
Industrial Entrepreneurship of Shekhawati Marwaris

Dr. D.K. Taknet

Industrial Entrepreneurship of Shekhawati Marwaris

© D. K. Taknet

Email: iime.jaipur@gmail.com

First Edition-1986 Revised Edition-1987 Forword

Marwaris are among the most enterprising people of India. They are known for

their business acumen not only in every nook and corner of the country but in other

parts of the world also. They play a leading role in India's private secotr. A number

of Marwari houses rank high in the industrial and business entrepreneurship of the

country.

Sh. D.K. Taknet has made a painstaking study of this community and the

reasons for success of its members. The study shows that Marwaris, particularly

those belonging to Shekhawati region of Rajasthan have been the most successful

mambers of the community. Sh. Taknet opines that geography and the social set up

have been responsible for drawing the best from the community. He has also made

case studies of some of the well known business houses of the community.

The book provides useful information of a subject about which very little has

been written. It is lucid and remarkably absorbing. It is hoped that people interested

in the economic development of the country will read this work and benefit from it.

20, Akbar Road,

New Delhi

Dr.BALRAM JAKHAR

Speaker, Lok Sabha

Dedicated to The loving memory of the old generation of Shekhawati entrepreneurs including stalwarts like Seth Jamnalal ji BajaJ and Ghanshyamdasji Birla whose enterprise, effort and sense of social responsibility for social purposes nurtured in the undulating sand-dunes of Shekhawati stand out as beacons and everlasting monuments to the continuing industrial entrepreneurship of Shekhawati Marwaris.

Preface

ENTREPRENEURSHIP is a product of history and geography. This fact is amply borne out by the spirit of entrepreneurship shown by the Marwari community in India. Though spread all over Rajasthan, the Marwari community of the Shekhawati region in particular has shown an entrepreneurial skill unsurpassed by any other business community of the world. There is a great deal of this innate talent in this region which is proved by the contribution of the Shekhawati Marwaris to the industrial development of the country. It seems as if entrepreneurship is deeply immersed in the very sand dunes of Shekhawati.

Interestingly, entrepreneurship is born in the midst of adverse and hardy geographical conditions. The dry climate and the rough topography goads the people to wage a continuous struggle against the vagaries of nature. The entrepreneurship springing out of adversity does not prove to be so nerveracking as to crush the very personality of man to near extinction. The man struggles more and more against the odds of nature and musters potential to overcome them. Adversity though causing some frustration occasionally, finally proves to be invigorating with each hard assignment undertaken making the people of Shekhawati sturdy.

On the face of it, the approach of this study looks historical but it is the entrepreneurial traits of the Marwari community that have been focussed in detail. The Marwaris of this region have a distinctive entrepreneurial culture and work ethos. They were initially traders, financiers and brokers but in the course of time they enlarged their industrial base. The study analyses their economic growth as also their entrepreneurial development.

It is also modest attempt to map out the application of entrepreneurial skill in the industrial development of the country. Apart from pinpointing the historical evolution of Shekhawati Marwari entreopreneurship, it makes a vivid survey of the economic and geographical environment of the entrepreneurs hailing from this region. It also identifies the various socioeconomic and geographical factors responsible for the emerging patterns of entrepreneurship.

The study takes in its gambit location and geographical features of this arid region and their impact on the character and habits of the people. To be plain, the geographical environment serves as a solid backdrop of industrial entrepreneurship in this region. The social and cultural aspects which emerge from geographical conditions strengthen the spirit of entrepreneurship in this area. This work touches upon the trade and its routes and the migration of Shekhawati Marwaris. The pre-Independence and post-Independence contribution of Shekhawati Marwaris has been highlighted. A detailed

examination of geographical, socio-cultural and economic factors indicates the secrets of success of the Shekhawati Marwaris.

