A Life as Colourful as Her Batiks*, n.d.)

### 3.3. AHC and its Craft community

The previous subtopic explains that the bulk of the community members for this craft business came from neighbouring villages around *Matale*. In essence, the ladies gave their families a second source of money by involving in the Batik crafts. Although they were paid less than they would have in a contemporary clothing factory, the working environment at *Aluwihare* Craft Centre was more comfortable, and they had the freedom to control their own time and bring work home with them. The women, at present, feel independent and have new social support networks because to the business. It has also made a substantial impact on the village's economy. Some of the women have established side businesses, while others have moved on to employment at competing workshops. In addition, the company has benefited them to break down all the caste barriers that were prevalent in the society, by bringing communities together (Robson,2008).



Figure 10 - Ena de Silva and her team (taken in the 1980's)  
Source: GILDING THE LILY celebrating Enna De Silva by Rajiva Wijesinha.

According to *A Life as Colourful as Her Batiks*(n.d.), notably, the Aluwihare Craft Centre was one of the few communities in the nation where unemployed youth did not resort to violence because the cooperative employed young men as well during the second Southern Insurgency in the late 1980s to give skilled occupation. Hence this foundation laid by AHS has led to the consequent beginning of the Brass Foundry in 1992 and the Carpentry Training Centre in 1989. The SOS Children's Village in Anuradhapura received animal seats, fantasy tables, and chairs from them in 1997, as well as the enormous village people and nearly life-size elephants on wheels for Archt. Jeffery Bawa's Kandalama Hotel in 1994.

### **3.4. Batik craft practice at AHC**

Ena de Silva's passion to create something unique and outstanding had contributed to her, almost single-handedly, conquering the culture of batik – a form of dying fabric – and establishing the craft in Sri Lanka. The Javanese word for 'writing with wax', batik takes a great deal of understanding and patience to master. However, the unrelenting Ena de Silva did so through trial and error, following instructions from the Encyclopaedia Britannica to guide her. At a time when making batik was just a small part of the textile industry, Mrs. De Silva and her team turned it into an art form. (Sapphire Residences, 2022)

According to the source Robson (2008), Ena has been trying to find a method to create something new and intriguing and wanted to use her son Anil's design abilities. Based on a two-line entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica that read, "Place a lump of wax in a pot and heat it," her creative counterpart Laki Senanayake had looked up the term "batik." Thus, they began their preliminary tests. One or two batik producers already existed in Ceylon at that time, but they were known for producing studio batiks, which are wall-mounted paintings. They originally began experimenting with our home-made vegetable colours, including gentian violet and onion skins. Later Soma Udabage has introduced them to synthetic dyes at around the same time that she began creating batiks in the style of Indonesia.

By bringing their goods to Colombo at first, Ena was able to market to the local market. They would do house sales rather than sidewalk sales. In Colombo, they would hold a one- or two-day sale from a vacant home if they had amassed enough merchandise, or they would rent a venue like the Lionel Wendt Theatre. The *Aluwihare* Kitchen was thereafter launched. This was intended partly to offer the delights of traditional village cooking to tourists who usually had to make do with badly cooked European food or bland versions of basic “rice and curry,” but partly also to attract clients into the emporium. Once they had eaten a lunch prepared by the village women from local produce and spices, they expected that they would also buy their products. At one time they have run a small guesthouse and restaurant down beside the main road, and that helped to draw in the tourists, but Ena’s cousins (who owned the property) mistakenly thought that she must be making a fortune out of the business and tripled the rent. Then the tour operators have refused to bring people to lunch because they were not paying commissions. For this reason, even the bigger and more reputable tour companies brought people for lunch but actually prevented them from selling their products to their tourists.

Ena de Silva Batiks constantly progressed amidst many hurdles in establishment and marketing the business to segments of customers. Walpola (2022) states that Batik banners that were modelled after those found in medieval temples are among her most enduring creations. They initially featured in the Bawa-designed Ceylon Pavilion at Expo '70 in Japan. The ones shown in 1974 in the multi-story atrium of the Skidmore Owings and Merrill-designed Hotel Lanka Oberoi in Colombo may have been the most noteworthy. Her contributions to the 1982 Bawa-designed new Kotte Parliament and the 1979 installation of decorations in the Lowes Anatole in Dallas, Texas, both stand out. The ceiling paintings above the main staircase of the 1969 Bentota Beach Hotel, Bawa's first significant hotel in Sri Lanka, feature designs by Anil Gamini Jayasuriya and showcase the modern interpretation of batik the studio created at its dramatic finest.

“She designed flags for various districts of Sri Lanka. In creating these Sinhala flags, we pay special attention to the colour because the speciality of her designs is to show antiquity through the use of colour,” Nanda Aluvihare, another passionate long-term

member of the AHC said. (*Carrying on Her Legacy at the Aluwihare Heritage Centre*, n.d.-b)

According to Walpola (2022), different in style but equally impressive are the wall and ceiling murals, and the designs for the laminated table tops, created for the Triton Hotel, Ahungalle in 1982. In contrast to the vibrant colours of these batiks she provided a gentle range of pastel shades for the exteriors of the buildings of the University of Ruhunu, Matara that Bawa designed in 1986. The ceiling of the ‘Court of Arms’ bar at the Lighthouse Hotel in Galle, 1998 was one of the last commissions she did for Bawa.

The textile collages of the AHC have been used in many offices and buildings in Sri Lanka, including the Mobitel Office (1993), Vanik Incorporation (1993) and ANZ Grindlays Bank (1994) designed by Nela de Zoysa.

When they started out forty-five years ago, there was almost nothing established firmly as “Batik crafts”. Coomaraswamy (1908) had pointed out that, after four centuries of colonial rule, local craft traditions were on the point of extinction. Of course, Ceylon has never had a strong weaving culture, and the majority of our printed fabrics used to come from South India or even Burma. They were accountable for starting a rebirth of regional crafts and for authenticating them in the eyes of Sri Lanka's new middle classes, together with Lyn Ludowyk, Barbara Sansoni, and a few other artists and impresarios. They were also able to inject new designs into what had become a rather moribund situation and, with the help of people like Geoffrey Bawa, they were able to show how handicrafts could contribute in a positive way to modern environments and new ways of living.



