Chapter II

Entrepreneurship: a Conceptual Framework and Case Studies of Successful Migrant Entrepreneurs
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ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the rate of technological progress and creativity continues to accelerate, change becomes a way of life, and managing change a prime requisite for any organisation, irrespective of its size. Innovation, the conversion of new knowledge into new products and services, has long been recognised as the motor of economic growth. High in the list of requisites for such economic success are access to risk capital, availability of technical and business skills, and a culture of “can-do” entrepreneurialism. In this chapter, a conceptual framework about the term ‘entrepreneurship’ is presented.

2.2 ENTREPRENEUR

Behind all innovative business, there are entrepreneurs, individuals who possess the foresight, belief and boldness to build something new. It is a fact of human existence that some individuals are more capable than others, that some individuals are harder workers than others, and that some individuals are better at creating wealth than others. Schumpeter classified the entrepreneur as a sociologically distinct individual, who sees an opportunity, seizes it, and creates a new marketable process, or otherwise creates a new marketable contribution to the economy. He termed this activity “innovation” and claimed innovation as the sole domain of the entrepreneur (McDaniel, 2002). Entrepreneurs are important to the society and differ greatly from non-entrepreneurs. Kirzner (1973), describes an entrepreneur as someone who is capable of “staying alert”. Only certain people are capable to spotting previously undiscovered business opportunities, without the need to go out and look for them. Therefore, when groups of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs are compared, it is only to be expected that the former group will
perceive business opportunities where the second group does not. Regardless of the field in which entrepreneurs work, they admit the responsibility of using their own judgment; use their abilities to create new values; deal sincerely with others and with reality, risks failure and loss, cope with adversity, are watchful for signs of previously unrecognized needs and ways of meeting them, and get reward for increasing the wealth of individuals in society. By their nature, entrepreneurs are fanatically driven to succeed; they are sensitive to all market fluctuations and movements; they stay focused on long-term goals but continually adapt to changing environments; they are enthusiastic to action, reality, and the need to transform ideas into concrete form.

2.3 DEFINING ENTREPRENEUR

An entrepreneur is one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth opportunities and assembles the necessary resources to capitalise on those opportunities. While one cannot teach entrepreneurship *per se*, one can teach the skills of small business management. Choenni (1997), the noted psychologist characterised the high achievers/entrepreneurs as having:

- a desire for responsibility
- preference for moderate risk
- confidence in personal success
- a desire for immediate feedback
- a high level of energy
- a future orientation
- skill in organisation and
- the feeling that money is a great way to keep score, but it is not as important as achievement.
Various other studies have expanded on Choenni’s work identifying other characteristics of entrepreneurs such as a high degree of commitment, a tolerance for ambiguity and flexibility. These are the traits of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are not set in a fixed mould, and no one set of characteristics can predict entrepreneurial tendencies or success.

### 2.4 CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

One of the core activities in entrepreneurship is the creation of new and effective ideas that solve challenges in the markets. It is about defining solutions that add value to the users. Entrepreneurs may add value not only by developing new technologies or discovering new knowledge or expertise. It also focuses on using old technologies or existing products and services in new ways or by adopting old technologies or systems in innovative manners to deliver innovative solutions. At its basic roots, entrepreneurship is about finding new ways of satisfying customer needs more effectively than existing solutions. It is thus about the fundamental understanding of what is valuable to customers and developing solutions that deliver this value. This calls for the application of creativity and innovation to solve problems and to exploit the many opportunities that are presented whenever there is a ‘problem’.

Landstrom and Stevenson (2006) define creativity as the ability to develop new ideas and to discover new ways of looking at problems and opportunities. Innovation is defined as the ability to apply creative solutions to those problems and opportunities to enhance or enrich people’s lives. Levitt explains the difference by stating that creativity is thinking new things and innovation is doing new things. Entrepreneurs thus need to think and do new things, hence the importance of creativity and innovation.

Small businesses may be short of many resources, but creativity and innovation are typically areas in which they have thrived. Creative thinking has become a core business skill, one in which small businesses have proved their competitive advantage time and again. It is not surprising that in many large organisations where internal bureaucracies have stifled creativity and innovation,
managers are being taught these skills to take on a more entrepreneurial approach. Entrepreneurship is the results of a disciplined, systematic process of applying creativity and innovation to understand better and serve more effectively the needs and opportunities in the marketplace. Entrepreneurs must therefore connect their creativity and innovativeness with the realities of developing the solutions in a business environment. It is an ongoing challenge to be creative and innovative in a way that allows the entrepreneur to exploit market opportunities.\(^6\)

### 2.5 ENTREPRENEUR AS A LEADER

Small business managers take on a wide range of roles and responsibilities, but the most important is that of a leader. Leadership is the process of influencing and inspiring others to work to achieve a common goal and then giving them the power and freedom to achieve it. For an entrepreneur, leadership success is one of the key determinants of the company’s success. Management and leadership are not the same; yet both are essential to a small company’s success. Leadership without management is unbridled; management without leadership is uninspired. Leadership gets a small business going, management keeps it going. Schuetz (2005)\(^7\) affirms that much of a manager’s effectiveness is dependent on how he or she builds relationships with others. The most important relationships often have nothing to do with the formal structure or hierarchy of the business: managers engage in what is in effect a form of alliance-building with colleagues and others whom they believe will support them and help them to achieve their goals.

Svilokos and Carraher (2006)\(^8\) compare management with leadership and concludes that there are four significant differences between the two concepts:-

1. A difference in agenda: managers are concerned with planning and budgeting within specific timeframes, while leaders have a more open-ended approach and work to create a vision of the future.
2. Managers are responsible for the form of the organisation, while leaders put more stress on communication.
3. Managers focus on problem solving, while leaders aim to inspire and motivate the organisation.

4. Because managers are focused on targets, they aim to achieve predictability; leaders, whose job is to create and manage change, must at times be unpredictable. The author, thus argue that management tasks are focused on execution and control, whereas leadership tasks deal with planning and vision. They maintain that managers and leaders should not be separate people, although in reality this often happens. Management and leadership can be combined in the same person, but he argues that it is critical to recognise that the tasks are different. Management is about the present, leadership is about the future. Leadership is a series of definable skills that can and should be taught. It is not enough to rely on entrepreneurial spirit, potential leaders need to be identified at an early stage and groomed to lead long before they assume positions of leadership.

2.6 HIRING EMPLOYEES

In every business, the decision to hire an employee is an important decision. In a small business, the impact of such a decision can be very significant. Every new employee a small business takes on determines the heights to which the company can climb, or the depths to which it will plunge. To effectively hire employees, entrepreneurs should develop meaningful job descriptions and specifications; plan and conduct effective interviews and check references carefully before hiring staff. Selecting the right staff calls for an understanding of the core values of the organisation and a matching of these values to the recruits own set of personal values. In this way the new recruit is far more likely to adjust to the internal requirements and standards of the organisation than if these conflicted with his or her own values. Starting off with the right candidates will make it much easier to motivate and retain such employees as these settle down in the organisation. Selecting the wrong candidate will not only incur costs or replacement, but there is also the opportunity cost of not having the right person when required.
2.7 BUILDING THE CULTURE AND STRUCTURE

Company culture is the distinctive, unwritten code of conduct that governs the behaviour, attitudes, relationships and style of an organisation. It is the “way we do things around here”. Entrepreneurs must consistently and relentlessly build the core set of values that all employees in the company can believe in. The company’s culture has a powerful impact on the way people work together in business, how they do their jobs and how they treat their customers. For a small company, having the right kind of structure and culture can lead to a competitive advantage.

For successful small businesses that have built their position around the core values of the entrepreneur, growth that comes from success can be the ultimate downfall. As many companies grow, their culture begins to change and break down, along with the management infrastructure that was supposed to support the company’s growth. Entrepreneurs typically follow six different management styles to guide their companies’ growth. Craftsmen, Classic, and Co-ordinator Strategies involve running companies without any management assistance and are best suited for small companies in the early stages of growth. The last three strategies, Entrepreneur-Plus-Employee team, Small Partnership, and Big-Team venture, centre on a team approach to manage increasing growth.