The study is based on primary and secondary data; interviews with eminent industrialists, top managers, and surviving *seths* and *munims* of older days. Information was collected through visits to various places in Shekhawati and by contracts with both the old and new generations. The old *bahis* and manuscripts retrieved from the native places of Shekhawati industrialists have been regerred to collecting primary data. The art and architecture as depicted on the walls of their houses were studied in details.

The secondary data collected from the Census report of British India and District Gazetteers, several authentic publications of the Marwari Samaj, e.g. books written on Marwaris, their family histories, *abhinandan granths* and felicitation and memorial volumes. All these helped in providing research material and information regarding the nature, scope and methods of operation of business of the old Shekhawati firms. Besides, the study of daily newspapers and magazines of the Marwaris of the past helped a lot in understanding the socio-economic condition of the time. The reports of the Monopolies Inquiry Commission and the Industrial Licensing Policy Committee were instrumental in knowing the contribution of the Marwari industrialists in the context of the economic development of India as a whole. An overview of their contribution in the international arena was also taken.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my worthy preceptor, Dr R. B. Upadhyaya, vice-chancellor of Ajmer University for his inspiration, constructive criticism and able guidance. I am also grateful to those Marwaris who made available to me their family history and personal records. Thanks are also due to R. K. Bajaj, President, Bajaj Group, D.N. Patodia L.N. Birla, B.K. Birla, Sarla Birla K.K. Birla, Chairman, Hindustan Timmes, A.K. Jain, Bennet Coleman & Co, R.N. Goenka, H.S. Singhania, B.K. Jalan, P.M. Rungta, Rajesh Khaitan, D.P. Mandelia, V.H. Dalmia, B.L. Jaju, G.N. Dalmia, S.P. Singhania, R.P. Podar, L.N. Jhunjunwala, K.M. Rungta, Sanjay Dalmia, M.M. Ruia, Kishore Rungta, Ramnath A. Podar, and others for the prompt supply of family history and original manuscripts. The active assistance of Lok Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan, Churu, needs special mention.

The project would have not seen the light of the day but for the inspiration provided by the former chief minister of Rajasthan, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. The advice by Mr. Jean Louis Benard who has been associated with the Shekhawati region for decades was of immense help. I Sincerely hope the study will stimulate further work and motivate scholars to launch newer projects on entrepreneurial development and enterprise management.

Contents

Foreword		V
Preface		vii
List of Tables	5	xiii
List of Maps		xiii
List of Photo	graphs	vix
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Social and Cultural Background	17
3.	Pre-Independence Contribution	
	of Shekhawati Marwaris	48
4.	Post-Independence Contribution	
	of Shekhawati Marwaris	96
5.	The Secrets of Success of Shekhawati	
	Marwaris	153
6.	Summary and Conclusions	173
Appendix-A		179
Appendix-B		202
Appendix-C		212
Bibliography	7	229
Glossary		241
Index		244

List of Tables

1.	Precentage Distribution of Companies	
	among various communities	88
2.	Frequency Distribution of Industrial	
	Companies Controlled and Directorships held by	
	Communities 1911-1951	97
3.	Community of Leading Industrialists	98
4.	Assets, Turnover and Profit of Large	
	Industrial Houses From Shekhawati	101
5.	Top Giants of Shekhawati Industrialists	104
6.	Major Companies of the Birla Group	115
7.	Major Companies of the Dalmia Group	143
	List of Maps	
1.	Political Shekhawati, 1984	2
2.	Map of Cultural Shekhawati, 1897	18
3.	Trade routes passing through and around	
	Shekhawati in the 19th Century	50
4.	India, 1857, Migration of Agarwals	58
5.	Origin of Shekhawati Industrialists	113