## **Chapter 04: Batik Craft Practice and the Strategies associated with the AHC**

### **4.1. Role of Design on batik craft practice at AHC**

Design plays a significant role in batik craft practices around the world. Batik designs are characterized by their ornate geometric shapes, intricate symbols, patterns, dots, and designs associated with nature. (*Batik Art & Design*, 2022.).

Bhatt (2014) explains that the cracks that appear in the design due to the wax are an important attribute of batik. In traditional batik designs, patterns are handed down over generations and artisans may work from memory, which signifies that design is an integral part of the process of creating unique and beautiful batik fabrics. (*Batik, the Traditional Fabric of Indonesia*, n.d.)

Design plays an important role in Ena De Silva batiks, with intricate designs and elaborate motifs typically featuring images of nature, animals, and religious symbols. The art panels provide quilters, craft and home sewers, and interior designers with an opportunity to combine an ancient art form with a contemporary use. To keep the craft alive in modern times, Ena has had to be creative and perseverant. Innovatively she has also revived the traditional batik technique by combining it with modern fashion trends. The process involves colouring fabrics with natural dyes and creating patterns on them using wax.

When considering components of design, colour a visual feature that is distinctively felt while observing Ena De Silva Batiks. Batik craft is an important and traditional industry in Sri Lanka, representing an integral part of the country's rich culture and giving it a distinctive identity. It features designs in striking and bright colours, providing economic benefit from dealing with individual design talent and creativity. The Batik industry also provides employment opportunities to thousands of people.

Among Ena de Silva's most notable pieces of artwork, the flags of the then new Sri Lanka Parliament building in Kotte are prominent, and is another collaboration

through her connection with Geoffrey Bawa, who designed the Parliament building in the 1980s. This is a reflection of her political influences through arts and crafts.

The Government of Sri Lanka, represented by President J.R. Jayawardene, invited Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa to create a new Sri Lankan parliament at Kotte on the eastern outskirts of Colombo in 1979. In 1980, Bawa hired Ena de Silva to create a set of heraldic banners that would fly in front of the new structure on official occasions. There were fourteen banners manufactured by Mrs. de Silva's company, Ena de Silva Fabrics, each measuring fifteen by six feet (4.5 x 1.8 meters). The designs were based on heraldic elements that were used on traditional Sinhalese flags and were made by Mrs. de Silva's son Anil Jayasuriya as full-sized cartoons on tracing paper. Then, using the wax-resist dyeing method in Batik, they were transferred to heavy linen fabric and coloured (Batavian Tik). When the Parliament first opened in 1982, the banners were already up and were hung on future formal occasions.

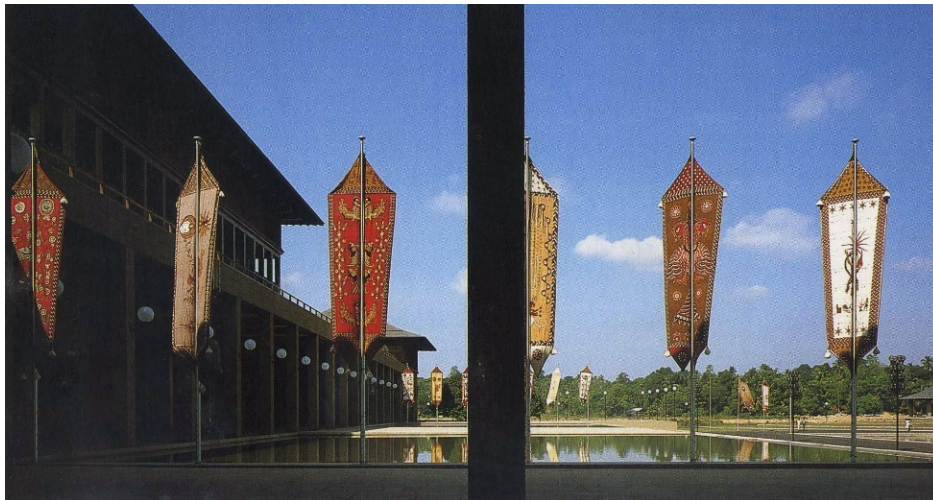


Figure 11 - Parliament flags designed by Ena for Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Parliament building  
Source: Personal image archive – Archt. C Anjalendran

The flags were changed at the end of the 1990s, despite the fact that they were still in fine shape. Mrs. de Silva was 'asked to tender' to furnish 'copies,' but she refused, claiming that the banners were works of art and that she owned the design rights. A commercial outfit in Colombo created inferior replica banners, and the originals were sent to a storage chamber in the parliament's basement.

A significant retrospective exhibition of Geoffrey Bawa's work was staged at the Deutsche Architectural Museum (DAM) in Frankfurt in 2004. The curator, David Robson, intended to present a selection of six of the original de Silva flags, which he discovered dusty, neglected, and moth-eaten in a cabinet, but a parliamentary committee refused to let them be included in the exhibition because they were a "essential national treasure"! Robson then commissioned Ena de Silva to create six new display banners. These new banners were created by a team of craftswomen at the Aluwihare Workshop working under the leadership of Mrs. de Silva and utilizing Anil Jayasuriya's original drawings, and so qualify as "originals."

The designs of all fourteen banners were inspired by traditional Sinhalese kodiya (flags) from the 'medieval' Kandyan period. Flags were formerly used by kings, hereditary rulers or disawa of districts or korale, more significant village shrines, castes, and guilds of craftsmen. While the Kandyan Sinhalese were nominally Buddhist, traditional village temples, known as dewales, were often dedicated to the worship of local deities which were often Hindu in origin. These were officiated by lay-priests called caporale and administered by local hereditary landowners called 'Nilame'. The Buddha image house and the sacred Bo tree would be located separately within such temple compounds and administered separately by properly ordained Buddhist priests. The banner designs are mostly taken from non-Buddhist imagery and relate to Hindu tales and local quasi-Hindu deities. Ena incurred her creativity in the designing of the following flags.

