



A REVIEW PAPER ON A JOURNEY OF RECOLLECTING, LEARNING AND REFLECTING EXPERIENCES ON ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Higher educational institutions are facing difficult economic times which can place financial pressure on leaders in colleges and universities to seek out alternative funding source through entrepreneurial endeavours. All academic leaders have their hidden wishes to translate them into action recognizing environment and marketplace to drive their institution in order to be successful leaders. Some leaders take time to understand the situation when change is needed. Nowadays, the situation has been changed; it demands research based evidences to take a risk for venturing. This article betrays the recollecting my vista of entrepreneurship skills and leadership development imprinted in my mind from the childhood and reflects the process in my academic journey. The PhD in Educational Leadership Program of Kathmandu University, School of Education has revitalized my inner thrust to exploration and research in order to open up an avenue for entrepreneurship in academia. This review article aims at recollecting, learning and reflecting of a body of knowledge from self and literature of scholars around the world to create a roadmap for venturing. This article is expected to be useful to academic leaders of higher education, novice researcher, policy makers and entrepreneur in academia.

Keywords: Recollecting, Learning and Reflecting Experiences Entrepreneurial Leadership Activities, and Higher Education

Scene Setting

Qualities of entrepreneurship skills and leadership development have always oriented me to exploration and research, and such an individual tenet has reflected my total vistas of real life experiences and retrospections thoroughly. Recollection of my childhood really over joys me, and inspires me to memorize my own real lived experiences of entrepreneurship and leadership qualities. My family, especially, father was tremendously entrepreneur

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business oriented man, and this could be blatantly seen in his business leading roles and qualities. He owned a grocery, a fancy store, and a hotel in Pakuwa VDC, Ward no 7 of my village. Indeed, all these ventures were fulfilling the needs and wants of villagers and foreigner and my father was really appreciated for his pioneering and entrepreneurship skills and leadership qualities all over the village. Our enterprises were located at the centre of our village, and hence they were mostly visited not only by locales but also by tourists who held up their night stays. This is the main reason, why I got fascinated towards this skills and leadership. My father was a paragon for me. Among seven brothers, I was an honest, creative and one of the reliable ones for my parents, and took very keen interest on all qualities of my father, and at times attempted for mimesis.

We all were happy at that time. However, all of a sudden after the construction of Pokhara- Baglung Highway, our business was badly affected. Gradually, we lost our customers. No customer visited at our business enterprises. Slowly and gradually, villagers started to get their commodities from the district headquarters because of easy access. Before road access, it was difficult to reach the district headquarters. However, after having road access, they started to sell their local products at the headquarters. My father took advises to solve the crisis because of road access. Many people suggested him to establish similar enterprises at the district headquarters but he decided to migrate from that place to Simara, Bara, an industrial area to cash opportunities for our family members' survival. There too he used his entrepreneurial skills to establish grocery and others to give better education for all of us. Still I am in confusion whether the step of my father to migrate from Parbat to Bara was good or bad. What other better opportunities he had at Parbat, he did not explore. One of the reasons to choose this area is to validate the entire effort of my father.

Recollecting the vistas of my childhood 40 years back, I could feel that I was very gregarious. Time spent with herds of cattle, shoals of fish, folks of chickens and swarms of bees is still afresh in my memories. Experiences of half an hour distance school from home and adventurous walk through the edge of the dense and scary forest fraught with weird sounds of wild beasts and strange creatures for about ten minutes to reach the school still revolve around the lanes of my memory. Sometimes, the melodious sound of cuckoo, wild fowl, mynah and other birds made the walk wonderful.

Another milestone that had really inspired me for entrepreneurship skills and leadership qualities is a water mill at our village. There was a stream as a line of demarcation between the village and the forest. There was a water mill situated at the bottom of the village where one could reach in about 2 hours. I used to go to the mill with my mother to grind cereals and



get amazed with that wonderful machine and the entrepreneur who owned it. Machines grinding cereals to flour and flour transforming to delicious cakes endowed to humanity are wonderful results of entrepreneurship skills and leadership qualities.

I, therefore, could see into how much entrepreneurship skills and leadership qualities are result oriented and life teaching skills. I decided to carry on my further education and research on the same issue. Real-lived experiences pushed me to higher secondary education, Bachelors, and Masters, but my thirst and exploration remain unaddressed. But, when I joined M.Phil, I could find the dint of what I wanted. Then, I decided to continue my research in the same area and grab what I really desired for.

Now, I am pretty much sure that my investigation and research would provide me right direction for an unending exploration into my area. And, moreover, Kathmandu University scores a greater reliability for that purpose. I really feel determined and assured into considering how much reliable and endowing are my decisions for entrepreneurship skills and leadership qualities.

