



Growing Entrepreneurially

A compendium of eighteen entrepreneurial journeys from Gujarat and Rajasthan



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Foreword

The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Govt. of India, instituted the National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA) in 2016, with an aim to catalyse a culture of entrepreneurship among India's youth. This would inspire youth to set-up their own enterprise and create employment opportunities for others.



Over the last three years, the structure and the process of the National Award has undergone transformation to make it more inclusive across geographies and enable entrepreneurs with diverse socio-economic backgrounds to participate. The Ministry is happy to have the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) join as a regional partner in NEA 2018 to reflect this inclusive turn of rural and grassroots entrepreneurship.

The award winners shortlisted by the regional jury for Gujarat, Rajasthan and Daman and Diu and the final winners of the NEA 2018 reflect the power of diversity of our nation and unwavering commitment and potential of its trailblazer citizens towards changing the face of the nation with their entrepreneurial aspirations.

It is indeed heartening to learn that IRMA's incubator, ISEED (Incubator Social Enterprises and Entrepreneurs for Development) has brought out this well-intended compendium of eighteen entrepreneurial journeys from their region. By doing so, ISEED has unleashed the creative energies and meaningful experiences of these young role models for the benefit of many other struggling entrepreneurs. Most importantly, these case studies relate easily to the common Indian youth. Hope they will find these case studies most useful. I greatly compliment and thank ISEED IRMA for spearheading this path breaking advocacy work on NEA 2018 and am sure that the compendium will generate wide interest among the youth of India. Incubators like ISEED should continue to work with the awardees to mentor and build their capacities for inclusive growth.

Jyotsna Sitling
Joint Secretary to Government of India
Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Growing Entrepreneurially: Rewarding Grassroots Entrepreneurs and Collective Enterprises

When IRMA was asked by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to join as a regional partner for the National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 it was both an opportunity and challenge for us. IRMA's young incubator, ISEED was beginning to consolidate its [learning](#) over two years when this opportunity arose. The team had to redirect its energy and focus to meet with the new challenging deadlines that NEA 2018 provided. Following discussions with other partners where it became clear what we had to do we organised a regional workshop of Civil Society Organisations introducing them to entrepreneurship and seeking their support in spreading the awards within their networks. They were better connected with the grassroots and we encouraged them to nominate deserving entrepreneurs in the region. We followed this up six road shows at Anand, Vadodara, Surat, Ahmedabad and Jaipur. The Diwali holidays restricted our outreach.

Our next challenge was to process the entries and organise field visits to all the shortlisted locations. Annu Sunny and Bhavesh Sawariya, India Fellows joined the team to assist Shubha Khadke, ISEED's incubation manager who was ably coordinating the process and the diverse demands both internally and externally. Shriprakash Singh Rajput too joined the ISEED team and together we covered twenty locations in less than a week for the field level verifications. We had a total of 616 nominations for the region and a set of 54 final shortlisted entries after due scrutiny in both A and B categories (the latter relating to the entrepreneurial ecosystem). A joint visit to one of the shortlisted candidates helped us to discuss possible variations in assessment of field teams. This turned out to be very useful for the regional jury meeting in early October. We were encouraged by the response of the regional, and later the national, jury who commended our documentation. Having put in considerable effort and having listened to the entrepreneurs journeys we felt that their stories needed a wider audience. It was then that we decided to capture the stories through brief case studies.

The stories presented in this compendium represent the diversity of experience and entrepreneurs. Some began with initial investments of less than a lakh, a few were fortunate to have received mentoring and networking support from local RSETIs but a large proportion of them have pursued their dreams depending, it appears, through family support. (un) Surprisingly, few were connected to incubators in the region. The NEA 2018 experience helped us link to grassroots entrepreneurs and think of newer vistas of engagement, mentoring and networking support as well as capacity building. We invited one of the entrepreneurs and NEA award winner, Vijay Rathod of VRG Energy, to share his journey in our Entrepreneurship Development Programme in February on "Building and Managing a Social Enterprise" and realised the potential of peer learning among entrepreneurs. This compendium is a small tribute from ISEED to the spirit of opportunity orientation, perseverance and

silent leadership and effectuation of these uncelebrated leaders. We hope that this compendium would help inspire many others to venture into growing entrepreneurially. For us at ISEED, and hopefully other incubators in the region, this engagement with entrepreneurs is a continuous process that goes beyond the Awards. We hope to continue to work with some, if not all, of them and explore ways by which we can add value to their lives even as we co-create an entrepreneurial ecosystem at the grassroots. This, as we are increasingly realising, requires innovative platforms and spaces where different stakeholders can meet, listen to each other and [think together](#).

The energy of the case writers - Annu, Bhavesh, Shriprakash Singh and Shubha - has been infectious. I thank them for their perseverance and Swati for agreeing at very short notice to read and copy-edit many of these stories from distant Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh. I would also like to thank my colleagues Prof Saswata Biswas, Durga Prasad, Paresh Bhatt, Hippu Nathan for their support at various stages of the NEA 2018 and our Director Prof Hitesh Bhatt for his constant encouragement and support. There are many others who have contributed directly or indirectly to this volume and ISEED would like to thank all of them. These stories would need both expansion and revisions. We encourage all to share their comments and suggestions with us at iseed@irma.ac.in

Prof C. Shambu Prasad
Coordinator ISEED

March 2019

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VRG ENERGY INDIA PVT. LTD.

Harnessing solar energy¹

¹ The case study is based on an interaction with Mr. Vijay Rathod, on 30/11/2018 as part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018



They have implemented projects in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.

Vision reading is part of their daily regimen.

Journey of Vijay

Mr. Vijay Rathod, is one of the three directors of VRG Energy India Pvt. Ltd., which is the core team that understands the energy needs of modern era and recognizes its implications for the society, economy and environment at large. Solar power is the future of the energy needs of the modern era as it is a natural source which ensures an overall sustainable development. Mr. Rathod has been experimenting with locally affordable technological solutions for harnessing solar power since 2011. Having completed his Diploma and Degree in Electrical and Communication Engineering in the year 2010, he began to experiment with people friendly and efficient Switched Mode Power supply (SMPs) models. With an initial investment of Rs. 2 lakhs, he sought to develop models which could compete with the existing Chinese models in the market. However, the low cost points of the Chinese SMPs didn't allow him to succeed initially against them but this experience coupled with his engineering background came handy in next few years. His subsequent experiments based on 'keen observation of existing technological solutions and the felt needs of the local pumps based on solar power' gave him an instant success in the local market. His efforts to become an Engineering Procure Company (EPC) as a part of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM) gave him a much deeper understanding of the varied business opportunities in the domain of solar power and it is at this juncture that the idea of solar power based water pumps took birth.



Vijay Rathod

He experienced his first success when his company implemented the pilot project on 7.5 AC solar water pumps in the state of Bihar in the year 2011-2012. Although he was credited with great success, the pumps manufactured by them were not energy efficient. There were around 20 companies at that time in this market and 'Shakti pumps' was a major name. The initial victory and a better understanding of the competition in the market led his company to decide on making a solar water pump with 80% efficiency. They succeeded in doing so and a presentation on the same at Rajasthan

Horticulture Department recommended the use of these pumps by willing farmers. This move had a cascading effect on the business turnover of the company. From 20% market share in the segment of the water pumps in the year 2012, they made a huge leap to conquer almost 80% of the solar powered water pump market. The company installed 550 pumps under the above project and it was certified by the Rajasthan Horticulture Department that these pumps had fault ratio of less than 1%. This marked his journey as a technology driven clean energy solar power entrepreneur!

His team strove to manufacture cost-effective SMP controllers which were mainly supplied by Chinese companies until then and they could reduce the cost of SMP controllers from Rs. 65,000/- to Rs. 23,000/- from the year 2012 to 2018. This gave them an edge over their Chinese counterparts resulting in conspicuous recognition of their company by major players in this market. Additionally, it yielded the company the opportunity of being either a consortium partner to some of the dominant players or a part of the customer portfolio of the major companies like Larsen & Tubro, Jain Irrigation, Mahindra group of companies etc.

Mr. Rathod travelled across India and also to Africa to understand the functioning of similar industries and to explore the business opportunities they offer. At the same time, his core team continuously monitored the existing market situation and the solar power sector within and outside India. To their advantage, the government of India and many global institutions began placing immense emphasis on increasing the share of solar power in the overall energy requirements. The launch of International Solar Power Alliance by India and participation of his company in their summit gave them the platform to present and strengthen their case further. Through procured investment sources they set up their own factory in the year 2011 at Rajkot.



VRG Energy Workshop

About the enterprise

Vijay Janubhai Rathod in association with Riteshbhai Babubhai Kamani and Ghanshyam Vallabhbai Kapuria registered the private limited company named **VRG ENERGY INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED** and the operations of the company started in 2011-12. Their factory as well as the company was set up in Metoda GIDC at Rajkot.

Mr. Rathod and his team is committed to constant innovation based on their market research about the application of technology for harnessing and adapting solar power. This relentless hardwork on their part has given **VRG ENERGY INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED** a considerable recognition in a

span of less than a decade, while several start-ups take decades to reach this mark. The company headquarters is at Rajkot in Gujarat whereas its projects are implemented and operated through their project offices in the states of Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh and Karnataka.

The company ventured into a new segment of linking hand pumps with solar pumps to fill overhead tanks to provide tapped water to the communities. This earned them many projects in the year 2014 from the Department of Drinking Water Supply under the Government of Jharkhand. This project was also an outcome of the founder's commitment towards socially responsible business. These solar powered hand pumps helped thousands of children save several hours of their time which was earlier spent on fetching drinking water.

Their commitment to innovation and people-friendly business led to the growth of their business turnover to several times. In the year 2014-15, their total annual turnover was around Rs. 28,00,000/-, which expanded to Rs. 34,00,000,00/- by 2017-18. This is also reflected in the major leap in their customer base too. While the company had no government client but only 10 end users along with 2 private companies as their clients in the year 2011-12, it changed to a healthy increase in customer base in the form of 9 state governments as clients with 1200 end users and 25 private companies. Along with this client growth, it has also seen a considerable growth in the total number of employees, recording an increase from 2-3 in the year 2011-12 to 34-35 in 2017-18. The company is expecting an addition of Rs. 17 crores in the current fiscal through rooftop empanelment in the above mentioned 6-7 states across India. Not only have their vendors increased but their operations have also led to an overall increase in the village level employment thereby securing livelihoods of many people.

Another striking feature of the company, in addition to its sales and service, is the link between them better known as real time remote monitoring system of their installations. Until 2014-15 the government gave subsidies for installing solar powered pumps and other units but there was no accurate monitoring for it. The company has developed the above mentioned GSM based monitoring system which provides concerned data every two minutes and the government has now made it mandatory. This does not require physical monitoring, which reduces the operational costs as well as increases the effectiveness of maintenance of installed units.

The most striking feature in the success of this company is not only its increasing business turnovers but also its focus on processes vital to enterprise building and the spirit of treating its manpower as its family rather than as its employee. The company keeps an unwavering focus on learning through its business journey and has clearly spelt out its vision document along with a 'strategy sheet' visibly placed in the company premises.

Each member of 'VRG family' has been given a Vision Card for the daily reinforcement of these ideas. Vision reading is part of their daily regimen.

As the company is growing it has developed an exhaustive HR manual which determines the smooth functioning of the company. Regular employees have been covered under Employee Provident Fund scheme. ESIC is still in process but they expect it to be part of their system soon.

In addition to fulfilling the above mentioned mandatory requirements, the company has developed its own ethos to make every employee part of its family. They are:

1. A welcome ceremony is organized for every new employee.
2. The company's establishment day (Birthday) and the birthdays of the employees are celebrated.

3. The directors of the company visit employee's parents to know their wellbeing.
4. Major festivals are celebrated where employees give speeches honing their leadership skills.
5. Incentives to the tune of 50% of their salary are given in addition to their salary.
6. The company demands a strict adherence to the company policies. Once even one of the directors was fined for not wearing company uniform.
7. Company tries to help its employees in exceptional need conditions, even beyond the prescribed norms. It has helped an employee whose father was suffering from cancer and another employee in getting a housing loan.



VRG Energy Team

Growth Challenges

Mr. Rathod is of the opinion that the present time is full of possibilities for his business and that the government of the day has been very supportive of this sector. He also strongly feels that the GST compliance has helped him to expand his business and also to boost the financial growth of the company. As of now, he does not see any major hiccups coming his way but for the competition from the emerging and established players locally and globally. And he believes that his company and its human resources are capable of facing those challenges.

The Way Forward

Company's core team has travelled to African countries including Democratic Republic of Kongo to explore the business potentials available there and their assessment suggest that there is a tremendous scope for expansion in the West African countries mainly for solar powered hand pumps, the installation of which saves several hours of thousands of children which at present causes them to compromise on their healthy growth and education. Being part of international solar alliance helps

them in mobilizing required funds. Even the Exim Bank of India has been supporting the cause. On the technology front, the company has three important innovative products lined up, which are presently undergoing their final testing. They are:

1. **Universal Solar Pump Controller (UPSC):** It is designed in such a way that a solar powered pump controller will control more than 300 agricultural operations.
2. **A Fault Passage Indication Gadget** which is meant for checking the conveyance loss in electricity transmission lines is being tested. This will be 15% cheaper than similar products available in the market. A MoU was already in the pipeline at the time of the interview with the director.
3. **VRG Electric Vehicle (VEV):** It is being developed at their Rajkot facility and so far everything is being sourced or manufactured locally. It will be operated by using lithium batteries.

Mr. Rathod wants his company listed in BSE and NSE as soon as possible In order to achieve his aspirations. He has a vision of establishing branches and service networks all over the Indian and African regions and also aims to become the top solar solutions provider in the world.

Key takeaways

The enterprise was started to find space in the SMPS market but when met with failure the founder exhibited the determination and zeal to convert his experience into learning and to use it to his advantage in the business of solar power solutions.

Openness to novel ideas and an ever-expanding market for solar power has given them successes at regular intervals which have kept their enthusiasm going and maintained the motivation levels among the employees. Their HR practices and the philosophy of the company as a single family have created a very friendly environment for their employees, which have probably resulted in better productivity.