### **1. The *Nawandanne Hanuman Kodiya***

This is the Guild of Craftsmen's flag. There are three main characters: The monkey king, Hanuman; Visvakarma, the Hindu divinity venerated as the creator of the cosmos; and a blacksmith (nawandanne) with his forge. Hanuman is dispatched by Rama to rescue his love Sita from the hands of Ravanna, the King of Lanka, in the famous Indian epic the Ramayana. The artwork depicts Hanuman begging the heavenly architect Visvakarma for permission to utilize fire from the blacksmith's

furnace to burn the city of Lankapura. He has a bow in one hand and a fiery torch in the other.

## **2. The *Ire Hande Kodiya***

This is the flag of the *Disawa* of the *Hatara* (four) *Korale* in Kegalle District, and it depicts the sun (*Ira*) and the moon (*Handa*).

## **3. The *Berundha Pakshaya Kodiya***

This is the flag of the *Disawa* of the *Thun* (three) *Korale* in Kegalla District and shows the double-headed eagle or *Berundha Pakshaya*

## **4. *Kataragama Dewale Kodiya, Malwatte, Kandy***

*Kataragama* is a Sinhalese deity who is revered throughout the island and is honoured at an annual festival held at a remote jungle shrine near Hambantota. The banner depicts the multi-headed god riding on his *vahana* (vehicle), the *monera* (peacock), while being watched over by the sun and moon.

## **5. The *Ruhunu Kataragama Dewale Kodiya, Kegalle***

This design is based on a *Dewale Kodiya* and depicts the tree of life, with a peacock in the centre, two elephants at its base, and the sun and moon above.

## **6. The *Natha Kodiya***

This design was inspired by the *Natha Dewale* flag in Kandy. Sri Lanka's guardian god is *Natha*. The flag depicts a demon named *Bhairava*, who is said to be the next Buddha after passing through a series of reincarnations to become a *Bodhisattva*.

Gradually, the scale of work of Ena de Silva expanded, and she was sought to design the Batik Banners of one epitome of urban hospitality, the Cinnamon Grand Colombo which was then known as the Oberoi Hotel.

According to *Giant Batiks That Turned Heads, skywards* (n.d.), a prestigious U.S firm – Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM), was selected to design the new hotel in the heart of the city's capital. It was the outcome of the American firm's observations and a study carried out by the Sri Lanka Government on 40 arts and crafts studios and workshops across the island that eventually led to the choice of Ena de Silva to collaborate with SOM architects in designing the banners.

It was infamously difficult to create batik in five or more colours on such a vast scale, especially during the 80s. The cloth on which the design was set was waxed on both sides so that the individual parts of the design that will be dyed in different colours do not overlap or run into each other. Following each cycle of dyeing, the fabric was boiled in hot water to remove all of the wax before being re-waxed to get the next colour. After working on 18-foot-long batiks at Ena's workshop, the writer of the particular resource found how difficult and time-consuming it is to make large-scale batik hangings. The batiks at the Oberoi Hotel were very large.

One disadvantage was that the dye vats used at Ena's workshop in Kotte were only 12 to 14 feet long. Despite the fact that the pieces were coloured individually, when they were wet during the dyeing process, they became extremely heavy and difficult to manage. Furthermore, the material had to be strengthened along the edges to prevent damage during handling, shipment, and hanging. Ena hand-picked and educated the team of craftspeople (mostly women) that worked on these banners. The designs and motifs utilized in the batiks were based on sketches created by Anil Gamini Jayasuriya, Ena's son and a gifted artist. Anil was recuperating from the repercussions of a bad car accident in 1974.

To display the batik banners, an 80-foot-high scaffold was erected and a lighting consultant from Hong Kong was brought in to ensure that the colours and design were

highlighted dramatically. The batiks were in place in the Hotel Lanka Oberoi's atrium by September 1975, just in time for the hotel's official opening.

Ena de Silva's textile art was recognized and appreciated by heads of state during the Non-Aligned Conference hosted by Sri Lanka in September 1976. The conference was attended by approximately 60 heads of state, including Indira Gandhi, Fidel Castro, Marshal Tito, Archbishop Makarios, and Kenneth Kaunda, among others. Some of these heads of state stayed at the Oberoi Hotel, where the batik banners were displayed, and showed a personal interest in Ena de Silva's work, particularly Indira Gandhi.

Another contribution of Ena to the hospitality industry is the creation of Batik Panels for the *Bentota Beach Hotel Ceiling*. Wax resist and dye on cotton cloth mounted on ply board is still a vivid attraction at the *Bentota Beach Hotel*.

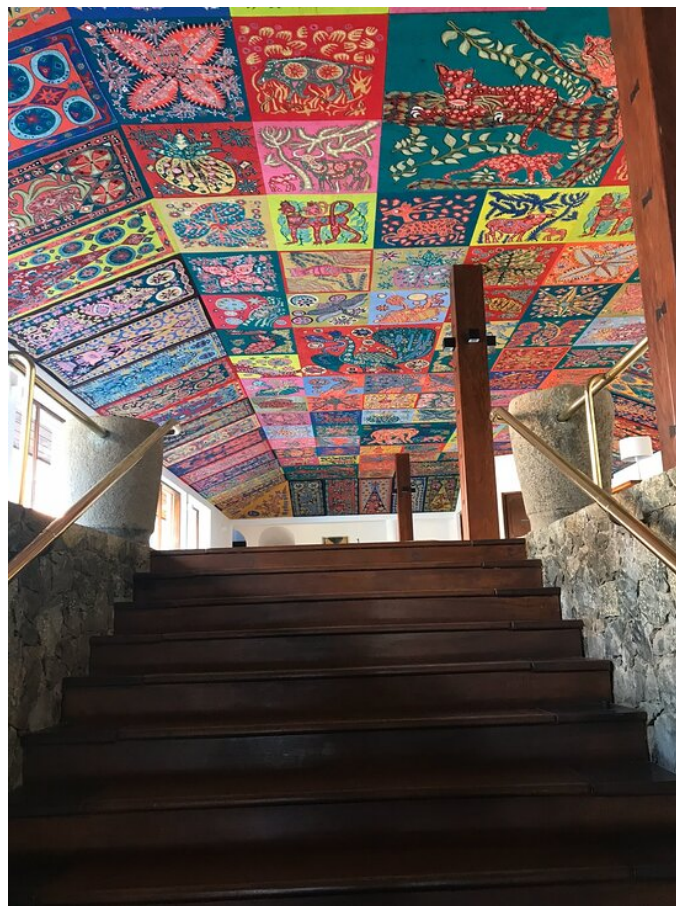


Figure 12 - The artistic remake of Ena De Silva's vivid Batik patterns, as seen in the present.  
Source: Author



