
Dalit Entrepreneurship: Problems and Prospects with Special Reference to Dakshina Kannada District

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Abstract: *Entrepreneurship is an elusive concept. The concept of entrepreneurship has been a subject of much debate and is defined differently by different authors. It has been used in various ways and in various senses. The word entrepreneurship has been derived from a French root which means 'to undertake' Today, people call it by various names such as, 'risk bearing', 'innovations,' 'thrill seeking' etc. The word 'Dalit' comes from the Sanskrit root dal - and means 'broken, ground-down, or oppressed'. Those previously known as Untouchables, Depressed classes and Harijanas who are sharing 24.4 percent in the total population (According to 2011 census data) are today increasingly adopting the term 'Dalit' as a name for themselves. The Dalits have historically been poor, deprived of basic human rights, and treated as social inferiors in India. They still face economic, social, and political discrimination in the name of 'caste'. Entrepreneurship is particularly important, as the so called Dalits have run and managed a number of traditional and cottage industries such as handicrafts, pottery and leather-work for centuries. The skills, know-how and domain of knowledge necessary for this purpose have been passed on from one generation to the next and are available with them even today. In the modern technology dominated and development driven times, to fulfil the mission of, 'Subka Saath- Subka Vikas', there is an urgent need as well as wide scope for research on Dalit Entrepreneurship in a developing country like India. It is necessary to reflect on the factors that have imprisoned them in the dungeon of depravity and shed light on how to push them to the mainstream of the economy with access to means of better livelihood and opportunities.*

Key Words: *Dalit, Entrepreneurship, Motivation.*

Introduction: Entrepreneurship is an elusive concept. The concept of entrepreneurship has been a subject of much debate and is defined differently

by different authors. It has been used in various ways and in various senses. The word entrepreneurship has been derived from a French root which means 'to undertake'. Today, people call it by various names such as, 'risk bearing', 'innovations,' 'thrill seeking' etc.

Entrepreneurship can be defined as an ability to discover, create or invent opportunities and exploit them to the benefit of the society, which in turn brings prosperity to the innovator and his organisation. From the social and macro-economic perspective, it is held that the economic development of any nation is a direct function of the number of high quality innovators and entrepreneurs it supplies. This, in turn, is dependent upon the desire for new and better products that society demands and accepts. A vicious circle is there by created resulting in all-round economic development and standard of life. With liberalisation and global competition being the governing societal paradigm and with the acknowledgment that wealth creation is indeed of paramount importance, the concept of entrepreneurship is receiving closer attention than hitherto from business management scholars and societal scientists.

Dalit Entrepreneurship

'Someone who believes in equality, practices equality in his or her life, and protests inequality wherever he or she sees it'.

The term 'Dalit' has different meanings for different people. The most common use of the term is to define people who were known as 'untouchables', separated from the rest of the society by the cast system. The word 'Dalit' comes from the Sanskrit root dal- and means 'broken, ground-down, or oppressed'. Those previously known as Untouchables, Depressed classes, and Harijanas who are sharing 24.4% in the total population (According to 2011 census data) are today increasingly adopting the term 'Dalit' as a name for themselves. The Dalits have historically been poor, deprived of basic human rights, and treated as social inferiors in India. They still face economic, social, and political discrimination in the name of caste.

The constitution of India guarantees equality of law to all citizens and this guarantee applies to all aspects of national life including social and economic. This provision was meant to be a tool especially for the upliftment of those sections of the population that had suffered deprivation for long periods in history owing to pernicious caste system. One such section is that of Dalits.

The concerns for Dalits lead to more radical movement headed by Dr B.R. Ambedkar. Mahatma Gandhi viewed Dalits problem as social one, whereas, Dr Ambedkar saw it as political and economic problem created by upper castes.

Entrepreneurship is particularly important, as the so called Dalits have run and managed a number of traditional and cottage industries such as handicrafts, pottery and leather-work for centuries. The skills, know-how and domain of knowledge necessary for this purpose have been passed on from one generation to the next and are available with them even today. Our history is evident that many small enterprises like fan-making, leather craft and manufacturing of musical instruments were their monopoly. These deserve to be revived with the help of the new available technologies as to make these neglected enterprises by traditionally skilled persons as successful entrepreneurship ventures. Another factor that contributes to the attractiveness of entrepreneurship in the context of this community is the filling of self-worth and independence that it generates.

Importance of Dalit Entrepreneurship

Dalit entrepreneurship is not only a social and economic necessity but also a technological and strategic necessity due to the following reasons;

1. **To Enhance the Standard of Living of the People:** Development of entrepreneurship is very vital for economic activities to uplift the poor masses. Developing country like India's main aim of economic activities is to raise the standard of living of the people, particularly Dalit population.
2. **Modernisation of Dalit Society:** The development of entrepreneurship is urgently needed for the modernisation of Dalit Society, because the life style of the present Dalit community has not changed. Therefore, the higher economic needs of these people can be met only by bringing them under the entrepreneurship ambit.
3. **Employment Provider:** Dalits can become the job givers, instead of job seekers if they get the sufficient entrepreneurial opportunities.
4. **Financial Inclusion:** The revolution in financial inclusion in India will lead to its natural progression i.e. entrepreneurship. The people who enjoyed the financial inclusion now are getting into entrepreneurship. A good number of people who have been brought into financial inclusion are Dalits. So it is quite obvious that the financially included Dalits will be graduating into entrepreneurs.