They have been on all the right platforms presenting their case, which is also one of the reasons for their goodwill and standing in the emerging market of solar power related solutions within the country and abroad.

Compliance to the government norms like GST could also be attributed to their success.

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MAHESH HANDICRAFTS

Artisan to an exporter²

² This case study is based on an interaction with Ashok Chouhan and employees of Mahesh Handicrafts, Jodhpur on 30 Nov 2018 as a part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018. This was followed by a telephonic conversation with Ashok on 13 Dec 2018 for more information about the enterprise.



Ashok Chouhan (left) with his brother.

I know what makes an artisan happy, I am one of them.

Journey of Ashok

Mahesh Handicrafts is a renowned name in Jodhpur for their exquisite hand embroidery and finesse furniture. Started by Ashok Chouhan in Jodhpur, Rajasthan in 2006 the firm is gaining recognition the world over.

Ashok hails from a community that excel in making leather footwear. After finishing school, he was in a dilemma to pursue further studies due to financial constraint. He had to start working to fund his education. He started working in a metal factory, saving money for education and supporting his family. He later joined a local artisan to learn making Mojari. A Mojari is handcrafted footwear made by artisans with tanned leather and decorated with textile embroideries and other embellishments. He wasn't satisfied by making them as he also wanted to market it beyond Jodhpur. He had studied post-graduation by then and started scouting for market opportunities. The market for leather mojari was limited and it would be difficult for him cater to the bulk demands of thousands of handcrafted footwears of single design with very high precision level.

It was then that he started working with an artisan who used to cover furniture with leather as per specifications. He found opportunity in expanding this market as the profit margins were immense as compared to a mojari.

About the enterprise

Ashok began Mahesh Handicrafts as a proprietorship firm at Jodhpur in 2006. He funded his venture with self-savings and money borrowed from family from whom he received immense support. For almost six years, he sold his products through retail or traders. He wanted to go international. He found an opportunity to exhibit his products in EPCH (Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts) exhibition in Noida, NCR. EPCH organizes the fairs and exhibitions exclusively for overseas buyers. In initial years he could not make it through the exhibition but eventually by improvising his designs and methodology he got permission to display his products there in 2011. This was a key point as Mahesh Handicrafts started exporting leather coated furniture to various European, American and Middle-east countries. As the work started expanding the orders started growing bigger and bigger.

Process of production

Goat leather, the main raw material used, is purchased from several villages in Rajasthan where tanning of leather is done using traditional methods. Cow and buffalo leather are purchased from Government certified tanneries across India. The wooden or metal structure of the furniture is made locally in another unit of Mahesh handicrafts. In most cases the design is provided by the client,

along with specifications. All the process of cutting the leather as per the design, dyeing, stitching, and coating the furniture with leather are done by local artisans.



Women are also engaged in making leather furniture.

Growth challenges

No entrepreneurial journey is complete if it does not have its share of challenges to overcome and Ashok's story is no such exception. He faced immense problems initially in having a say as a trader in handicraft market which was dominated by higher communities. Perseverance and maintaining cordial relationships with everyone helped him stay afloat. Currently, he is the only artisan who is a member of the Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Association.

Language played a bigger deterrent while exporting products to other countries. He lost a lot of money and opportunities as he wasn't able to speak English. He joined English speaking classes in the evening to overcome this limitation. By learning English he was able to receive information about various rules and regulations in the business and was able to take informed decision about the same.

Inspirational value and impact

What has made Mahesh Handicrafts successful is that they have always kept themselves relevant. Presently 20 permanent local artisans are engaged as employees while they hire contract-based workers, to provide livelihoods to the communities. As Ashok points out, 'I know what makes an artisan happy, I am one of them.' The common dining area for everyone at Mahesh Handicrafts is a space for sharing ideas, solutions, concerns etc. They do not use harmful chemicals in any process of production. They give the design and the material to the local artisan community of around 250 families, who work on each piece of leather as per the design and bring back to Mahesh Handicrafts. The artisans are paid per piece and the charges differ based on the design and intricacy involved.



A normal day at the production unit.

The waste and left-over leather pieces are used consciously. The enterprise tries to make maximum use of leftover scraps of leather and other raw materials in the furniture. Some of the scrap is converted into footballs and rugby balls. The remaining leather is sent to specific communities that make traditional Jodhpuri mojari, helping them reduce the cost of production for the handcrafted footwear.

Ashok volunteers with an NGO called Jodhpur Leather-works Society and Smart Mojari of FDDI (Footwear Design and Development Institute) to improve the lives of the artisans and imbibe the entrepreneurial culture in them. Ashok also shares his story and experiences to the youth of Jodhpur through JHEA and by speaking at various college events.

Key takeaways

Ashok says that networking and maintaining good terms with the clients is the key to successful business. He makes it a point to be present in all the exhibitions of Mahesh Handicrafts. In his experience meeting clients in person and listening to their requirements is very important to maintain trust. Also, he stresses on taking feedbacks positively and work on it accordingly. He believes that working with the people of his community has been a win-win situation for his enterprise and the artisans. Also, knowing the fundamentals of leather handicrafts has helped him take practical decisions before committing to a client. He does not plan to mechanize the unit as he thinks the touch of an artisan adds value to each piece of furniture that is made at Mahesh Handicrafts. Also it is the major source of livelihoods for many communities.

It is this spirit of Ashok that in last 6 years' the enterprise has achieved a turnover of rupees 41 Cr. He has also won the '*Rajasthan Udyog Ratna Puraskar*', by the Government of Rajasthan in 2017.

Ashok aspires that his legacy of high quality and working with local artisans should continue for years to come. He wants the enterprise to be known for the handcrafted leather furniture all over the world. In future he is plans to create his own designs and brand name along with the customizing lines of furniture.

Details of the entrepreneur

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HEM CHEMICAL AND PHARMA INDUSTRIES

Channelizing experience to pursue entrepreneurial dream³

^{3 3} This report is based on interaction with Ritesh Kumar as part of Field visit during the assessment process of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 on 02 Dec 2018



Ritesh Patel

Relinquishing the handsome salary with perks to chase his dream was not easy.

Journey of Ritesh

Ritesh Patel belongs to a village nearby Himmatnagar. His father has a furniture shop, now handled by his younger brother. Ritesh graduated in B.Sc. chemistry from North Gujarat University, Himmatnagar and was among the top 15 students in his class. He chose to pursue M.Sc. in Material Science as he felt it would give him opportunities to work in different industries like glass and paper. After completing his M.Sc. in 2002 he joined as a quality control chemist in a small company at Himmatnagar. While the salary was not high, he was keen to learn as much as possible. To broaden his horizons and he switched his job to become a quality assurance officer in a different company where he learnt management of plant, audit and compliances. He helped his company get a testing approval.

The declaration of an excise free zone in Himachal Pradesh then began a shift of various companies to the state and Ritesh too moved from Gujarat to Himachal Pradesh. This was his first exposure out of the Gujarat and according to him that was an important mile stone because he learnt all dimensions of setting up an industry. In 2006 he joined Acme Farma in Himachal Pradesh, which was into wellness and cosmetics products. He worked with a multinational company and learnt corporate culture and enhanced his networks. With this wide exposure he decided to return to his home town with a view to give shape to his extensive knowledge, skills, networks and experience.

Relinquishing the handsome salary with perks to chase his dream was not easy. Ritesh gives all credit to his wife who was always ready support him. Despite his experience he needed to start from scratch. He did not have the capital and the pharma sector requires considerable investment. For a year, Ritesh provided consultancy to pharma companies of Gujarat even as he continued to work on his idea. With close to a decade of industry experience he became an expert in audit and compliance issues. In pursuit of financial support he applied for the Pradhan Mantri Employee Generation Programme (PMEGP) but unfortunately could not get it. He finally decided to take a loan from the bank. He mortgaged his house at Himmatnagar and took a term loan of Rs 16 lakhs from Dena Bank. With some saving and borrowed money from friends he started Hem Chemical and Pharma Industries (HCPI) in 2012 at Himmatnagar with 24 lakhs. His proprietorship firm was registered in the name of his wife Hemlata and he also wanted to develop and supply pure products like Hem (Sanskrit word for Gold). He purchased basic machinery through a bank loan and started production on rented space.

About the enterprise

He has known that pharma industry requires major investment and he applied for a different registration and he entered the food business. The bigger challenge now was to procure orders that could keep his firm running. He got his first order from his friend who was working in an export company and they had required glucose to export to African countries.

His first order amount was Rs 5 lakh and he developed seven flavors of glucose for the client. Although he had nearly 10 years of experience in the field of Pharmaceutical sector and had wide experience in the field of manufacturing, testing, developing product and material procurement, getting continuous orders was still a challenge. In the initial phase, he pursued digital marketing. He used to receive lot of queries from export companies and other countries and he ensured that he answer every query personally. This attitude worked for him and he started getting orders for flavoured glucose. His challenge thought was that during the monsoon there was no demand for glucose and thus no work. So he decided product diversification. He used his knowledge about formulation and development and diversified into protein powder, developing new instant drinking powders like Rasna and glucose tablets. These products come under food license which don't require pharma license.

Ritesh did not have money for advertising and marketing so he developed products for third parties only. Through digital marketing and personal contacts he was able to get orders. They were largely from African countries. He tried to enter the Indian market and a company from Bihar showed interest. They gave him a big order of worth Rs. 80 lakhs in 2013-14 but he realized that payments were irregular. Despite following up regularly he finally ended with a loss of Rs 5-6 lakhs. He then changed the strategy and decided to take advance from all companies before production. HCPI does not sell directly but develops products for other companies like Baidyanath, Sunpack, Ross care etc. He faced a major challenge for excise registration. To get orders from big companies like Baidyanath they needed excise registration. This increased the cost of products resulting in a loss of orders from smaller companies.

The turnover of HCPI has increased since 2015 after stabilization of markets and products. At present HCPI supplies products to 10 African companies and 15 Indian companies (largely in North India). Its network in African Countries is good and 50% of sales are from Africa. Current product range includes 6 flavours in glucose, instant drink mix, protein powder and energy drinks. Their USP is to provide different products to the customers. HCPI's turnover has touched Rs one crore. Recently they got an order from Central Police Canteen (CPC) in Gujarat where they will supply glucose and sugar free protein powder. Ritesh Patel has experience of cosmetic products so in future HCPI will come up with cosmetic products and he hopes to also explore manufacturing agro-chemicals also. Currently, though the focus is on product diversification of the present range of their products and to ensure customer satisfaction which to him is the key to business growth.

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Chhayaben Pawar

Prosperity through papads⁴

⁴ This report is based on interaction with Chhayaben Pawar and her husband Hemkant Pawar as part of Field visit during the assessment process of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 on 29 Nov 2018



A common scene at her production unit

She too had to take up the responsibility of supporting her family.

Journey of Chhayaben

A true entrepreneur is not only a dreamer but a doer as well. Chhayaben Pawar is one of them. She was born in Usarli village of Nandurbar District in Maharashtra in an agrarian family. She completed her higher secondary from the school village in Arts. Along with it, she has been interested in activities stitching and embroidery, making of papads and pickles etc. Post her marriage with Hemkant Pawar she had to shift to Songarh block in Tapi District of Gujarat. Her husband was a business owner of a partnership firm Madhuram which was into making and selling papads. His business was not doing well. Hemkant had to close the unit and take a job to support his family. Chhayaben realized that her husband's income would not be sufficient to cover expenses and ensure a better future for their family. She too had to take up the responsibility of supporting her family. As she knew how to make papads she suggested her husband renew the papad making venture. Her husband would continue his job while Chhayaben would look after the production. Hemkant focused on delivery, sales and procurement of raw materials. She picked up the skills of making papad on a large scale soon and started getting larger orders backed by her husband's marketing efforts. As the business started growing Hemkant left his job and joined full time in their venture. For any business to run successfully a steady working capital is a must. In 2015 as they wanted to scale up their business they got to associate with Mr B. G. Chaudhary who was then working with Bank of Baroda. He suggested Hemkant or Chhayaben can take a formal training under Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMEGP) run by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Govt. of India and then apply for a subsidized loan under that. After understanding the terms and condition of the program, they decided that Chhayaben will go for the training program and apply for a subsidised loan on her name as the scheme gives a greater subsidy of 35% for women entrepreneurs compared to 25% for their male counterparts.

In January 2016 Chhayaben participated in 14 days long Entrepreneurship Development Program under PMEGP. Post-training she registered her own proprietorship firm named Pawar Chhayaben Hemkant. She applied for a subsidized loan of 23 Lakh 85 Thousand rupees under the same scheme. It took more than a year to get the loan approved from which they bought a fully automated unit for manufacturing different varieties of papads. In order to keep an effective production line of the papads, Chhayaben attended three-day training separately for learning how to operate the unit.

Chhayaben manages the entire production right from grinding flour till packing the product along with pursuing her family responsibilities. Being a mother of a girl and boy she manages her home and business gracefully.

About the enterprise

After receiving her training under PMEGP in 2016, Chhayaben registered a proprietorship firm on her name and also applied for Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) certificate. After

registering the proprietorship she applied for a bank loan to scale up. As they started selling papads under the brand Madhuram which had a goodwill among the customers, she continues to use the same brand name to maintain the consistency.

After starting to work in 2010 she handled entire operations by herself for a year since her husband was in a full time job. When the sales began to pick up in 2011, there was a need to start hiring more staff. Some neighbouring women showed interest and they started coming to Chhayaben's house for rolling papads. New and young mothers took dough home. Payments were done on daily basis. Typical to a scaling up situation and new staff joining there was inconsistency in quality of papads which led to increase in operations cost. The business suffered a loss as many orders were rejected. But realizing that hiring women to manufacture papad is the way forward at that phase, the couple decided to invest in training these women for consistency in quality. They organised training sessions and set standards for size and weight of papads. They decided on a matrix for a particular weight of papad what should be their number approximately. After setting standards they gave them raw materials to practice and also paid them for their efforts. Soon they were able to achieve the desired results and the business gained momentum again.