Geoffrey Bawa carefully selected a group of artists and craftspeople who he trusted to work on the interior of his architectural projects for the *Bentota* Beach Hotel. He was reluctant to have any outsiders involved. This small guild of creatives included Ena de Silva, Barbara Sansoni (for the handloom ceiling), Laki Senanayake (for the peacock sculpture), and another artist who created 14 black and white panels, a gold leaf painting, and a nail sculpture. Their artworks now form part of the main lounge of the hotel.

Ena de Silva was responsible for the design and implementation of the batik ceiling cloths at the reception area. In collaboration with Laki Senanayake, her partner at Ena de Silva Fabric, she played a key role in creating the batik ceiling pieces. At her workshop, both of them would assist her with different tasks.

The ceiling of multiple batik panels made by the AHC, which is now laid over the Hotel lobby ceiling, is a copy of the original that was done in 1967 by Ena De Silva and her son Anil Gamini Jayasooriya with the artisans carried out by the same craftspeople who made the second iteration of it in 1994. And newly for the 3rd time in 2020. By the almost the same artisans who was from the original team in 1967.



Figure 13 - The refurbishment of the Batik Ceiling at Bentota Beach Hotel, 2020  
Source: Author

#### **4.2. Social, cultural and political influence on the Practice**

Ena de Silva was inspired to revive traditional Sri Lankan craftsmanship by long-held traditional craft production intermingled with ideas from other disciplines and cultures. She was renowned for her skillsets in the design of batiks and handicrafts and played a pivotal role in reviving the arts and crafts in Sri Lanka. She is Sri Lanka's foremost Batik and Embroidery designer, famously known to have been the force behind the rebirth of Batik craft in Sri Lanka, and taught not just batik techniques but numerous crafts, generously imparting her experience and knowledge.

The social force behind her work is massive. Her workforce consisted mainly of women from the surrounding villages and grew from a small core of ten to a peak of about seventy-five. Most of them were paid on piece rates and, as the cooperative grew, many worked from their own homes. No men were employed in senior positions, though she employed youths from the village as carpenters and brass founders working under the supervision of craftsmen who came from further afield. During this period the cooperative benefited from various grants from the Canadian and British governments and from private benefactors.

#### **4.3. Creative knowledge management tools at AHC**

Given that the batik crafts are handcrafted, the issue of knowledge transfer in arts and crafts organizations becomes more important. Craftsmen's knowledge is crucial for the success of these organizations. Long-term organizational existence depends on both organizational performance and knowledge transfer between artisans, their team of assistants, and the next generation of employees.

According to Hgseth (2013), even though this type of knowledge is difficult to link to performance outcomes because it primarily exists in craftsmen's minds as a result of their working experience, analysis of knowledge and knowledge transfer is crucial in the arts and crafts industry, more so than in the creative industry at large. Ena had not inherited the craft from her ancestors but had accumulated the craft into the society through passion and curiosity. She has studied the technical skills and personal ability;



proper know-how Savino et al (2017), Micelli (2011) and the Linkage between tradition, innovation and passion for its activity De Massis et al. (2016), Messeni Petruzzelli and Savino (2014),

Ena has played a significant role in the revitalization of traditional craftsmanship in post-colonial Sri Lanka and has provided crucial support to her local community. In 2006, her contributions were recognized when the AHC was invited by the Daskari Haat Samithi to participate in an interactive workshop during the annual craft fair held in Delhi. Ena led a group of men and women who were traveling abroad for the first time. The workshop was highly successful, leading to an invitation for Ena and four of her colleagues to conduct a batik workshop in Madhya Pradesh the following year.

Her workshops have spawned a whole industry and the road from Matale to Naula is now lined with her imitators—batik emporia, restaurants, craft shops—some of them run by her former employees.

Latilla et al. (2019) state that the role and function of a craftsman can vary depending on the organization being analysed. In some organizations, the craftsman may be viewed as a symbol of tradition and heritage, while in others they may be seen as a master of the production process. Additionally, craftsmen can be seen as a source of creativity and inspiration, a resource for the local community, and even as the real differential value for the entire organization.

This allowed to narrow the research on the knowledge transfer process within the arts and crafts organizations, i.e., how the craftsmen's knowledge is being transferred. We hence tried to understand the ways through which knowledge transfer can be effectively realized in line with the peculiarities of each organization, investigating the relationship among the exclusivity of the artefacts realized, the tradition and knowhow that each organization tries to preserve and transfer. This process helped understanding the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer for arts and crafts organizations and to consolidate a holistic view on the overall knowledge transfer process about:

1. the specific knowledge to be transferred.
2. the people (craftsmen) repository of such knowledge.

3. the timing of the transfer.
4. how the transfer is effectively realized; and
5. the future of the knowledge transfer within the organization investigated.

The process Ena managed AHC in Matale. Ena has transformed the lives of her workforce in different ways, which has led them to a secure future. According to sources, the oldest staff that was working with Ena, joined the Craft Centre in February, 1965, right after leaving school. Originally, a sewing class has been conducted by Ms. Indrawathie under the guidance of Ena. The first group Ena spread her knowledge to consisted of 8-10 villagers living in close proximity to the AHC.