List of Photographs

- 1. A scene of Shekhawati sand dunes.
- 2. A decade-old mansion of the Podars at Ramgarh.
- 3. Two-storeyed, eight-pillared cenotaph built in memory of Thakur Bakshiram Taknet in 1776 at Churu.
- 4. An eight-haveli complex in Nawalgarh.
- 5. A magnificent dorway of the haveli of Ramnath Anandilal Podar in Nawalgarh.
- 6. An exquisitely painted room in the Sone Chandi ki Haveli of Sej Ram Podar in Mahansar.
- 7. A 130-year-old painting in the haveli of Ram Gopal Goenka in Fatehpur.
- 8. The beautiful temple of Rani Sati, Jhunjhunu.
- 9. A wall painting of a munim making entries in a bahi.
- 10. The gaddi of Seth Lachchiram Jaidayal Khemka of Bhiwani.
- 11. 78-years old Shrilal Podar a munim of Tarachand Ghanshyamdas, seen at work.
- 12. The Gaddi of Shivnarain Birla at his haveli in Pilani.
- 13. Maharaja Ranjit Singh presenting a necklace to Seth Mirzamal of Churu.
- 14. A 150-year old bahi from the Podar Collection at Churu.
- 15. A Swastik drawn on the first page of a bahi.
- 16. Hundi given by Maharaja Surat Singh of Bikaner to Seth Mirzamal Potedar, Churu.
- 17. A parwana written by Maharaja Surat Singh of Bikaner permitting traders to set themselves up in the state. It also granted them certian concessions.
- 18. Another parawana issued by Maharaja of Bikaner in favour of Seth Mirzamal Harbhagat inviting him to set up business in Bikaner.

- 19. A rare photograph of the descendants of Bhagwandas Bagla, the first Marwari crorepati, with Jawaharlal Nehru in Burma.
- 20. The Awards of 'Raja and a Sanad' that was given to Rai Bhadur Baldeodas Birla.
- 21. Raja Todarmal, who was the first to establish the Marwaris in Bengal. He is also credited with the creation of the Muria language.
- 22. The first cotton king of Marwari community.
- 23. The first Marwari who set up banking on the British pattern.
- 24. The first Marwari Sheriff.
- 25. The first Share king of the Marwari community.
- 26. The fifth son of Mahatma Gandhi in Marwari attire.
- 27. The pioneering entrepreneur among the Marwari community.
- 28. Jawaharlal Nehru, enjoying a camel ride in Shekhawati.
- 29. The founder of J. K. Organisation.
- 30. R. K. Bajaj with Gandhiji in a train compartment at calcutta in 1946.
- 31. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi lighting a lamp during the prewsentation of the Jamanalal Bajaj Awards.
- 32. G. D. Birla, Leader of Indian Industrial Delegation to U.S.A.
- 33. Lachhamangarh, in Shekhawati, full of ancient buildings which are adorned with brilliantly-crafted wall paintings.
- 34. The ancestral kothi of Sitaram Deora which is unique for its architecture and stands out as a symbol of creativity.

INTRODUCTION

SHEKHAWATI, the land of heroes and dynamic entrepreneurs has made a noteworthy contribution to the social, religious, cultural, industrial and political fields of not only Rajasthan but of the entire country. Poets and historians have paid glowing tributes to the braver and chivalry of the people of this region. Its ancient art and architecture, the unique topography, and the variety and splendor of its culture and the hospitality of its people have won the heart of many a foreigners.

Shekhawati¹ drives its name from the brave Rao Shekhaji and his descendants.² He was a great grandson of Balaji and son of Mokalji and was born in 1433 AD.³ Shekhaji established an independent state at Nan Amarsar.⁴ His descendants are called Shekhawats who later expanded the Nan Amarsar state by wresting Rewasa and Kasali from the Chandels⁵ and Khandela and Udaipurwati from the Nirban Chauhans. They also snatched Jhunjhunuwati from the Kayamkhanis and the Narhar Pargana from the Pathans.⁶ Thus, Shekhawati includes Nan Amarsar, Jhunjhunu, Udaipurwati, Sikar, Fatehpur, Danta Ramgarh and Khandela. It is on record record that Balaji and Mokalji, used to pay to the Chief of Amber, as annual tribute, all the cattle reared on their lands, but Shekhaji grew more powerful than his ancestors and became independent of the parent State. From then onwards this area came to be known as Shekhawati.⁷