Many companies that use teams successfully have reported significant gains in quality, lower cycle times, lower costs, improved employee motivation and morale, and increased customer satisfaction. Because of these advantages, teams are becoming increasingly popular in small businesses.

2.8 MOTIVATING WORKERS

Saxena (2008) observes that motivation is the degree of effort an employee exerts to accomplish a task - it is the willingness to go the “extra mile”. In lots of ways, motivation reveals itself as the excitement and enthusiasm in getting things done. Entrepreneurs can motivate their employees with a combination of four different tools:
Empowerment: This involves taking decision making as close to the customer as possible, giving employees the freedom and responsibility to control their own work using their discretion in taking action to meet the company’s objectives.

Job design techniques: These techniques for enhancing employee motivation include: job enlargement, job rotation, job enrichment, flexitime, job sharing, and telecommuting.

Rewards and compensation: The key here is to tailor the reward system, consisting of money, perks, praise and recognition, to the individual worker. The power of praise and recognition are even more important because of the typical strain on small business resources, particularly in the early stages.

Feedback: Another motivational tool is to provide employees with relevant feedback about their performance.

2.9 THE CHALLENGE OF INNOVATION

Over the last decades, innovation has become more globalized; therefore, the importance of innovation as a driver of competitive advantage in economies has increasingly grown. Innovation matters because it can deliver better products and services, new and more efficient production processes, and improved business performance. For consumers, innovation means higher quality and better value goods, more efficient services and higher standards of living. For business organizations, it means sustained and improved growth because it delivers higher profits. For employees, innovation has a meaning of new and more interesting work, better skills and higher wages. For the economy as a whole, innovation is the key to higher productivity and greater prosperity for all (DTI, 2003).

Innovation has been studied in a variety of contexts, including in relation to technology, commerce, social systems, economic development, and policy construction. Therefore, there is a wide range of approaches to conceptualizing innovation in the scholarly literature. Much of the current business literature
associates the concept of innovation with value creation, value extraction and operational execution. In this view, an innovation is not an innovation until someone successfully implements an idea, creates value and makes profit. A convenient definition of innovation is provided by Luecke and Katz (2003). According to them, innovation is generally understood as the introduction of a new thing or method. It is the embodiment, combination, or synthesis of knowledge in original, relevant, valued new products, processes, or services. Innovation typically involves creativity; however, it is not only identical to it. It involves proactive proceeding on the creative ideas to make salient and tangible difference in the domain in which the innovation occurs. For example, Amabile et al (1996) state that all innovations begin with creative ideas. They define innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. In this view, creativity by individuals and teams is a starting point for innovation; the first is necessary but not sufficient condition for the second.

Innovation, here, is defined as a successful exploitation of new ideas. Ideas may be entirely new to the market or involve the application of existing ideas that are new to the innovating organization or often a combination of both. Innovation involves the creation of new designs, concepts and ways of doing things, their commercial exploitation, and subsequent diffusion through the rest of the economy and society (Wickham, 2006).

Most innovations are incremental – a succession of individually modest improvements to products or services over their life cycle. However, a few will be dramatic, creating entirely new industries or markets. Innovation, as a way to do something better and differently, involves experimentation and risk taking. Some attempts to innovate will fail, but across the economy, the successes outweigh the failures. In addition, the failures themselves generate new knowledge, which if evaluated correctly, can improve the chances for future success. The risk of failure justifies the potentially high returns from successes, which provide the incentive to innovate in the first place (Brockhoff & Chakrabarti, 1999). A key challenge in innovation is making the innovation to occur because something more than the generation of a creative idea or insight is required. For this purpose, the insight must
be put into action to make a significant difference, resulting for example in new or altered business processes within the organization, or changes in the products and services provided.

Moreover, due to trade liberalization and technological change, global competition is increasing. In today’s highly competitive business environment, entrepreneurial organizations must be ready to change and change frequently. Organizations cannot sustain excellent performance unless they comprise change. Therefore, the challenge for businesses is to compete on the solid foundation of exceptional value. To compete effectively, they must innovate not just once, but consistently, in all their products, services, and business functions. If business organizations fail to innovate effectively, they might be destroyed by those that do. Behind almost all important innovations are entrepreneurs, people with novel ideas for solving problems, who build new kinds of organizations to implement those ideas, who will not take “no” for an answer, and who will not give up until they have disseminated and embed their ideas as far and deeper as they possibly can. While others see the innovation challenge is a difficulty in an undertaking, true entrepreneurs consider it invigorating because innovation challenge inspires entrepreneurs to express their innate drive and passion that allows them to fulfill the need for efficient provision of irrevocable and unremitting stream of new products, services and markets. It energizes them to find tomorrow’s opportunities and push their internal confines to deliver the truly exclusive solutions to their customers.17

2.10 THE CHALLENGE OF OPPORTUNITY

In a dynamic world, a company's success rests to a very large degree on its ability to pursue new opportunities. Recognizing the importance of the entrepreneurial opportunities, research attention on the phenomenon of entrepreneurial opportunities assumes critical significance. Eckhardt and Shane define entrepreneurial opportunities as the situations in which new goods, services, raw materials, markets and organizing methods can be introduced through the formation of new means, ends, or means-ends relationships (as cited in Dutta, 2005).18 According to Schumpeter, they arise in the economy as an outcome of a self-transformation process, the driving element of which is an innovating
“entrepreneur-hero”. In other words, he gives cognizance to the importance of the personal traits and motivation of the entrepreneur. Schumpeter suggests that entrepreneurs are the rare breed of individuals motivated intrinsically to utilize the benefits of technological, demographic, and social changes to create upheavals in the current state of equilibrium and to usher new products and services or new ways of working. A vivid demonstration of a “rare breed of individuals” is exemplified by Alexander Graham Bell whose worldwide recognition originated from the success of his telephone invention in 1876, a direct result of his attempts to improve the telegraph.19

The major challenge in opportunity is its recognition. Although an opportunity for entrepreneurial profit might exist, an individual can earn this profit only if he or she recognizes that the opportunity exists and has value (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).20 Due to complexity and multidimensionality of this process, entrepreneurs must receive and utilize all the information that they obtain from the external environment to create, shape, and maintain a kind of information asymmetry that allows them to notice new opportunities that are either not seen or are disregarded by the other groups of the population (Sexton and Landstrom, 2000).21

Moreover, they must do this selectively: assimilating, organizing, categorizing, and prioritizing information that help them to make decisions about emerging opportunities, and selecting one opportunity over others at any specific instance of time (Sharma, 2006).22 By its essence, the opportunity challenge encourages entrepreneurs to see the world in a new way, more as world full of opportunities and possibilities rather than a world full of problems and obstacles. It motivates them to be always curious and looking for new ways to serve and share their gifts and talents with the world.

2.11 THE OPPORTUNITY OF E-COMMERCE

The Internet is not merely another advertising medium or marketing tool. It is a vast and powerful arena which can transform business if successfully exploited. The Internet offers new business opportunities, new ways of designing work, and
organising and operating businesses. The continued growth of the use of the Internet at a personal and corporate level has greatly impacted the manner in which organisations need to review the way they operate and deliver value to their customers. Not only must they compete in the traditional bricks and mortar marketplace, they must also compete in what has been termed the market space. This refers to the virtual dimension of their business, comprising the manner in which customers and a whole range of stakeholders are able to interact with the organisation. The tremendous advances made over the past few years in e-commerce and the emerging m-commerce enabling customers to acquire products and services through their mobile phone, means that organisations must continue to focus and develop more customer centric services that enable the ever increasing number of tech savvy customers to enjoy the benefits of such technologies.  

The Internet continues to grow at an ever increasing pace. Organisations, large and small have turned to the Internet as a channel through which to generate sales or improve internal and external communications. The low cost of entry, has meant that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been able to utilise much the same development tools available to the large organisations. In many ways this has provided a level playing field for organisations large and small. In this arena we have seen various business models developed in recent years.