When the number of staff grew to 13 and more orders started coming in, Hemkant joined his wife full time and looked after the sales and procurement. With systems in place, Chhayaben was able to innovate more varieties of papads. The couple decided to make smaller packets of papads that could be sold at Rs. 5. Their idea was that daily labourers were in huge numbers in nearby towns and villages and they would prefer buying smaller packets daily rather than buying a big packet at once. Also with shorter value chain they were able to keep the prices comparatively low than their competitors. This idea worked and the sales increased. Soon they was able to get regular orders from hotels and restaurants around Surat city extending their customer segment from retail counters to businesses.



Women from nearby locality are engaged in production.

Most of the employees who were working with Chhayaben were either young girls about to get married or women who got married recently and were expecting to become mothers. Their retention period was very less and training new employee took time and investments. The market was filled with cheaper machine made papads which were giving them competition. So the couple wanted to automate the production unit but didn't have sufficient resources to do so.

In 2015, Hemkant's friend wanted to get a subsidised loan under Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme of Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, GOI. He took him along to discuss with a bank official about the process. Hemkant also shared their future plans and the bank official encouraged them to apply for it. He mentored them to go through the process and also make a proper business plan. Chhayaben was enrolled for fourteen days long Entrepreneurship Development Program under PMEGP in January 2016. After completing the program and registering her own proprietorship firm named Pawar Chhayaben Hemkant, she applied for the loan but her application was rejected by the state nodal agency District Industries Centre (DIC). The couple lost hope and decided to continue doing the work in the way they were doing earlier. But the challenge of retaining employees was always there. They even tried engaging their employees by distributing note books and stationery to their children but it didn't solve their problem. This made the couple to try again and get the loan approved. After lot of corrections in their previous business plan under guidance of DIC officials the loan was finally approved in 2017. Through DIC contacts they also got contract for supplying papads in Gujarat Industries Development Commission (GIDC) canteens round the year.

After installing machines their dependency on employees for production was over but they needed them for packaging and distribution. Hiring new employees didn't affect the quality of products any longer and the production cost overall came down with increased capacity. Their average monthly production is around eight tons and they have around 18 employees, mostly women, who are regularly working with them and are able to earn four to five thousand rupees per month. They currently sell their products in more than 30 villages in and around Songarh block along with other customer segments.

Growth Challenge

After streamlining their production, their biggest challenge is to streamline sales and delivery. They want to set up a dedicated sales team in line with their operations team. Currently their average production is significantly lower than the actual capacity of their unit and they need more sales to be able to use it to its full potential and drive more profits to make it sustainable. Another challenge is to continue maintaining lower prices with growing value chain in search for newer markets.

Inspirational value and impact

Chhayaben breaks many stereotypes related to Indian house wives. In the face of adversity she turned it into an opportunity. Her ability to manage family and business together speaks volumes about her management skills. Her husband's ability to understand their customer segment and satisfy their needs through innovative pricing is an example for entrepreneurs trying to compete against established brands. Through their work they not only are generating employment opportunity for themselves but for others as well in their locality. They continue supporting their staff by distributing free notebooks and stationery to their children for encouraging them to study well and have a bright future ahead

Key takeaways

The role of ecosystem which includes government, nodal agency and mentors, is very crucial in the journey of this enterprise as without the support of the ecosystem support, scaling up may not have been possible for them.

Through shorter value chain, innovative pricing and deeper understanding of their customer segments, smaller enterprises can sustain against established brands.

Role of partners in the success of any enterprise is very crucial. Having a partner who can overcome one's shortcomings and support through thick and thin is very essential in the journey of an entrepreneur.

Way forward

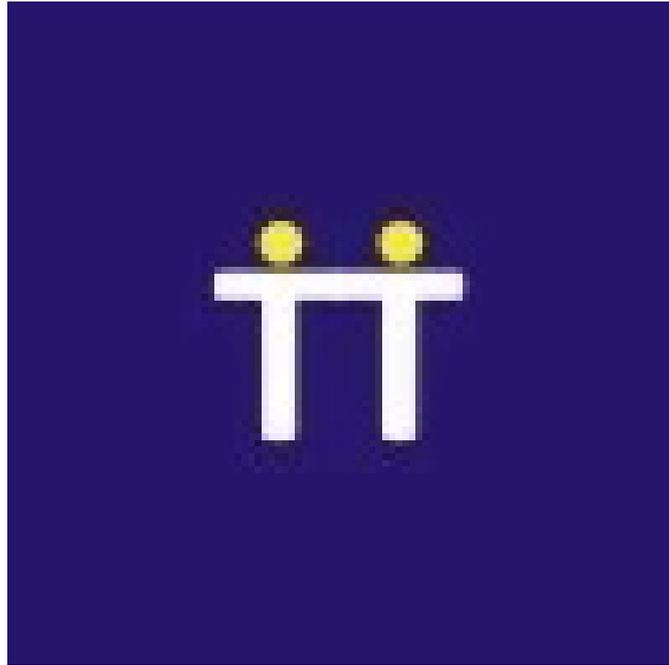
Moving ahead the couple want to shift their production unit to a larger infrastructure so that they can store more raw material and products. They want to have a dedicated sales team to increase and streamline their sales. They also want to extend their product segment by introducing different varieties of papads which are hand made with better quality ingredients for high end consumers based on growing awareness towards handmade products and organic food.

Details of the entrepreneur

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TEAMWORK TALENT

Bridging the gap⁵

⁵ This case is based on a telephonic interview with Mr. Mansur Madan on 03/12/2018 as a part of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018.



Mansur and Imran

Opportunity came knocking twice to them, they were lucky that they answered it.

Such is the case of Mansoor and Imran, co-founders of Teamwork Talent. They both hail from middle class families of Bhavnagar. While Mansoor's father was a machine operator, Imran's father a vegetable vendor. They both met at a point in their lives where they wanted to do something better and big. Mansoor after passing out of a Gujarati medium school pursued four year diploma in fabrication technology. At his vocational training with L&T during diploma, he was fascinated to see people conversing in English. He committed himself to learn proficient English in future. He realised he was good with communications and co-ordination as he became the placement coordinator of his batch. He got a job in L&T but he wanted to become an engineer.

While pursuing engineering he started working with a career counselling firm that worked to connect educated personnel to school students. They organized counselling camps for students from backward region to give them exposure to make better career choices. It was in this group that he met Imran who had come to facilitate the students while working with a private bank after pursuing Masters in Commerce. Post engineering he was offered a post of a trainer in a vocational training institute. Students availing the training in the institute shared their difficulties in finding jobs and sought recommendation. Meanwhile Imran too joined a listing platform for engineering service provider. He got an opportunity to meet many HR managers and realised their struggle to get good employees.

At one end there were student seeking jobs while at other HR managers awaiting good candidates. It was time to address this through their talents and networks. The idea of Teamwork Talent came into existence. They took a loan of twenty five thousand rupees and rented out a small office in the outskirts. Their initial idea was to provide placements to students from semi-urban and rural areas after giving them specific trainings as per recruiting company's requirements. They bought some office furniture and a white board for their office along with a banner with the name Teamwork Talent.

They continued their day jobs and tried to manage Team Work talents part time. Soon they realised that atleast one person should dedicatedly be involved in the operations. They mutually agreed that Mansoor would work fulltime at Team Work and as Imran was married and had to support his family financially he continued his job. In next 6 months they organised few workshops to no avail. Pressure from Mansoor's family also started piling. Since they had hit a road block and motivation levels hit rock bottom they decided to close their venture. They sold all their furniture and whiteboard to a coaching institute. Mansoor took up a job in the same institute and worked with them for next two months. He then became centre in-charge for Aspire Skill Disruptive Foundation (ASDF) in Gujarat.

Both of them continued with their life for a while but they were not satisfied with their jobs and wanted to do something of their own. On one hand, in every meeting with a HR manager Imran would be asked to recommend better candidates and on the other hand Mansoor would meet students who after finishing their studies were struggling to get their first job.

Hope started knocking their doors again. They both quit their jobs again in 2016 and started working exclusively for Teamwork Talent. They registered a partnership firm by investing some of their savings. They rented a small office space this time in the main location of Bhavnagar city and searched for second hand furniture to start the office. Coincidentally, the same furniture which they had purchased and then sold earlier came back to them. Taking it as a sign from the Universe as welcoming them back, they commenced their journey.

They started by organising a job fair where Imran called HR managers looking for good candidates. Space was a constraint so they approached a nearby coaching institute to provide them space and sponsor the job fair. The coaching institute gave a small newspaper advertisement a local newspaper to create awareness. Three students got placed and Teamwork talent earned nine thousand rupees from the recruiting organisations. This boosted their confidence and they started visiting various small scale industries in and around Bhavnagar to understand their specific human resource requirements. After getting a sense of their requirements they visited colleges and held interviews to do the first round of filtering. Selected candidates underwent a training session by Teamwork Talent specific to that particular recruiter. They then appeared for final rounds of interview. Initially they were not sure whether they should charge students or industries or both. They later decided to charge only industries to make their service more inclusive for students.

In one such placement drive in a college they met recruiters from Home Credit Finance Limited.

They negotiated with Team Work talents on their needs and started availing their services. They asked to bring the candidates to Mumbai for final rounds of interviews. Mansoor and Imran were hesitant as they had placed students only in Gujarat and knew that the industry exists. They followed their intuition and Mansoor went along with the students to verify the organization. The organization turned out to be successful and are their biggest client recruiting more than 500 students in a year.



College group after getting placements

Along with fulltime job opportunities, now they have also started listing part time opportunities for students who can dedicate few hours or days and earn some money for carrying out their basic expenses. They have also built a web portal for students where they list out some job opportunities and students can subscribe to their notifications. They built a mobile application called Jobchat which is platform for initial interactions between recruiters and job seekers. Once the recruiter chooses a profile both candidate and recruiter can see all the details and chat directly.



Training session in village

As per the requirements of the industry they have modified their training modules and recently they started giving trainings on digital marketing. They want to create online training modules specifically customised for students in rural areas to help them find better job opportunities after finishing their studies. They are able to place around thousand students a year and the numbers are just increasing with every passing year.

In retrospect they feel that the struggle in the initial days was worth it. Opportunity came knocking twice to them, they were lucky that they answered it.

Details of the entrepreneurs

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CHANDRAKALA VERMA

Breaking stereotypes one day at a time⁶

⁶ This case study is based on the telephonic interview of Chandrakala Verma on 29/12/2018 as part of the field assessment of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018



Chandrakala Verma makes soft-toys and handicrafts from locally available clothes and runs a handicrafts shop in Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan

She raised a few eyebrows when she decided to go solo.

A native of Alanpur village in Sawai Madhopur district of Rajasthan, Chandrakala was confined to her house for a major portion of her life. It was under the guidance of Access Development Services, a national livelihoods support organization that focuses on incubating innovations for sustainable livelihoods in rural areas that she joined a Self- Help Group (SHG) in her village. Her SHG comprises of 13 women from the neighbouring houses saving Rs.100 every month. They rotated the money internally for their daily requirement and household purposes. Her family did not mind her joining the SHG as she attended the meetings during her leisure time from the money she saved from household expenditure.

Along with her SHG, as part of skill development she was trained by Access Development Services in making Handicrafts in 2013. She further received training at Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETI) Jodhpur in making soft-toys and other handicrafts items. To integrate and bring together the various artisans, a producer company called Ranthambhore Mahila Ajeevika Producer Group was registered with 40 SHGs of Sawai Madhopur under the guidance of Access Development Services.

As part of this Producer Company she started making handicraft products in her house from 2014 and started earning around Rs. 3000 a month. She also participated actively in various activities of the producer company over the years. As the Company diversified and ventured into food processing in 2016, she realised that her interest lied in making handicrafts and she would like to pursue it actively and independently.

During the same time-period, Shilpgram was set-up at Ranthambhore as an extension of the Ranthambhore National Park. Apart from working at the producer company Chandrakala decided to set-up an independent handicrafts shop there. She raised a loan of Rs.10,000 from her SHG for the initial investment to set-up her own shop at the venue. She started with making the products along but after realising the increasing demand of the hand-made produce she trained 6 local women to make soft-toys and other decorative items using cloth and other materials. At present, she has trained and employed 10 local women to make handcrafted soft-toys for her shop. These 10 women assemble at her shop in Shilpgram and make the toys and display the items together. All the women are paid for each piece of handicrafts made by them earning up to Rs. 7000-8000 per month. The beautiful toys made by the women are rustic and beautiful. Each piece is uniquely hand crafted making them popular among tourists as a souvenir. On an average Chandrakala makes a profit of Rs.15,000 per month through her shop.



Stall in an exhibition at Delhi.

Seeing the growing market for handicrafts Chandrakala has started receiving bulk orders for her products. She is committed to provide excellent customer service and customises products according to client requirements.

As she reflects on her journey from 2013 till date, she wonders how different her course has been from other women in the village. How she had to break many norms in the society she is living to be able to do what she likes. Initially the women in her village were not even allowed to go out of their house for work. The SHG was the first step of getting out of their household threshold and save money for future. This gave them confidence to think beyond their house and earn a living. It was an advantage to work in the producer company as the villagers approved the idea of women working together and contributing to the household income. She raised a few eyebrows when she decided to go solo and set up her handicraft shop, as a woman managing a business alone wasn't precedence. She overcame all the criticism by working hard to make her venture a success.

Chandrakala Verma continues to follow her passion by paving way for more women to follow their entrepreneurial dreams. She was able to take help from the ecosystem to set up a business and run it profitably. With the hand holding offered by Access Development Services and RSETI she was able to unleash her potential and realise her interest. Her Self Help Group has helped her to provide the requisite support emotionally and financially to pursue her dreams and move ahead. While she is running her own enterprise she is still an active member of the producer company and also the SHG that she belongs to. Though she is one of the Directors of the company, she likes to identify herself as an independent entrepreneur who follows her passions and interests in handicrafts. As she plans to open another shop of handicrafts outside Shilpgram in Sawai Madhopur, she continues breaking stereotypes one day at a time.

