

## **Arunachal Pradesh - Looking Beyond & Within in Pursuit to Promote Entrepreneurship**

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**Introduction:** Entrepreneurs shape economic destiny of nations by creating wealth and employment, offering products and services, generating taxes for Governments. That is why entrepreneurship has closely been linked to economic growth. Entrepreneurs convert ideas into economic opportunities through innovations which are considered to be major source of competitiveness in an increasingly globalizing world economy. Therefore, most Governments in the world strive to augment supply of competent and globally competitive entrepreneurs in their respective countries. Without a strong entrepreneurial community the developing countries will not prosper despite their rich resource endowments.

**Entrepreneurial Status:** India has been growing at a relatively high rate, envisioned to be the largest economy in the world by 2050. Unlike most of the developed economies, India is a young country with about 63 per cent population currently being in the working age group (15 - 59 years). This is a plus factor as the studies say the nascent entrepreneurship prevalence rates are highest in the 25-34 age-groups. We have a demographic dividend to en-cash however it could prove to be its impediment if we are not able to engage our youths in creative pursuits.

This is also a case for Arunachal Pradesh where she has about 3.64 Lakh persons in the age bracket of 15-29 years (Census, 2011). Most of this population chunk is either in education or looking for employment. According to a Skill-gap-study in the North East Region conducted by ICRA Management Consulting Services (IMaCS) in 2011, the State will have a man power supply of 7.50 Lakh between 2011- 21 while the demand for internal growth will be around 1.47 Lakh leaving a youth population of additional 6.03 Lakh in next 4 years. We need to appreciate it as an OPPORTUNITY not from the perspective of problem. The challenge is to harness these youths to productive works, the most important task at this deciding moment of her development.

So, the core of the policy should be ingrained to the motive to inspire, nurture and promote the spirit of entrepreneurship for “there is no country that has high levels of entrepreneurship and low levels of economic growth (Reynolds et al., 2002)”. A study in Indian context on the basis of a cross section of data for 17 States the study found a positive impact of the Index of Entrepreneurship on per capita income. In fact, underdevelopment is not because of the lack of natural resources but because of the absence or inadequate supply of entrepreneurs. If only natural resources were the key determinant of economic growth, the entire African continent or Latin America or most of Asia would have been developed. Within India, States like Assam, Bihar, M.P., Orissa, even Arunachal Pradesh would have been leading the growth trajectory of the country. In fact, economic growth is the outcome of entrepreneurial endeavours.

Incidentally, the base of entrepreneurial supply has historically been rather narrow, confined by and large to a few castes and communities, leaving out a large section of society consisting particularly of women, scheduled castes & scheduled tribes, minorities, artisans, etc., under-represented. Similarly, the supply has also been regionally imbalanced, leaving a large part of Eastern and NER underrepresented. The 4<sup>th</sup> Census of MSME says women accounts 7.36% ownership (Global average 7.72%), SC/ST 11% and the NER 3.48%. The ownership is confined to micro enterprises.

**Policy of A.P. at Inception:** If we relook at the policy inception in A.P. for industrial development we find that a start was given in 1952 through Policy of Craft Promotion by creating the Department of Cottage Industries Development. Our crafts were rich in words of Gunnar Myrdal “Crafts and Small-Scale Enterprises have deep and well-established roots in South Asia’s indigenous economic development (Asian Drama)”. We know India’s first tribal

stamp originated in NEFA based on a photograph of a *Konyak* woman in weaving photograph of a *Konyak* woman weaving captured in 1947 by Verrier which was issued on Republic Day in 1955. In understanding the complexity of development of the State, we find the task of nation building started belatedly here and adequate importance was not accorded in promotion of her treasure trove of arts and crafts.

**The way out:** Arunachal Pradesh need a paradigm shift in redefining the inclusive development of her less visible areas of 3863 villages spreading over 83,743 sq. km. area. If we fail to be the herald of development of her villages, the ongoing trend of migration of rural youth to towns cannot be clutched. Migration is a function of labour reallocation in response to market demands. It is also a reflection of rural poverty. In the words scholar Dipankar Gupta, “the Indian villages have started disappearing” a trend rapidly spreading its contagion in youth minds. So the rural areas are to be revitalized else our capital and small towns will be in distress with lack of civic amenities. This is in tune with John W Keller’s (2000) findings on rural - urban migration issue.