My Position

Academic leaders give a direction to higher education creating conducive environment to make education system viable for gaining global competitive advantages. Globally universities and colleges that rely heavily on students' tuition fee for revenue are most vulnerable not only because of economic instability but also because of competition, rising costs and fluctuation in students' demand. The challenges and complexities of leading a higher education have changed radically and multiplied dramatically over the past 20 years. The leadership of these universities and colleges need to adopt changing market and environmental demands if they are to successfully lead their institutions to meet these new challenges and complexities.

In this confounding situation, I as a researcher of educational leadership of PhD program at Kathmandu University School of Education insist that leadership role is at the centre in academia to create a roadmap of education as per contemporary societal needs, national expectations and international orientations. Academic leaders' endeavour of tracking higher education cultivates a new economic paradigm for institutional efficacy and productivity. In this perspective, different point in time in the history of leadership exercised, many leadership styles and approaches such as trait, skills, style, situational, contingency, path goal, leader member exchange, transformational, servant, team, value based, ethical and authentic. These styles and approaches have been applied and modelled



in higher educational institutions for their effectiveness. However, many researchers and academic leaders have been questioning on practical wisdom of these styles and approaches in this contemporary era. In this back drop, I claim that a new leadership approach has to be coined in order to address the contemporary societal needs and expectations.

As Kuratko (2011) strongly put forward his argument that educational market in today's world is dynamic. The scope of competition has crossed the national boundaries. Educational organizations are in existence because of coordination, collaboration and networking. Creativity and innovation have been fueling to educational organizations in order to gain global competitive advantage. In this context, mobility of education as a service and business has trans-bordered. Productivity in education has been value added knowledge and innovation. The influence of innovation has reached to every sector of educational organization.

Pointing out the changing leadership role of academicians in higher education, many researcher like Riggs(2005), Kirby (2005), Goodman and Nelson(2009) and Smith (2009) state that academic leaders in higher educational institutions need to be more entrepreneurial for their survival gaining global competitive advantage. Therefore, I claim that entrepreneurial leadership, which is a fusion of (transformational, team and value based leadership approaches), has to be modeled in Nepali higher education in order to address societal, national and international anticipations from higher education. My claim above may not be universal remedy for entrepreneurial leadership. Therefore, what we need is more thoughts and explorations that place the academic leaders' activities and their orientation in the centre of leadership development so that we might frame conceptualizations and uncover findings that are specifically relevant to entrepreneurial leadership. I therefore started my journey of reviewing literature on current status of higher education in developing countries and entrepreneurial leadership activities in higher education.

Current Status of Higher Education in Developing Countries

World Bank (2010) in its report on higher education in developing country: Peril and promise highlights the importance of higher education in the world for human capital development. The knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people are considered to be critical to the world's economy. The report argues that the developed world is reacting quickly, with education a major political priority. High quality human capital is developed



in high quality education system, with tertiary education providing the advance skills that command a premium in today's workplace. The report also points out a substantial rise of young people receiving higher education in developed countries. However, the status of higher education in the developing countries is still at the crossroad. World Bank (2010) states that higher education system in developing countries is great strain. The report points out the defect on faculty, curricula, teaching learning and lack of motivation. In this context, it would be worth effective to mention UNESCO (1998) as the report points out that everywhere higher education is faced with great challenges and difficulties related to financing, equity of conditions at access into and during the course of studies, improved staff development, skills- based training, enhancement and prevention of quality in teaching, research and services, relevance of programs, employability of graduates, establishment of efficient co- operation agreements and equitable access to the benefits of international co-operation and new opportunities relating to technologies.

Singh (2009) spotlights role of higher education, as she indicates that the higher education system has been realized as an effective means of economic and social development to reducing poverty by way of developing human resources that can compete at the international level for all round development of the country and support for the national economy.

In the present context, global wealth is concentrated less and less in factories, land, tools and machinery. The knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people are increasingly critical to the world economy. In this connection, World Bank (2000) says that higher education plays an important role for the overall development of a country using knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people. They further emphasize that higher education enhances the quality and productive capacity of the people to meet human resources.

The Havana Conference, which was held on November 1996 mainly, focuses on the crucial magnitude of higher education for a developing country. The conference concluded that higher education is an important element for social development, industrial production, economic growth, continuing the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the cultural piece. This indicates that higher education is an important facet for the overall development of development countries using learning and research.



