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Two-wheeler mechanic business: A sustainable business model based on local traditions of Kolhapur District

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Abstract

This study focuses on the two-wheeler mechanic trade in Kolhapur district, which includes both rural and urban areas. The trade is based on traditional skills and is mostly self-employed and operates through small workshops. Skill transfer in the trade is done through apprenticeship and experience. The age of the people working in this sector is between 25 to 45 years and most of them have secondary education and some have done ITI or technical training. Economic stability the average monthly wage is ₹5,000 to 10,000 in rural areas and ₹10,000–15,000 in urban areas. From a social perspective, there is a trusting relationship between the mechanic and the customer and the mechanic is known as a “problem solver” in the society. Environmentally, vehicle repair and recycling of old parts reduces waste, saves resources and reduces environmental burden. The trade strengthens the local economic cycle, creates employment and boosts small-scale industries. However, technological changes such as digitalization, electric vehicles, smart bikes have created a need for new skills. Qualitative and quantitative methods have been used for the research. The aim of this study is to examine the business from the perspective of traditionality, socio-cultural significance and sustainability. Overall, this business is a sustainable economic model based on traditional knowledge, which makes a significant contribution to all three areas: employment, economic stability and environmental balance.

Keywords: Two-wheeler mechanics, Sustainable business, Local traditions, Informal sector, Skill transfer, Customer trust, Economic stability, Environmental sustainability.

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Introduction

Kolhapur district is an industrially, educationally and culturally developed district in Maharashtra. Agriculture is the main livelihood in the rural areas, where farmers use two-wheelers extensively to connect with the market and for daily transactions. In the urban areas, two-wheelers are widely used in Kolhapur city and suburbs for work, school-college, business transactions and to save time on busy roads. The growing population, urbanization, and increasing economic potential of this district are fuelling the use of two-wheelers, making vehicle repair and maintenance a much-needed service in this area. The two-wheeler mechanic profession in Kolhapur district is based on social, economic and cultural traditional knowledge. Many mechanics undergo training from generation to generation through a method of skill transfer, which emphasizes apprenticeship and hands-on experience. The main features of this profession are the formation of long-term trust-based relationships with customers and the social importance of this profession in the local community. This business operates small workshops in the form of micro-enterprises, which create local employment and maintain economic stability. Environmentally, the process of vehicle repair and recycling of old parts saves resources, reduces the demand for new vehicles, and thus reduces the environmental burden. This business model is sustainable and balances all three aspects, economic, social, and environmental. In today's digital and technology-driven era, the rise of electric vehicles, smart bikes, and computer-based maintenance services pose challenges to the traditional mechanic business. However, the mechanic business in Kolhapur is an example of a sustainable business model through local knowledge, skill transfer, trust with customers, and self-sufficient micro-enterprises.

Studying this business provides important guidance on how traditional knowledge can be used for economic development, job creation, and environmental management.

Theoretical Background

What is a Sustainable Business Model?

A Sustainable Business Model is an economic activity that is not limited to making profit alone but also maintains long-term social, economic and environmental balance. In such a model, the concept of “triple bottom line” is given importance that is, maintaining a balance between all three things: people's welfare, Planet environmental protection and Profit. The characteristic of a sustainable business is that a product or service remains in constant demand, meets the basic needs of society and survives without putting pressure on the environment.

Local knowledge-based economy

Many traditional businesses in India are based on local knowledge, experience and skills. These businesses, which have been carried on for generations, are not only a means of livelihood, but also meet the needs of society and connect with culture. The two-wheeler mechanic business also falls into this tradition. Simple tools for repair and maintenance, skills acquired through hands-on experience, and a trusting relationship with customers are important components of this business. This makes this business an ideal example of a local knowledge-based economy.

Informal Sector and its Mechanic Business

A large part of the workforce in India is associated with the informal sector. The work in this sector is largely unregistered, lacks legal contracts, and has limited social security schemes. Yet, this sector contributes significantly to the national economy.

The two-wheeler mechanic business is an important component of such an informal sector. It is characterised by self-employment, small-group workshops, and apprenticeship training. Workers build businesses based on their own skills and the trust of customers. Although this business is characterised by economic instability or lack of formal rights, it is resilient and sustainable.

Research Objectives

1. To understand the nature and traditions of the two-wheeler mechanic profession.
2. To examine it from a sustainability perspective.

Research Methodology

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the nature, tradition, economic stability and sustainability of the two-wheeler mechanic profession. Accordingly, the following methods have been adopted for the research:

Study Area

The Kolhapur district of Maharashtra has been selected as the study area for this research. Kolhapur is a developed district from an industrial, commercial and educational point of view and there is a large use of two-wheelers in both rural and urban areas. Therefore, it is a suitable example to study the nature and tradition of the mechanic profession in this area.

Data Collection

The following sources have been used to collect the information required for the research: Secondary information: Government reports, academic research papers, books, magazines, as well as reports of local social organizations.

Analysis Methods

The collected information has been analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis: In-depth description of aspects related to the tradition of the business, skill transfer, social position and sustainability. Quantitative analysis: Statistical analysis of income, employment stability, vehicle repair costs and financial factors of the business.