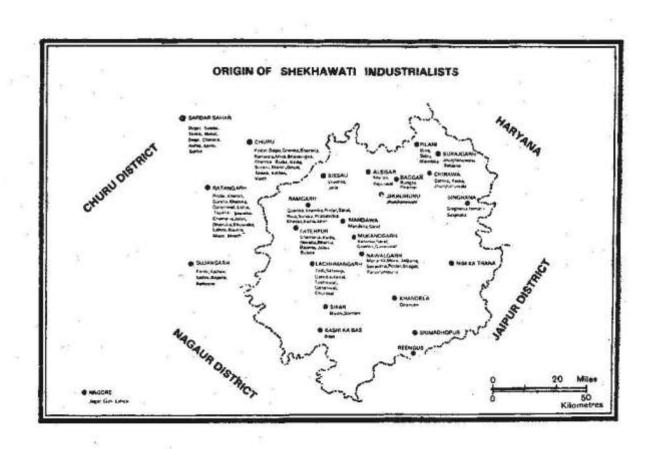
The word Shekhawati was used for the first time in 1803 by Col. W.N. Gardener. Col. James Tod labeled this territory as the Shekhawati Federation and showed it under the forer Jaipur State in his book. In Rajputana, it was the largest nizamat of Jaipur State and was known as Shekhawati.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

SHEKHAWATI, comprising the present Jhunjhunu and Sikar districts, is in Jaipur division and is situated in the north-west of Jaipur. It lies between 27°20', 28°34' north latitudes and 74°41' and 76°6' east longitudes. The entire region takes almost a round shape. Its total area is about (Sikar 7732+Jhunjhunu 5929) 13, 661 sq. km. ¹⁰

Shekhawati is bounded on the north and north-west by Churu district, Nagaur in the west, Jaipur in the south-east and Haryana in the north-east. The Shekhawati nizamat of the former Jaipur State used to have a natural boundary in the Aravali ranges.

Shehawati, thus, covers almost one fifth of Jaipur division. The area of this region is about 0.4 per cent of the total area of Rajasthan.¹¹



POPULATION

ACCORDING to the census of 1901, the population of Shekhawati was 8,08,196¹². But when the census of 1971 was taken, the population increased to 19,71878. Again, the census of 1981 indicated a very quick and enormous growth in population of Sikar in 1981 was 13,77,245 and that of Jhunjhunu 12,11,583.¹³

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

FOR administrative purposes Shekhawati is divided into two districts, Sikar and Jhunjhunu. There are six sub-divisions, namely Sikar, Fatehpur, Jhunjhunu, Nawalgarh Neem ka Thana and Khetri. These sub-divisions have been further divided into 10 tehsils, namely Sikar, Danta Ramgarh, Lachhmangarh, Fatehpur Srimadhopur Neem ka Thana Chirawa, Jhumjhunu, Khetri and Udaipurwati. There are 23 municipalities, namely Fatehpur, Ramgarh, Lachhamangarh, Khandela, Losal, Reengus, Sikar, Srimadhopur, Neem ka Thana, Jhujhunu, Khetri Nawalgarh, Chirawa Mandawa, Udaipurwati Mukandagarh, Bagggar, Surajgarh, Pilani, issau, Mandela, Gotra and Vidya Vihar. There are 16 panchayat samitis, 1529 village panchayats and 23 towns in the aggregate. 14

TOPOGRAPY AND GEOLOGY

THERE is no perennial river in the Shekhawati region. The Kantil, the main river, originates from the Khandela hills and after flowing for about 104 km. along the northern side of Khandela, reaches Rajgarh tehsil of Churu district and ends I the sand dunes of Nwarngpura. In July and August, this river is generally in spate. There are several other rivers and nallas. The Ranoli river passes through the salt lands of Revasa and turns into a miniature sea in the territory of Jeenmata and Kochhor. The Sabi, Sota, Basai, Ajabpura, Ramgarh, Kharakhera, Manda, and Kanwat are the other rivers that flow in the rainy season for only two or three months.