The first workshop was conducted in the shed of the Original House, but Ena later built a separate “Maduwa”. The older girls who stucked by Ena since its inception in 1964 were Sudharma, Malini, Nalini, T.K. Jayanthi, K.Mangali and Dhana. Out of the first set of employees at the AHC, Dhana went off to flourish on her own by starting out her own business called “Baba Batiks”.

Ena used to come from Colombo and stay with her father Sir Richard for about a week to teach the girls and pay them based on the number of pieces completed. All the raw material necessary to produce Batiks were brought to *Matale* from Colombo with time, the number of Employees under Ena increased from 10 to 20 by the year 1968. A few years later, by the 1970s, they expanded their line of products and have started sewing cushion covers and stuffed animals too.

According to most employees all the significant events of their lives have revolved around the AHC, which is a reflection of how the strategies Ena has used in knowledge transfer has made the employees retain in the context. Another significant moment where the employee loyalty towards Ena was shown dawned by the late 1970s, when Ena left for Virgin Island. The work was not halted in her absence but was efficiently and trustworthily carried out by her staff who managed on their own to carry out the business.

At that time the crew included some more employees. They were *Padmajina*,

*Swineetha, Nanda, Asoka, Sudharma, Malkanthi, Gnananwathi, Gunawathi, Suja, Chandra Kumari, Ajantha, Geetha, Chandani* (for a very short time), Olga, Milina and *Harindrani*, who strived to carry out the business at a very challenging period without Ena's presence. Through this, Ena has given them an opportunity to discover the depths of business.

Ena de Silva Batiks has given rise to the initiation of Batik Centres around Sri Lanka such as *Walawela* Batiks, a Batik Centre around Gelioya and Gampola area in the Central Province and Embroidery Centres in *Mawilmada*, Kandy. The waxing process of Batiks produced by these centres was completed at the AHC with the skilled craftspeople.

After Ena returned to AHC in 1981 after her brief stay in the Virgin Islands, the business expanded furthermore. The wave of arts and crafts during the 1984 was such that many businesses started out around the AHC.

In 1984, *Aluwihare* Tapestries Co-op was registered and formed. After tapestries was started, the carpentry workshop was started 1986. Then with the aid from British council the carpentry workshop was built with Anjalendran with a full force of about 12-15 men in the village. By the 1990s, the Brass Foundry was started in 1990 under Mr. Dharmasena and Mr. Weththasinghe who started out with 12-16 employees. Those included Wijenayake, Hemantha, Susantha, Kumara, Eresh, Jayarathna and Sunil.

#### **4.4. Inspiration through Architecture and Landscape**

The synthesis of Geoffrey Bawa as architect and Ena De Silva as creative client provides a unique pioneering collaboration in contemporary Asian architectural history. Ena de Silva asked Geoffrey Bawa to construct a home for her family in the early 1960s. She searched for housing that was in keeping with traditional Sri Lankan residences because she was dissatisfied with the typical houses of the period, which were based on Western societal principles.



Figure 14 - Interior of the Aluvihare Heritage Centre  
 Source: GILDING THE LILY celebrating Enna De Silva by Rajiva Wijesinha

The residence, which broke new ground in its inward orientation and seamless integration of interior and outside, was constructed from wall to wall with a big **centre** courtyard and six secondary courtyards. A central courtyard with enormous circular oil presses in the corners, where people can sit or dry spices, is surrounded by two grinding stones that support the entry link. This courtyard is entered by a belled gateway from a Hindu kovil or shrine. In the courtyards that opened directly onto the rooms and even through the roofs, trees sprouted. In front of the trellised bay windows, one may relax, sleep, or read a book.

The home was adorned with unique embellishments and rich textures. The dialectics of East and West, within and outside, as well as the traditional and the modern, may have been genuinely transcended for the first time in independent Asia. The marriage of Geoffrey Bawa as the architect and Ena De Silva as the creative client results in a ground-breaking cooperation that is unmatched in the annals of contemporary Asian architecture.

When Ena De Silva started out Batiks in the 1960s, there was nothing at the AHC, but a regular colonial house. Many years before that, Coomaraswamy (1908) had pointed out and predicted that, after four centuries of colonial rule, local craft traditions were on the point of extinction, in his novel: “The Medieval Sinhalese Arts and Crafts”. But

it was time to challenge that statement made by Coomaraswamy. There had never been a great tradition of weaving in Ceylon and in the past, most of the printed clothes were imported to Sri Lanka from South India and even from Burma.

Ena De Silva, Mrs. Lyn Ludowyk, Barbara Sansoni, and a few other artists and impresarios are credited for initiating a renaissance of indigenous crafts and authenticating them in the eyes of independent Sri Lanka's emerging middle classes. They were also able to inject new designs into what had become a rather stagnant situation and, with the assistance of people like Geoffrey Bawa, demonstrate how handicrafts could contribute positively to modern environments and new ways of living. Considering the context, all of the workshops are positioned in the same lovely landscape and are organized around the main house, the designer's house.

Apart from the main workshop, a sight that tourists are attracted to more was the Alu's kitchen, an in-house restaurant in the AHC which was established with aid from the Canadian Government. The K1 portion of Alu's kitchen, which started in 1992, serves Sri Lankan lunches to tourists who visit the AHC.

At Alu K 1, located near the batik works, the menu offered was nothing short of extraordinary. While people may have heard of lavish 15-16 course Italian meals, Alu K 1's menu boasted a similar number of items, all of which were authentically Sri Lankan. It was an experience that left diners in awe and shock, having consumed a remarkable and diverse range of dishes. Ena's culinary expertise was not limited to the restaurant, as even in her house, she never settled for simple meals, always creating dishes that were unique and full of flavour.

K2 portion started few months later by renting another block by the side of the main road with 3 guest rooms to provide accommodation for travellers. By associating Batik to the whole of the AHC atmosphere, the tactic knowledge and the concept was communicated to anyone who is visiting the location.

## Chapter 05 – Research Findings

This research is a descriptive study using a qualitative approach to produce a description and analyse how the creative industry business strategy of Ena de Silva deal with the AHC community. The data collected in this study through observation and document study (analysis of content).