Details of the entrepreneur:

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HODKA RANN STAY

Livelihood through tourism⁷

⁷ The case study is based on the interaction with Bhimji Khoyla as a part of field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018. A few references regarding the background of the enterprise is taken from the case study on Shaam-e-Sarhad, Hodka by Kalpavriksh and Seema Bhatt in 2015.



Bhimji showcasing some of his products.

The Shaam-e-Sarhad project has imbibed willingness to host outsiders in the village.

Journey of Bhimji

Bhimji Khoyla, is a 26 year old entrepreneur belongs to the Meghwal community of leather handicrafts artisans in Kutch, Gujarat. He is a native of Hodka village in Banni region of Kutch district. Bhimji lives in a joint family of 20 members. Out of the lot, he is the only graduate. Two of his elder brothers could not continue their studies after primary school education due to the lack of high school at the village or nearby villages. When Bhimji completed primary school education the family could afford to send Bhimji to school in Bhuj, the biggest town in Kutch district. After completing school education, Bhimji join the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD), Jaipur as per the guidance from KHAMIR⁸, an NGO that works with artisans in Kutch. At IICD, Bhimji studied Soft Material Design at the institute to support his family who was into making and selling leather handicrafts.

After graduation Bhimji joined his family who made leather handicrafts. He started introducing new designs and products into the inventory and is associated with the work till date. In 2015 he created a brand called 'Leder Handcrafted' for all the products made by his family members. Now, Leder Handcrafted sells their products to clients across India. In 2017, Inspired by the Shaam-e-Sarhad⁹ project at Hodka village and considering the growing tourist influx in Kutch, Bhimji started Hodka Rann stay, a resort in Hodka village close to the white desert of Kutch.



Leather footwear called mojaris made by Bhimji's family

⁸ **Khamir**: is an NGO that works in the Kutch region of Gujarat, to promote and strengthen the artisanal culture of the region.

⁹ **Shaam-e-Sarhad**: A resort set up as part of community run tourism of the UNDP Endogenous tourism project. This resort was set-up in Hodka village in 2005

Journey of Hodka Rann Stay

After the earthquake in 2001, Kutch district of Gujarat was noticed by many philanthropic organisations and individuals. Shaam-e-Sarhad, a community run tourism initiative in Kutch is also a result of the same. Shaam-e-Sarhad was a resort set-up by the government of India under the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) of UNDP. Kutch was one of the 36 proposed sites for the project. In Kutch, Banni region was found to be the hub of handicrafts, folk-music and traditional lifestyle.

Hodka is a village in Banni which was chosen to set-up the Shaam-e-Sarhad resort considering the willingness of the people of Hodka. The initial plan was to set-up home-stays in the houses of villagers. However, the culture and traditions of the regions does not permit outsiders to stay in any villager's house. Therefore the collector of the district suggested to use the tents that were received after the earthquake in 2001 as part of relief and rehabilitation initiatives to be used as accommodation facilities for tourists as there was some tourist influx. The villagers of Hodka were trained in basic hospitality skills and a system was set-up to run a resort under the capacity building component of the ETP. Thus Shaam-e-Sarhad was started in 2005. After the tourist season (October-February) in 2005, the villagers decided to make permanent mud huts to cater to the tourists the next year. They made the circular mud houses or Bungas as part of Shaam-e-Sarhad. In 2007, the state government of Gujarat started promoting Rann Utsav- the festival of the white desert, a seasonal festival in the Rann of Kutch region, which is 20km away from the Hodka village. Rigorous marketing and promotional activities of the Rann Utsav has resulted in the growing tourist influx in the region.



Tents which were used earlier before constructing huts.

As the tourist influx increased many villagers in Hodka village, started setting up private tents and Bungas during the tourist season. Bhimji and his family used to pitch few private tents and rent them to tourists from 2015. This was to cater to the growing demand for food and accommodation facilities in Kutch during the Rann Utsav. However, Bhimji and his family like many others were involved in the setting-up and running Shaam-e-Sarhad. Some of them were guides, some became cooks etc. Bhimji's mother along with her juth (group) of women from the village is responsible for the art work in Shaam-e-Sarhad till date.

Hodka Rann Stay formally started in December 2017 by pitching tents in Hodka village. Initially, the food was made by Bhimji's family and was served to the guests at the campsite. After the first season as Hodka Rann stay, from December 2017 to February 2018, they made a profit of Rupees four lakhs. They decided to construct permanent structures to host tourists. Hodka Rann stay is highly inspired by the first tourism initiative of the Hodka, the Shaam-e-Sarhad. All the employees at the resort are trained in soft-skills that are important in hospitality industry, similar to Shaam-e-Sarhad.

While many others in the village made Bungas (circular houses) similar to Shaam-e-Sarhad, Bhimji decided to make delo huts (rectangular houses) which are similar to the houses in many places across India. He says that the design was chosen on utility basis. The design is also a result of his exposure during his education in Jaipur. However, when many others used bricks and cement to construct resorts, Bhimji made sure that he stuck to the traditional method by using mud and grass to build Hodka Rann Stay. He says that, the decision to use mud, grass and wood for construction of Hodka Rann Stay was consciously taken as he knew the impacts of the earthquake in 2001. He says that the village suffered less damage and many lives were saved as they were still staying in the Bungas.



Delo huts for tourists

At present Hodka Rann Stay is known for the concept is based on traditional lifestyle and is as per the demand of the tourism market at Kutch. There is no air-conditioners or television at the stay. They engage the tourists in various village activities as part of the itinerary. The enterprise aims at provided experiences of a traditional village life through their design and itineraries. Bonfires and traditional art-forms like folk songs and dance performances are organized to entertain the guests along with sale of local handicrafts to the customers at a lower price.

As the resort is located in 20 km from the white desert of Kutch, Dhordo, the tourist influx is seasonal. The tourist season starts in mid-November and ends in February. Most of the bookings are

done through online platforms and few through travel agents at Bhuj. As the enterprise is in the initial stage and does not have all the industry documents, there are no clients from other countries.

Growth Challenge

Bhimji had the advantage of being a graduate from Indian Institute of Crafts and Design, Jaipur when it came to the already existing family business of handicrafts. He added value to it by creating a brand and connecting to customers across India. However, it was observed during the field visit that the entrepreneur was not aware of book keeping or accounts maintenance. He had information about the importance of GST (Goods and Services Tax) and had applied for a GST number. He shared that he was not aware of licenses and other documents that he is expected to maintain as part of running a business in tourism. The only document he had, was a no objection certificated from the Panchayat.

In case of Bhimji, and many others at Hodka, they understand endogenous tourism and the impact of it. They have experienced it and is very confident about their hospitality and artisanal skills. However, they do not have the expertise and awareness about the importance of permissions, licenses etc. that are required to run the business.

Also, geographically the location of the village has been a challenge when he approached for a loan in banks at Bhuj. The village is close to the Indo-Pak border and none of the villagers legally own land or any property. Land is considered to be common and any activity in these common lands is controlled by social dynamics of the village. Bhinji, was denied loan and any schemes of the Government that were aimed at establishing the enterprise. He had to wait till 2017 and use his savings from the handicrafts business to get tents on rent and make basic sanitation facilities to start Hodka Rann stay. The profits from first year along with money borrowed from informal sources were used to build Hodka Rann Stay the way it is today. He expects to clear his debts in the tourists' seasons in the coming years.

Advantages_and_opportunities

Bhimji had the advantage of the already existing tourist influx in the region. Marketing was easier as the Rann of Kutch and the Rann Utsav was already a bucket-list travel for many people around the world. He benefitted from the visibility and popularity of the region created by promotions done by the Government of Gujarat. The knowledge of handling social media and other online platforms helped him to reach to the customers faster and also, was an easier way of getting feedbacks.

Above all, the success of the community-based initiative, Shaam-e-Sarhad gave confidence to invest in the infrastructure of Hodka Rann Stay even if he had to borrow money from informal sources. He also, could find persons trained and experienced in hospitality from the village, who now handles the operations at the stay.

Key takeaways

Bhimji's exposure to the world outside Hodka village is also a factor that has helped him designing Hodka Rann Stay and inculcating the modern amenities even while promoting the traditions and culture of Hodka. Bhimji also shares that the role of NGOs like Khamir and Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangam, has motivated him to pursue his education and take decisions to be more entrepreneurial. But, initial hand-holding support was not available when he decided to start his venture. In this case, the role of necessary mentoring can help in the growth of the enterprise. Since the enterprise is still in the initial stage, guidance to set systems, knowledge about the industry etc. can help the entrepreneur to further build the enterprise in a systematic manner.

The enterprise Hodka Rann Stay is an impact of the Shaam-e-Sarhad project Of UNDP ETP. The ETP has encouraged many villagers of Hodka to explore tourism as an alternate livelihood option. The Shaam-e-Sarhad has imbibed willingness to host outsiders in the village and encouraged the revival of culture of Kutch. Thus the Shaam-e-Sarhad model has become the method of tourism in the region. Bhimji, like many others in the region considers the income from Hodka Rann Stay as seasonal and is involved in other activities of the community, which is mainly making and selling leather handicrafts. Thus he manages his income throughout the year. However, Bhimji is confident that he will find ways to increase the capacity of Hodka Rann Stay to cater to the growing tourist influx.

Details of the entrepreneur

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NAHARI

Serving collectively¹⁰

¹⁰ The case study is based on an interaction with group members and staff of BAIF foundation trust on 30/11/2018 as a part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018



Group members of Ambika Self Help Group

They wear a silver necklace as a symbol of their entrepreneurial spirit and collective action.

Journey of the SHG Members

Ambika Swasahay Juth is a self-help group of twelve women, formed on 16th December 2009 by Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF), now known as BAIF Development Research Foundation, in Savarkhadi village of The Dangs district in Gujarat. This group initially had ten members which later increased to twelve, composed mostly of women with a primary level of schooling.

Greater than 90% of the population is tribal and rain-fed agriculture is the major source of livelihood. Owing to its hilly terrain, this limited option of livelihood causes forced migration of the inhabitants during the remaining seasons. BAIF facilitated discussions amongst local women to foster collective action for generation of new livelihood opportunities. After subsequent rounds of discussions, they identified an opportunity to serve traditional meals in weekly market outside Kalibel sector. Until now, there were no such lunch arrangement for both vendors and buyers. Counting on their skills to cook traditional Dangi meal, five members decided to give it a try.



Weekly village market gathering.

Initially they mobilized basic resources like food grains, utensils, firewood from their own kitchen and started serving food. They setup a new temporary kitchen every time using bamboo sticks and nets. Their one meal consisted of a bread of Nagli (Ragi Millet), local vegetable, pulses, rice, pickle and some salad in limited quantity. The food which remained unsold was consumed by these women and their families. After the initial days, they started procuring food grains from other villagers and profits were equally shared between the five members. Gradually they started getting orders for events and other functions.

Once their offerings were tested and had a proof of concept, other members of SHG who were still not involved in this business wanted to join. For this reason, and to fulfill their growing aspirations, they looked for new markets and avenues to expand their outreach. Other markets were fairly distant with limited options to commute. Also, they had to carry a lot of resources like utensils, firewood etc along with them to cook and serve food thus making it a very laborious task. Taking inspiration from vendors who come to the market in their own vans, they came up with an idea to buy a mobile kitchen, a vehicle modified into a kitchen. In 2017, with handholding support from BAIF, they submitted a proposal and received a grant from NABARD under phase two of tribal development program for Gujarat in May 2018 to buy a mobile kitchen to make more markets accessible to them. Since then, they have been serving three weekly markets along with 19 Aanganwadis. They are in business for more number of days in a week than before.

Their day starts usually at 5 AM in the morning. After finishing their daily chores, they cook meals for their family and leave home by 8 AM. They gather at some member's home and start the preparation for the day's work. Cutting vegetables, making dough from flour, cooking rice and dal are some basic activities to name a few. They head to the market by 10:30 AM and by 12 noon they are ready to serve the customers. The work finally ends at 3:00 PM and by the evening, they are busy making papads or spending time with family and neighbours. Around 6:30 PM, they start preparations for dinner and end the day by 9:30 PM.

Somewhere in between all this, they unanimously decided to buy a silver necklace for all the members from the profits they had made through this business which they proudly wear till date as a symbol of their entrepreneurial spirit and collective action.

About the enterprise

Back in 2009, when Ambika Swasahay Juth (SHG) was formed it had 10 members out of which 5 members were willing to start the food business. They started by selling traditional Dangi meals as lunch in weekly market gathering of Kalibel block. After getting a proof of concept, there were two major operational challenges which the group was facing. Since they belong to a remote village, their dependency on taxi drivers for local commute was very high. Facilities for local conveyance were very limited and expensive. They had to travel by sharing taxis along with all the utensils, firewood, bamboo sticks and nets and had to return whenever the taxi returned, irrespective of leftover food or customers waiting to be served. Hiring a private taxi would dry up their entire profit for that day's work. Also initially, they were able to cater to only one weekly market due to lack of local transportation options leaving them free for six days in a week. Moreover, the profit earned had to be distributed between all the members which was not enough for a day of hard labour. Second challenge was to set up a temporary kitchen every time.



Earlier days of Nabari

Through BAIF's support, NABARD gave them a grant of eight lakh rupees under Phase 2 of Adivasi Development program for Gujarat. Group members took a loan of remaining 1.5 lakhs rupees in the name of SHG. They received the modified mini truck in May 2018, giving them access to more markets and business opportunities. To support their initiative, district administration gave them a contract to serve food to lactating mothers and pregnant women in nineteen aanganwadis in the region one day in a week. This allowed them to involve more group members and generate employment opportunities for all the members willing to participate. Currently their SHG has twelve members out of which ten members are actively involved in this business.



Mobile kitchen

They now pay every participating member a sum of 100 rupees per day for their labour and the remaining profit is shared equally between all the active members. They also provide loans to other women in the village from the extra money as an additional revenue stream. In addition, they have started making and selling papads, pickles and other such products to keep themselves engaged during the remaining time.