Sustainable business model based on local traditions of Two-wheeler mechanic business

The two-wheeler mechanic business in Kolhapur district is seen as a sustainable business model based on local traditions and knowledge. The business provides economic stability through self-employment and small-scale enterprise creation, while preserving traditional skills that are passed down from generation to generation. Building long-term relationships with customers based on trust enhances social commitment, while the methods of repairing and recycling vehicles contribute to environmental sustainability. In the face of the growing demand for two-wheeler use in rural and urban areas, studying this business is an important and timely research reason that using traditional practices can achieve inclusive economic development, job creation and environmental balance.

Findings

This study has revealed various aspects of the two-wheeler mechanic profession. Considering the demographic structure, employment patterns, economic status, socio-cultural values, and environmental perspectives, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Demographic profile

The age group of those working in this profession is mainly found to be between 25 and 45 years. Although the level of education is mostly limited to secondary school, some have taken ITI or technical training. The average period of experience is 8 to 15 years, and many have continued this profession for generations.

Employment pattern

Most mechanics are self-employed and run small workshops or garages. Some mechanics work as workers in larger workshops. The training pattern is usually in the form of “apprenticeship”, i.e. learning under an experienced mechanic.

Income and financial stability

The average monthly income of a mechanic in rural areas is found to be between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000, while in urban areas it is found to be between ₹10,000 and ₹15,000. During seasonal periods, the workload increases and the income also increases. Although there is no formal social security or banking facilities, this profession is relatively stable and provides regular income.

Socio-cultural values

The relationship between a mechanic and his customers is based on trust and mutual assistance. Many customers continue to receive services from the same mechanic for a long time. Skill transfer is a tradition. Young mechanics are born from the experience passed down from generation to generation. In society, a mechanic enjoys a special social recognition as a “problem solver” or “rescuer”.

Environmental aspects

Two-wheeler repair and recycling of parts reduce the need to buy new vehicles. This reduces mechanical waste and pollution. The repair process increases the life of vehicles and is an example of an eco-friendly economy.

Discussion

This research, after studying various aspects of the two-wheeler mechanic profession in depth, reveals some important things. This profession is not only based on traditional skills but is also adapting to modern technology with the changing times. At the same time, it is important from the three perspectives of employment generation, local economic development and environmental sustainability.

Blending Traditional Skills and Modern Technology

Although the two-wheeler mechanic profession is rooted in tradition, today the sector is undergoing significant technological changes. Traditionally learned skills still win the trust of customers, but the need to use new technological tools such as digital diagnostic tools, electric vehicle maintenance, computer-based inspections has increased. Therefore, the blend of traditional skills and modern technology will be a key factor for future sustainability.

Sustainable Employment Generation

This profession is in constant demand as two-wheelers are growing in both rural and urban areas. Even youth with little formal education get employment by acquiring skills through apprenticeships. This employment is sustainable in the long term and helps reduce seasonal unemployment. Therefore, this profession becomes a stable source of sustainable employment in the local community.

Digitalization and Future Challenges

In the era of digital technology, electric vehicles (EVs), smart bikes, internet-based maintenance services are expanding. Therefore, the traditional mechanic faces a major challenge of acquiring new skills. Technical training, adaptation to digital platforms and adoption of eco-friendly practices will be important components of the next phase in this sector.

Contribution to the local economy

The two-wheeler mechanic business is an important pillar of the local economy. In every village or city, small garages create employment, money exchange remains local, customers get services at affordable prices and ease of transportation is maintained. Therefore, this business is not only limited to individual livelihood but also plays an important role in strengthening the local economic cycle.

This study shows that the two-wheeler mechanic business is not just a way of life but a sustainable business model. This business, which has emerged from local traditions, is important at all three levels, economic, social and environmental. The characteristics of this business are customer trust, tradition of skill transfer, continuous demand and stable income with low investment.

However, in the changing times, it is necessary to provide support at the policy and institutional level to face the new challenges of technological advancement, electric vehicles, digitalization. This research has examined the two-wheeler mechanic business in depth from the perspective of local traditions, economic stability and sustainability. As the use of two-wheelers in rural as well as urban life continues to increase, the need for their maintenance and repair is also increasing. This business is mainly associated with the informal sector and is sustained by the characteristics of traditional skills transferred from generation to generation, trust with customers and self-employment starting with low capital.

Conclusion

Although the two-wheeler mechanic business is part of the informal sector, it is a sustainable business model based on local traditions. The skills passed down from generation to generation, the

trust built with customers, and the self-sufficiency that starts with little capital make this business economically viable. Mechanics are recognized in society as "problem solvers", while repair and recycling reduce waste and extend the life of vehicles from an environmental perspective. However, digitization, electric vehicle repair, and the use of computer-based tools are new challenges. Without proper training and institutional support, traditional mechanics can fall behind. At the policy level, credit facilities, insurance, and social security are necessary. Training the youth in modern technology can achieve a convergence of tradition and innovation. Linking repair and recycling with a green economy will make this business environmentally friendly. With the right policy support, this business can become the backbone of the local economy.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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