The answer is to innovate with Reverse Migration. Our youths with new ideas and entrepreneurial zeal move towards “Rural Arunachal” to tap the vast unexplored resources and the talents to wealth. A.P. is bestowed with the wealth of natural resources like forest and minerals and traditional tribal knowledge about the natural eco-system, medicinal plants, forest eco system etc. Then why should ours villages continue to remain under-developed and face problems of poverty, malnutrition, low literacy and poor health. These mammoth problems can only be solved when inspired individuals challenge the status quo with their entrepreneurial zeal and spirit of innovation and develop solutions based on her core strengths. The take away is, inspire, nurture and promote the spirit of entrepreneurship. We discuss now few related issues.

**Skill Development & Entrepreneurship:** Skill development and entrepreneurship cannot be viewed in isolation. For Skills Strategy will be successful if it commensurate with job creations. This has to happen in the primary, secondary and in tertiary sectors as well. This demands a robust MSME sector. India’s MSMEs contribute to 17% of GDP as compared to 85% in Taiwan, 60% in China and 50% in Singapore.

Globally India is one of the youngest nations having more than 54% of its total population below 25 years of age. The average age of her population will be 29 years by 2020 as against 40 years in USA, 46 years in Europe and 47 years in Japan. During the next 20 years the labour force in the industrialized world is expected to decline by 4%, while in India it will increase by 32%. This poses formidable challenge and huge opportunity. Evidently this demographic dividend will last for next 25 years. To reap benefits India has to equip the workforce with employable skills. Skills and knowledge are driving forces of economy. However India is late to get engaged with this important aspect. This is evident as the first Industrial Policy was notified in 1956, Science & Technology Policy in 1958, Housing Policy in 1988 and National Labour Policy in 1966 whereas the National Policy on Skill Development was notified in 2009 and reviewed as the National Policy for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in 2015.

India has 4.69% of the total workforce who undergone formal skill training as compared to 68% in UK, 75% in Germany, 52% in USA, 80% in Japan and 96% in South Korea. As per a skill gap study of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) over 2010-14 indicates that there is an additional net incremental requirement of 109.73 million skilled manpower by 2022 in twenty four key sectors (2011-12, NSSO). Also, the number of people who enter the work force age group every year is estimated to be 26.14 million. In that analogy, our workforce needs to be mapped through recognition of existing skills and then provide them with necessary skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling to increase productivity and provide a livelihood pathway.

We need to increase women's participation in the country's labour force. Census data shows a continuing fall in labour force participation rate of women from 33.3% to 26.5% in rural areas and from 17.8% to 15.5% in urban areas between 2004 and 2011. In this context, the Arunachal Pradesh has higher rate of women participation a silver lining indeed. As per a study the success ratio of female and male entrepreneurship is 63:37 in terms of various parameters of establishing micro enterprises (Deb Sukamal, 2014). The State is also rich in traditional skill. Also an UN finding say India's GDP will leap frog by another 4.2% if her women can contribute their full potential to the economy.

**The way forward:** The pathfinder is Promotion of entrepreneurship - Rural Entrepreneurship, Agri-Preneurship, Women Entrepreneurship, Tourism Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship. This will give momentum to the State's development agenda. We need to groom the youths with the relevant skill, inspire motivation, bring innovation, the appropriate technology (not always the hi-tech), relooking at the resources with wisdom, sensitized on sustainability.

The call deserves to be echoed louder and louder at her vast horizon. If Entrepreneurship is her vision today way needs to be paved to translate the 'vision- in- to- Realty'. According to World Travel and Tourism Council, "India has potential to become number one tourist destination in the world with the demand growing at 10% per annum". Our Dawn Lit State of should then inquisitively see her silver-lining there.