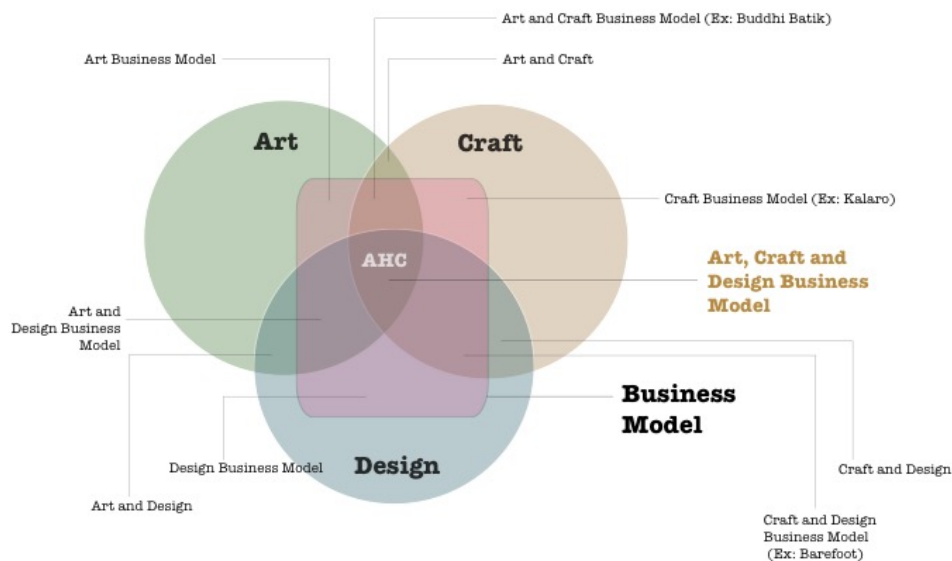


Figure 15 – Identified Business model at Aluvihare Heritage Centre  
Source: By author

The research was solely focused on the Exploration of business strategies of a predominant Batik craft context in Sri Lanka, which is the AHC. According to figure 15, the AHC becomes the intersection of Art, Craft and Design.

The business strategy of Ena de Silva Batiks started with appropriate allocation of resources and the involvement of correct stakeholders and resource people in the business. As mentioned in the fourth chapter of the study, the division of labour started with Ena taking time to learn and improve her creative skills in crafting batiks and distribution of that knowledge and skills to her workforce.

To strengthen the home-based batik industry in Indonesia, it is crucial to enhance partnerships among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the industry. As the majority of batik artisans in the region work from home, building a large-scale batik industry through core contributors' partnerships is vital. Such collaborations will not only empower the home-based batik industry but also help address issues related to market penetration and marketing challenges faced by many home-based batik industries.

Strategies that have been executed Ena de Silva Batiks among others as follows:

### Research Questions 02

What strategies AHC has implemented for the sustainability of its craft-based business?

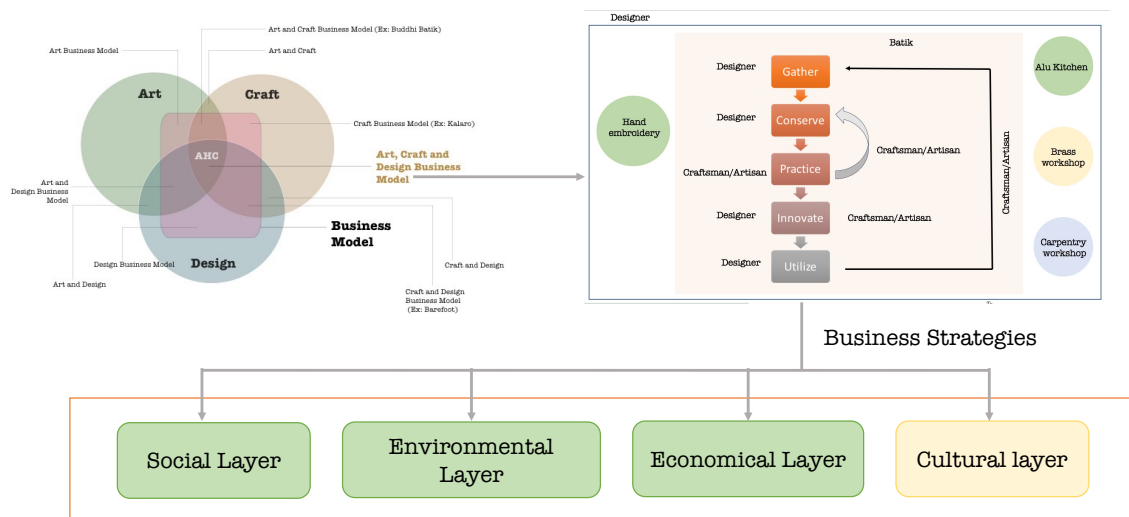


Figure 16 – Identified design business strategies at Aluvihare heritage centre  
Source: By author

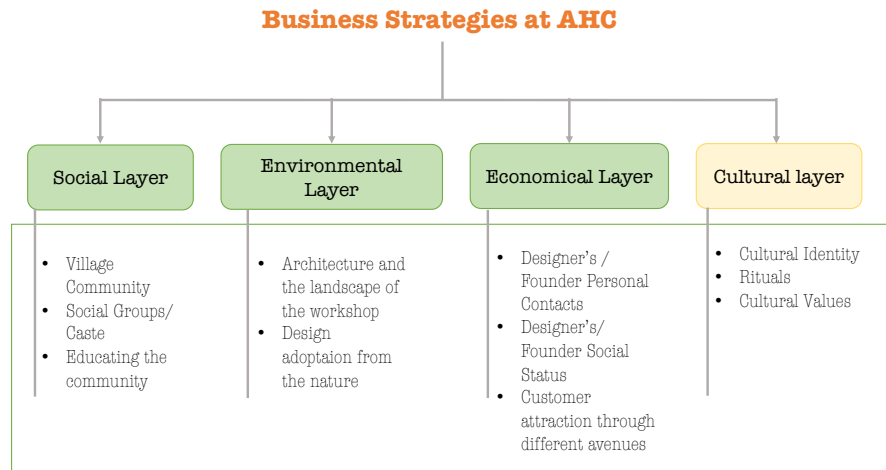


Figure 17 – Identified design business strategies (layer wise) at Aluvihare heritage centre  
Source: By author

When considering the future system. AHC's identification, assemble fertility training Invent, use, and the. Participation of designers and other workshops in the process. Considering the commercial tactics employed in sustainable practice.

