

# **Enterprises and Entrepreneurship: Promising Tools for Inclusive Development**

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**Dedicated To**  
**Tanu,**  
**My Wife and The Polestar of My Universe**



## Preface

“Life” is surely a practical concept which exist for so many beings. But if you ask any random person, “what is life?” The answer can be of any shape and size. People, academicians and philosophers have always duelled on the theoretical understanding of life and are still unable to provide a single answer. Same is the case with the “entrepreneur.” It is a practical concept over which there have been a lot of discussions yet a uniform and comprehensive theoretical understanding seems to be a distant dream.

Consider a hat named “entrepreneur”, when a person wears it (s)he starts showing some qualities and starts performing some functions. But there is no certainty about what should be the type, shape, size, colour or style of this hat? Which form of hat would qualify as the “entrepreneur”, can this hat be made or does it fall from sky, or which cloth would make a perfect “entrepreneur hat” are the questions without any unique answers. An observer looks at this incredible hat and starts indexing and makes a list explaining and defining the “entrepreneur hat”. Another observer looks at another amazing hat and does the same. The lists do not match and the debate starts. So, the hat is real with some characteristics and performs certain varying tasks but a uniform conceptual clarity on this idea of “entrepreneur hat” is absent.

Concept of entrepreneur and notion of entrepreneurship have suffered a similar fate. As per Shane and Venkataraman a conceptual framework on entrepreneurship is still missing. They say, “rather than explaining and predicting a unique set of empirical phenomena entrepreneurship has become a broad label under which a hodgepodge of research is housed” (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Similarly, Gartner (1990, p.

16) writes: "Is entrepreneurship just a buzzword, or does it have particular characteristics that can be identified and studied?"

As per Baumol, an entrepreneur has always been recognized as at the top of the firm, who decides the firm behaviour and so bears great responsibility. His mention was frequent but without any clear definition of form and function (Baumol, 1968).

Grebel and Pyka also write that most innovation economists had been appreciative of entrepreneur, but nothing more. A consistent theory which can combine various approaches in an empirically testable model is still lacking (Grebel et. al., 2001). A proper definition of the word "entrepreneur" along with established boundaries of this field are still unsolved questions (Bruyat et. al., 2000).

The studies on entrepreneurship have constantly been increasing but Sexton's nearly three-decade old question (1988, p. 4) is still relevant: "Is the field of entrepreneurship growing, or just getting bigger?"

Before looking at the definitions provided by various scholars it is important to see basic meaning and origin of the term. It is believed that the term entrepreneur has emerged from the French word, 'entreprendre', which means 'to undertake.' As per Oxford dictionary the entrepreneur is "a person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit. " Cambridge dictionary explains it as someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity. Merriam-Webster defines it as "one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise." As we can see even the three most famous and detailed dictionaries could not come to a single platform while

giving meaning to the term “entrepreneur,” challenges in academia are additionally complicated.

The aforementioned paragraphs have been reproduced from my MPhil thesis, but are as relevant today as these were few years ago. Further, when we bring Inclusiveness in the picture-taking into consideration whether these entrepreneurs and enterprises are in any way contributing towards inclusive development; multiple additional dimensions get added into the complications.

So the need is to study these relations in detail from multiple perspectives. This is where this book comes into the discourse, which looks into the impact of entrepreneurs and enterprises on poverty alleviation, agriculture and rural economy. It takes into consideration the role played by women entrepreneurs in various settings. Micro-finance, higher education and health in the post COVID world have been seen through the lens of entrepreneurs including some case studies.

I am thankful to the Social Research Foundation, Kanpur for agreeing to publish this book on such a multi-dimensional field of research. There is no dearth of gratitude towards my PhD Supervisor Dr. Saradindu Bhaduri and Late Dr. Shailaja S. Thakur. Without the support of my parents Dr. (Mrs.) Premlata Mishra and Mr. Surendra Kumar Mishra this would not have been possible. I must thank my brother Ratnesh who himself is an entrepreneur with an undying pursuit towards Inclusive Development. I am also thankful to my dear friends Gaurav, Manish and Suryoday for constant support and motivation.

I hope this book will provide an addition albeit small, in the vast knowledge around entrepreneurship and inclusive development.





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