Almost every village has a pond which is generally used for bathing and providing water for cattle. The sandy land of the Kanwat and Jeenmata rivers are veritable lakes. Waters from several rivers collect here and are converted into salt. However, there is a network *Bawries* (tanks) 16 in Shekhawati. *Bawries* of Fatehpur and Jhunjhunu serve as reservoirs¹⁷ of water, apart from being nown for their architecture.

The region is replete with hills some of which are very high. The Aravali range beginning from Singhana covers Khandela, Udaipurwati, Shakembhari, Lohargal, Raghunathgarh, Rewasa, Sangarwa and Harsh regions and ends near Sambhar Lake. Malkhet, the highest peak is about 1,052 metres above sea level.18 Lohargal, Khandela and Sikari are other hills having places of worship.

The Aravali range indeed proved a boon for Shekhawati, but for their presence, this region would have been mere desert. The hills provide livelihood to the

people of this area. Several persons are engaged in mining and sell the slabs and stones obtained from these hills.

Some hillocks at Lachhamangarh, Jhunhunu, Pilani, Khirod and Basawa also exist. The stone of these hillocks is used for construction work. These hillocks have either temples or forts with great historical and religious significance.

Shekhawati is semi-desert and forms part of the vast Thar Desert of Rajasthan of Rajasthan. It stretches from Losal in the south-west of Sikar to Mandela right in the north of Jhunjhunu district. The Soil is sand and infertile with some areas completely barren. Of course, plenty of clay exists in some hilly and sub-hilly areas which are relatively fertile. The water level is not very low and half of the fertile region of the Aravali ranges, located in the south, consists of red soil which is not very useful. Salt-laden soil and yellow sand also abound in Shekhawati region, which too are not fertile.

The north-western part of this region is particularly sandy. There are lesser sand dunes in the eastern part and the plains are comparatively fertile. Such plains also abound in the eastern part of Jhunjhunu. Towards the north-west of Sikar the desert stretches over a vast area, but in the south-east from Danta Ramgarh to Neem ka Thana there are fertile plains.¹⁹ The water level is comparatively high due to plentiful rainfall.

The agriculture of Shekhawati depends mainly on the monsoon. Some are is irrigated by walls. The total number of useful wells in Shekhawati region was about $40,670^{20}$ in 1979-80. In the south-eastern part, several seasonal rivers flow. The water level is low the depth of the wells in this region is about 120 ft. Nowadays, pumping sets are also used for irrigating the fields. The Ajitsagar Bundh (earthen dam) in Khetri, Poonkh Bundh of Udaipurwati, the bundh of Kot, and the bundh of Saledipura near Khandela, etc. are used for irrigation, but the area irrigated by such bundhs and tanks is not very large.

Shekhawati is an area where rainfall is deficient. The people of the area depend largely on wells and ponds, but for a good harvest rainfall is a must. Since it determines the water level, it goes without saying that the rainfall in the people. It rains generally between the last week of June and mid-September. Occasionally, there is *Mawat* (winter rainfall) which is useful for the Rabi crops. A survey has indicated that the average rainfall in the towns is comparatively greater, the highest being in Neem ka Thana. Farmers face famines as the average rainfall in the region is low. Occasionally, there is a heavy rainfall which destroys the crops which is locally called *Barsta Akal*. Scanty rainfall is dubbed as *Sukha Akal* or dry famine. The average rainfall in Sikar and in Jhunjhunu districts is 46.61 cm. and 44.45 cm respectively.

Winter begins here in December and ends in February, January being the coldest month of the season. Sometimes, the minimum temperature in Sikar district falls to (-) 3°C and in Jhunjhunu to (-) 1°C;²¹. Occasionally, in December and

January, the temperature falls to freezing point and ice is spotted at some places. The summer extends from April to June. May is the hottest month of the year. Sometimes in June, the country's highest temperature, 44°C or 45°C is recorded here. In the summer, the day temperature soars but drops at night.

