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**RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT: A CASE STUDY OF  
MS. MANSUKHBHAI RAGHAVJIBHAI PRAJAPATI**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Rural development is more than ever before linked to entrepreneurship. Institutions and individuals promoting rural development now see entrepreneurship as a strategic development intervention that could accelerate the rural development process. Entrepreneurship stands as a vehicle to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities and to sustain a healthy economy and environment. The entrepreneurial orientation to rural development accepts entrepreneurship as the central force of economic growth and development, without it other factors of development will be wasted or frittered away. However, the acceptance of entrepreneurship as a central development force by itself will not lead to rural development and the advancement of rural enterprises. What is needed in addition is an environment enabling entrepreneurship in rural areas.

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## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEFINED**

Defining entrepreneurship is not an easy task. There are almost as many definitions of entrepreneurship as there are scholar books on the subjects. To choose the definition of entrepreneurship most appropriate for the rural area context, it is important to bear in mind the entrepreneurial skills that will be needed to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities and to sustain a healthy economy and environment. Taking this into consideration, we will find that each of the traditional definitions has its own weakness (Tyson, Petrin, Rogers, 1994, p. 4). Defining entrepreneurship as risk-taking neglects other major elements of what we usually think of as entrepreneurship, such as a well-developed ability to recognise unexploited market opportunities. Entrepreneurship as a stabilising force limits entrepreneurship to reading markets disequilibria, while entrepreneurship defined as owning and operating a business, denies the possibility of entrepreneurial behaviour by non-owners, employees and managers who have no equity stake in the business. Therefore, the most appropriate definition of entrepreneurship that would fit into the rural development context, argued here, is the broader one, the one which defines entrepreneurship as: "a force that mobilises other resources to meet unmet market demand", "the ability to create and build something from practically nothing", "the process of creating value by pulling together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity".

Entrepreneurship so defined, pertains to any new organization of productive factors and not exclusively to innovations that are on the technological or organizational cutting edge, it pertains to entrepreneurial activities both within and outside the organization. Entrepreneurship need not involve anything new from a global or even national perspective, but rather the adoption of new forms of business organizations, new technologies and new enterprises producing goods not previously available at a location (Petrin, 1991).

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL VS NON ENTREPRENEURIAL ECONOMY**

An entrepreneurial economy, whether on the national, regional or community level, differs significantly from a non-entrepreneurial economy in many respects, not only by its economic structure and its economic vigorousness, but also by the social vitality and quality of life which it offers with a consequent attractiveness to people. Economic structure is very



dynamic and extremely competitive due to the rapid creation of new firms and the exit of 'old' stagnant and declining firms.

## **RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND URBAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

It is important to stress that rural entrepreneurship in its substance does not differ from entrepreneurship in urban areas. Entrepreneurship in rural areas is finding a unique blend of resources, either inside or outside of agriculture. This can be achieved by widening the base of a farm business to include all the non-agricultural uses that available resources can be put to or through any major changes in land use or level of production other than those related solely to agriculture. Thus, a rural entrepreneur is someone who is prepared to stay in the rural area and contribute to the creation of local wealth for the upliftment of rural economic and social structure. To some degree, however, the economic goals of an entrepreneur and the social goals of rural development are more strongly interlinked than in urban areas. For this reason entrepreneurship in rural areas is usually community based, has strong extended family linkages and a relatively large impact on a rural community.

The promotion of entrepreneurship, the understanding where entrepreneurship comes from is as equally important as understanding the concept of entrepreneurship. It indicates where the governments, national, regional or local, should target their promotional efforts. If entrepreneurial skills, for example, are innate, active promotion policies have a small role to play. If instead, only certain entrepreneurial characteristics are innate, then active promotion policies can contribute to entrepreneurship development in the community in the region and in the nation, since entrepreneurial skills can be acquired through training.

## **PERSONALITY, CULTURE AND OTHER PREDISPOSITIONS TO ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURE**

The standard perception is that **entrepreneurship is a special personal feature** (personality profile), either a person is, or is not an entrepreneur. According to this perception entrepreneurial traits, such as the need to achieve, risk taking propensity, self-esteem and internal locus of control, creativity and innovative behaviour, the need for independence, occupational primacy, fixation upon goals and dominance, are all inborn. Therefore, policies directed specifically towards promoting the development of entrepreneurship would not help much since those characteristics cannot be acquired by training.



Another perception is that **some cultures or some social groups** are more conducive to entrepreneurial behaviour than others. According to this view, the factors that contribute to the supply of entrepreneurs are an inheritance of entrepreneurial tradition, family position, social status, educational background and the level of education. Based on research into the origins of business owners, it is believed that persons, who come from small business owner families, are more likely to become entrepreneurs than others.

The research which tries to explain, by personal traits and/or other social aspects, why certain individuals become entrepreneurs, has not yet produced convincing results. Consequently, a widely accepted view is the following: while personal characteristics as well as social aspects clearly play some role, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs can also be developed through conscious action. Development of entrepreneurs and of entrepreneurship can be stimulated through a set of supporting institutions and through deliberate innovative action which stimulates changes and fully supports capable individuals or groups. It is argued, that controllable variables such as a stable system of property rights and freedom of action in the economic sphere, availability of other inputs in the economy (besides entrepreneurship) as well as education and training, contribute significantly to the development of entrepreneurship.

