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ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

THE CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

You are aware that entrepreneurship is regarded as one of the four major factors of production, the other three being land, labour and capital. However, it should surprise you that as regards its French origin, the term 'entrepreneurship' (derived from the verb 'entreprendre' meaning 'to undertake') pertained not to economics but to undertaking of military expeditions. So is true of many terms in management such as strategy (a course of action to beat the competition, the 'enemy') and logistics (movement of men and machines for timely availability), etc. Historically, as wars are followed by economic reconstruction, it should be no surprise that military concepts are used in economics and management. It may be pointed out that whereas the wars are rare and far between, in today's competitive world, entrepreneurs wage wars everyday. There is a tremendous pressure to continually develop new products, explore new markets, update technology and devise innovative ways of marketing and so on.

The term 'entrepreneur' was first introduced in economics by the early 18th century French economist Richard Cantillon. In his writings, he formally defined the entrepreneur as the "agent who buys means of production at certain prices in order to sell the produce at uncertain prices in the future". Since then a perusal of the usage of the term in economics shows that entrepreneurship implies risk/uncertainty bearing; coordination of productive resources; introduction of innovations; and the provision of capital.

We would like to define entrepreneurship as a systematic, purposeful and creative activity of identifying a need, mobilising resources and organising production with a view to delivering value to the customers, returns for the investors and profits for the self in accordance with the risks and uncertainties associated with business. This definition points to certain characteristics of entrepreneurship that we turn our attention to.