South-western and western winds blow in Shekhawati. High velocity winds blow during June and they are mild in winter. Sand-storms believed to be the most dangerous winds of this region are experienced during the months of April and June. They are called *Kali-Pili Andhi* in local parlance. During May and June, terrible storms and *Loo* (dry, hot winds) cause extreme discomfort to the people and animals. They raise high sand-dunes at various places.

FAMINIES AND DROUGHTS

THE Rajasthan desert, Col. James Tod observes, is "the region of death" (*Maroo Bhumi*) because it is regarded to be the most famine-affected region in India. It is called *Kal* in the local dialect which is synonymous with death. Mostly, cattle are the victims of these famines, but sometimes people also perish.

Shekhawati has perpetual famines too. Col. James Tod has also described the twelve-year famines. The period from 1255 to 1258 AD is known for its terrible famine. In the Shivalik regions of Ajmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaipur, people begged for a drop of water. They were compelled to migrate with their families to Delhi. Let was followed by another famine in 1875 when the people had to live on skins of animals and the bark of trees. Some people even turned cannibals.

However, the worst calamity occurred in 1899, when a famine called *Chhapania Kal* in the local dialect struck. The story goes that people went to sleep at night without walking up ever again. The had to eat grass, roots, and the bark of the *Khejara* tree, a species of prosopis which was bound and mixed with flour and eaten²¹ it is also said that three-fourth of the cattle died. This tragedy has been registered in a Rajasthan fold song "*Chhapania aurun mat aai mahare desh*". In this song the inhabitants of Marwar implore the terrible demon not to revisit their beloved land. It is worth mentioning that the Marwaris assisted the famine-affected people by giving alms and charity. Liberal assistance from the Marwaris of Bombay who were closely connected with the people of Marwar was received at this juncture.²⁵

Though most part of it is a desert, the soil of this region is rich in minerals. At Khetri, in Jhunjhunu district, Copper mines have existed since ancient times. There, mining was done even in the Mauryan period. The Khetri Copper Project is one of the largest projects of our country. In Jhunjhunu district, other metals like iron, fluoride clay and soapstone are also available. The non-metallic minerals found in this district are Bajri, slabs and limestone.

Sikar, the other part of Shekhawati, is devoid of such metals, At Neem ka Thana, mica is available in plenty. Besides, the non-metallic minerals that are found here are marble fluorite pyrite-pyrhotite, dolomite, talc, clays, building stones and roof slabs. ²⁶ Uranium and lead are found in small quantities in the Khandela and Saledipura mines. Harsh, Bhoyam, Mandawara, Raghunathgarh and Sangaria are the main sources of roofing stones and slabs. It is a well known fact that limestone and *kankar* are available in the whole region. A special variety of limestone is found in Maunda and Khirod. Limestone is generally manufactured by burning the *kankars*.

FLORA AND VEGETATION

DUE to the extremes of weather and want of water, Shekhawati is devoid of forests. However, it is noteworthy that in the medieval period, the rulers here had earmarked certain lands as pastures. Fatehpur's pastures, known as *beed*, has historical significance. It has a number of green shrubs with trees

Shekhawati mainly produces grass and wood. In some reserved forest areas grazing is banned while the remaining forest serves as pasture land. Honey, gum and leaves for basket making, are also produced collection of these materials from the reserved forest areas.

Only such vegetation as suits the atmosphere prevailing in the dry season grows. Fog and Khejara (Prosopis cineraria) are the major vegetation. Khejara grows in abundance and is put to multifarious use by the inhabitants of Shekhawati. The leaves of this tree called Loong are used as fodder for camels and goats. Sometimes it is also used as a herb. Its wood is used for domestic fuel. Sangari, the fuit of Khejara, is generally used as a vegetable. It has proved an effective herbal medicine for stomach ailments. When this fruit dries up, it is locally known as khokha and is exported to far-flung areas like Assam, Bombay, Madras, etc. where it is relished by the Marwaris. Therefore, it would be no exaggeration to say that the Khejara is the multipurpose tree of this area. It is regarded as a holy tree and is worshipped by the people who go around it, bow their heads and ask for its blessings.