It is also clear that the concept of entrepreneurship is multilateral and has many definitions due to different interpretations and understanding of this notion. After thirty years of intensive study of the phenomena, the research community still spends much energy on the definition of the concept of entrepreneurship. This shows the complexity of the area as well as the process, and that this could and should be exploited from several different frames of understanding (Blenker, Dreiler & Kjeldsen, 2006). Today, with the rapid development of the society, entrepreneurship has become one of the most dynamic forces in the economy. It is driving the technological boom, which in its turn, is driving much of the world's economic growth. This makes entrepreneurship very important from a macro-economic perspective. It has become a broader economic phenomenon that has a major impact on the economy. As the globalism of business becomes even more
widespread, this impact will be felt even more deeply. The scope of what entrepreneurship involves, will continue to change and evolve because environment in which entrepreneurship operates, is constantly changing and evolving too. Therefore, companies must learn to think and act in this dynamic equilibrium. Since, entrepreneurship is an established field with a wide range of issues at all stages, promoting and nurturing it raises several challenges for today’s organizations.25

2.12 TRENDS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Youths in business:** In the US about 30 per cent of entrepreneurs are 30 or younger making generation next the most entrepreneurial accounting for 70 per cent of all business start-ups.

**Women owned businesses:** These are the fastest-growing segment of the small business sector in many countries. In the modern era, women are launching new businesses at a rate twice as fast as that of men. Many women find that starting their own business is the best way to beat discrimination in the office. Still, women entrepreneurs face barriers from social pressure, a confidence gap and limited access to capital.

Rao (2000)26 focuses on the role Asian female entrepreneurs in their own rights and Asian women working in ‘family’ business play. He identified two broad groups of female entrepreneurs which he referred to as the “independent women” and the “hidden women”. The first group of entrepreneurs chose to set up their business primarily for self fulfilment, while the second group set up their businesses out of necessity and often do not even appear on the books when working in a family business. This general categorisation and the implications of such underlying motivations are evident in many women owned business internationally.

Sharma (2001)27 focuses on the leadership styles provided by women in top corporate positions. His research showed an integrative leadership model characterised by task commitment, demonstrated by a ‘hands on’ approach to work, personal sacrifice, multi-tasking and goal orientation; a commitment to personal relationships with employees shown by an emphasis on teamwork/collaboration,
egalitarianism and concern for employees; and power sharing, shown by information sharing, autonomous decision making and employee development.

**Immigrant entrepreneurs:** These are closely related to minority businesses and reflect the cohesion within the group as immigrants are forced to fend for themselves to cope with an alien environment. This seems to bring out the resourcefulness and innovation of immigrants who have often proved to be excellent entrepreneurs.

**Part-time entrepreneurs:** This is a growing trend which allows employees to test the waters of entrepreneurship without burning their boats at an early stage. Many employees find that running their own business on a part-time basis gives them the satisfaction and the rewards of entrepreneurship, whilst maintaining their full time employment provides them with stability and continuity in their career.

**Home-based business owners:** The multitude of small businesses that can be run from home has proved attractive to many, particularly to those who have to be at home, to look after kids or other members of the family. The projects range from tele-sales to piece-work, translation services to on-line support services. The advent of reliable always-on telecomm connectivity has given a boost to this sector.

**Family business owners:** Family owned business (where two or more members of the family have a financial control of the company) generate 40 to 60 per cent of the US’s GNP. One third of the Fortune 500 companies are family businesses. London Business School Research shows that family businesses account for around 3/4s of all businesses in most economies, including the UK, and contribute a substantial portion of GDP. There is no sign that they are "dying out" or diminishing in importance. Other studies show that only 30 per cent of family businesses survive to the second generation, and just 10 per cent make it to the third generation.28
2.13 MACRO DIMENSIONS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

With the reduced job opportunities in many larger organisations and public sector organisations, as these seek to down-size and reduce operating costs, self employment has become not only a matter of choice, but in many cases also a matter of lack of choice. Those who set up their own business, either as a matter of choice or circumstance, need people to grow their business. These small businesses need motivated workers who are essential to their survival and prosperity. Woolcock (1998) demonstrated how entrepreneurship has a vital part to play in creating new jobs. He deals with the challenge of promoting entrepreneurship, which is needed to stimulate job growth in markets that often are characterised by contracting workforces within the larger organisations. He focuses on the need to understand the determinant characteristics of entrepreneurship, the capacity to seize new opportunities or to build trust, networks and projects. These are intangible and not easily translated into policy recommendations by the state. He highlights the need to address these issues with urgency as tomorrow’s enterprises, and consequently tomorrow’s jobs, will be based on flexible networks interconnected through the mechanisms of loyalty and trust – social capital – that are characteristic of entrepreneurship.

Ram (1994) argues that one can trace the roots of economic growth to the specialisation and entrepreneurship that thrive in an institutional setting favourable to growth. He contends that if the political, judicial, and cultural institutions work together to protect property rights, advance the rule of law, and limit government spending and taxes, then the millions of economic decisions made by private individuals would yield rates of long term economic growth far superior to the hundreds made by central planners. He refers to the index of Economic Freedom which supports their premise that the institutional setting apparently makes a significant difference in the level of long term economic growth since the association between country index scores and economic growth strikingly reflects the findings of the New Economic theorists. Increases in per capita wealth clearly correspond to increases in economic freedom, and countries that embrace free market principles experience greater and more stable economic growth that
countries that discourage free markets. The author found that the factors that contribute to economic freedom lead to higher levels of household income and increase the possibility of domestic consumption for products generated from investment and likely to improve the rate of return.

Masurel *et al* (2003)\(^{31}\) define the indispensable role that entrepreneurship has had in the production of economic progress over the years. Economic growth is more than the increase of income. They argue that managers are not entrepreneurs, focusing on the differences between growth and progress and between management and entrepreneurship. Masurel *et al* argue that because progress is the result of entrepreneurship, any economic analysis of progress must incorporate entrepreneurship. They postulate that despite the tremendous growth in gross domestic product (GDP) over the twentieth century, it is apparent that the primary component of economic progress is not the amount of income growth, but rather the substantial change in the qualitative nature of the economy’s output. They maintain that even more striking than the growth in income over the past years has been the change in the nature of the types of goods and services people consume. They, thus define progress as “the changes in lifestyles of the typical citizen, in the types of goods and services consumed, and in the way that goods and services are produced”.

Brush (1992)\(^{32}\) maintains that economic theory focuses on the properties of economic equilibrium, and in the theory of competitive markets, actions of firms are constrained by the parameters of the market. Within this framework, profit is maximised by hiring inputs up to the point where their marginal product is equal to their prices. Good management thus means efficiently combining inputs to produce output, implying that with good management the firm will maximise its profits, whilst with poor management it will not and will thus be competed out of business by the more efficient firms. Entrepreneurs on the other hand uncover new and more effective ways of combining inputs and outputs, so the manager who simply prevents shrinking and waste will be left behind by the firms that adopt new production processes. More significantly, he maintains that entrepreneurs will discover new types of output that will better satisfy consumer demands, thus ensuring that the more innovative products will displace the older product offered by
classically managed firms. Furthermore, the deficiencies of the traditional economic model of the firm and competition fail because primarily they do not take note of entrepreneurship which focuses on the search for alternative forms of production and creates innovative non-homogeneous outputs that create competitive advantage. In this context, the author asserts that people who run firms serve both managerial and entrepreneurial functions.

Rath (2000) suggests that the traditional economic model holds that profits give positive reinforcement to successful entrepreneurship, while losses discourage the further pursuit of unsuccessful attempts at entrepreneurship. In reality, entrepreneurial opportunities involve the complexities of production and timing in converting what appear to be a profitable opportunity into a loss activity. Circumstances, time and place will have a major impact on the success of any business venture. Thus, losses serve to limit ideas that are not wealth-enhancing and profits reinforce ideas that are. Rath, thus maintains that the positive impact of successful entrepreneurship is much larger in magnitude than the negative impact of unsuccessful attempts. One can identify those entrepreneurial actions in hindsight, through the profits they generate, but it may be impossible to define in advance what activity will be entrepreneurially successful. Rath concludes that the theories of entrepreneurship can be completely incorporated into a model of competitive process to show that entrepreneurship is the engine of economic progress, to show that entrepreneurship is necessary for firms to survive in competitive markets, and to show that product differentiation is one of the competitive strategies that produce economic progress. This leads to a competitive process where firms continually improve their production processes and the characteristics of their output in order to remain competitive, and this process results in continual economic progress.

