



A CASE STUDY ON BURIMA FIREWORKS

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This case study pertains to the gritty battle of survival of a lady who was forced to flee her village Faridpur in 1947 post partition. She had got shelter in a refugee camp in Gangarampur in south Dinajpur with her six year old son and infant daughter. Now it was a question of survival as well as to raise her young son and daughter. It was her indomitable spirit and the will to fight all odds that helped her to survive and so she learnt to roll bidis and started her own business. The life was very tough for a young lady with no other financial support. But she carried on with her mission and worked tirelessly to make ends meet.

After a long struggle, she shifted to Belur in 1952. She bought a house with a little shop in Parimohon Mukherjee Street at Belur where she started selling candies, toys and seasonal items such as kites for vishwakarma puja, idols for saraswati puja and crackers during kali puja. But her problem was that all these items she had to purchase and then sell in retail. The profit used to be negligible and insufficient for survival. One day, a group of girls and boys came to her shop and asked “Burima, please give us candies”. That day Annapurna Devi realised that she had become aged and that’s why people called her name as “BURIMA”. Slowly this name spread out and became famous as Burima. The selling of retail items didn’t provide proper financial support for her family. So she decided to learn to make various types of crackers from Akbar Ali, an artisan who stayed at Bankra. Soon her crackers and chocolate bombs were so popular and famous that traders from all corners like Howrah, Hoogly, North and South 24 Parganas started coming during festivals to buy crackers in bulk. Soon her business grew at a fast pace. After that there was no looking back. She started new business for manufacturing match box in Sivakasi and setup a new cracker factory at Dunkani. After her death her children started looking after the business. Her brand name Burima also thrived on the brisk sales of Crackers. Burima’s crackers started giving competition to

both Sivakasi and Chinese Crackers as time passed by. It is seen that they are cheaper than Sivakasi's products. A packet of three rangmashal from Sivakasi costs Rupees 250 and a packet of ten Burima's rangmashal comes for Rupees 160 only. So everyone can afford to buy from Burima and enjoy firing the crackers.

Today in Bengal, Kali Puja celebrations are incomplete without Burima's fireworks. There are many new companies in market, but Burima's brand is an old favourite. Chocolate bombs were a craze in our youth. However restrictions from Supreme Court on firing crackers making noise levels more than 125 dB, had a very negative impact on the sales of Burima's signature chocolate bombs. The sales dipped on account of these restrictions. However Burima's company came up with more innovative ideas and started making different types of colour-changing flowerpots and rangmashals. Today more than two decades after Burima's death, her business flourishes even in the face of competition from Sivakasi and Chinese fireworks. The traders in Bengal are of the opinion that demand for Burima's fireworks still continues as they are cheaper and reliable. Even the customers would want to fire only Burima's brand of firecrackers.

Today people remember Burima as a role model who carved out her own destiny with sheer hard work and zeal to fight. It is a wonderful case study for students to learn how to manage a business. The moral of this case study is that to run a successful business, only hard work pays. On her last day of life, local people showed their admiration to Burima with cracking of chocolate bombs.



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Prof. Ray is currently the Mentor & Adviser to Chancellor, Sister Nivedita University. He has always focused on research and publications and while at IBS, he created the IBS Research Centre Kolkata where dedicated researchers and authors worked passionately towards developing management case studies and books, so far, more than 300 case studies developed by the centre has been uploaded in European Case Clearing House. The centre has also come out with more than 100 books.

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