

# *Dhandha: How Gujaratis Do Business*

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***Shobha Bondre (2013). Dhandha: How Gujaratis Do Business. Random House Publishers India Private Limited, Price Rs. 199, Pages 284, ISBN: 9788184004243.***

Dhandha is the most common term used for business throughout India. The book on 'Dhandha' is a compilation of success stories of some Gujarati business men. It is written in a simple and inspiring manner that motivates the readers. This book is duly forwarded by Shri Narendra Modi.

The book 'Dhandha' sketches some Gujarati business men: Bhimjibhai Patel-one of the country's biggest diamond merchant; Mohanbhai Patel-the leading manufacturer of aluminium tubes; Dalpatbhai Patel-the motelier who went to be a mayor in US; Jaydev Patel-the New York Life Insurance agent, who sold the policies worth \$2.5 billion; Hashu and Hersha Shah-owner of 100 hotels in US. The common thread in all these stories is that all these people believed in a single trail of business. The book demonstrates the power of ambition and highlights the incredible capacity of hard work and incredible business sense of Gujarati businessmen.

The book not just describes the businessmen, but narrates the role of the whole family; how they faced challenges, troubles and obstacles and how they helped during unpredictable events, the failures they faced; The best thing are their amazing attitude for success and determination to work. This book distinguishes the Gujaratis from the rest of the world when it comes to business and shows it in a beautiful manner. The book also reflects on female empowerment: how they have contributed to the success of their partners. The Gujarati women showed that none of the efforts go waste if one put their heart and soul to achieve what one wants.

The first story of this book is titled as "DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER", which is dedicated to Bhimjibhai Patel, that proves 'nothing is impossible'. He didn't know any language other than Gujarati but he proved that language is not a barrier in the way towards success. He was confident and knew key points about diamond industry which is most important component of his business. He believes 'luck favours the brave'. He started his incredible

journey with just Rs.15 and worked for 19 hours a day to make his life better. He always wanted to adopt and learn new things and spent his initial days in learning the art of cutting the diamonds. He strongly believed that only hard work, practical approach and the inborn sense of business can make him a successful businessman. After crossing many hurdles, he became country's biggest diamond merchant. Bhimjibhai not only followed his dream, but also helped his brother to get settled.

The second story "THE CIRCLE OF LIFE" refers to Mohanbhai Patel (leading producer of collapsible tubes in the world). The story discussed about one who experimented with a new machine tool for producing ophthalmic nozzle tubes (used for packing eye ointment) with aluminium (usually tin is used all over the world). He tried not for twice or thrice but about 30 times to use aluminium. It shows dedication, determination and the never giving up attitude. He believes that work should be done not just at 96 or 97 percent but at 100 percent. Mohanbhai worked for Tata Company at Mumbai before establishing his business. The book narrates how busy business schedule insisted him for not visiting home for weeks, take rest for only 3 hours a day etc. It shows dedication of Gujaratis for the business and the quality of hard work with huge patience. The determination to establish the best in the world is really inspiring. The entire family worked as a team and their real risk taking ability made their dream true. It reflects the supportive nature of the family.

The third story "MOTELIER BECOMES MAYOR" is about Dalpatbhai Patel who studied in US, and gradually became the first motelier in the region. Like many others, he came to US and experienced many ups and downs, but with time all difficulties were healed up. He had a friend cum motivator, Maganbhai who always supported Dalpatbhai and helped him in every intricate circumstances of life. Their partnership proved to be

a great success. They are practical and calculative about things. Neeta Patel, wife of Dalpatbhai Patel proved her capabilities regarding business by managing the motels. It narrates that the Gujarati woman is not less than the man in any way. This story is not just about the success of a businessman but about the person, who always was considerate towards people and helped others. Because of these qualities he was selected as the mayor in US. The chapter shows how one person managed two responsibilities at a time and also showed the qualities of a successful entrepreneur.

The fourth story, "LIFE OF A SALESMAN" is about Jaydev Patel. The story describes a Gujarati businessman's journey towards success and how he struggled in his initial days and ultimately got the status of the Top Agent out of 9000 agents of New York Life Insurance. He started his career as a teacher and then chemist and finally ended with that of an Insurance agent. His talents to sell policies are unbelievable and praiseworthy. Due to his implausible marketing skills, he sold \$2.5 billion worth of policies that was a great success and made a history. But success did not come to his life immediately; sometimes he was not able to sell even a single policy. But his patience did not let him down and his wife always motivated him. She did not lose her patience even when Jaydev lost his job. Jaydev Patel believed that his relationship with his clients is never limited to a professional level, rather it was always an emotional involvement. He adopted new techniques to sell his policies. The great example of his marketing skills is that he sold policy to the attendant who fills gas in his car at service stations. Selling process took long time but he did. He remained down to earth and his emotions are always attached to his schools, family values and his culture. As a social worker, he renovated three schools in his village.

The last story "NOT ONLY POTELS" revolves around a couple Hashu and Hersha Shah. Like others, they also had a dream of achieving reputable position and came to Harris Berg. Both of them worked tirelessly to fulfill their dream. They did not have any money to begin but they had sharp intellect, will power and great capacity for hard work. They started with a small motel of 11 rooms and they pursued their dream to be bigger and today, they are the owners of over 100 hotels having about 11000 rooms. They provide employment to 650 people and also contribute to social service organisations.

During their hectic schedule they did not forget to instill sound values in their children. Jay and Neil, both are highly qualified. With their business skills and innovative ideas, Jay and Neil took the business to new heights. The role of Hersha Shah was remarkable, as she led a pampered childhood but she worked hard and faced challenges. Behind every success story there is a dark face; this story also captures hurdles like recession, robberies, disaster and flood. But they never took their step back. The real businessman is one who overcomes all the difficulties and hard times and converts them into never ending success.

The concluding section shed light on the lives of most of the successful people which reflects that there is no single mantra that causes success. Rather it results from a combination of vision, passion, perseverance, enthusiasm, willingness to learn from failure and unending capacity for hard work. Reading the book Dhandha is quiet interesting and is a fascinating book for the upcoming entrepreneurs. The book cites innumerable instances about human behavior and makes us learn lessons of humanity. The common thread running through each of these stories is the incredible amount of hard work, preservice and patience. Despite of their conservative backgrounds, they are the examples of working in unfamiliar land, often doing double shifts to raise the capital and taking risk. The contribution of their families are nicely captured in the book. The generosity of Gujarati businessmen and their ability to remain rooted to their origins as narrated in the book is commendable.

Some parts of the book needs more clarification. Though the book covers good success stories, putting all energy in earning money without taking care of their family, society and friends reflects money-money culture which may not be correct.

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