2.14 CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN TAMIL NADU AND CHENNAI CITY

This section provides a brief account of some of the successful migrant entrepreneurs who are located in Tamil Nadu or those who have hailed from this State.
2.14.1 C. K. Ranganathan

C. K. Ranganathan, chairman and managing director of CavinKare, has shown the world it is possible to beat the multinationals even in the most difficult market of fast moving consumer goods. Ranganathan's journey, which started from a small town of Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, has been an amazing one. A business which he started with only with Rs 15,000 is now worth Rs 500 crore (Rs 5 billion).

He learnt the first entrepreneurial lessons from his father, Chinni Krishnan, who started a small-scale pharmaceutical packaging unit, before moving on to manufacture pharmaceutical products and cosmetics. His father died as he entered college. He had come out with the sachet concept a couple of years prior to his demise. He felt liquid can be packed in sachets as well. When talcum powder was sold only in tin containers, he was the one who sold it in 100 gm, 50 gm and 20 gm packs. When Epsom salt came in 100 gm packets, his father brought out salt sachets of as low as 5 gm. Selling things in sachets was his motto as he said, 'this is going to be the product of the future.' But his father could not market the concept well. He moved from one innovation to another but never thought of marketing strategies. He was a great innovator, but a poor marketer.

After his father's death, his brothers took charge of the family business. In 1982, when he joined them after his studies, they had launched Velvette Shampoo. Within eight to nine months, he left the business because his ideas clashed with his brothers. He decided to begin shampoo business; rented a house-cum-office for Rs 250 a month against an advance of Rs 1,000; took another place for the factory for a rent of Rs 300 a month and against an advance of Rs 1,200 and bought a shampoo-packing machine for Rs 3,000. He named it Chik Shampoo after his father. The product did not succeed immediately; he learnt many things during the process. In the first month, he could sell 20,000 sachets and from the second year, he started making profits.

He moved to Chennai in 1989 but his manufacturing unit continued to be in Cuddalore. When Chik entered the market, Velvette Shampoo was being marketed
aggressively by Godrej. But his scheme became extremely successful -- he exchanged five sachets of any shampoo for a Chik Shampoo sachet, free.

Later, he altered the scheme -- he started giving one free Chik Shampoo sachet in lieu of five Chik Shampoo sachets only. Soon, consumers started asking for Chik sachets only. The sales went up from Rs 35,000 to Rs 12 lakh a month. When he introduced jasmine and rose fragrances, sales went up to Rs 30 lakh per month and then to Rs 1 crore a month. His market share increased and in 1992, his brand became the number one in South India.

2.14.2 A. Sivasailam

Born on August 24, 1934, A. Sivasailam was the elder son of S.Anantharamakrishnan, founder-chairman of the Amalgamations Group. Sivasailam’s family hail from Tirunveli district in south Tamil Nadu. He graduated in commerce from the University of Madras, and after a four-year stint in management accounting with a leading firm of chartered accountants in London, he returned to join the Group.

In 1961, Sivasailam became Tafe’s general manager and subsequently its chairman and managing director. In 1968, he became chairman of the Amalgamations Group. It has grown from a Rs 35 crore turnover in 1961 to the present Rs 7,000 crore and one of India’s largest light engineering groups, consisting of 48 companies, with 12,000 personnel. Its operations include automotive components manufacturing, trading and distribution, services and plantations.

He was given a Padma Shri, among other awards. He was also recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the All-India Management Association, the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Society of Indian Automotive Manufacturers, the Golden Jubilee Lifetime Contribution Award by the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association and the Lifetime Achievement Award from SAE India. He was also honoured with the Outstanding Industrialist Award by the National Institute of Quality Assurance.
2.14.3 A. D. Padmasingh Isaac

Aachi group was found in the year 1998 by A.D. Padmasingh Isaac, a first generation entrepreneur with BBA and hailing from Nazareth in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. Isaac had earlier served for Godrej Soaps as Area Manager for over a decade. The Tamil word ‘Aachi’ is used for addressing women with respect. It has also been derived from the word “Aatchi” which means ‘to rule’. Undoubtedly, Aachi has come to rule the kitchen today. The companies which are under the shadow of Aachi roof are: Aachi Masala Foods Ltd; Aachi Spices & Foods Ltd; and Aachi Special Foods Ltd.

Aachi has become a household name because of its excellent quality products and at the same time catering to the common man at prices affordable by him. The product range is so wide and backed up by quality products that no household can afford to miss Aachi products from kitchen. The success of the brand “Aachi” may be attributed to meet the demand of consumer from all walks of life at affordable price. Aachi Group, which started as a small proprietorship concern in 1998, has enlarged its branches. The sales turnover for the year 2010-11 has touched Rs.448 Crores from Aachi Masala Foods (P) Ltd alone. The total turnover of the Group has reached Rs 700 Crores during 2010-11.

Today’s pace and pressures on the time of home makers have made Aachi to sharpen focus and cater better to customer’s increasing needs. Isaac has also been elected to the Southern Regional Council of CII recently, representing Tamil Nadu and is the Chairman of MSME Panel of CII Chennai Zone. Mr. Isaac has been conferred with the ‘Extreme Entrepreneur Award for 2010’ by the Silicon Valley IndUS Entrepreneurs USA known as TiE.

Aachi Spices & Foods Ltd which also owns the Aachi Brand has embarked upon a project for the manufacture of vegetarian and non-vegetarian pickles, mineral water and fruit juices etc. Aachi has established an enormous Food Park at an estimated capital cost of RS 14 crores at Red Hills, Chennai.
2.14.4 Shiv Nadar

Shiv Nadar is the Chief Executive Officer of Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL), India's largest infotech conglomerate. He figures in the Forbes list of Indian billionaires. Originally hailing from Moolaipozhi Village, Trichendur, Tuticorin District, Tamil Nadu, Shiv Nadar moved to Delhi in 1968. He worked as an engineer with DCM Ltd. But Shiv Nadar wanted to set up his own business. Therefore, he along with six of his colleagues launched a firm making office products like copiers.

In late 1970s, when IBM quit India, Shiv Nadar's HCL stepped in to fill the vacuum. In 1982, HCL came out with its first computer. Today, HCL derives 80% of its revenue from computers and office equipment. HCL has also been spreading its global reach. Its Singapore subsidiary, Far East Computers, achieved a breakthrough in imaging technology, which, among other applications, enables computers to read handwritten tax returns.

HCL has adopted innovative practices to achieve growth. In the U.S, a software subsidiary, HCL America, has reaped huge dividends by taking advantage of global time zones. Every morning, the company's Chennai office receives software assignments from the U.S just after work stops there for the night. A team of Indian engineers, with salaries much lower than those of their American counterparts, complete the jobs and send them back in the evening. In a short span of time, Shiv Nadar has reached pinnacle of success by his hardwork, vision, and entrepreneurial spirit.

2.14.5 Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar

Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar was born on September 30, 1881 at Kanadukattam in the Sivagangai District of Tamil Nadu, India. His father, S.R.M.M. Muthiah Chettiar was a rich landlord, influential businessman and a prominent banker.
He was to married Rani Seethai Achi, the couple had Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar as their son. After his schooling, he joined his family business. During the course of his business, he visited some of the countries in Southeast Asia. He also spent a considerable time in England. On his return home, he became the head of the civic body of Kairaikudi, also member of several local organizations and the District Board In 1916, he transferred from local affairs to the Legislative Council of Madras Presidency, where he sat for 3 years.