### **The Social Layer**

Ena transformed her father's Matala home into a Heritage Centre in the 1980s, where she taught carpentry, needlework, brass foundry, and batik making. By doing so, she not only improved these skills but also the lives of the women she hired. She frequently took on young school dropouts, teaching them not only skills but also giving them the confidence and financial independence, they needed to become contributing members of society.

Ena was able to access socioeconomic strata in the community that was divided into many tiers by involving them in the Batik craft. She not only recruited women in the neighbourhood, but also men who were able to start steady careers because to the skills they had acquired. Under the roof of the AHC, the society that was before split into classes came together as one.



The transfer of knowledge through educating the community and equipping them with necessary skills and expertise also was a predominant characteristic in the social layer.

### **The Environmental Layer**

“Transformative sustainable business models must adopt a shared-value approach that encompasses their social and environmental surroundings. This is in line with the literature on sustainable business models, which describes business models as extending beyond the immediate entity of the firm, such as shareholders and customers, to include value captured for key stakeholders.”

The AHC has itself transformed its business model by making the maximum use of its surroundings. The portion of her house reflects her creativity and her personality, thus helping to create the aesthetics of the context the products are sold.

Her house captures her spirit entirely and has been her home for the past 30 years. Although crowded with a multitude of items, it holds a sense of calm and tranquillity. The restaurant- Alu’s kitchen serves the tourists and buyers whenever they visit the Heritage Centre, thus positioning it to another level.

### **The Economical Layer**

Sri Lankan Batik crafts bring economic benefits primarily through foreign customers. Along with her great friend Geoffrey Bawa, De Silva was able to add batik tapestries to several notable structures created by Bawa, the world-renowned architect, including the Bentota Beach Hotel and the Sri Lanka Parliament. Several years later, this Centre is still one of the few that supports regional artists while drawing numerous tourists from all over the world to see what Ena has done for her home country.

### **The Cultural Layer**

While possessing a wealth of cultural heritage, traditional handicrafts need to incorporate innovative practices in order to remain competitive. This study aims to

explore the concept of innovation within the context of traditional handicrafts, with an emphasis on promoting sustainable development. Mainly Ena celebrate the cultural identity in here designer and merch with contemporary elements. Rituals and cultural adaptations are significant in her practice.

The development of the batik industry presents certain challenges that require attention. One of these challenges is the need for human resources regeneration, as the majority of batik artisans are relatively advanced in age. Thus, there is a pressing need to generate interest among the younger generation to participate in the batik business. Additionally, there is a need for batik entrepreneurs to improve their production systems and techniques, in order to increase productivity and ensure consistent quality across every piece of batik cloth.

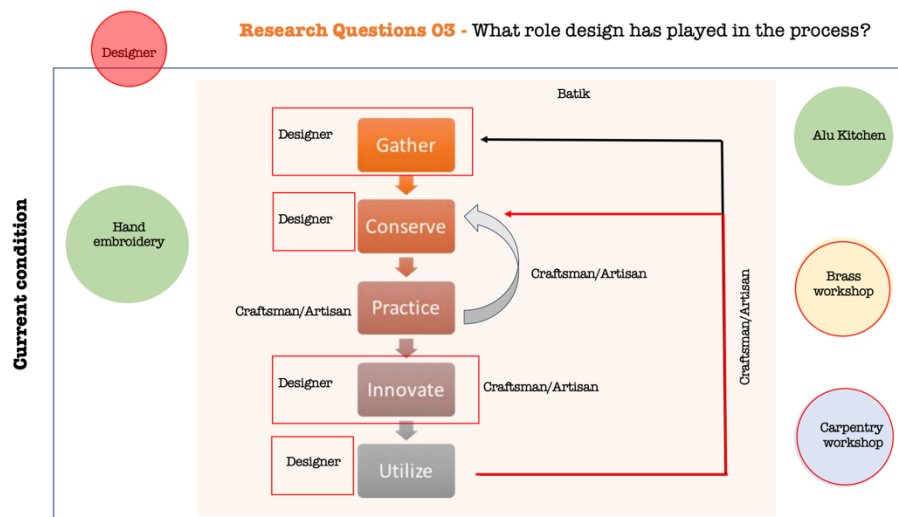


Figure 18 – Identified main design business strategies at Aluvihare heritage centre  
Source: By author

Answering Research Question 03 unveils that designing and the creative role constitute one facet of the AHC business model. Beyond the design process, the business model encompasses various other dimensions including human resource management, collaborative strategies with other crafts, effective business and marketing management, and intricate political interconnections. These diverse aspects collectively underpin the sustained success of AHC as a design-oriented business, even in the absence of its primary designer.

The research findings illustrate several noteworthy points which have been explored throughout the study:

- Ena De Silva's batik designs predominantly feature patterns and motifs inspired by nature, seamlessly integrated with contemporary applications. This blending of ancient art with modern fashion trends demonstrates her innovative approach.
- The ingenious application of color is a defining characteristic of Ena De Silva Batiks, setting them apart as unique artistic creations.
- Despite not aligning with the conventional canon of Sri Lankan textile crafts, Ena's batik contributes substantially to the nation's cultural identity while concurrently fostering economic opportunities.
- Ena's strategic collaborations with design contemporaries of her era led to the conception of substantial works, signifying a deliberate business strategy. These collaborations transcended traditional divides between East and West, as well as between the traditional and the modern.
- AHC serves as a catalyst for the revival of traditional Sri Lankan craftsmanship. Simultaneously, it plays a pivotal role in supporting the local community, particularly its female workforce drawn from nearby villages. This dual function not only provides employment but also empowers women, thereby serving as an integral business strategy.
- Ena's adept management of creative knowledge has catalyzed the proliferation of batik and craft centers beyond the confines of AHC, demonstrating her influence in shaping the wider craft landscape.
- Her initiatives have injected fresh life into traditional crafts, breathing new designs and perspectives into age-old practices, thereby revitalizing them for contemporary relevance.
- AHC has embraced a conscious and strategic design business model that revolves around gathering, conserving, practicing, innovating, and effectively utilizing craft knowledge. This deliberate approach forms the cornerstone of AHC's sustained success and enduring impact.

