

Challenges faced

In this winter, while sitting on an arm chair, taking a cup of coffee & going through his memory lane, Mr. Mohanty intrigued that during the journey of these 10 years, the major challenges faced and overcome in sustaining the entrepreneurship were:

- Maintaining hygiene and procuring quality ingredients;
- Paucity of skilled and dedicated manpower resources;
- Unhealthy business practices amongst competing entrepreneurs.

Learnings

Mr. Mohanty perceives that without learning life ceases. So, he constantly keeps himself abreast of different culinary by attending seminars, conferences and training programs nationally & internationally. He learned that one needs to continuously invest in business. Accumulation of money is the major drawback for business. The moment one starts accumulating the downfall of the business starts.

Impact of business

The impact of the business can be traced by observing the employment opportunities created for many.

Future Plans

Mr. Mohanty has expanded his business by opening different branches in Bhubaneswar & opening Namkeen & dibba sweets factory in Rasulgarh. He constantly persists on providing hygienic & qualitative food to customers. Mr. Mohanty proudly says that this year he is one of the highest sales-tax payers among the competitors. He is planning to open few more branches.

In the year 2009, Mr. Subrat Mohanty received the Entrepreneur's Award from Journalist Association for maintaining hygienic ambience, honesty, transparency & commitment in business. Mr. Mohanty believes that the key factor leading to his achievement rests on his staff members. He says, "If they are happy, they will make me happy and strive to achieve the excellence. This is where I will build my competitive advantage". While interacting with the staff members, one of the employees said, "We believe that Baba (Mr. Mohanty)

strengthens our social security & will by providing PF & ESI to all of us. So, it becomes our responsibility to strengthen Baba's business." Chhappan Bhog's popularity can be assessed by the stories covered by, Aajtak, Zee TV & NDTV.

Advices to the future generation:

When asked to advise the future generations, Mr. Mohanty suggests, the following:

1. Always be confident, be generous to the mankind
2. Be committed, be truthful.
3. Understand the importance of time.
4. Have patience.

For future entrepreneurs, I would suggest "Do not accumulate money. It is the drawback of business." The moment you do it, the downfall of business starts, says Mr. Mohanty

Mr. Subrat Mohanty does not want to publicize himself, so he does not discuss much about his social work. According to him, God has made him efficient to help others & not to boast on it. When insisted, he could only reveal with shyness, that only, 20% of his income is spent on social work. "My family members and relatives always purchase sweets, bakery, snacks & meals (without onion-garlic) from Chhappan- Bhog due to its incredible taste & quality", says Dr. Rath, a local resident of Jayadev Vihar. "We have been offering sugar-free sweets keeping an eye on the health conscious people of the city & now, we are trying to be the top in packaging sweets in Odisha", says Mr. Mohanty confidently.

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CHAPTER FORTY TWO

A Study on Rajamoni Foods

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Arisha Pitha, the customary "cake" of Odisha, is now a marketable commodity. It has transcended the state boundaries and finding place amongst the delicacies of other states. In Bengal it is called as '*Anand Pithe*' which is on the verge of extinction from the state, but it is somehow managed to survive in our state. It may be due to the association of this homemade cake with every auspicious occasions and festivals in Odia culture.

Behind this lays the enduring enterprising spirit of Tara Das. For her this began as a way of tiding over her personal and financial adversities and has culminated into a proper corporate venture. “I had to sustain my family and medical expenses of my ailing husband. With no options, I decided to encase on my culinary skills, especially preparing traditional Odia cakes which I was best at” says a proud Tara.

She, along with her husband Sachidananda Das, two daughters and a son moved to Bhubaneswar from Delhi in early 1994 after her husband underwent kidney transplantation. “But my husband’s illness continued and his recurring medical expenses nearly milked us dry. Along with my son, I took the plunge into the business to earn some money”. While Tara cooked the *Pithas* day in and day out, her son went around marketing. “Sadly we ended up earning nothing, but it did catch the fancy of some customers who tasted the *Pithas*. We began getting orders from marriage parties, families and friends,” she said.

As ordered mounted, a worker from Salepur, Cuttack district was hired. Business took off and the worker strength rose from one to three in her small makeshift factory adjacent to her house in Sailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar. The product, labelled as ‘Rajamoni’, packed with five cakes was endorsed by almost every big shop selling snacks in the city.

Why this business and Success Storyline

Started with two kg of rice and two kg of jaggery, now her daily requirements of raw materials has reached to fifty kg of rice, forty five kg of jaggery and twenty litres of vegetable oil. She sells around two thousand pieces of *Arisa Pitha* on any given day. The production touches three thousand per day during festive occasions and the auspicious wedding seasons. Each *Arisa* weighs around hundred gram, and costs Rs.7/- per piece. She also prepares a special kind of *Arisa Pitha* that is made from *Desi Ghee* which costs Rs.16/- per piece. Other than *Arisa Pitha*, she also prepares *Laddu*, *Namkins*, *Khira Gaja* etc. The delicacies prepared from rice powder and jaggery, can be preserved for at least one month in any season.

Das claims that it is hectic lifestyle of today’s world that is stopping people from making the *Pitha*, which involves intricate and time consuming methods. “*Arisa Pitha*” has almost vanished from household in the state. People have become so busy that they do not get the time needed to prepare the dish, so I have been trying to keep the tradition alive”, she said.

Residents of the city agree with Das, “I make *Arisa Pitha* at home only when I get the time”, said Sanjukta Misha, a resident of Niladri Vihar. “But I never manage to match Tara’s preparations. She knows the secret of preparation of the most perfect *Arisa Pitha*”, Mrs. Mishra added. Tara started her business on August 16, 1999 on the day of Ganesh Chaturthi. After the death of her husband, her son Siddharth has been providing the much-needed support to the business. “My son has been toiling hard to market the product. I have hired four people, who are also helping me a lot in preparing *Arisa Pitha* she said. My son is helping me in every walk of life”, she told.

Challenges She Faced

She attributes her success to her secret method of preparing and mixing the ingredients. “In order to make the cakes taste differently from others we prepare a different mixture of jaggery with right proportion of water “, she says with great deal of satisfaction. The cakes come with more crispy and soft from inside. But fate tested her patience when workers in her factory duped her and started their own parallel business. They not only hijacked her trade secret but also marketed the cakes with the look-alike label named “Rajlakshmi” where as the original named as “Rajamoni”. “It hurt me badly. We had to convince shop-owners about the duplicity of the packets”, said Tara. Incidentally it was during the same time that she lost her husband. She overcame the problem when affected labours from a nearby leather factory arrived at her doorstep for work.

Impact of the Business

Today her *Pithas* have spread to almost every town of the state, as well as other parts of the country. *Arisa Pitha* has gone global, “I receive orders from customers living in US, Germany and Japan. My clients include NRI’s, Non-Residents Odiya as well foreigners,” Das said. So well know is her *Pitha* that Das does not even have to foot the bill of sending her items by courier to her over-seas customers. Instead, it is her clients who collect Das’s preparations from friends and relatives who live in Odisha. She bagged many accolades from different organizations. She has been awarded from IIM, Ahmedabad, under the tag of Shristi Samman on 29th February in the year 2007, Nehru Juba Sansthan in the month of November 2002, and she has been interviewed on many television channels.

Future of the Business