In 1920, he stood for election to the Council of State, established under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, and was returned for the general constituency (the whole of the Presidency) at the head of polls. He held his seat in the Council for three consecutive terms, always by election and every time at the head of the polls. With his natural bent for finance, he with others founded the Indian Bank. He was also appointed a governor of the Imperial Bank of India at its inception in 1921 and continued as one of its directors almost to the end of his life. Annamalai Chettiar was of the firm view that education was the primary need for the country. He made his mind to found and endow a college at Chidambaram. Sri Meenakshi College was formally opened in 1920. To the Arts College was added the Sanskrit College and a Tamil College in 1927. Soon an Oriental Training College followed by a College of Music was established. With all these institutions forming a splendid nucleus for Annamalai University and it came into existence in 1929 with the passing of the bill and started functioning from July 1929. In recognition of his unique services to the cause of learning, a Knighthood, and the distinction of a hereditary Rajah of Chettinad was conferred on him. He died on 15 June 1948. Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department is privileged to issue a commemorative stamp in his honour.

2.14.6 Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar

Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar was a banker, educationist, philanthropist and a short time politician from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He was the first Mayor of Chennai. His father Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar was also a famous educationist and along with him he found the Annamalai University in the town of Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. He was also the third Nattukottai Chettiar to be knighted; the first
two were his nephew and father. Government of Tamil Nadu honoured him with the title *Tamil Isai Kavalar*. He was born on August 5, 1905, son of Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, The Rajah of Chettinad. He studied mostly in Madras, graduating from the Presidency College, Chennai in 1922. He then went to Burma on his family's business, acquiring expertise in banking. He became a member of Madras Legislative Council, representing the South Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry with which he was associated for 50 years, and was elected its President in 1941. He was appointed member of the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee (1931). In 1929, he became a member of the Corporation of Madras and was elected Mayor in 1933 and 1934. In 1943, he was elected president of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and industry. He was associated with the Imperial Bank of India (now the State Bank of India) and the Indian Bank. Interest in education was part of the family heritage.

While pursuing his political career as Chief Whip and Legislative Assembly Chairman of the Justice Party, he retained his interest in education. In 1936 he was appointed Minister-in-Charge of education, Public Health and Excise, and was also the pro-Chancellor of Madras University for over a year. He remained on the Board of Management of the Pachaiyappa's Charities for 33 years. He was also on the Syndicate of the Madras University and the Board of Management of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, for some years. In 1948 he became Pro-Chancellor of Annamalai University which expanded to include the faculties of Education, Fine Arts, Culture, Law and Medicine. Two UGC Centres of Advanced Study in Marine Biology and Linguistics came into being. The Engineering and Technology Department developed into a Post-Graduate Centre. The Muthiah Polytechnic, Annamalainagar, and the Annamalai Polytechnic, Chettinad, were established.

He was the first Mayor of Chennai (then called Madras) when the Mayoralty was reinstated for the Corporation of Chennai in 1933. In 1946 he was elected member of the Constituent Assembly at New Delhi. He earned the reputation of being a sensitive Parliamentarian, impartial and balanced, as a leader of the opposition in 1939 and when he held charge of Local Administration and Hindu Religious Endowments.
2.14.7 M. A. Chidambaram

M.A. Chidambaram was born at Kanadukathan on December 10, 1918, the third and youngest son of Annamalai Chettiar, the Raja of Chettinad. He was the younger brother of M. A. Muthiah Chettiar and M. A. Ramanathan Chettiar. He started off with a scooter factory in Mumbai and later became the Director of the Indian Aluminium Company at a young age. He was instrumental in founding the Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation (SPIC) and served as the chairman till his death. He was the Mayor of Madras in 1955.

Chidambaram became the Vice President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in India in 1956, President from 1960-61 to 1962-63 and treasurer for about twenty years. He was the head of Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) for 32 years. He was also the President of All India Lawn Tennis Association from 1963 to 1966. He played a significant role in the negotiations between the TNCA and the Madras Cricket Club over the construction of a stadium on the Club's ground in Chepauk. Completed in 1980, this stadium was later named M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in his honour. Besides being a pioneering industrialist, he is also remembered for his contribution to several other fields. He started the Tamil Isai Sangam to promote music in Tamil. His trust contributed substantially to the Voluntary Health Service.

2.14.8 M.A.M.Ramaswamy

M.A.M. Ramaswamy, a politician from Janata Dal (Secular) party, is presently a Member of the Parliament of India representing Karnataka in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament. He is also the Pro-Chancellor for Annamalai University. He is the current Pro-Chancellor of Annamalai University. With the insight of a skilled entrepreneur, the organisational capability of an executive, the versatility of a venturesome industrialist, and the qualities of leadership and organization, he has continued to show the same care and guidance
for the growth and development of the University with a sense of devotion and commitment. Thanks to his guidance and encouragement, several new courses like bio technology, bio informatics and job-oriented courses have been started in various Faculties and Directorate of Distance Education. As a patron of sports, he has paid attention to the growth and development of the Physical Education Department, by adding to it the enviable Tennis Complex, the Gymnasium and Sports Laboratory. The University which started with only seven departments in 1929 has, over the last 75 years, developed into a mighty institution of higher learning with nearly 48 Departments, in all 9 Faculties. This is one of the very few institutions in India with all the Faculties located in the same campus. A close interaction has been developed between the institution and the neighbouring industries for promotion of research and training programmes. M.A.M. Ramaswamy is a true sports enthusiast though his energies have been mostly concentrated on racing. He was the President of the Indian Hockey Federation and during his stewardship, India won its first and last World Cup hockey championship.

2.14.9 Venu Srinivasan

Venu Srinivasan is the Chairman and Managing Director of Sundaram Clayton Ltd and TVS Motor Company, the third largest two wheeler manufacturer in India. He also served as the President of Confederation of Indian Industry for the year 2009-10. He is the Honorary Consul General of Republic of Korea and a Member of the Prime Minister’s Council on Trade & Industry.

Venu Srinivasan is the grandson of the TVS Group's founder, T. V. Sundaram Iyengar. After graduating as an engineer from the University of Madras, he completed a Master's Degree in Management from Purdue University in the USA. He became the Managing Director of Sundaram Clayton Ltd. in May 1979. He went on to become Chairman of TVS Motor Company in July 2002.

In the late 1980’s, Srinivasan scripted a turnaround of the company, which was then mired in labour trouble and was sinking into the red. Srinivasan dealt with the situation sternly and shut the factory down for three months, forcing the unions
to relent. He then re-structured operations by upgrading plant machinery, investing in new technologies and implementing Total Quality Management practices.

Under his leadership as the Managing Director, Sundaram Clayton's brakes division won the Deming Prize in 1998 for having "achieved distinctive performance improvements through application of company-wide quality control". In 2004, TVS Motor Company also won the Deming Prize, becoming the first two-wheeler company in the world to do so.

2.14.10 Subramaniam Ramadorai

Subramanian Ramadorai is the Advisor to the Prime Minister of India in the National Council on Skill Development, Government of India. He holds a rank equivalent to an Indian Cabinet Minister. He is the current chairman of Tata Elxsi and Vice-Chairman of Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS). His tenure as CEO and Managing Director of TCS ended on October 5, 2009.

Ramadorai played an integral role in the international development of TCS as he took over when TCS earned a mere $400 million and had 6000 employees. His efforts have helped make TCS one of the world's largest global software and services companies with more than 143,000 consultants working in 42 countries, operating out of over 151 offices worldwide, and with revenues over US$ 6.0 billion (FY 2008-09).

Ramadorai was born in Nagpur, Maharashtra and holds a Bachelor's degree in Physics from Delhi University, a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Electronics and Telecommunications and a Master of Science degree in Computer Science from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Beginning his career with TCS as a junior engineer in 1969, he rose through the ranks and eventually was charged with setting up TCS operations in the United States in 1979 in New York City, which has since grown to over 40 offices throughout the country. Since taking on the role of CEO, Ramadorai focused his efforts on building relationships with large corporations and academic institutions,
planning and directing technology development and acquisitions and overseeing the company's research and development activities.

He has played a pioneering role in establishing Offshore Development Centres in India to provide high-end solutions to major corporations including IBM, Microsoft, General Electric, Hewlett Packard, Morgan Stanley, Tandem-Compaq, American Express, Merrill Lynch, Capital Bank, and others.

