

Executive Summary

Saterra Pottery, the project implemented on manufacturing and retailing terracotta lifestyle clay products was initiated as an entrepreneurial research report as a partial fulfillment of PIM MBA. The report demonstrated in versatile components of project management, opportunity identification, theoretical review, implementation plans and presentation of results and findings, how the entrepreneurial project was executed within the given time frame of April to January. Each chapter as elaborated in sections below illustrate how the sub components of the project was devised being fine-tuned in diverse aspects and how it ultimately benefited the Sri Lankan terracotta industry and academic entrepreneurial research repository.

The introductory chapter of the research report facilitated grounding of the basic project overview elaboratively demonstrating the background for the project and presenting project idea. It was identified that the project was massively beneficial and significant for the Sri Lankan terracotta industry, general household consumers, specifically eco-consumers and the local neighbourhood of the entrepreneur. Project methodology was based on utilizing an existing factory space of entrepreneur's family business on rental basis to conduct manufacturing of products. The entrepreneur has invested Rs. 700,000 as the initial investment to commence business operations. The project was limited on the grounds of manufacturing only terracotta items and not ceramics which has a better lucrative market potential, however for which additional investment is required to purchase required machineries. Moreover, as project could provide employment opportunities only to a limited number of individuals and the issue of limited time availability to complete all project activities were identified as other limitations of the project.

In identifying the opportunity by displaying cognitive behaviour of an entrepreneur was visible in the following project as theoretically explained opportunity identification chapter. The background to the project was further reinstated through the narration of Sri Lankan pottery industry uncompetitiveness that led in justifying the opportunity recognition. Economic and social forces were the most pivotal forces that influenced the entrepreneur to identify the untapped market opportunity of manufacturing quality terracotta lifestyle products. In evidently proving the existence of this business opportunity a survey and interviews were conducted to verify the justification. Based on the survey conducted, it was identified that

homeware products such as clay mugs, pitchers and bowls were in great demand by potential consumers that possess an understanding about terracotta. The survey and interview scripts further revealed that majority of the consumers are willing to shift towards an eco-conscious lifestyle. The gaps of quality clay product manufacturer availability and confined access to quality imports were obtained through analysis. Hence, based on which a set of achievable output and outcomes were developed.

The literature search about global and Sri Lankan pottery and earthenware industry disclosed the differences in development of the global versus local industries. Lack of adequate government support was identified as a major reason for the local pottery industry to remain at uncompetitive levels. Whereas, neighbouring countries such as India have outperformed in the same industry by uplifting the local artisans. Though it was identified through literature that terracotta clay is one of the most sustainable materials and a potential demand exists both internationally and locally, the efforts taken to capitalize on this demand was not visible. Consequently, the business model for the project was developed based on literature searched.

The entrepreneurial project was analysed based on the sub components of project management, identifying the individual activities, task allocations, quality, cost and delivery controls and availability of human resource to execute the project. Considerably higher number of activities were planned for the execution process group as the project was involved with manufacturing. In implementation of this activity, it was identified that certain activities such as business registration was delayed more than a month than planned and some activities managed to get completed with a lesser or zero cost than budgeted such as website development. Certain project delivery variances occurred such as registering in e-commerce sites.

Nevertheless, towards the end of the project it was identified that the project managed to earn great non quantifiable benefits and with a significantly lower margin of net incremental cost of 0.80 owing to the high expenses of the initial year. The proposed business model was executed almost above 90% as discussed in Chapter 2 with more new skills acquired and exhibited by the entrepreneur during the tenure of the project. With sound financial performance, the project guarantees a positive going concern and business continuity.