Growth Challenge

Owing to the low entry barriers they face stiff competition from new players and they are looking for more B2B contracts like the Aanganwadi contract they received from the district administration. As the SHG matures, it needs to install internal systems in place like proper bookkeeping, accounts etc.

Inspirational value and impact

Breaking stereotypes in a remote tribal village, these women are a source of inspiration for other women in that region. Till date this group has inspired more than 100s of women to improve their financial conditions and contribute in family's income by taking collective action.

For their efforts they have been recognised as the best SHG in the district and BAIF has also recognised as the best SHG overall by awarding them with Dr. Manibhai Desai Gaurav Purashkar on 24th August 2018. Also, they have been able to encourage some farmers to start growing traditional millets again which shall be helpful in conserving traditional food grains native to that region. They also organise village cleaning drives and cook free traditional meals for villagers during festivals. By consuming traditional Dangi meals they have overcome malnutrition amongst the group members.

Key takeaways

Role of supportive ecosystem comprising of government and non-government organisations is very crucial in the growth of an enterprise. Having government as a customer segment can be very helpful in growing a business but sustaining longer credit cycles is a challenge.

In the scaling phase, there is a strong need for incubation support to such rural enterprises for putting systems in place for smooth functioning of the enterprise.

Way forward

Moving forward they wish to reach out to more customers through B2B tie-ups and encourage other women to take control of their situations through collective action. They wish to have their own segment of pickles, papads and other such products in packed form through which customers outside The Dangs who are probably unaware of delicious traditional Dangi food items can also get a chance to enjoy.

Details of the SHG

Name: Ambika Swasahay Juth

Total members: 12

Address: Village Savarkhadi, Post-Koshimada, Mulgam, Gujarat 394730



LAW BRIEFS

Website that simplifies lengthy court judgements¹¹

¹¹ This case study is based on the telephonic interview of Aditya Gor on 03/12/2018 as part of the field assessment of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 and later on 15/02/2019 for more details.



LawBriefs has received top five best student early stage start-ups awards under SSIP Policy across the state of Gujarat.

The purpose was not to lessen the understanding of the judgement but to reduce the time and efforts required in understanding it.

The inception of LawBriefs began with Aditya, a native of Kutch district in Gujarat. He was immensely influenced by his father who worked as a personal assistant to a judge. This inspired him to pursue law as a career. He underwent coaching for Common Law Admission Test in Ahmedabad after his and secured a seat in Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) for B.Com LLB in 2015. He was to spend five gruelling years of academics studying various facets of law.

While he was in second semester of his course he met with an accident while cycling and fractured his hand. Rather than sitting idle while recuperating he started reading case judgments. He realised that reading the entire case takes a lot of effort and time which is not possible for law students as well practitioner due to several constraints. Moreover there were no platform in India which provided summaries of Indian case judgements. Initially he was apprehensive to start writing on his own as he had recently joined law college and had not even began his core legal subjects in the course. He found a way out for incrementing his knowledge about law and how to pursue it from different aspects. He spend months watching videos of professors from Harvard and Oxford University to understand the base of a case, identify important parts of a judgement and how to find different pattern of summarising cases.

Aditya observed that in USA the judgement summaries available for the readers were mostly in two paragraphs with no division of sections which may not work for the Indian legal scenario. Giving a detailed case summary will be more helpful for a reader as the purpose for the summaries were not to lessen the understanding of the judgement but to reduce the time and efforts required in understanding it.

He drafted a method for documenting case summaries based on his research and thinking. He divided them into five segments making it easier for a reader to understand. He contacted his friends and classmates, requested them to write the case summaries in their curriculum using his method. His peers found it easy to use and gave feedback for its betterment.

It was during this time of transition that he participated in the Business Plan competition organized in his college. He was encouraged by his faculty Prof. Satyaranjan Mishra to pursue his method from a business perspective through affiliated marketing model and present a business plan. While preparing for this business competition he realised the potential market for case-summaries. It was not only law students who required it but also chartered Accountants, practising lawyers, researchers, journalists etc. He could not restrict his method of summarising cases to just his peers but reach a larger audience. He prepared a business proposal keeping in considering all this. The uniqueness of his method and the scope it had, he won the first prize in the business plan competition. He used the winning amount of twenty five thousand rupees develop the website for Lawbriefs. It is through the medium of a website could he reach a larger audience base with no restrictions of geography and time.

He started participating in many business plans with an intention to get more feedback and overview on how to make his method more effective. In one such competition he received a suggestion to explore the possibility of artificial intelligence (AI) to prepare case summaries. This intrigued him immensely and he started to research and explore opportunities of integrating AI in his method. He connected with many experts and tech savvy individuals to learn on various AI tools. He found that the cost of incorporating AI was very high and as an undergraduate student it was difficult for him to raise huge funds.

So rather than concentrating on AI he focused on creating proof of concept. He started writing case summaries by choosing one particular area of law and identifying some remarkable judgements in that segment and writing their case summaries. He began with the case of ‘arrest under criminal procedure court’ and identified ten other landmark judgements. He wrote the case summaries for these ten judgements, which were compiled and uploaded on their website. 120 people bought the summaries on the first day. Based on the feedback, he edited the summaries, structured it properly and uploaded it again in the form of an eBook and started doing it continuously. His method drew a lot of questions on its authenticity as they were written by a law student who had not even graduated from college. To cater to this concern he started sending the summaries to his professors for review and feedback. He sought help from other seniors of his college including Mr. Ashwin Madhavan for proofreading his summaries and helping him identify proper market. The incubation centre of the GNLU Legal Incubation Council supported him to shape the business model of Lawbriefs.

An interesting trend emerged while he was publishing the summaries on his website and Facebook page, he started getting requests for summary of specific judgements. He realised that rather than just reading random case summaries people wanted to read those which were of immediate important to them. For example: Lawyers used them for substantiating their arguments, law students required them for learning and understanding legal standpoints. It wasn't only the direct practitioners who used these summaries. There were requests from founders and directors of various firms who wanted to understand what their council were arguing into court. It was then that he realised that LawBriefs is not only helpful to people associated with law but to almost everyone who wants to go to the court. In six months he received around 400 requests for case summaries. As the demand increased, he monetised his method as the complexity of the cases and length of the judgements were lengthier. The money helped him to run the website effectively, invest in research of cases and pay for his other costs.

It takes around six hours of intense commitment to write a case summary on request. The biggest challenge that he faces in writing the case summaries is that that there is no format in India for writing judgements. Every judge has its own style of doing it. Some start with a poetic phrase while others with facts etc. This has made it difficult to integrate AI in writing case summaries.



Participating in various b-plan competitions has helped Aditya in developing his idea.

As Aditya gears up to pass out of his law college he has decided to opt out of placements. Lawbriefs is receiving around 30 requests for case summaries every month. Keeping its potential in mind Aditya feels that rather than joining a corporate law firm he intends to pave a way for himself. He wants to work for Lawbriefs and take simple and clear law to each citizen in the country.

LawBriefs has got recognitions from -

- 1) Best Student Startup Award 2018 from the August hands of CM of Gujarat
- 2) Winner, GNLU Startup Competition in the domain of law
- 3) Winner, The Indian Entrepreneurship Summit, IIT-Kanpur
- 4) Campus Placement, UPES Law College Dehradun for the year 2019
- 5) Partnership offer from a legal tech company based out in California
- 6) Featured in YourStory, Ahmedabad Mirror, Startup Tales, Entrepreneurs of India..

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SAGAR

TradeLink

SAGAR TRADELINK

Organizing the unorganised sector of incense sticks in India¹²

¹² This case study is based on the interaction with Mr. Sagar on 29/11/2018 at Sagar Tradelink office as a part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018.



Sagar Anandbhai Popat

Their mission is to become a multinational enterprise of fast moving consumer goods, by establishing a key nationwide distribution network of their extended range of products to be in every person's reach and establish their presence in every household

Branding the fragrance

Journey of Sagar

Mr. Sagar Popat is a young and energetic person with a vision to create a global brand in the field of agarbatti making. He is a person with dynamic world view and is a keen observer of the business world. He comes from a modest family located in Rajkot, Gujarat. He earned his under graduate degree in business administration (BBA) from L.J. Institute of Business Administration, Ahmedabad and later completed his post-graduation (MSc.) in entrepreneurship at the University of Surrey, United Kingdom (U.K.). His academic decision to pursue business administration shows his resolution to become an entrepreneur right from his young age. He returned to India in 2011, harbouring an ambition in his mind of starting his own business enterprise.

Initially, he wished to move into the FMCG sector but given his modest family background and the requirement of a huge start-up capital, he was forced to rethink his options. After much deliberation, he opted for Agarbatti (incense stick) making. This, he thought, was a much feasible business idea as it required a startup capital of only about Rs. 1-2 lakhs which was manageable amount for him. Before venturing into the actual production, he did a thorough survey of the market potential of Agarbatti business in India which was approximately Rs. 3000/- crores worth at that point of time. An aspect he had to deal with was the categorization of this business as a part of cottage industries which had by then slowly changed to rural cottage or semi-urban micro-enterprises with limited assistance from the government. But agarbatti making is one such industry which had responded well to increased demand for its products, both in the rural and urban areas, mainly due to availability of cheap labour force comprising of women and children. Further, his analysis showed him that although this sector was well established across India, it was mainly dominated by the unorganized sector and that only 15-20% of this sector was branded. This was a silver lining for him as it was an evergreen business and he also felt that the branded agarbatti segment offered enough scope for new players. So, he decided to plunge into the branded agarbatti business in the year 2012. According to him, until 2012, the agarbattis made in Banagalore and Gaya (Bihar) occupied almost 80% of the market but their costs were very high. It was in 2012 that he imported a container of machine-cut agarbattis and this turned out to be a major success due to the uniformity of their shapes and sizes.

Mr. Sagar Popat is the principal promoter of SAGAR TRADELINK, a proprietorship firm, and he is also a partner in an FMCG unit called Vajani Foods. His sharp business acumen and his ability to take quick decisions have probably contributed to his entrepreneurial success. While mentoring the SAGAR TRADELINK, he looks after the overall management of the enterprise. He also plays a primary role in the marketing and sales segment, apart from looking after the finances and the day-to-day decision-making processes.

Journey of Sagar Tradelink

Sagar Trade Link (STL) was registered as a propriety firm in the year 2012. STL does the manufacturing and trading of premium quality incense sticks, locally known as 'agarbattis'. The offerings from the firm are branded as 'Somnath' and 'Vajani'. It has attempted to blend the best quality essence with the highest quality material to produce incense sticks that has both a unique fragrance and a longer burning time. It has a vision of becoming a multi-national enterprise by establishing a large distribution network comprising of its extended range of products. It aspires to incorporate the values of integrity; quality relationships, equal opportunity for all and innovation through new technologies are some of the values in its functioning. STL's 'Kalam' and 'Bilipatra' are the most sought after fragrance types among its agarbatti products. STL offers the largest selection of premium brand Agarbattis. Their incense sticks are uniformly manufactured and securely packaged in protective layers to ensure that they stay fresh. They have earned the reputation of excellence by blending exceptional essences with the highest quality ingredients. Their incense sticks are also known for their unique fragrances and white smoke with longer burning time. They have adopted seal-pack packaging to preserve its goodness.

The manufacturer is committed towards providing the best quality incense sticks. They manufacture depending upon the feedback from the market and demand for products. They strive to maintain both quality standards and the aroma. All their ingredients used in the product preparation are sourced with much care and precision. The products are closely examined by their quality and standards department, which is responsible for constant scrutiny of the products and their packaging throughout the process.

STL believes in the principle that "quality backed by values will pay" and this insistence on quality helps accelerate their goals of transitioning from a small scale industry to a global entity.

Founder of STL believes in upholding production integrity, product quality, customer responsiveness, financial discipline and most importantly, in honouring commitments to its consumers. He has a concern for social causes and ensures that these are consistently reflected in day to day functioning of the firm.

Manufacturing process of agarbattis can be broadly categorized into two sections: raw material processing and product processing. Raw material processing involves production of raw agarbattis, perfume blending, making RTD and dipping (spraying of perfumes). On the other hand, product processing involves drying of RTD battis, weighing, packing, sealing and dispatching the ready branded agarbattis.

Marketing strategy of STL is based on FMCG approach which includes wholesale trading through a chain of distributors. The family of STL's promoter has considerable experience in FMCG distribution. STL has tried using this reputation and experience to set a strong distribution network of the FMCG style distributors who have both the infrastructure and the human resources to reach the smallest retailers in a disciplined and timely manner. Such quality services in addition to their high quality product offerings helps them increase their outreach to even the remotest areas, which in turn strengthens consumer as well as retailer loyalty for the various brands of STL.

STL's distribution network consists of a supply chain of a C&F agent for a respective state (or states) who supplies to a super-stockiest who looks after district (or districts) and supplies to a city or a rural distributor. The distributors then distribute it among the retailers.

They began at Gujarat in 2012, which had only 1 distributor at that time and by 2013 it expanded to 70-80 distributors. It was in the year 2014-15 that STL started expanding outside of Gujarat. They expanded first in Uttar Pradesh starting with fifteen sales team, which then increased to more than thirty sales teams in various districts across the state. After UP, they widened their base to Jharkhand and Bihar, where they appointed 2 super stockiest and 30 district-wise super stockiest respectively. STL has organized several radio campaigns to promote its products among the masses. They also organise advertising campaigns across cities at regular intervals.

Growth Challenges

The greatest challenge in this business is ensuring brand loyalty. Agarbattis are low involvement products whose purchases are often impulsive. Since there are a few brands in this category, customers make purchase based on impressive packaging, fragrance or price. Additionally, due to low price, setting brand loyalty is a challenging task. Agarbatti market is a very difficult market to establish a name in because consumption of agarbatti is mostly for the purpose of poojas and because there is a religious aspect to the product. Earlier this product was tax free. Post GST it was taxed at 12% initially and later tax rates were revised to 5%.

Way forward

STL aims to take this brand beyond the *pooja* rooms. Their packaging and advertising have attempted to emphasize the other uses of the agarbatti such as for meditation, as room fresheners etc. in their marketing campaigns.