On 31 January 2011, TCS Vice-Chairman, S. Ramadorai was appointed by the Indian Government as the advisor to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh for the National Skill Development Council. In this role, Ramadorai will hold the rank of a Cabinet minister, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a release. The Council, which is headed by the Prime Minister, seeks to develop a strategy for skill development at the national level along with variations at the state level and formulate strategies to address the skill deficit.

2.14.11 K.P.Natarajan

K.P.N Travels India Limited is plying buses in four states namely Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and Karnataka. Lakhs of customer prefer KPN Travels buses throughout the year for going to various places in South India. 38 years in public transport is indeed a great accomplishment by the company. Headquarter at Salem, KPN Travels India Limited, is in business since last four decades. From a humble beginning, it has grown to become one of the leading bus operators with an expanding fleet of buses in the country. Offering excellent service with its well-maintained coaches and courteous staff, KPN travels strength lies in its enlightened management under K.P.Natarajan its Managing Director. Today the luxury buses of KPN are familiar sights on almost all the vast highways of the South. The runaway success of the company and the popularity of its bus service are traceable to its quality and timely service to customers, excellent labour relations and the steadfast loyalty of the workers to the management.

Born in the year 1949 in Salem district, K.P. Natarajan is simple and most unassuming, and he is from an agricultural family. He started his career as a tour
operator in 1968, later, in 1971, he realized the need for regular bus services between major towns and cities. Thus was born KPN travels in 1972. At the age of 23, he started the first service of KPN Travels between Thirunelveli and Bangalore. Initially he used to travel and sometimes even drove the bus himself. His regular travel on the buses gave him an opportunity to interact with all his customers and get valuable feedback, which helped improve service, facilities and comfort levels in the bus. In the next couple of years he could start his service from Trichy to Chennai. In fact, he began competing with railways by starting his service at around the same time from Trichy and reaching Chennai much earlier than the express trains. Customers enjoyed the experience and started preferring KPN buses. It is a fact that KPN was one of the firsts to introduce the latest technologies in buses. Today it has the latest and most modern fleet of buses, including 35 Volvo B7R high-end luxury coaches. His sound management and pioneering ideas on fleet standardization, bus route review and employee training provided a strong base for growth.

2.14.12 Sarath Babu

When 27-year old Sarathbabu graduated from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, he created quite a stir by refusing a job that offered him a huge salary. He preferred to start his own enterprise -- Foodking Catering Service -- in Ahmedabad.

He was inspired by his mother who once sold idlis on the pavements of Chennai, to educate him and his siblings. It was ‘a dream come true’, when Infosys co-founder N. R. Narayana Murthy lit the traditional lamp and inaugurated Sarathbabu’s enterprise.

He was born and brought up in a slum in Chennai. He has two elder sisters and two younger brothers and his mother was the sole breadwinner of the family. She made just one rupee a day for six people. So, she sold idlis in the mornings. She would then work for the mid-day meal at the school during daytime. In the evenings, she taught at the adult education programme of the Indian government.
He did book-binding work during the summer vacation and accumulated money for his school fees. When he got plenty of work, he employed 20 other children and all of them did the work together. That was his first real job as an entrepreneur. Once he saw the opportunity, he continued with the work. Through his hard work, he got admission in BITS, Pilani.

It was while preparing for the Common Admission Test that he read in the papers that 30 per cent of India's population does not get two meals a day. He knew how it felt to be hungry. What should be done to help them, he wondered. He also read about Infosys and Narayana Murthy, Reliance and Ambani. Reliance employed 20,000-25,000 people at that time, and Infosys, around 15,000. When a single entrepreneur like Ambani employed 25,000 people, he was supporting the family, of four or five, of each employee. So he was taking care of 100,000 people indirectly. He felt he too should become an entrepreneur.

His mother was his first inspiration to start a food business. Then of course, his experience as the mess secretary at IIM was the second inspiration. He also felt there is a good opportunity in the food business. If one notices, a lot of people who work in the food business come from the weaker sections of the society. His friends helped him with registering the company with a capital of Rs 100,000. Because of the IIM brand and also because of the media attention, he could take a loan from the bank without any problem.

He set up an office and employed three persons. The first order was from a software company in Ahmedabad. They wanted them to supply tea, coffee and snacks. Then he got the order from IIM, Ahmedabad, took a loan and started a kitchen and the rest is history.

2.14.13 P. Rajagopal

P. Rajagopal, founder of Hotel Saravana Bhavan, is the son of a farmer who had a wholesale trade in onions. Affectionately called “Annachi” (brother), he was born in a small village called Punnaiyadi, Tirunelveli District, in 1947. When one thinks of quality South Indian cuisine, Hotel Saravana Bhavan is a name that comes readily to mind. The success story of Saravana Bhavan started in 1981 with just a
small hotel in K. K. Nagar, Chennai. Today, it has 14 branches and a 4,000 strong workforce. It has over 70,000 people step into the 14 branches of Hotel Saravana Bhavan from 6.00 am to 11.30 pm every day. Quality, hygiene and motivated and committed staff have combined to make Hotel Saravana Bhavan what it is today.

Saravanaas Fast Food Centres, with its variety of vegetarian fast foods, fresh juices and ice creams, is the perfect choice for those in a hurry. Saravana Bhavan has its own ice cream manufacturing unit at Vadapalani. They also specialise in outdoor catering and accept orders from a minimum of 25 upto 10,000, for any part of the city.

Human Resource policies are one of the most talked about aspects of this Restaurant chain's approach to business. Innovative incentive and welfare schemes, including Educational, Medical and House Rent Allowances and productivity-linked bonuses, are being implemented for the benefit of employees and their families. Rarely does an employee leave after he has joined the organisation. Rajagopal sets apart five hours every day to speak to his workforce. He has been awarded the "Best Employer - Employee Relationship Award" by the Rotary Club of Chenna Patna in 1996.

2.14.14 Rm.K.Visvanatha Pillai

Rm.KV Textiles founded in 1924 by Sri Rm.K.Visvanatha Pillai, RmKV today is reputed for its wedding silks, trendy and unique silk sarees, as well as family apparel, with large showrooms in Chennai, Tirunelveli and Coimbatore. With 85 years experience in silk, they are identified with quality products, design innovations and new techniques in handloom silk weaving which have won them two National Awards. Today RmKV's vision is taken forward by Sri. Rm. K. Sivakumar, following in the illustrious foot-steps of his father Sri.V.Kumaraswamy and his brother Sri.K.Viswanathan. The RmKV Design Studio has created over 25 unique silk sarees to date, the most notable being Theme sarees such as Chinnanchiru Kiliye, Durbar Krishna, Aishwarya Pookkal and Kural Ovium; the Grand Reversible saree, the 50000-colour saree, and the latest Varnajaalam range
created for the 2008 Deepavali season. Today one can custom-design their own saree in one of over 50000 colours, to be hand-woven by RmKV’s team of master weavers. RmKV is the first ISO9001-2000 certified silk saree manufacturer in India. RmKV also carries a wide range of fancy and embroidered sarees, salwar kameez, and a complete range of ladies’, gents’ and children’s products.

2.14.15 K.V. Pothy Moopanar

Pothys is a chain of textile showrooms in South India. Though their first showroom is Srivilliputhur, the Tirunelveli branch gained more popularity and it is the key for opening many showrooms across South India. Pothys has established itself as household name in the textile industry in Tamil Nadu. The undisputed reputation stems from the unflinching dedication to give the highest quality, exclusive and diverse clothing options and unmatched customer service.

The house of Pothys has a rich legacy and vibrant history, as their forefathers served as weavers to the royal households of the maharajas of yesteryears. Pothys itself was established over 90 years back by K.V. Pothy Moopanar, the founding father, under the name “Pothy Moopanar” to sell cotton sarees, dhotis and towels woven in his own loom. Thus, their first showroom was set up at Srivilliputtur.

Their hard work, dedication and perseverance have earned us the distinction of being voted the most preferred saree showroom in Chennai in the year 2002. Pothys are also the first retail showroom in Tamil Nadu to be accredited with ISO 9001 certification way back in 2003. Pothys desire to innovate and excel in silk manufacturing won them the Guinness World Record in the year 2005 for creating the world’s longest silk saree.