Bush is another important vegetation of this region; its leaves are locally known as pala which is the main fodder for cattle. This tree also bears fruit called Ber or plums which are eaten with great liking. Its thorny twigs serve as fences around fields. The root of this tree called Rangjad is used for dyeing leather and making liquor. It is also helpful for healing wounds and in childbirth.

Akra is another plant which grows in the desert of Shekhawati; its leaves are used to making donas or small containers. Ropers are made from its fibre and its milk is used for washing leather. Khinp is also a small shrub found in sand dunes. This plant is very useful to the inhabitants. Shekhawati does not have fruit trees and plants like mangoes, oranges, apples, grapes, and almonds. All it has are shrubs and the roughest trees and plants but the ingenuity of its people has enabled them to make the best use of the worst available geographical situations. Babul, Kher, Kankera, Neem,

Kikar, Siras, Gular, Rohira, Pipal, Sisam etc. are the main trees of Shekhawati. We get Sangari, Gum, Ber, Keria, Pilu, Fogla, etc. These have become part of the day-to-day life of the people of Shekhawati.

Several herbs found in the forests of Shekhawati have great medicinal value. These are *bharoont*, *khinp*, *marodfali*, *gokharun*, *ardusa*, red and white *akra*, *dhatura*, *gunwar petha*, *kharinti*, *amarbel* and *rangjad* to mention only a few. The bitter apple has been praised by allopathic doctors for its medicinal properties. Radish, gourd, bitter gourd, cabbages, carrot, onion, brinjal, chilli, *tindasi*, *torai*, *sogari*, *cholai*, *podina*, *dhania*, etc. are the main vegetables. As far as fruit production in Shekhawati is concerned, *matira* or water melon is the most common fruit especially during the rainy season. It is not only eaten as a fruit but used as medicine also. It is very sweet and quenches the thirst. It comes to the rescue of travellers in the hot season who but for it would have died in the desert.

Agriculture in Shekhawati depends entirely on the grace and mercy of the rain-gods. In the north-western part of Shekhawati, only kharif crops are harvested while kharif and rabi crops are grown in the other parts. Bullocks and camels are used for ploughing the fields, but of late scientific techniques have been introduced in this arid region which will prove a boon.

Major crops of the area are maize, *bajra*, *moth*, *guar*, *moong*, *jawar*, *chaula*, etc. while in the rabi crops wheat, barely, gram and mustard are grown. A number of vegetables are also grown. Tobacco, sugarcane, groundnut, garlic, chilli, onion, *Sakarkandi*, *dhania*, *methi*, *jira*, *amla*, and *soanf*, are the commercial crops. Papaya, lemon *kharbuja*, *keri*, *dansariiya* are the fruits of this region. The production of these fruits is normal though grown only at a very few places.

The main crop is *bajra* which is widely grown in Jhunjhunu, covering 57.57 per cent of the district and in Sikar, Danta Ramgarh, Udaipurwati and Neem ka Thana. Millet is the staple diet of the inhabitants besides proving a good source of revenue in bumper years.

FAUNA

EVEN though a majority of cattle like cows, bullocks, buffaloes, sheep and goats are found in Shekhawati, the camel, the ship of the desert, proves to be the most useful animal. It is the mainstay for farmers. The bullocks are of Haryana and *Nagori* breeds, cows of *Nagori* and buffaloes generally of Murra, Goats of the Mayapuri breeds abound. The breeds of Bikaneri camels, *chokhala* and *neli* sheep are popular.

To generate and excellent breed of sheep, the Government of India has established a Sheep Farming Centre at Fatehpur where foreign breeds are also kept. Many farmers live on the sale of milk from their cows and buffaloes. Sheep provide good quality of wool and the wool industry employs a large number of people.

