

## Small enterprise-Beginning of Business

Nandini Kapdi

Razia was a homemaker. Her husband was a worker in a printing factory. With two growing up children, Razia was finding it difficult to meet the expenditure. She was worried that they would not be able to afford a college education for their daughter and son. They lived in a ten by ten tenement. She had plenty of time on hand and wished to do something to earn some extra income. One day, as she was purchasing her vegetables, she overheard two ladies talking. They appeared to be working women. Each was complaining how difficult it was to complete cooking before they left for work. "Who has time to grind masala for our curries day in and day out?" she heard one lady grumbling!

That is when she began to think. Indians eat curry everyday and it was indeed time consuming to prepare the masala paste every day. If only they had ready paste, cooking would be so much easier. So, she decided to give it a try. She bought just 2 kilos of onions, half a kilo each of ginger and garlic and some red chilies to go with it. Using her domestic mixer, she prepared small batches of ginger-garlic paste and fried onion paste and neatly packed them into polythene bags and sealed them. She went to the market that evening and found several women purchasing vegetables. She went to each one of them and asked them to sample her masala paste and tell her next day, their responses. Several women refused the samples but a few took the samples. She told everyone that next day onwards, she could be found at the same place.

Within two days, one lady came to her with a request for a large quantity of the masala very next day. Razia supplied the order. She added the cost of all ingredients and some profits and sold the next day. In a few days, more orders came in. One lady told her, how convenient it was to buy these basic ingredients from her and make curry at home. Razia felt very happy that her effort was helping another busy woman and she was also earning her own income.

Today, Razia owns a mobile. She has printed her business cards and given it to all the hawkers and shop keepers at the local market. She has prepared handbills and distributed them across several multi storied buildings. With the profits, she has bought a refrigerator, in which she can store the unsold masala paste. As per the request, she also prepares garam macula powder to individual specifications. She has also tried various masala combinations trying dry coconut, tamarind and so on. Her original customers have remained faithful to her and are also bringing new customers. Razia has also employed two helpers, who are willingly doing the work of distributing the packages to individual homes.

Razia has shown to the world that a little hard work and imaginative enterprise can go a long way. With the profits she makes, their living conditions have improved. She is saving money every month in a separate Bank Account to fund her children's' education.

A small enterprise can thus help hundreds of poor women in coming out of the shackles of poverty. Razia has indeed shown the way!