2.14.16 C. Subba Reddy

C. Subba Reddy possessed with the everlasting urge of making apartments, came to Chennai from his native place Yellayapalem village in Nellore District of
Andhra Pradesh. He hails from an agriculturist family titled as Cherukuru and hence his name is Cherukuru Subba Reddy.

Having finished graduation in 1973, he started his career as a builder and is doing well even now steadfast, thus having been in the field of flat promotion for over a period of 30 years so far. In these periods, Mr Reddy has made many projects comprising both residential and commercial/office complexes. An area of about 50 lakhs sq ft must have been built up by him so far in the City of Chennai spread over in prime and posh localities. Mr Reddy has done independent houses, semi-independent row-houses besides doing apartments on regular basis.

Reddy has established himself as a man of great repute among various eminent personalities by virtue of his professional career as a builder. These eminent personalities will stand testimony for Mr Reddy’s reputation. Mr Reddy’s next diversification is promotion of Tourism in the Hospitality Sector with a Star Hotel which is one of the vital industries as per the priorities set by Government of India in its Infrastructure Planning for Development.

2.14.17 K.S. Thirupathi Raja

Three Decades ago a small sweet shop started by Late K.S.Thirupathi Raja in Chennai who born in Rajapalayam. Then Metropolis of Chennai, India, has now flowered into fifty four branches covering the length and breadth of Chennai city, its neighbouring places such as Kanchipuram, Erode, Madurai, Trichy, Coimbatore, Tripur and the states of Karnataka, Pondicherry and Delhi. M/s. Adyar Ananda Bhavan Sweets & Snacks is now well established and firmly in saddle as one of the leading and exclusive sweets and savouries manufacturer in South India. What started as a humble beginning it has now grown into a 12 million US $ turnover concern. The driving force behind the concern now is the two brothers Mr. K.T. Venkatesan and Mr. K.T. Srinivasa Raja to whom the baton of rich sweet tradition has been passed on by their late father K.S.Thirupathi Raja.

Today Adyar Ananda Bhavan Sweets and Snacks is synonymous with commitment to quality and high degree of professionalism and use of state of the art
technique in the manufacture of sweets, savouries and snacks. The fifty four branches of the concern speaks volumes about hygiene and service rendered by the organisation and the trust and reliability that the customers have reposed. Adyar Ananda Bhavan Sweets and Snacks is the pioneer in the manufacture of such sweets in the rich tradition of the respective regions

2.14.18 Avichi Meiyappan

Born on 28 July 1907, Avichi Meiyappan hailed from a Nattukottai Nagarathar family of Karaikkudi in Tamil Nadu. Avichi Chettiar ran a mini-department store, named AV & Sons. It sold gramophone records. Meiyappan, who joined his father's shop even as a teenager, decided to produce gramophone records instead of merely marketing them. He came to Madras where along with friends K. S. Narayana Iyengar, Subbaiah Chettiar and others promoted Saraswathi Stores. He found excellent support in K. P. Varadachari, its manager, and his lawyer friend Thoothukudi Govindachari Raghavachari he produced many records.

After starting out as a young man selling gramophone records in his father's shop, Meiyappan was struck with the idea of pressing his own records and soon realized that more opportunities lay outside the narrow limits of his home town. This idea led to the creation of Saraswathi Stores on 9th September 1932 in collaboration with the German owned Odeon records in Madras. Saraswathi Stores soon emerged as one of the market leaders in South Indian records.

Buoyed by his success in one medium of musical entertainment, Meiyappan branched out to another in 1935 with his Saraswathi Sound Pictures' Tamil film Alli-Arjuna, produced at Pioneer Studios in Calcutta. Although this first effort was not particularly successful, Meiyappan launched a new venture, Saraswathi Talkie Producing Company, and produced a second film, Ratnavali the following year. With his next release "NandaKumar", AV Meiyappan created history by using the first ever playback song in a movie. Unfortunately for the young producer, all three films failed at the box office.
After analyzing his failures, AVM wanted to spread his wings and decided that he must have his own studio. In 1940 he established "Pragathi Studios" in Madras in partnership with two others. Over a period stretching from 1941 to 1945, he produced 'Bookailas', 'Sabapathy', 'En Manaivi', 'Harischandra' (in Kannada) and 'Sri Valli'. All these films were very successful and AV. Meiyappan gained recognition as a producer of repute and was popularly recognized by his initials - AVM.

2.14.19 V.G.Paneerdas –VGP Group

V.G.Paneerdas was the founder of VGP group of companies. His story is one of the rags to riches. He started as a poor Christian man from a remote village called Azhagappapuram near valliyur in Tamilnadu, India in the Tirunelveli district. He moved to Chennai in search of opportunities. In 1955, he opened a shop selling items such as alarm clocks, watches and wall clocks. He was the pioneer in south India to introduce Hire purchase for every day goods. He built the VGP company from nothing to its present status as a group of companies including retail, real estate and property development, resorts, amusement parks, video and audio studios.

2.14.20 E.V.Perummal Sami

EVP is a person who always has a torch for the goodwill and harmony for the society. Mr. E.V. Perummal Sami Reddy is where the term EVP is coined from. He was a seed that became a banyan tree. His vision to promote the lifestyle and quality entertainment brought EVP WORLD into existence. His untiring nature and hard work gave life to EVP world.

On 7th August 1954, Mr. E.V. Perummal Sami Reddy was born in the Kanchipuram district of Tamil Nadu, as the eldest son in an agricultural family to Mr. K. Veeraraghava Reddiar and Mrs. Alameluammal.
He married Mrs. EVP. Rajeshwari in the year 1978 and they were blessed
with three children two daughters and a son. Mrs. EVP. Rajeshwari is the director of
EVP Group of companies, her guidance and support has leaded the companies to
marvelous heights. Following the footsteps of Mr. E.V. Perummal Sami Reddy and
Mrs. E.V.P. Rajeshwari, the young and enthusiastic managing director Mr. E.V.P.
Santhosha Reddy, manages the entire spectrum of business activities of EVP group.

The Chairman and founder of the EVP Group of companies,
Mr. E.V. Perummal Sami Reddy is a leader who serves people, a gentleman in nature
and down to earth in person has a dream to follow and a destiny to be reached. He
has manifold personalities. A farmer, a master degree holder in history, a Writer, a
spiritualist, a Financier, a Real Estate Promoter, an Educationist, Industrialist,
Jewelry merchant, Importer of Construction tiles and furniture, a politician, a
hotelier, a land lord, a publisher of spiritual books.

He is also the recipient of several titles and awards; Mr. E. V. Perummal
Sami Reddy has been awarded a Doctorate in Real Estate business by an American
University. He has served as the District secretary, Chair Person of Co-Optex and
the Salt Corporation of Tamil Nadu Government. In his commitment to peace,
social justice and the welfare of the weak, He took effort for about 1000 poor
couples to tie the conjugal knot.

2.14.21 MGM Group -Dr.M.G.Muthu

Dr. M.G. Muthu born in a hamlet in Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu. He
became a classic personification of the “rags to riches: through hardwork and
absolute honesty. His business acumen, commitment to social peace and justice ,
sports and welfare activities aimed at uplifting the under privileged are all widely
recognized and appreciated by the society.

He is a recipient of several awards and accolades including ‘Chevalier’,
‘Doctorate’ ‘Rashtriya gaurava’and Seva ratna. M.G. Muthu group engages people’s
lives with a presence in logistics, hospitality, international trading, housing,
distillery and IMF business.
2.14.22 Subramaniam Srinivasan⁵⁵

Subramaniam Srinivasan born in 1903, popularly known by his screen name SS. Vasan was an Indian journalist, writer, advertiser, film producer, director and business tycoon. He is the founder of the Tamil language magazine Ananda vikatan and the film production company Gemini studios.