They also plan to focus on emphasizing healthy fumes which can be used as a strategy to target the lower priced incense stick segment of customers by warning them about the health hazard associated with uses of non-branded agarbattis.

The management of STL feels that Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand offer a huge potential for the product. So far, they have covered only 10% of these states hence they have reduced their focus on Gujarat and are now channelizing their energy to the above mentioned states.

Inspirational value and impact

Sagar Trade Link (STL) seems to be a dynamic enterprise given the fact that it has not only prospered business wise but it has also kept pace with the changing environment like GST. It is essentially a handicraft (incense stick) manufacturing unit which is a traditional business (cottage industry) but this enterprise has incorporated modern ethos like compliance with all government norms, maintenance of audited records etc.

Since, the fumes produced from the incense stick can be harmful if inhaled in constantly for longer periods, charcoal free agarbattis can be a way out to address this issue. Such incense sticks were initially imported from China by various players in India.

Such concerns for environmental hazards negatively affecting the public health have also been recognized and hence charcoal free agarbattis are slowly being introduced in their production line.

Socially important factors like gender equality and employment to weaker sections of the society are also addressed by STL. Majority of their workforce are women from the rural areas, whose wage rates are quite healthily fixed at Rs. 300 a day.

The appreciable growth of their business is evident from the fact that they have established their presence in 7 states by 2018 with more than 25 sales teams and more than 450 distributors!

Entire production is done and managed by women. Packaging teams are indirectly promoting women empowerment and helping these women to earn their livelihoods.



Production unit

Key Takeaways

1. Starting with initial investment of Rs. 8 lacs and the turnover of Rs. 30 lacs in 2012, STL has grown to achieve a turnover of almost 6 crores in the year 2018.
2. Except the core management team, it is an all-women work force organisation giving employment to women from around 8 to 10 villages. Their wage rates are quite healthy at Rs.300 per day.
3. In terms of business ethics, they have opted for the FMCG model of appointing city-wise distributors and have also sustained them with the growth of the firm.
4. USP or innovation: They converted 30% of its production to charcoal free substance (which is considered to be a health hazard for the user). Secondly, different fragrance from traditional ones to fruit and flower fragrances along with their sleek packaging has increased their desirability among people.
5. The compliance records of this enterprise has got them in principle approval of an online loan of Rs.35 lakhs from PSBLOANSIN59MINUTES.COM

Details of the Entrepreneur:

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360003;



MANISHANKAR OILS PVT LTD

Continuing the legacy¹³

¹³ This case study is based on the interaction with Manoj Murarka and Nirmala Murarka at Manishankar oils Pvt. Ltd in Chomu, Jaipur, Rajasthan as part of field assessment visit for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 on 29/11/2018. A telephonic conversation to gather more information was done on 27/12/2018.



Their products are cold pressed mustard and sesame oils.

There is a better ecosystem for anyone who wants to establish an enterprise today.

Journey of Manoj

Manoj Murarka, is an entrepreneur from Jaipur, Rajasthan. He spent his childhood in Siliguri, West Bengal. He comes from a family of entrepreneurs for generations. His father had established an agri-products wholesale business in Siliguri, West Bengal. When Manoj completed his school education in Siliguri he moved to Jaipur where his grandparents stayed to pursue further studies. During his stay with his grandparents, he realized that the food there tasted different than the food at Siliguri. He found that his grandparents consumed refined oil as it was cheap. There were many ill effects of refined oil doing the rounds and Manoj started doing thorough research about it. He studied the processing of refined oil and realized that a lot of chemical was utilized in the process of refining. He decided to make mustard oil at home for household consumption. As he started doing it, slowly the demand of it increased as neighbors and local shop owners started asking for more. He realized that cooking oil, which is an integral part of daily human consumption, will never be out of demand. Hence he registered a company in 1998 'Manishankar oils' inspired by his grandparents. Even though his family helped him establish his venture he took more than a year to understand the business of manufacturing and selling cold-press oil against the cheaper refined oils that were already flourishing in the market.

About the enterprise

Manishankar Oils Pvt. Ltd was registered in 1998 in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Manoj, then 19 along with his friend ventured into setting up an oil mill. His friend withdrew from the company after few after which the entire task of establishing the oil mill came on Manoj. Through sheer grit and determination, the oil mill became functional in a year. Manoj by that time was joined in the business by younger brother Devendra.

The company procures the oil seeds- black mustard, yellow mustard and sesame seeds, through various AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEES (APMC) and directly from Mandis in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The enterprise also works directly with farmers in and around Jaipur district and encourages them to grow indigenous mustard, especially yellow mustard. Manishankar oils works with 350 farmers and conducts awareness programs with them on the importance of the indigenous varieties of mustard and supports them in cultivating mustard. Once the crop is ready the company purchases directly from the farmers at a slightly higher price than the usual market rate. The oil seeds thus procured are washed and dried in the manufacturing unit. Then, cold-press method is used to extract oils. The oil is filtered and packed from 500ml to 15 liter packaging as per the requirement of the clients. Manishankar Oils have one major production unit in Chomu, Jaipur which produces an average of 20 metric tons of oil per day. The clientele of Manishankar oils in the initial years were the retailers of the local market of Jaipur, Rajasthan. Over the past years, they have been able to cater to the needs of customers across India and few even

outside India. At present the company sells their products through 780 super-stockists and distributors in various parts of India and deals directly with the customers in other countries.

Manishankar Oils employ local people of Chomu and few from in and around Jaipur. Most of the employees are paid a monthly salary and other monthly and annual incentives as per the work done. The second production unit is in Kolkata, West Bengal. They have offices in Jaipur, Siliguri, Kolkata, Chomu and Iran to manage distribution of their products.

The first product of Manishankar oils Pvt. Ltd was cold-pressed mustard oil. They started by selling the product in the local market of Jaipur. As the years passed they started adding other products to the company's portfolio. However, it was taken care that they made only cold-pressed edible oils. The enterprise aims at providing good quality unrefined cooking oils to all. There are few other products like tea and spices which are also traded by the company. However, the main focus of the enterprise is to ensure that the end customer receives adulteration free healthy cooking oil. The company has an in-house laboratory to ensure the quality of the cooking oils produced.

Manoj and his wife Nirmala also participate in various exhibitions and other promotional events with the aim to spread awareness about the health benefits of unrefined cold pressed oils, especially yellow-mustard oil.

Growth Challenges

Over the past 20 years from 1998 to 2018 in the journey of Manishankar oils, Manoj acknowledges the support from his family the most. Still it wasn't a cake walk always. It was extremely difficult to get a space in RIICO to establish the oil mill. He had to visit various Government offices for months to get the needed permissions and licenses. Getting a loan sanctioned was another tedious work as there were very few policies and schemes in support of entrepreneurs. He believes that compared to the challenges then there is a better ecosystem for anyone who wants to establish an enterprise today.

The main challenges he faces today as a producer of edible oils is the large scale import and distribution of the unhealthy refined oils at a very low cost. The cost of production of cold pressed oils is higher than the unrefined oils. However, the system that exists in India considers all edible oils as one category and the rules and regulations on all of them are the same. He is of the view that the two products are extremely different, the unrefined oils from oil seeds are much healthier and chemical free compared to the refined oils. He believes that unless this differentiation is recognized and policies are formed accordingly the farmers who grow the oil seeds will not be receive a fair price for their produce.

Key takeaways

The trust Manoj's family had on him in the initial years gave confidence and encouragement to the young entrepreneur to think independently and establish the business. He also had the advantage of the initial financial support from his family. This helped him pursue his idea even if he had to wait for few months to get the loan sanctioned.

Also, according to Manoj, the wide use of internet has made work easier than before. He says that these days it's easy to get in touch with clients and maintain contact with them through email, Google etc. Also, various social media platforms have helped him promote and market the products of the company. The introduction of internet and use of it across various sectors have improved the transparency and accessibility to various schemes for entrepreneurship.

His dedication earned him the National Award for outstanding Entrepreneurship by MSME in 2014. Manoj is supported by his wife Nirjala in all aspects of his business now. They both spend time in the main production unit at Chomu. They are fully involved in supervising the manufacturing unit and promotion of benefits of cold-pressed mustard oil. In future they look towards expanding their work in other segments of unrefined cold pressed oil like Groundnut and Coconut.

Details of the entrepreneur

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Jaydada Industries

Ecosystem and Engineering¹⁴

¹⁴ This case study is based on the interaction with Mr. Harshad on 28/11/2018 at as a part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018.



Designs of his machines

His brother believed that owning a business helps the future generation lead a stable life.

Journey of Harshad

Bavla block of Ahmedabad district in Gujarat was in drought in 1985 when Harshad was born. Hailing from a family of a daily labourer, his mother delivered him on the field where she was employed for digging the canal. His father used to work as a diamond polisher and did farming. His family shifted to Ahmedabad city post his primary school. He finished high school and pursued B.com in Gujarat Commerce College. Around that time computers gained popularity and there was a craze to learn it. During the second year of his college, Harshad wanted to learn computers but didn't have money to pay the fee. His close friend offered to pay half the amount of the fee as he wanted Harshad to learn to operate a Computer. Post the course, he joined at Vacunair Engineering Company Pvt. Ltd. His role was to make entries of incoming stock in the system. Moving beyond his scope of work he also assisted in maintaining the stock by organizing them and in helping other workers find the parts they needed. While doing this activity he realized that there was no system to figure the number of stock remaining. Also, the methodology was that only when the stock was over it was reordered causing a delay in work. So he suggested his manager for using material management system for increasing efficiency of their production unit and took responsibility to incorporate it in the production system due to his IT knowledge. He ensured that the material management system is introduced there.

After working there for two years he joined as a purchasing assistant at EPM Tech Industries which used to manufacture textile warping machines. He realised that there were no proper systems in place for purchasing and maintaining stocks and rectified it. Acknowledging his dedication he was given additional responsibility of quality control department along with material management. He got promoted to Asst. Manager and hired people for helping him deliver better. After working there for four years he had to resign due to personal reasons.

He then took a job with Harvest Tools and Machinery project Private Limited, an on-board agency working for Narmada Nigam which was constructing check gates for canals and dams. Keeping in view his mapping skills and experience with managing material and men, he was given the responsibility to make an estimated bill of materials required for constructing various structures helping them to fill tenders for the same. A team of 80 reported him. His intelligence and dedication impressed a senior government official managing the project. He offered Harshad a permanent post of an engineer but Harshad didn't have the required engineering degree. So the officer suggested him to enrol in a diploma in mechanical engineering through distance education mode at Ranchhodlal Chhotalal Technical Institute, Ahmedabad. As a part of this course, he was required to attend classes for 10 days in a semester and give exams. Since he was handling a large team on the field for the project it was not feasible to give him leaves for 10 days at a stretch. Owing to this barrier he had to resign from his job as he wanted to study. He joined his previous organisation EPM Tech Industries with a condition to avail ten days leave at a stretch once in every six months. Unfortunately, the MD of the organisation passed away in a few days and the change in leadership made it difficult to work

After quitting his job at EPM Industry, Harshad was at crossroads. He reached out to his elder brother for suggestions. His brother suggested him to try and set up a business as he believed that owning a business helps the future generation lead a stable life. His brother took the responsibility of the entire family and encouraged Harshad to set-up his own business. His friend Umesh Patel who was running bricks and paver blocks manufacturing machinery business successfully gave him a pre-order of six thousand rupees for making some spare parts of his machines. Incidentally, his school friend Jayapal was already in the business of making spare parts of mat weaving machines exported from Germany. Harshad asked Jayapal for suggestions to proceed further. Jayapal offered him space to work in his own workshop helping Harshad avoid some expenses initially. Under his mentorship, Harshad started working and meeting people to get more work. Raju Panchal an acquaintance suggested him to try and make a machine for making nylon ropes which were exported from Germany and was very costly. Harshad liked the proposition and decided to give it a try. He started looking for videos of rope making machines on YouTube and Google. Through Raju, he got some contacts who were using the machines and visited them to understand the internal mechanism. He realized that by making some modifications he can double the production capacity and if the machine is locally assembled then buyers can save on transportation cost considerably. It took him almost a year to get the prototype ready and he sought suggestions from experts for suggestions. With multiple rounds of feedbacks and iterations, he was able to fine tune the machine and make it market ready. It took him around 45 days to assemble the second piece and he slowly started getting orders from various textile industries. Till date, he has made more than 150 pieces of the rope making the machine and has designed seven more machines to manufacture threads and ropes.

He recalls the first day when he did not have money to even buy money for beginning the rituals. From there to running a profitable business his journey has been nothing but an achievement. He lives with his family in Ahmedabad and has a toddler going to school. He is indebted to his elder brother, wife and friends for their immense support in his entrepreneurial journey so far.

About the enterprise

In his initial days, he took a drastic step of doing something of his own. He received an advance of six thousand rupees from his friend Umesh along with a workspace from Jayapal. He bought a second-hand drill machine to start making spare parts of paver blocks manufacturing machine. In a couple of months he bought a second-hand lathe machine to make more varieties of spare parts. He registered his proprietorship firm “Jay Dada Industries” after 4 months of starting his work in 2014. Almost after six months, he got the idea of locally manufacturing nylon rope making. He did some market research and figured out that industries exported such machines from Germany as there was no one manufacturing it locally. When he understood the internal mechanism of existing similar machines he realised that there is scope for doubling the production capacity with some modifications and started working on it. The money earned by making spare parts was used for R&D. During this phase, his brother managed the family’s income. After working on the design of this machine Harshad needed money to convert it into a working prototype. His wife gave him one lakh rupee that she had received from her mother as a gift to their newborn baby. In the next four months Harshad built the first prototype and gave it to his friend who was in rope manufacturing business to see how the machine performs. After doing some fine tuning machine was ready to be placed in the market and through word of mouth the news spread. He got his second order within a month. In the next three years, he was able to sell more than one hundred fifty machines. He has designed eight machines for various types of thread and rope manufacturing works so far. He also attended 10 days entrepreneurship development program under Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMEGP). One of his major key takeaways from this training program was the need to understand his customer.