**Case Studies who can inspire our Vision:** Sharing the following stories of innovative entrepreneurs may give this paper a guided conclusion as our youths has to bridge Develop developmental partnership with Innovators. Everyday be it globally or within the Indian subcontinent new ideas, new institutions are emerging. The need is to set an interface with these people and their institutions. The Government essentially has to play the role of true facilitators.

**Story of Assam's First Organic Tea Farmer Mr Tenzing Bodosa:-**



Mr Bodosa - Assam's First Organic Tea Farmer



World's first elephant - friendly farms



Mr Bodosa, his international recognitions



Mr Bodosa - his products

I met Mr. Tenzing Bodosa recently in a Global Tribal Entrepreneur Summit, where he was honoured as a tribal entrepreneur. He is Assam's first Organic Tea Farmer. He owns the world's

first elephant friendly tea farms. He says if you respect nature, nature will respect you. His two farms in Bodoland, Assam have been certified as the world's first elephant-friendly farms.

There was a time when Tenzing did not want to become a farmer like his father and grandfather. He dropped school after class VI, left home when he was 10 to work and help his widowed mother who was looking after their 2 hectare ancestral farm. After doing odd jobs for few years he joined a Malaysian Construction Company where he learnt to drive, repair machinery, work on internet and english. In 2006 at the age of 19 he returned home, started looking for alternative livelihood. He conceived an idea of organic tea farming but everyone told him tea could not be grown organically. Tenzing did his research online, came to know about Dr. L. Narayan Reddy, Bangluru who was doing it organically. Although Reddy guided him he was not fully satisfied. In 2007 a Canadian NGO, Fertile Ground, gave him trainings enabling him to start his organic farm. Tenzing is the only farmer among 12000 who grows organic tea. He owns his processing unit and sells tea in Canada, German, US and UK. Today he has 25 Acre of land doing farming of various paddy, fruits and vegetables all organically. His yearly turnover from the tea plantation on just 7.5 Acre of land is around 60 - 70 lakh. He has employed 50 persons.

Interesting part of his farm is the buffer zone, the area at the end of his farm from where the jungle begins at the Bhutan border. He has spared a part of his land contiguous to, has not cut down any tree or set any fire there, instead planted bamboo on which the wild elephants feed. He has not put any barrier, so wild animal freely move in his farm. At time one can see 70-80 elephants, hornbills, wild pigs, deer, peacocks and variety of birds. This has added to the attractions to visitors. Tea buyers, the foreign tourists come to see it. (<https://bkbrosarahah.com>). He can be a real source of inspiration for our youths.

**Organic farming, Arunachal Pradesh may become a model:** Organic farming has always been the most natural method of growing crops using natural fertilizers and manures. Following the green revolution in the early 1960s, the Indian agriculture sector gradually witnessed a shift to synthetic fertilizers. Though this ensured faster and bountiful production, the crops became highly contaminated posing threat to general well-being. In a reverse shift, the country started adopting organic farming during the late 90s'. In 2004 India introduced the National Project on Organic Farming. Within 10 years the amount of certified organic land (land free of chemical residue) increased from 42,000 hectares to 4.72 million hectares. In 2005, as per Government of India figures, approximately 190,000 acres (77,000 hectares) were under organic cultivation. Organic India is now one of the biggest players in the business and has seen its revenue rise from INR 25 crore in 2008 to INR 175 crore in 2013. According to reports by ASSOCHAM and TechSci Research, the organic food market in India is estimated to be over US\$0.50 billion. It is further projected to reaching up to US\$1.36 billion within the next four years. Overall, the organic foods segment in the country has witnessed an estimated 25 per cent to 30 per cent growth. While once consuming organic food was perceived to be a trend, now it has become essential, considering its medicinal benefits. The consumers are becoming increasingly aware of what they are consuming and how it impacts their health in the long term. They are relying on organic food as the 21st century medicine to beat lifestyle diseases like cancer, diabetes and obesity.