Many examples of successful rural entrepreneurship can be found in literature. Diversification into non-agricultural uses of available resources such as catering for tourists, blacksmithing, carpentry, spinning, etc. as well as diversification into activities other than those solely related to agricultural usage, for example, the use of resources other than land such as water, woodlands, buildings, available skills and local features, all fit into rural entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial combinations of these resources are, for example: tourism, sport and recreation facilities, professional and technical training, retailing and wholesaling, industrial applications (engineering, crafts), servicing (consultancy), value added (products from meat, milk, wood, etc.) and the possibility of off-farm work. Equally entrepreneurial, are new uses of land that enable a reduction in the intensity of agricultural production, for example, organic production. Dynamic rural entrepreneurs can also be found. They are expanding their activities and markets and they find new markets for their products and services beyond the local boundaries.



## **METHODOLOGY**

The present paper is a case study of a Mr. Mansukhbhai Raghavjibhai prajapati whose entrepreneurial ventures were diversified from the traditional farm sector entrepreneurial initiatives. He was an entrepreneur who was engaged in the diverse entrepreneurial activities for the upliftment of local communities. The paper analysis his personality profile and his environment forcing him to undertake entrepreneurial ventures. The paper also shows how the small entrepreneurial ventures like his could be translated into bigger entrepreneurial activity.

### **Mansukhbhai's journey in the Entrepreneurial world.**

Mansukhbhai Raghavjibhai prajapati was born on 19th October 1965 in village Nichimandal in Morbi Gujarat, where he started his journey as a supervisor in roof tiles manufacturer company of Gujarat.

In the year of 1989 he started making **Tawa** from the Taraquta mud in which he got unbelievable response from market thereafter in 1997 he launched mitti cool water filter successfully then in 2002 he launched **mitticool refrigerator**. In 2004 for mitticool (non stick tawa) he got award from national and state rural development departments. At present Mansukhbhai is roaming all over India with his different artistic products for marketing abroad and in India as well. The indigenous products like natural refrigerator/ filter created by him are liked by peoples because of its use and cost effectiveness.

**Learning for sure entrepreneurial success:** need based, user friendly, cost effective products sell fast in market.

**Vision and aim of the rural entrepreneur:** To provide all luxurious things to country wide peoples who can't imagine affording such goods at competitive rates.

### **Manusukhbhai's life experiences and landing into entrepreneurial ventures.**

After the breakdown of Machhu dam of Morbi in 1979, his family lost everything and they had to migrate to wankaner where his father took the job of mason to support his family. It was here his journey as a worker in a small rooftop tile manufacturing unit started, which today has reached at a point as a successful entrepreneur. Through his family was struggling with finances, his parents motivated him to study up to class ten later he left his studies to provide a helping hand in augmenting family's



resources.

To begin with he started to working in a small factory. **Learning: (Catch every little opportunity which will enrich experience).**

Unfortunate enough in the very first month, while working inside a chimney his left eye got injured because of which he had to quit work for ever eight months.

Once his sight improved, in 1984 he started tea lorry near the highway but somehow due to the persistent comments of his acquaintance he closed it down within six months, one of his uncles visiting at his tea lorry inquired about a person who would be interested to work in a roof tile manufacturing unit. He immediately closed tea lorry and joined the unit, Jagdamba potteries, as a trainee at Rs.300 per month in 1985. He worked hard for three years and learned all the related works of the unit during this time, he also helped to my parents marry off his younger sisters.

**Learning:** Overcoming losses and ill fates at an earliest and not allowing them to be converted into one's miseries.

**Witnessing how technology can increase quantity as well as quality of products manufactured.**

During his childhood he saw earthen pans/ hot plates (locally termed askaladi/tavdi) being manufactured manually on the potter's wheel (locally termed as chhakdo). Using this one person could only make about 100 units per day. Then he saw roof tiles being manufactured in large quantity on hand press, which made him think why earthen pans cannot be made the same why.

**Mansukhs first small entrepreneurial initiative.**

In 1988 Mansukh left his Job and took a loan of Rs 30,000 from a money lender to start his own earthen plate manufacturing factory. Then he purchased a small piece of land for the factory, dyes and presses, soil mixing machine, electric potter's wheel and other scrap objects. Later he modified the roof tile making hand press and developed a hand press machine having capacity to produce 700 earthen pans per day.

**First marketing strategy of a small entrepreneur and taste of success experienced by budding entrepreneur encouraging him for undertaking larger entrepreneurial ventures.**

It took him eight days to put everything together and on the ninth day because of the first day of his work he made 50 pieces of the earthen plate. Then he kept all of these in a



container tying to the carrier of the cycle and went to the nearby villages to sell the same. He sold one piece for 0.65 paise and within two days he could sell the entire first batch. This was the first income of the budding entrepreneur.

#### **Utilising the fruits of technology in further strengthening his entrepreneurial venture.**

This continued for the sometime. Then he realized that there was a difference in making earthen objects on manual potter's wheel and making them on electric potter's wheels and using presses. He also visualised the problem with the twas they would break because of overheating.

#### **Importance of feedback and product improvisation for product to cater to consumers need.**

He got negative feedback from many of his customers. He even tried reducing the price of his tavas but still people could not find it as a good value for money. Then experimentally varying the proportions of different types of clay to obtain the preferred mix. Gradually he increased the production and in six months time started hiring chakda to go around nearby villages to sell his products.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Entrepreneurship especially rural entrepreneurship stands as a vehicle to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities and to sustain a healthy economy and environment. The entrepreneurial orientation to rural development accepts entrepreneurship as the central force of economic growth and development. Mansukh Bhai's entrepreneurial initiatives appropriately contribute in the said direction i.e in socio economic upliftment of rural people. His case studies his worth emulating for budding entrepreneurs. Being an uneducated man he realised and applied the importance of technology and customer feedback and suitably used both in improvising his business ventures. His dominant **personality traits** demonstrating strong learning acumen, perseverance and coming out of the adversities immediately contributed to his entrepreneurial success.

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