The UNESCO's World Declaration and Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development in Higher Education on its 1st Article highlights the redefining roles as per the emerging needs in higher education. The main focus is on quality education, training and research. Similarly, realizing need for a new vision and paradigm of higher education on its 9th Article emphasizes the innovative educational approaches: critical thinking and creativity. Under Article 9c, it has clearly been stated that the role of higher education should be directed towards entrepreneurship (UNESCO 1998, p.9).

The discussion above shows that developed countries in the world are raising the stakes in higher education and developing countries are at the crossroad. Despite the challenges ahead, there are new opportunities relating to technologies for knowledge production, management, dissemination, access and control. This indicates a clear direction of higher education in future that is knowledge production utilizing technologies for generating world's economy. The discussion also highlights the emerging role of higher education is to produce knowledge traders to generate economy exercising entrepreneurship education. Here one question may be raised: What kind of leadership approach can better shape creative and innovative person to trader their knowledge for productivity? This question led me to review Northouse (2007) in order to find out the answer. However, the book could not help me to capture the espouse and underlying evidences of leadership that could link to the higher education for the innovation and creation which could work as a fuel to accelerate knowledge economy for a nation's development. As a student of leadership in education, I studied a book written by Goossen and Stevens (2013) entitled 'Entrepreneurial Leadership', in order to solve the problem. The book helped me a lot to understand the concept of entrepreneurial leadership and how can we translate it in to action in education. In the book Goossen and Stevens (2013) articulate, "An entrepreneurial leader is one who pursues opportunities in the face of opposition or limited resources and brings together the human and financial resources necessary to pursue an objective" (p.37).

Entrepreneurial Leadership Activities in Higher Education

Entrepreneurial leadership has also been defined as the process of creating an entrepreneurial vision and inspiring a team to intact the vision in high speed and in uncertain environments (Gupta et al 2004; Kuratko, 2007). If we observe minutely, this definition has three main components. They are: proactiveness, innovativeness and risk taking. Emphasizing the proactiveness component of entrepreneurial leadership Kuratko (2007) advocates that it encompasses willingness of leaders to be active to influence and



lead the future rather than waiting to be influenced by it; exploiting opportunities and accepting the responsibility of failure, being able to anticipate future problems needs for change and improvement and responding to environmental opportunities. Emphasizing the another innovative component of entrepreneurial leadership, Gupta et al (2004) expand the features of it as the ability and tendency to think creatively, develop novel and useful ideas in problem solving, resource utilization and opportunity recognition. The last but not the least component of entrepreneurial leadership as Gupta et al (2004); Kuratko, (2007) underscore is risk taking. Widening the risk taking component they state that it is one of the common characteristics of entrepreneurial leaders particularly in the early stages of entrepreneurial process. They additionally affirm that it is the willingness to absorb uncertainty and take burden of responsibility for the future. After gazing the depth of entrepreneurial leadership, I found three characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership: proactiveness, innovativeness and risk taking. Then, I thought what activities are initiated in higher education for its productivity if proactiveness, innovativeness and risk taking behaviors of a leader would be functional?

The question above led me to review the possible activities in order to explore the possible activities through entrepreneurial leadership in higher education to harness global competitive advantage. For this purpose, I reviewed, Riggs (2005).

He says that universities around the world can create a strong financial base through entrepreneurial orientation role reaching out to the nontraditional sources of income in addition to tuition, government support and donor contribution. In this connection Rhodes (2000) says that there are many ways to demonstrate entrepreneurial orientation. One main way universities are doing this is by offering their academic specialties in exchange for opportunities for added revenue, using faculty experts to produce value for the private sector. In some cases, high tech research conducted in collaborative business, government and university consortia (Rhodes 2000 as cited in Riggs 2005). Riggs (2005) points out ten entrepreneurial orientation activities in universities. They are: research and technology, intellectual property, licensing and patenting, small business development, partnerships, fund raising program, investment activities, educational services, real estate and retail sales and services.

The review above on entrepreneurial activities in universalities helped me to conceptualize ten potential activities to be undertaken by academic leaders through entrepreneurial orientation. They are: research and technology, intellectual property, licensing and patenting, small business development, partnerships, fund raising program, investment activities, educational services, real estate and retail sales and services.



Conclusion

Colleges and Universities around the world are entering into a decline due to environmental, economic, political and demographic changes. Higher educational stakeholders including students, faculty, employers, employees, government and society have been continuing to place increasing demand for change on Colleges and Universities. Leaders of higher educational institutions are required to deploy entrepreneurial activities such as research and technology, intellectual property, licensing and patenting, small business development, partnerships, fund raising program, investment activities, educational services, real estate and retail sales and services if they are to succeed in ever changing market and environmental condition.

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