**The Sresta Natural Bio Products** is one of the leading organic processors and suppliers. In the backdrop of excessive and harmful usage of pesticides began the story of Sresta. In 1992, Founder Raj Seelam realized how investment in pesticides and synthetic fertilizers were affecting the sustainability of farmers' lives and standard of living. He set out on the journey to set up the firm in 2004. Today over 50,000 farmers cultivate 2, 50,000 acres across 15 states in India, covering varied agro-climatic zones. They aims to reach 500,000 acres by 2020.



Organic farming could be fit case for the State. Organic cultivation, enhanced productions and value addition locally adopting appropriate technology in lieu of Jhum or through scientific Jhum Cultivation may be a right approach for her to join Make India Mission. We know, among the 100 most climate-sensitive districts in India 16 are in NER of which 2 are in A.P. (West Kameng and East Siang). Since link between poverty and environmental degradation is very strong we need to reorient our developmental programmes accordingly (*read full paper of Dr. Sukamal Deb on line, 2015*).

**Bamboo:** We start with a story published in the Indian Express on 25-11-2017 captioned Bamboo cycles may soon grace a cycle track. The cycles are made by members of 10 agricultural families based near Pune, who are involved in bamboo plantation. It weighs only 2 kg but is sturdy and easy to ride. The cycles are designed by Bamboo India, a Pune based company. Yogesh Shinde, founder of Bamboo India, said concerns about the increasing use of



plastic, and its harmful effects on the planet prompted him to introduce cycles made of bamboo. The cycle, which costs Rs 35,000, has an online customer base of over 9,000 people in India is also becoming increasingly popular in Netherlands, US and Europe. There are 136 species of bamboo and they are working on developing cycles with newer species.

Arunachal Pradesh need to promote industries based on non-timber forest produce like bamboo, cane (rattan), medicinal plants herbs, aromatic grass, tea, coffee, sericulture. There are 16 genera and some 63 species of bamboo in the NER. The State has some 45 species of bamboo, and nowhere else are bamboos found at such a high altitude, 2000m (Haridasan, pers. com. 1997). The State has 20 species of canes and offers an ideal agro climate with vast potentials for growing varieties of orchids round the year.

Let us share an inspirational story called URUVU. URUVU means spring, source of water, life, creativity. Uravu is a non-profit organization established in 1996 at Thrikkaipetta village in Wayanad, Kerala. It is a wing of the State Bamboo mission under the Department of Industries. Uravu makes use of the indigenous sciences and technology for the upliftment of the tribes in the area. It runs a successful bamboo crafts design and production centre along with bamboo nursery. Like A.P. Bamboo is found abundantly in Wayanad and Uravu encourages the traditional technology and craftsmanship of the tribes in creating a whole range of products. The institute also helps in marketing these products. It provides job opportunities, uses the locally available materials, ensures the restoration of the ecosystem and revives the traditional craftsmanship. Uravu, in its efforts to uplift the local community, has resorted to bamboo as a major means because it provides a local solution to the global challenges. Like A.P. bamboo is found in the area abundantly and the tribes are traditionally adept at creating handicrafts, furniture and other materials; hence the organization has to just revamp and rejuvenate the tradition. Bamboos have great environmental significance and it helps rejuvenate degraded lands. So, this approach well fits to the case of A.P. to rejuvenate the degraded Jhum lands. Growing bamboo can also prevent soil erosion. The products made of bamboo are eco-friendly and they don't harm the environment compared to the non bio-degradable and synthetic materials. The bamboo-based economy can also help the rural community re-establish its control over natural resources. The economic benefits of bamboo cultivation too cannot be neglected. The bamboo plantation needs only minimal capital investments and while growing bamboo we

can resort to the inherent cultivation skills of farmers. Thus the approach envisages an economy based on natural resource, the local skills and application of appropriate technologies. Uravu implements the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVJ) programme, Ambedkar Hast Shilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) and NABARD's schemes. It has established mother and satellite units helped about 200 families to find a livelihood making the area a beehive of activities, promoting tourism and social enterprises using bamboo, the green gold. Cottages innovated by Uravu are -

**Honeymoon Cottage:** Enjoy your perfect stay in the eco-friendly cottage offering all the charm of a traditional bamboo hut fused with all the modern facilities. The eco-friendly values coupled with the traditional work of local artisans and the modern design of Indo-Swiss architects make this cottage the perfect place for tourist's next vacation.