Vasan was born in Thirthuraipoondi, Tanjore district but was forced to migrate to Chennai following the death of his father at an early age. Vasan discontinued his studies before graduation and set up an advertising business. In 1928, Vasan purchased a struggling Tamil magazine Ananda Bodhini and renamed as Ananda vikatan. He also entered the Tamil film industry in 1936. In 1940, he purchased the motion picture production, a film studio and renamed as Gemini studios. Gemini studios made a number of Tamil and Hindi movies.

2.14.23 B. Nagireddy⁵⁶

Bommi Reddy Nagi Reddy was born in Potti padu village in Cuddapah district Andhra Pradesh on 1st of December in the year 1912. In his childhood he used to help his father in their family business which consisted of exporting onions to Burma. During world war II the business suffered huge losses. As a result he returned to his village. At the age of 31 in 1943, he returned to Chennai and came in contact with Mr. K.V. Reddy who was releasing his movie ‘Baktha Pothana’ under Shri Nagi Reddy’s brother Shri B.N. Reddy’s banner. That was his first exposure to the film industry. Mean while he started a printing press called the B.N.K. Press which specialized in printing wedding cards. At that time it was considered to be very auspicious if a couple got their wedding cards printed in this press. In 1944 he met Shri Chakrapani who came from Tenali (Andhra Pradesh). Shri Chakrapani was helping Mr. B.N. Reddy to write dialogues for his movie “Swarga Seema”.
The lifelong partnership developed between Shri Nagi Reddy and Shri Chakrapani which lasted till the death of Shri Chakrapani in 1975. Together they started the famous children’s magazine Chandamama in 1947 which came to be printed in English and 12 Indian languages. Later on along with other friends as partners they started the famous Vijaya Productions which produced more than 60 movies in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam & Kannada. Shri B.Nagi Reddy later on acquired the famous Vijaya Vauhini studios which became one of the largest studios in South East Asia. Apart from making movies as an industrialist in various fields. He had a dream to give back something to the society which had made him successful in all fields of life. In that contest he remembered his father who did not get proper medical treatment when he was ailing.

That was when he prayed to God that if given a chance he would start a hospital and serve the needy. In the year 1972, Vijaya Hospital with 30 beds was incepted by B.Nagi Reddi, a great visionary who believed that all people irrespective of their caste, creed or socioeconomic status should have access to good quality health care services at affordable cost. With this vision, it grew and expanded to present 750 bedded multispeciality hospitals of Vijaya Group. Cardiac Centre of our Vijaya Hospitals is one of the leading and trusted centre that provides complete care for patients with all kinds of heart diseases.

Vijaya Group of Hospitals is known for the compassion and warmth that it offers to all those who walk through its doors. A centre which caters to and exceeds the expectations and needs of its patients. A magazine which entertains, emancipates and civilize the children of Indian community. Chandamama was founded in 1947, is the brain-child of visionaries B. Nagi Reddy and Chakrapani. The magazine was launched with an aim to entertain and educate young minds about the rich traditions of India.

2.14.24 H. Vasanthakumar

Vasanthakumar was born in 14 April 1950 in Agastheeswaram, Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu. He is a master of Arts (M.A) graduate. He is
married. He has addresses in both Valliyur, Tirunelveli district and Chennai. He released a book titled *Vetrikodi Kattu* on 17 September 2006.

Vasanthakumar is an Indian enterpreneur and politician from Tamil Nadu, India. He is the owner of Vasanth & Co, one of the largest durable goods retail chains in Tamil Nadu. Vasanth & Co, which is a renowned chain dealer of consumer electronics and home appliances. The company was started in year 1978 and has 50 showrooms across almost every town in Tamil Nadu and one in Pondicherry and Bangalore. It reported a turnover of 500 crores of rupees (100 million US dollars) in year 2007. He also owns Vasanth TV.

2.14.25 Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar

Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar, an acclaimed silk industrialist, hails from the reputed Nalli family of weavers. Born in Kancheepuram on Nov. 9, 1940 he is a successful businessman, a connoisseur and patron of fine arts, and an award-winning author of business management books. His grandfather Nalli Chinnasami Chetty founded the shop in 1928. The untimely death of Nalli Narayanasamy Chetti, his father, brought the brilliant school finalist Kuppuswami into the family’s textile trade, straight from the classroom. However, the teen-ager quickly grasped retailing nuances for further improvement. With excellent customer relationship, Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti developed the 200 sq. ft. shop into a 30,000 sq. ft., threefloor showroom, stretching from one street to another.

Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar is a voracious reader and an author of a score of books in English and Tamil. Two of them have won Tamil Nadu Government’s awards as the best business books in Tamil. Some have been translated into English and Indian languages. His interests span education, philosophy, religion, metaphysics, literature, arts, culture and history. Known for his erudition and humour, he is an engaging speaker too. He is often invited by colleges, Universities and Business schools for special lectures. He is a liberal donor to religious, academic and social causes. He is a member of Harmony India, an inter-faith forum, Executive Committee member, Chennai centre of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. He has been a
member of the Trust Board of Tirupati Tirumalai Devasthanams. Now he is the Chairman of the Kapaleeswarar Devasthanam Trust Board, Chennai, for a second term.

A protagonist of value-education, he is on the governing body of his alma mater, Ramakrishna Mission School and Vivekananda College. He has been a member of the Senate of Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Member, South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur, and Member of the Central Silk Board, Bangalore. He is President of Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, Krishna Gana Sabha, Bhairavi Gana Sabha, Nungambakkam Cultural Academy, Mudhra, Mylapore Fine Arts Club and Vice-President, Tamil Chamber of Commerce. He is associated with a host of institutions like Sneha. Even as his shops are landmarks, Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar is a hallmark in citizenry. He has been honoured with several titles. For his acumen in history he earned the title ‘Charitra Mamani’ Developers India named him a Vibrant Indian.

Recognising his patronage to arts and culture the Tamil Nadu Government has presented him the title, Kalaimamani. The President of India has conferred on him with the title Padma Shree for his signal contribution to the national trade and industry. Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar knows Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and English. He has travelled widely in U.S., U.K. and Asian countries.

2.14.26 G.Venugopal Naidu

It was in 1939 that, the Founder - Mr. M G Naidu - a simple man, with an extraordinary mind and vision, whose uncanny knowledge of women's likes, dislikes, quirks and preferences, saw the birth of the Naidu Hall brand of Lingerie.

For over three decades now, Venugopal Naidu has been driven by a sureness of purpose and a single ambition; to take forward the successful company his father, the late M G Naidu shaped out of practically nothing. When his father first came to Chennai in 1939 he came with virtually nothing. He was, however, skilled with the needle and began stitching women’s blouses. He started with a single machine, in a garage that doubled up as his tailoring shop. Eventually, when business got better,
he had a shop in T.Nagar, tracing the beginnings of the brand, that can now boast of a 35,000 sq.ft showroom at the very spot. M G Naidu picked to start laying the foundation for his enterprise, Today Naidu Hall has branches in five other locations in Chennai, Anna Nagar, Velachery, Tambaram, Mogappair, Ambattur and outside, at Salem, Trichy and Coimbatore.

Naidu Hall also offers a wide range of branded home essentials and travel accessories and has separate sections for cosmetics and fragrances. The store stocked products that bore labels that were not their own, but prioritized on turning their in-house label into a trusted brand name. He kept an eye open for fashion trends in places like Bombay, and even abroad; and their clothes reflect that.

Venugopal Naidu has turned the brand into one that has a social conscience, with several pragmatic endeavours that have easily been fitted into the daily functioning of the company. Naidu Hall has set up a factory at a village near Ambur, manufacturing primarily lingerie, and will shortly produce, all products for everyone in the family. Of its 600 workers, 95% are women workers totally upgraded from agriculture to being factory workers, well trained to tailor clothing. Now neighboring villages are eager to invite Naidu Hall to start similar factories, thus providing employment opportunities and thereby social up-gradation. The unit, that started with just 50 machines three years ago, is today 1000 machines strong and has made many women from the village financially independent.

Venugopal Naidu also believes in maintaining good rapport with the company’s employees, and lending them a hand when they are in need. The company extends financial assistance when any of our employees need it for a wedding or some emergency in their family. They also provide for the education of one of their children.

2.15 REFERENCES


19. Ibid.,