Birds and reptiles of various kinds are also found in Shekhawati. The peacock, pigeon, eagle, crow hens and partridges abound. Snakes, frogs and scorpions and reptiles of different breeds are found. Rats and squirrels are known to cause great havoc in fields.

SPECIAL WEATHER PHENOMENA

SHEKHAWATI bears a rough exterior with dry sand-dunes, throny shrubs, rough vegetation, and coarse grains like *bajra* and millet pointing to a situation of real hard life in the region. But beneath this hardness flows the health and vigour of its people, cattle and fauna. The people of this area are strong and sturdy and exhibit a rare endurance to undergo hardships. Due to its typical topography and climate, the people of the area are enterprising and hard-working which is reflected in their employment in the armed forces and in business. Jhunjhunu and Sikar districts provide the largest number of military personnel. Eminent captains of national industry are also from the region. Deep, dauntless, dutiful, darling-these four D's describe a typical resident of Shekhawati. The topography exercises a tremendous influence on the character of the people which is writ large on their faces.

IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS ON HUMAN BEINGS

THE geographical conditions which exercise a major impact on a country and its background are acute in this region. Sometimes, they are pleasant while the case becomes the reverse occasionally. However, by and large, this unique phenomenon has proved to be a boon for the region. The socio-cultural life of the people Shekhawati is determined by the hostility of nature the desert and semi-desert tracts of land, semi-wooded rocks and cliffs, scarce rainfall, famines and frequent scarcities. The deep wells provide sweet and life-giving water and the dry climate keeps people healthy. The hardy life that the people lead here makes them industrious and enterprising. Famines and storms strike home the message of hard work, and want of facilities goads them to stoic and tolerant. Scarcity of water is responsible for the quality of economy and thrift. Scarce vegetation has forced them to invent different uses for the wood, the leaves, the fruit and bark of the available trees. Khejara, akra and *jhadis* are used to the fullest extent possible. The cotton of akra is spun and cots made from the yarn last for at least 20 to 30 years. Frugality naturally becomes a part of the nature of a resident of this arid region. A typical Marwari exhibits all the traits of this topography.

ENTERPRISING SPIRIT

DUE to scarce rainfall the people developed daring and enterprise as they had to shift frequently in search of a new place for their livelihood. The spirit of adventure is equally reflected in all their activities, be it farming, military, working in the Gulf countries, or in business and it would be no doubt true if we say that the persons of this region created a history of their own and achieved unsurpassed glory in every sphere of life. The Rajputs sacrificed their lives for their motherland and achieved

fame in chivalry. They displayed a rare sense of bravery on various occasions while merchants displayed rare enterprise and entrepreneurial skill.

As far as the armed services are concerned, this region has made a very significant contribution. At present the Rajputs, the Jats, the Kayamkhanis, the Gujars, the Yadavs, the Meenas, etc. are the famous martial races of Shekhawati. The proportion of the arial race is coparatively greater than that of any other part of India. Jhunjhunu district stands first in infantry. The brave soldiers of this region have won several *Paramveer Chakras*, *Ashok Chakras* and other gallantry awards and medals on several occasions.

The Vaishyas did not lag behind the brave Rajputs. They beautified this region with their generosity and glorified its name by their darling entrepreneurship. To set up their business empires they not only settled themselves in strange and new parts of the world but also picked up the local dialect. They adapted themselves to the new circumstances and secured a prominent status. They not only projected everywhere. They had to cross several obstacles; they fell victims to notorious dacoits. These hardships did not deter them.

These were the circumstances that turned the populace into migrants The spirit of enterprise manifested itself according to the 'Varnshram System' (Caste system) also, which was a historical phenomenon. The Kshatriyas and Jats joined the military while the Vaishyas preferred business enterprises and played a great role. Thus, both history and geography are responsible for making the men of this area what they are. The Vaishya community practices economy and frugality; hence it was able to effect savings for investment in industrial enterprises, while other communities of the area showed their genius in other spheres of national life. Together, they have raised the banner of their beloved land high in the industrial as well as every other sphere of national and international activity.