**Eco Nest:** Ideal for families, meetings or events, the new cottage creates the opportunity to stay in a peaceful environment surrounded by nature. Three floors, two rooms, three bathrooms and three balconies offer an authentic stay in the middle of bamboo grove.



**Rock the Jungle:** You will love to stay in our elegant and modern, as well as eco-friendly cottages built by local craftsmen using traditional and locally sourced materials. The mix between traditional materials and the modern design by our Indo-Swiss architects is the perfect combination for your comfortable and sustainable stay



**Style in the Wild:** The cottages offer a comfortable stay while preserving the environment by the appliance of strict sustainability policy based on values. The rooms are eco-friendly, well ventilated, offering maximum landscape views and very healthy to live in. Uravu Bamboo Grove offers peace, tranquility and the comforts





### **Bamboo Factory Uravu, Wayanad:**

Decorative & functional bamboo products are manufactured located at about 12 kms from Kalpetta. The backbone of the local economy, the bamboo factory gives livelihood to the locals, uplifting their standard of living. Visit the bamboo nursery, the factory to see design process and manufacturing the products like pens, lamp shades, baskets, masks, furniture.



To see documentaries on Bamboo extraction with tribal expertise of Wayanad, Kerala visit [www.uravubamboogrove.com](http://www.uravubamboogrove.com), [www.uravu.net](http://www.uravu.net), and you tube)

**Rural Technology:** A Polish Proverb says, “If the farmer is poor then so is the whole country”. We know one quarter of the world’s poor, almost 300 million, live in India. The IT sector accounts for almost 4 percent of GDP, but employs only a million. Rural Technology can help dramatically reduce the prevalence and severity of many developmental problems. It can help improve the quality of life, especially for the poor and disadvantaged, by permitting more and better services, transforming economic activity and reducing inequalities. It gives solutions that are affordable, sustainable and acceptable to the people. ([www.rtbi.in/Ashok/14.pdf](http://www.rtbi.in/Ashok/14.pdf)).

There are organizations working for innovating Rural Technology. We discuss the endeavour of Vigyan Ashram. It is a center of Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune. A scientist turned educationalist Late Dr. S. S. Kalbag started Vigyan Ashram in 1983 to find out solution to the problems in education. They offer Diploma in Rural Technology course for youth who want to start an enterprise. (Read success stories at [vigyanashramalumni.wordpress.com](http://vigyanashramalumni.wordpress.com), [ruralstartup.wordpress.com](http://ruralstartup.wordpress.com), [vigyanashramdbt.wordpress.com](http://vigyanashramdbt.wordpress.com), [vigyanashram.wordpress.com](http://vigyanashram.wordpress.com)). Vigyan Ashram works on Rural Technologies like vaccination of animal, drip irrigation, nursery technique, agriculture tools, watershed development, sanitation and food preservation. These innovations may have far reaching impact in the developmental efforts of A.P. if applied.

Similar is the case of STARS (Skill Training for Advancement in Rural Societies) Forum established in 2010 with objectives of constituting a common platform for NGOs and individuals working in the area of knowledge transfer of relevant marketable / vocational skills in rural and tribal areas. This is for mutual support and to advance this field by providing a forum to dialog, problem solve and sharing and evolution of best practices and innovative approaches through practical, relevant and cost effective way ([www.starforum.org](http://www.starforum.org)). The State and her youths need exposure and eagerness of networking with these organisations in her pursuit of development.

It is not that youths are not innovative. Among others one Mr. Mihin Doilang, Ziro designed a cardamom drier a useful innovation. We need to celebrate their entrepreneurship.



Mr. Mihin Doilang awarded in National Convention on Rural Industries in 2003 is seen with the author



Dr. Sukamal Deb a featured speaker in Niti Aayog’s tribal Entrepreneurship Summit, 2017