



MR. MANSUKHBHAI PRAJAPATI

Recipient of the Award for Application of Science and Technology for Rural Development - 2022

Born: October 19, 1965

Mr. Mansukhbhai Prajapati was born at Nichi Mandal, in Morbi District in Gujarat. Despite being discouraged by his father who was a potter, Mansukhbhai Prajapati with sheer passion and determination and with the support of a moneylender, started working on his dream project.

Mansukhbhai Prajapati is renowned for his rural innovations and has been credited for his earthen clay-based functional, utility products like refrigerators, filters, tawa (pan) and cookers, among other items. He has brought back pottery into the mainstream with innovative techniques and a wide product range.

In 1988, Mansukhbhai Prajapati made the first clay product – a tawa (pan) using a tile press, instead of a traditional potter's wheel. Potters used to make 100 tawa a day through conventional techniques, whereas he started making 3,500-4,000 in a day, using the tile press. Now, most potters use his machine to produce tawa. Introducing this technique led to getting thousands of potters back to pursue pottery, who had once closed their shop. The innovative tawa making machine revolutionized the pottery industry. By using this machine, several rural families have established and engaged themselves into startups and have become entrepreneurs, which has, in turn provided them with better livelihood and better standard of living.

Being engaged in the pottery work since the early eighties, Mansukhbhai Prajapati has innovated and adapted appropriate technology and modern techniques. This has developed the traditional work of the rural artisans to a level of entrepreneurship and business. In this process, it has also helped in the upliftment of the community members who are also engaged in this work.

Moving ahead, Mansukhbhai Prajapati scaled up his activity and started making highly efficient and eco-friendly clay products ranging from a small spoon to dinner set, bottles, cooker, water pots, filters to non-electric fridge, that are harmless to environment and health. The product range that are marketed, carry the brand name Mitticool.

Some of the innovative product range include:

- Clay Tawa Making Machine (motivated people to produce 10,000 tawa per day)
- Clay Water Filter (filters water without any electricity and maintains natural taste of water)
- Clay Cooker (cooks food by maintaining its nutritional values)
- Clay Refrigerator (works without electricity)
- Cow Dung Log Machine (makes several products from cow dung which are of daily use)

The refrigerator has had an environmental impact, considering its features of affordability, eco-friendliness, and being a non-electrical appliance. Not only the poor, but the rich have also accepted, appreciated, and adapted this innovation.

The cow dung log machine has had an economic and social impact as the products developed from this machine provided a new avenue for income generation for the people, as well as enabled the community to realise the importance of feeding and taking care of their cattle properly and eliminated the ill practice of abandonment and slaughter of cattle. The creative and innovative set up of Mansukhbhai Prajapati's pottery work in the rural area has empowered the families of more than 1000 women, who have worked

in his unit. Currently, around 100 form the women workforce in the production unit. The rural people who used to travel to faraway places in search of work and livelihood, are now employed in their area. Mansukhbhai Prajapati's effort has stopped migration of the people outside and has helped boost rural employment.

The grassroots technology and techniques initiated by Mansukhbhai Prajapati has also enabled rural people to work from their homes at a micro level and has encouraged and increased involvement of women to work from home, while carrying out their household chores. Due to this, women are being empowered and are also the contributors to their family income.

To create awareness and to train the domestic and international artisans on the new techniques, Mansukhbhai Prajapati has trained and educated more than 10,000 families including college students, rural communities, individuals, NGOs, institutes, and other artisans through online and offline mode.

With the use of technology, he was able to revive the traditional craftsmanship. With the increasing demand, the complete work of Mansukhbhai Prajapati has added a new and holistic dimension to his contribution namely economics, health, environment, employment generation, rural and women empowerment, and restoration of the traditional craft etc.

Mitticool has received an encouraging demand in the domestic and international market. The products are promoted and marketed through e-commerce platforms, retail outlets, social media and other B2B and B2C platforms and exhibitions. Increase in exports has also initiated and inspired the team to focus more on qualitative and quantitative production. The production capacity of the assorted range of products is currently 25,000 pieces per day and the production is operational for almost 25 days every month.

Mansukhbhai Prajapati's work has found a place in some of the reputed academic curriculum. It has also been recognized and praised by Government of India and Gujarat along with various organisations like Gujarat Matikam Kalakari & Rural Technology Institute, Khadi India, National Innovation Foundation, National Institute of Design, Global Initiative of Academic Networks, Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions, CSIR-Central Glass & Ceramic Research Institute, Women Empowerment Board, etc. which gave a platform to bring-forth this lost art-form to the forefront and supported in uplifting the society. In addition to the numerous governmental and institutional recognitions, awards and accolades to his credit, Forbes has recognized Mansukhbhai Prajapati as India's one of the most powerful rural entrepreneurs.

He has transformed the pottery industry and endeavoured to reconnect people with clay and soil. Mr. Mansukhbhai Prajapati has a vision to empower more rural communities by honing their skills, by building their self-reliance through this work, by involving women, by developing the spirit of being innovative in the young minds and by inspiring the youth for entrepreneurship.

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