As he didn't have enough working capital in his initial years, the contacts he developed with vendors while working with EPM industries became crucial. They offered him longer credit cycles. He believes that without their support running his company would have been difficult.

One of his customers exported industrial purpose bags with internal cotton lining to Bangladesh. He realised that Bangladesh can be a potential market for his machines. He searched for potential buyers there to buy his machines through the internet. He wrote emails to several industries which resulted in an order of two machines from an enthusiastic owner in Bangladesh making his first international sales. He also uploaded some videos on YouTube and got a query from one industrialist in South Africa. One of their representatives visited him to finalize the order after verification and the machines were exported to South Africa. He also participated in various textile machinery expos in India and Bangladesh to market his products.

Due to the bulkiness of the machine, around 10% of the machine costs are required as working capital. Hence to cater to large order he borrows money from market, friends or relatives. He believes that borrowing only working capital is feasible. His current workshop has a capacity of assembling twenty machines in a month. To diversify further he has rented a bigger space to increase their production capacity.

Growth Challenges

Harshad has realised that there is immense potential in foreign markets for his machines but channels for reaching out to them are expensive, limiting his sales to India only. As his constant attention required in the operations, he feels a need for marketing personnel which are expensive to hire due to the scale of the industry. Policies like GST and textile market has affected his business to some extent.

Way forward

Harshad wishes to develop a machine for making ropes used in the shipping industry and want to invest his time and resources in designing and developing such machine locally. He has rented out a larger space to increase his production capacity.

Key takeaways

Harshad has an opportunity to benefit from filing a patent for his machines and earn royalty through it. He requires mentoring on visioning further and tapping the potential of the market. His professional community and ecosystem have played a very crucial role in his journey by giving him financial and networking support. The role of the family in an entrepreneur's journey is often looked out but Harshad's story will be incomplete without his brother's and wife's support.

Inspirational Value and Impact

Harshad is the first person in his family to study engineering and set up his own business. His passion for machine designing and manufacturing is impeccable. His journey is motivating as it depicts how having a supportive ecosystem for grassroots level entrepreneurs can provide support to them by building credibility and trustworthiness.

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Mitti Cool

Traditional products for modern age requirements¹⁵

¹⁵ This case study is based on an interaction with Ravibhai and Mansukhbhai on 30/11/2018 as a part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018



Father-Son duo behind the success of Mitti Cool

Mitti Cool is about re-inventing traditional art into a modern day enterprise.

Journey of Ravibhai

Ravibhai Prajapati a resident of Vankaner Taluk in Rajkot district of Gujarat envisioned the creation of an enterprise devoted to eco-friendly clay products suitable to modern life. The seeds of this entrepreneurial journey were sown by his father Shri Mansukhbhai Prajapati, a well-known innovator of clay products who has converted tradition of clay pottery into a modern day supply chain of life style products. Together they set an example for the revival and successful survival of various traditional arts fighting for relevance with modern times.

Ravibhai's father used to make earthen pots and traditional items. Those initial days were full of struggle for him as clay pot making was not considered financially rewarding and socially looked down upon. Mansukhbhai worked for more than 20 years as an innovator experimenting with locally affordable technological solutions converting the clay products to meet the lifestyle needs of modern era in a sustainable manner. Some products include the earthen 'tawadi', i.e baking pan, non-stick pans, pressure cooker etc. While his father was busy creating these innovative products from clay to attract customers to his products and make his profession profitable his son chose to augment his knowledge. He studied ceramic engineering to sharpen his skills to fit modern day industrial requirements. Using this new knowledge Ravibhai along with his father has given a new lease of life to clay pottery or to say 'Kumbharikam' in local Gujarati language. They represent a rare combination of father-son duo of an entrepreneur and a top class innovator. They have incorporated local artisans and young enthusiasts interested in this venture by providing job work to them and also by conducting various trainings and lectures on the subject.

Mansukhbhai's innovations have been well documented and recognized by National Innovation Foundation an initiative started by Prof. Anil Gupta of Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad. He has travelled across India and internationally too. This exposure has given him the ability to understand the needs of the modern times and also the dynamism required to survive in today's competitive business environment.

They also had the advantage of greater recognition of Mansukhbhai's work almost every prestigious platform. This has helped them in getting financial, technical and mentoring help from various quarters. In 2015 they set up a partnership firm, Mitticool, at Wankaner near Rajkot.

About the enterprise

Mansukhbhai and his son shared the philosophy of their enterprise which seemed to be deeply rooted in the Indian belief in the tremendous health benefits accruing from earthenware. It is believed that cooking food in it adds nutritional value of the clay to the food and the porous material of clay helps water seep through it. This principle is also used in an earthen water bottle made by them which lets people enjoy the mildly cool water. In addition to this, the mineral composition and porous nature of clay products enhance flavour of the food cooked in them. Mitti Cool is all about re-inventing the rich roots of traditional Indian art of pottery into a modern day enterprise. Ravibhai, his father and all of his family members are partners in this firm. Earlier they used to work from a rented place but in 2015, they took a loan to have their own workshop, exhibition gallery and other facilities of their own. Their constant innovations based on market research about the utility and potential buyers in their already existing chain of distributors and retailers have given Mitti Cool Clay Innovations recognition in across various segments of the pottery market in a short span of three years. Their products are produced through subcontracting their work to other artisans under their guidance and specific design parameters to maintain the quality Mitti Cool is known for. Most of the raw material is procured locally from Rajkot and Morbi districts of Gujarat. Morbi and Wankaner are anyway known for the ceramic industry cross the globe.

Earthen artefacts are another segment which is popular from their range of products. They have a range of household products including artistic pieces to domestically useful kitchen wares etc. But ultimate recognition to their work came from their creation known as 'Mitti Cool Refrigerator'. They ventured into a totally new segment of producing refrigerators made from clay but did not require electricity to function! This product was very popular on the internet and social media platforms as it was hailed as a miracle for the warmer areas and particularly for those areas which need refrigeration but electricity is still scarce there. The product was also an outcome of founder's commitment towards socially responsible, environment friendly and customer satisfaction based products. It became an instant hit as it had a great utility value for people living in the areas without electricity. They have molded their products in such a way that they become relevant to contemporary times and their efforts in this direction demand constant innovation in designing, utility value, pricing and contribution to healthy and environment friendly lifestyles.



Awards and recognition gallery of Mansukh Bhai

Their commitment to innovation and people friendly business led to growth of their business turn over to several times. In the year 2015-16 their total annual turnover was around Rs. 10 to 15 lacs that

had risen to Rs. 41 lacs by the end of financial year 2018. This is also reflected in the major jump in their customer base too. On an average, they receive 200-300 online requests through their own website www.mitticool.com and also from online business platforms like Amazon. Beginning from a much localized market they have been able to have dealership network of 35 in Gujarat and 182 in outside states. They also export their products abroad through four companies which includes one company for the Gulf region.



Mitti Cool is also venturing into production of earthen furniture made from clay.

Their future course of action is focused on stabilizing the enterprise towards consistent growth and transforming this family enterprise into a professional business enterprise. One of the product segments they seek to work on is murals that would provide employment in monsoons when most other pottery work stops.

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Lead Reclaim and Rubber Products Ltd.

Serving small scale industries¹⁶

¹⁶ This case study is based on the interaction with Jayesh Baldevbhai Patel, the director of Lead reclaim & rubber products Ltd on 27/11/2018 as part of the field assessment for National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018

He has seen his grandfather and father set-up and run their own businesses.

Journey of Jayesh

Jayesh Baldevbhai Patel belongs to a family of innovators. They encourage exploring various sectors for doing business and support new ideas and initiatives. His father, a successful salt businessman in Baroda is Jayesh's mentor. Jayesh, completed his graduation in India and moved to United Kingdom (UK) to pursue his post-graduate studies. He has seen his grandfather and father set-up and run their own businesses his entire life. Hence he was always in the search for new opportunities and possibilities of establishing the same. During his stay in UK, he observed the upcoming possibilities in waste management and related industries flourishing in European countries and America. He travelled across various countries around the world to understand its functioning. He also did a study of the existing market situation and waste management realities of India. He started exploring e-waste management of mobile phone batteries. As the mobile technology changed very frequently there wasn't much that could be done in that domain. He found that recycling rubber was an effective waste management and environment conservation avenue to look upon.

About the enterprise

Jayesh registered the private limited company, Lead Reclaim and Rubber Products Ltd (LRRPL) in 2013. He was allotted a space of 1acre in Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) area of Kheda. The initial investment of 1.5 crores of the project came from his family. Later a loan of Rs. 4.5 crores was sanctioned from AU Bank for infrastructure development. The unit became operational in 2015. The scrap rubber especially the discarded rubber tyres were collected from different parts of Gujarat through vendors. The unit started producing reclaim rubber sheets as a raw material for various industries including the automobile tyre manufacturers.

While there are many players in the recycling of rubber domain there were unable to customize the reclaim rubber sheets for the clients. Jayesh through his research introduced few machines that customized the rubber sheets as per the requirement of the client and also follow the industry standards. LRRPL also provides raw material to manufacturers of cow-mats, door-mats, window-beading, tyres etc. The price of the reclaim rubber sheets is Rs.32/kg premium quality, while that of virgin rubber its Rs. 125/kg. Thus the recycled product reduces the cost of production. Except the tensile strength (capability to extend), all the other physical properties of the reclaim rubber is similar to that of virgin rubber. The promoter aims at providing premium quality products to the clients, as he believes that the end customer should not be asked to compromise on the quality of the product just because they buy recycled rubber. The enterprise had 3 customers in 2015 and now has 20 with 35% of the sales in Gujarat and the rest spread across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. While many enterprises focus on selling their products internationally, LRRPL focuses on

local small scale industries. With the help of technology they make customised products as raw materials for these industries in small batches. This has enabled small scale industries to use reclaimed rubber as raw material instead of virgin rubber.

Jayesh has been investing the profits back into infrastructure building and introducing new machinery every year and clearing the debts required during the initial stages. Due to their commitment to environment conservation they have been identified as green industry by Central pollution control board (CPCB).

Growth Challenges

Jayesh says that the support from the government agencies have been well so far. He also considers the business background of his family as an advantage that helped him in setting up the business. However, since recycling unit is a new sector for the ecosystem that he belongs to, he finds some difficulty in reaching out to more clients who need the raw materials he can provide.

The key challenge for him now is to retain the local labors as he has to employ labor from various parts of India to meet the HR needs.

Key takeaways

The enterprise was started not only with an aim of profit but for finding solutions to manage waste and protect the environment which is extremely essential. While coal is used in the boiler, the coal ash is collected and sent to the ceramic industry which acts as ash, a raw material in making tiles. Thus Jayesh, tries to maintain a zero waste unit as much as possible.

The financial support and mentoring that Jayesh had from his family has been an advantage for him. He has been able to invest time in study of market as well as in the process of starting the recycling unit. He is an aspiring entrepreneur who wants to grow the business to its fullest potential. He wishes to list his company in the stock market in the future and is in the process of understanding how to do it.

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BCM Training Academy

Training purposefully¹⁷

¹⁷ This case study is based on a telephonic interview with Mrs. Nisha Anaand on 03/12/2018 as a part of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018.



Nisha Anaand, Founder of BCM Training Academy

She had extreme stage fear due to her introvert nature.

Born and brought-up in Mumbai during her initial years, Nisha did her basic schooling from a convent school there till class 8th. After that her father decided to start his own work and her family shifted to Surat in Gujarat , where she did the rest of her schooling, graduation (BBA) and post-graduation (MBA in Marketing). She was shy and introvert in her school days and had very selective friends. Due to her shy nature, during her higher secondary school she opted for couple of training modules with Dr. Giri Shankar, attitudinal trainer, for gaining confidence. Around this time her inclination towards public speaking and addressing large audiences increased but she never had the confidence to talk to people in public and had extreme stage fear due to her introvert nature.

She along with her family attended an event organised by Landmark Forum International which helped her in slowly letting go off her stage fear and she grew confident. During her graduations she was encouraged by her friends to contest elections again for the post of student representative due to her friendly nature and oration skills. She won those elections with very encouraging margin boosting her confidence in public speaking. She won many awards for her college in public speaking at state level. Her journey to public speaking groomed in this phase. Her internships gave her lot of exposure to corporate culture. During her college she had some stints with television industry and she was invited to take up live tv shows in local channels where she will talk about personality development and about boosting confidence. She was invited by JCI group to become a panel member of JCI junior group after she won competitions related to public speaking and oration organised by them. This gave her an opportunity to work for the society along with exposure to marketing, PR, working in team, fundraising etc.



Nisha was involved in many social activities during her college days.

After finishing her graduation she went on to pursue her MBA and did her internship with an advertising firm. She worked for a while after doing MBA and then got married and shifted to Mumbai. She took up a job with an events management firm handling client acquisition for them. After working for a while she started feeling the need to be a part of bigger organisation. Meanwhile her husband got transferred to Pune and she took up a job with Godrej group which was into corporate trainings. This job was her door to trainings and development which she was passionate about but her role was in client acquisition. Her seniors were amazed by her ability to understand client's requirement and accordingly communicate it to their trainers for customization. She met some mentors during this period encouraging her to think as a leader with a larger vision and inspired by their thoughts she started thinking about her purpose in life.

In between she had to take maternity leave and she wanted to utilise this time effectively. She took up a diploma course in corporate communication and advertising from Vikram Sarabhai institute and after becoming a mother she joined L&T infotech as a strategic consultant and at that phase the organisation was going through a transformational change where lot of new policies were introduced and all of these changes were supposed to be communicated to the employees of the unit. She helped her organisation strategize these communications along with her other work. Looking at her good oration skills her seniors encouraged her to conduct sessions with other employees where she can explain them future plans of the organisation and keep everyone aligned to the organisation's mission.