In summary, the *Aluwihare* Heritage Centre's multifaceted business model is a testament to the intersection of design, cultural heritage, community engagement, and strategic planning. Ena De Silva's visionary approach and adept management have forged a path that transcends the limitations of a single designer, marking AHC as a beacon of sustainable design and cultural preservation.

## **Conclusion**

The modern world at a global level faces numerous challenges spanning over the environmental, social and economic aspects of the globe. End of World War II created the grounds for industrial revolution, technological advancement and a drastic change in the way how the world did function. The conventional and traditional means were replaced by many non-sustainable alternatives causing global issues which demands the highest amount of concerns in the present world. Long lasted trends towards these global issues are now taken in to every global platforms of discussion aiming to return towards sustainability. The sustainable movement is the most popular concept that the contemporary world now discusses. The original concept of sustainability lies in fulfilling the needs of current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfil their needs with the aid of existing resources. And further it is detailed in relevant studies that the sustainable movement is not a single route yet a complex whole which deviate in to social, environmental and economic aspects of any given community irrespective to their geographical location. And recently it was further identified that the three pillars of sustainability (social, environmental and economic) should be supported with the fourth pillar, cultural. A community, country and even the globe as one can only be sustained through sustaining these four pillars. Most of the developed countries are now beyond the missions of sustaining their economy, community and environment and they have satisfied most of the sustainable measures that the relevant studies imposed. The developing countries are where the sustainable means are yet to be imposed and are also lacking behind the development of their economy and sustaining their community, society, culture and environment.

Numerous attempts were taken to sustain these three main aspects through diverse means of sustainable alternatives and strategic systems. In these such attempt the world recently went on with the newly emerged concept, 'Craft based industries. Marketing the traditionally practiced community manufacturing at an international market is this new trend which was commonly adapted by most of the countries. These craft-based industries are recently identified considering the potential ability of these industries to support the developing economies and withstand the social issues that are mostly common in developing, third world countries. This can be achieved by maintaining

and enhancing the cultural identity and authentic values of a given community. On the other hand, it is emphasized that the craft-based industries are highly potential in accelerating economic development which can tolerate possible drawback that may occur, as the craft involves a direct portion of creativity which leads its ways towards innovation. These innovative developments are always capable of supporting the economy, overcoming the timely changes that may occur due to the evolution over time. Specifically, in developing countries craft-based industries are well known for creating international platforms for the vulnerable communities serving social inclusion as these craft-based industries mostly done by rural communities and it is also possible to promote such industries to different vulnerable portions of a given community.

Sri Lanka as a single country inherits a strong historical evolution. And the society and local communities that inhabits the island is enriched with a strong cultural backdrop. Which includes numerous unique practices that practices as rituals and customs for decades over number of generations irrespective to the counter forces that were made time to time by different invasions. Sri Lanka has a rich history of traditional craft-based industries, including textile crafts such as handloom textiles, batik and beeralu, which are mostly popular as domestic production at a lower scale with the intention of supporting the financial support for women. Most of these craft-based industries are evidenced to be almost 3000 years old and was shared down generations to generations over these thousands of years. These craft-based industries by its original nature consumes an intensive labour usage yet consumes a very low energy. Thus, helps and accelerate the economic growth as an environmentally friendly contribution. Further it is identified that most of these industries and craft practices are conducted in rural areas of the island thus promoting these businesses based on craft can reduce poverty and provide solution for the unemployment. As per the demographic statistics a major portion of the women population of Sri Lanka is still unemployed and these such industries can provide both direct and indirect employment opportunities to women empowering their household income. As these businesses market innovative and creative products, it is viable for both the local and foreign markets and thus can enhance the income at a national level.

Irrespective to these benefits that are inherited by the craft-based industries a successful conduct of a business based on craft demands proper organizing and maintaining. The study was conducted with the intention of developing a commonly adaptable business model that can be used for any craft-based business in Sri Lanka. The study encompasses with secondary data from literature and the primary data collected through case study and questionnaires. The model developed includes three main compartments and the business model which is the second component among them is detailed in to four main layers. The business model presented in the study can potentially guide any craft-based industry from its initial setting up stage to its constant development through strategic planning. The business model further has provisions to accommodate the uniqueness of any business that is going to adapt the model and it is proven that the character which enhances the uniqueness is what matters the most in marketing and selling the products in the market as showcased at AHC.

The business model presented provide measures of sustainable development providing necessary concerns to social, environmental and economic aspects of the organization. The direct adaptation of the model can surely sustain the business and timely alterations done to the third compartment: strategic plans provide the tolerance to withstand any possible challenge that the business might face in future to come. A good example of such is the prevailing pandemic situation with Covid-19. The waves of Covid situations created a major drawback which was unprecedented both economically and socially. At a glimpse the whole world was restricted to their houses and industries such as craft-based industries were hit harder. In such situation the proposed model provides guidance to alter its strategic plans in innovation where working from home, marketing products on virtual platforms kind of options to be developed.

This model can be further used for design specific business where a service is marketed. For an example architectural design practice, interior design or fashion designing business can be stated for such businesses. And for such use further studies can use the states model and alter with necessary modification to accommodate special characteristic of those design and creativity-based businesses. In a world where environment and society are kept in as same as the economy, this particular study

inherits a strong long-term consequence. If the craft-based industries functioned at a lower scale based on a domestic level can too adapt a properly detailed business model the whole economy of the country can be enriched. And such adaptation will be a timely solution for the prevailing economic crisis, social unrest and environment degrade that Sri Lanka as a single country faces in the present day.



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