Her work with L&T was going very smooth but after a while her husband was expecting another transfer though the date and location were not clear which prompted her to think about her next step. She realised that she has worked for many organisations till now but she doesn't want to do that anymore and wanted to do something of her own. She expressed her idea of becoming an entrepreneur to her mother and one fine day her mother told her about a newspaper advertisement given by government of Gujarat regarding SCOPE project, Society for Creation of Opportunity through Proficiency in English, and was inviting applications for setting up learning centres for professionals who lacked proficiency in English. She read about the program thoroughly and decided to apply for starting a learning centre in Surat as her parents were already there. She discussed briefly with her husband and convinced him to let her at least apply and see what happens. Owing to her long corporate exposure and ability to relate to people in Gujarat her profile was shortlisted but her husband got a transfer to Mumbai. With lot of discussions the couple decided to stay separate for a while and see if they are able to manage.

Nisha shifted to Surat and with an initial investment of sixty thousand rupees she started her own centre for SCOPE project and named it BCM training academy which stands for "Better Career Management". Initially they were a team of three and Nisha used to focus more on understanding the requirements of the trainees and design training modules accordingly. Her centre was recognised by CEO of SCOPE project for the quality of their trainings and number of trainees they had trained. While continuing with SCOPE they gradually started conducting corporate trainings as the training modules of SCOPE project were provided by Cambridge University which also interested corporates for training their employees. These corporates also asked them to conduct trainings on enhancing their employee's soft skills and soon with word of mouth and references they got more such assignments from corporate branches in and out of Surat. They started hiring consultants for delivering trainings as the business started growing. They also started organising training sessions for

youths where senior management of various corporate branches used to share their requirements with the youths. Reflecting on her past experiences and recent interactions she realised that many youths and women currently lack a proper vision for their life and are not able to identify their strengths which lead her to venture into their mentoring and training through Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and other such training modules.



Training and mentoring sessions for women

Nisha's second daughter is a special child with cerebral palsy and she had to undergo rehabilitation trainings on how to be a better parent for children with special needs. During the rehabilitation program she realised the pain of many other parents and children who are going through this situation and designed training modules for both to help them deal with it effectively.



Training session for parents of children with special needs.

Drawing upon the difficulties she faced while getting her second daughter admitted in a good school because of her special needs she realised that most of the schools are not very disable friendly and inclusive. Though she was able to get her daughter admitted in a good school, she has decided to build learning centres for other such children to provide them inclusive and better education. She is also currently working on creating a hub for trainers covering various verticals and aspects of their customers' training and mentoring requirements at Surat. Till date she has received many recognition and awards for her inspiring work in the skill sector.

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Their products portfolio caters to diversified market segment under the following brands.

- *Indigifts*: Ready- made gifts line. These gifts are focused on modern life styles of young Indians. The gifts are multi-design and utility based with a tinge of *desiness* in them making it unique. The price range for these products has been from Rs.150 to Rs.1500 as the target customers are working individuals and students in the age group of 16 to 35.
- *Indifamily*: Ideas and events series. Catering to the mental health issues in urban space they intend to spread the message of the importance of positive thinking and living.

Indibni is a mirror image of “Indi” representing India.

This bootstrapped start-up has been conceptualized by the dynamic duo of Nitin Jain and Ankit Jain in 2012. Indibni is one of the leading Indian Indigenous Content Production companies based out of Jaipur. They provide online and off line content services for relationship management. The quirky designs and ideas are created in-house by the team and sent to a production unit nearby or outsourced through local vendors.

Cashing in the growing popularity of online shopping, the team has strategized to sell their products through e-commerce platforms. It has helped them develop a customer base world over. The convenience offered by the e-commerce platform has helped them in growing their business, avail more opportunities and get feedbacks from customers for improvement. To cover a more diverse range of customers they are also establishing themselves in retail, starting with promoting their products in different cafes of Jaipur.

Reaching where they are today wasn't an easy journey. Nitin and Ankit realized the scope and power of content while pursuing film design and animation in their college. The first project they did during their studies in 2006 was to collate data and to share it with the masses through their website *Indianimator*. But they both took different path post their graduation as Nitin pursued his post-graduation and Ankit took up a job in film-making in Mumbai. The entrepreneurial passion brought them back to Jaipur in 2011 and they decided to work together in the field of animation. They began by travelling to various cities and meeting people. These travels helped them in understanding the growing gap in human interaction and weakening relationships in the urban population. They realized that working on content to bridge this gap would be the way forward.



Founders Ankit and Nitin

It all started by bringing like-minded friends on board and renting an apartment which worked as an office space. The initial days were about brainstorming ideas and making customized gifts for various

people. Though there was increasing demand for the customized products, they realized that the model was not scalable. The objective of their enterprise was to reach the masses. So they worked towards creating gifts based on human relations. They picked up daily anecdotes and conversational phrases and fused them with products and designs relatable to the public at large. These products are ideal for gifting due to its collectible value and amusing content.

As the work started growing, they underwent several ideation phases and multiple re-structuring. It was the vision and never-say-die spirit of Ankit and Nitin who were determined to create a successful business due to which Indibni was incorporated as a private limited company in 2017. While Ankit looks after the production and quality control of the products, Nitin steers ideas, design and handle marketing and promotion of the products. Taking the path less travelled in a competitive start-up environment, by principle Indibni has worked towards ensuring sustainability rather than seeking funding from its starting day of initiation. They are working towards scaling up by approaching investors with feasible and realistic business model. Rather than being formally incubated by any ecosystem they have empanelled experienced mentors who guide them from time to time.

The team does not shy from sharing their struggles, failures and experience they had while setting up the business. Even if their start up is extremely time and energy consuming the team do take time off for reflecting back and pursuing their hobbies. Nitin is a National Award winner in photography and enjoys it immensely during his free time. They offer volunteer time for social causes as well.



Few products displayed at Indibni office, Jaipur

As they gear up towards catering to an increasing demand for content, they are firm to engrain Indian value system in the young generation through gifts, social media posts, blog posts etc. As entrepreneurs Ankit and Nitin has found the market opportunity and upcoming trend in the urban population of India towards choosing gifts for their loved ones. With a positive attitude Indibni is bringing closer the world by celebrating the everyday spirit of India and engage with people to communicate their bonds and relationships by creating and sharing relevant content.

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Green Fibre

Government as the biggest customer¹⁹

¹⁹ This case is based on a telephonic interview with Mr. Nakul Sonwane on 03/12/2018 as a part of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018.



Fibre bench was the first product Nakul designed for Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

When everyone sees Obstacles, an entrepreneur sees an Opportunity.

Nakul couldn't clear the tenth examination and had to drop out of school. He occasionally visited his father in the newspaper printing unit where he worked as a Production Manager. It was during these visits that he came across fibre which was used as a lining material in some parts of newspaper printing machines to prevent them from corroding. His father had to hire workers from Delhi/Gujarat to get the fibre related work done. Nakul was fascinated by the idea of working with fibre. He spent hours watching the workers undertaking lining work through hand lapping. He interacted with them to understand the scope and methodology to work with it. With additional research and interaction he realised that there were very few skilled workers in Gujarat for to undertake fibre work. Due to this, companies paid a good amount to fibre workers. The demand for fibre was increasing due to its anti-corrosive and fire resistant properties. It had a potential worth tapping.

Following this, he joined a local firm called Fibretech Industry in 2000 that manufactured bathtubs made of fibre. He learnt the nuances of fibre and gained confidence for taking it further. A family friend realised his penchant for fibres and proposed him to design fibre benches for Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) parks as they intended to replace concrete and metal benches currently in use. Metal benches due to its higher scrap value often got stolen and concrete benches absorbed immense heat making it unbearable to sit upon during summers. Moreover, concrete benches were difficult to install as many got damaged during transportation. Fibre benches seemed like a practical idea that catered to all the problems of metal and concrete. He submitted a grant proposal for which he did not have a registered firm so he used his friends firm for applying for the grant. The grant was approved and received twenty thousand INR to design ten sample benches. It was tough for him to explain engineers at AMC the benefits of fibre benches over others due to low awareness. Since he was making these chairs for the first time he had to make 'dies' and in the process, he had to invest some money from his savings. The design was liked by the department. He started getting queries from various other departments and received the second order of fifty thousand rupees for making more benches.

As work began to flow in the need for a registering a proprietorship firm in his name grew stronger. There were problems of working capital at times due to delayed payments wherein his family supported him with a flush of capital from time to time. With one such investment from his sister, he started his own enterprise called Green Fibre. His work at AMC got him more contracts to make benches, umbrella dome along with a contract from the zoo department where he was to make fibre dustbins worth one lakh rupees to be installed at the Zoo. He rented a new place as order started streaming regularly. In 2012-13 due to regular demand, he required more working capital for his business to keep the supply of raw materials uninterrupted. He was very concerned about his image amongst his raw material suppliers as he didn't want to create a bad impression by delaying their payments. For this, he approached banks to get a loan of around one lakh rupees but received less.

As he wanted to expand further he realised his incompetency to bid for large tenders. Big tenders required the bidders to deposit some amount as a security deposit which he didn't have. When he failed to get a normal loan he decided to build rapport with the bank manager, met and kept him regularly informed of the work he was doing. The launch of Mudra scheme created a conducive environment for small and micro enterprises. He approached the bank and received a call from the bank suggesting him to apply for a Mudra loan of up to ten lakh rupees under the Tarun Slab. Nakul applied for a loan of ten lakh rupees and got it approved. The inflow of capital encouraged him to start bidding for bigger tenders.

He sought help from a friend who had an MBA to help him make proposals and make bids in tenders. With the seed capital, he started a workshop and hired workers for fabrication activities in the house. A major assignment he received was to install fibre benches in Somnath Temples as the metal ones corroded due to salinity in the air. With increasing usage of fibre, he increased his portfolio by designing playing equipment.



Playing equipment are his new offerings

Being a local player in his niche he got preference over other state players. He is currently empanelled as a vendor with L&T for constructing fibre cabins for shopkeepers displaced during construction of Ahmedabad metro. He is also negotiating with AMC for developing outdoor gyms in public spaces. As a vendor with a positive reputation, the National Institute of Design send their participants to his workshop for more information on fibre moulding.

Today Nakul heads a 5 member team along with 12 temporary workers in Green Fibre. His turnover has been around 96 lakh INR and is expecting more than a crore in the coming year. In reflection, Nakul believes his uncle's advice of "First learn to sell, and then produce it" has helped him carve his entrepreneurial journey. He believes the quality of service and innovativeness along with a supportive environment has helped him grow his business. His family has stood behind him as a rock supporting and nurturing him in every situation in his journey.

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Shree Krushna Agro Centre

Beyond selling Agro-inputs²⁰

²⁰ This case is based on a telephonic interview with Mr. Naimish on 03/12/2018 as a part of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018.



Naimish addressing farmer's group in a night meeting.

He was able to understand the plight of the farmers in a situation worse than them.

India is an agrarian country with 70% of the population directly dependent for their livelihoods. Even with a major chunk of the population involved there is much left to be done in this field. Agriculture is uncertain, the weather, water availability, pest attack, and several other factors may affect it and it's upon the farmer to be prepared for it.

Naimish Bhai Busa a young man from Rajkot Gujarat, identified one major gap existing in the value chain. Belonging to a well off family life wasn't difficult for him. Despite this, he never ceased to connect with the community. When he was in 12 standard there was a drought situation in Kutch district. The situation worsened as farmers suffered huge economic losses due to crop failure and meddled into debts leading to suicides in some instance. Even with plenty of available resources, his family suffered during this time. Naimish was able to understand the plight of the farmers in a situation worse than them. There was something that needed to be done. A major gap he identified was the retailers who acted as a bridge between the farmers and the agri input companies did not provide necessary information. As a result, the farmers weren't able to use products and services efficiently.

The idea to cater to this was seeded in his mind then. He wanted to start his own agro-input supplies services. He intended to increase the production of farmers yield by providing them information on every aspect of agriculture, right from sowing to harvesting and beyond. His family was repulsed by the idea. He was instructed to choose a field without farming. He took admission in Saurashtra University, and while studying he undertook market study and research on agri-inputs in his area. He attended workshops at the agriculture university to learn the best agriculture practices of the region through meetings and workshops. These lead to meeting farmers understand their challenges and current practices. He also started contacting agri-input companies and made a list of their products and policies. While interacting with these companies he used to take contact details of farmers who have used their product in their region to connect with them later and get their feedback about the product and sometimes visit their field. He also made a list of a number of farmers in nearby villages and total landholding to gauge the market size. This helped him to make better case presentations on the types of agro-inputs. Though, he did face the critique of being young and inexperienced in agriculture while he spoke about it in details. He moved passed it as the agriculture season was approaching and there was a need of inputs like seeds and other materials required. Rather than just talking about the inputs if he could sell them that would increase the weight of what he was saying to the farmers. His father supported him with the initial seed amount to purchase the stock. As the season went, his sales were less but the farmers were happy with the yield based on his suggestions along with the in-field support. To encourage him further his family raised more money to support him in the coming few months.



A picture of field visit

He learned immensely through the first season and worked towards improving his presentation skills. He bought a projector to show video as seeing is believing. Farmers could understand the use of agro-inputs better as they saw them and were interested to learn more. He also started sponsoring social activities like health camps, religious gatherings to build credibility. This helped him sell inputs worth around ten lakh rupees with an average margin of ten to fifteen percent. There were some sales of fertilizers and pesticides as well. Slowly trust started building for him amongst the farmers and by the end of the second year, he had repaid all the money he borrowed from his father and relatives. As the trust started building his father also assisted him in the shop which ensured that he could study while working

There were instances where the production didn't happen as expected but Naimish ensured to help those farmers as much as he can. He learned that what was considered to be medium output may actually be high for the farmer which in many instances lead to lower production. To understand the technicalities of it better he applied for a diploma in Agri extension input dealer management, by MANAGE, National Centre for Management of Agricultural Extension at Hyderabad. The year-long course taught him how he can work with the government in extending Agri input services.

After finishing the course he has now started working towards convergence with the government which is essential to increase farmer's production. Naimish realizes the impact of using extensive chemicals in farming and wishes to reduce their usage by promoting organic products but he also believes that it is unfair to expect it to happen overnight. Change happens slowly but it always does.

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