5. **Advanced Technologies:** Modern Information technologies like internet, mobile, cloud computing, etc. are throwing unlimited entrepreneurial opportunities to all the youths particularly the Dalit youths. The IT enabled business like e-commerce, e-trading, online trading of stocks etc. are giving innumerable opportunities for Dalit entrepreneurship.
6. **The Emerging Concept of Interest - free Finance:** Today, the interest-free finance concept gaining popularity. Interest-free financing are available for entrepreneurial activities. Interest-free finance concept discourages interest-based lending. This reduces the financial burden of the potential entrepreneurs. Interest-free finance emphasises the sharing of both profit and loss. Indirectly interest-free finance supports the equity model of business capital in small and micro enterprises. The interest-free finance is alternatively called as 'Islamic Banking'. Today, Islamic banking is more popular in Islamic and Non-Islamic countries. In London, all the traditional banks have Islamic banking windows. So, the interest-free financing and Islamic Banking will be a boost for Dalit Entrepreneurship.
7. **Educated Dalit Youths:** Easy access to Engineering colleges and Business schools produced a good number of Dalit engineers and potential managers. These engineers and managers are mostly from the second or third generation families. They are less interested in jobs and more interested in entrepreneurship. They feel that they have technical, financial and managerial capabilities to run business.

Dalit Entrepreneurship in Dakshina Kannada District

The study was related to Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. It is the coastal district of the state sheltered by the Western Ghats on the East and surrounded by the Arabian Sea on the West. Dakshina Kannada receives abundant rainfall during monsoon. It is bordered by Udupi district to the north, Chickmagalur district to North-East, Hassan district to the East and Kasaragodu district in Kerala to the South. Mangalore is the District Head Quarters. The district is divided into five taluks namely Mangalore, Bantwal, Puttur, Sullia and Belthangady. As per the general census of 2011 the total population of the district is 2089649 of which Dalits were of 230446 (11.03%). The community of Dalits in the district includes the sub castes - Baira, Maila, Adi-Dravida, Marati, Malekudiya, Nalke, Parava, Koragas and Mugeru etc. The district administration is very active in implementing the programmes of the government for uplifting the socio-economic level of the Dalits by monitoring the various activities like Safai Karmacharis Rehabilitation, Self Employment Scheme Programme, Micro Credit Schemes etc. launched by Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation, Dr B.R Ambedkar Development Corporation, Khadi and Village Industries Commission and Social Welfare Department. The District Industrial Centre

plays a key role in organising entrepreneurship training to the buddy upcoming entrepreneurs.

Objectives

The current study on 'Dalit Entrepreneurship - Problems and Prospects with special reference to Dakshina Kannada District' was formulated with the following objectives.

1. To identify the socio-economic profile of the Dalit entrepreneur,
2. To bring out the main motivational factors for Dalit entrepreneurs,
3. To study the major problems faced by the dalit entrepreneurs in the district.

Methodology

In order to analyze the topic, the questionnaire has been used. The sample consists of 50 respondents randomly selected from all the five taluks of the district and grouped under Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. The questions have been included to elicit their views to the required information relating to general background, motivational factors and the various problems faced by them.

Hypothesis Framed

1. There is no significant association between education and type of entrepreneurial activity
2. There is no significant association between the type of family and profit earned by the dalit entrepreneurs.

Statistical Tools Employed:

For analyzing the data and establish the inter-relationship between various variables, the following statistical tools are employed.

1. Simple Percentages.
2. Chi Square Test

Simple percentages

In order to prove the hypothesis, the percentages have been calculated on the data collected through questionnaires.

Chi Square Test:

The study used chi square analysis to find out whether there is any significant association between the education and type of entrepreneurial activity and the type of family and profit earned. The formula used was

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{\text{Observed} - \text{Expected}}{\text{Expected}}^2$$

Findings of the Study

1 General Information

Table 1: General Information of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	25-35	16	32
	35-45	18	36
	45-55	12	24
	Above 55	4	8
2	Educational Level		
	Illiterate	6	12
	Primary	22	44
	Secondary	17	34
	Collegiate	5	10
3	Monthly Family Income (Rs)		
	Below 4000	16	32
	4000-6000	20	40
	6000-10000	14	28
4	Type of the Family		
	Joint	20	40
	Nuclear	30	60
5	Caste		
	Scheduled Castes	18	36
	Scheduled Tribes	32	64

Source: Survey Analysis

The above table states that the majority of the respondents (68%) were in the age group of 25-45 years, wherein only 32 percent of the respondents belongs to the age group of above 45. The district is ranking the top position in the state in the educational level in general. Since the education can overcome the major causes of unemployment problem by promoting the entrepreneurial skills among the people, the selected sample also proves the same, indicating 88 percent of respondents were educated, of which 44 percent with primary education, 34 percent is up to secondary and 10percent with collegiate education. 68 percent of the respondents were getting the monthly income of above 4000. In the study area 60 percent of the respondents were belonging to nuclear family and majority of (64%) the respondents belongs to the scheduled tribe category.

2 Entrepreneurial Activities of the respondents

Table 2:

Activities	Number of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Managing Cottage Industries	16	32
Tailoring	13	26
Poultry Farming	16	32
Running DTP and Mobile work shop	5	10

Source: Survey Analysis

The above table indicates that majority of the respondents are exhibiting their entrepreneurial skills in innovations, decision making ability and leadership quality in managing the cottage industries with equal share to poultry farming (32%) , followed by tailoring with 26percent and 10 percent of the respondents have also possessed the knowledge of new technology by running their own DTP and Mobile work shop. The calculation of chi-square indicates that there is no association between education and entrepreneurial activities undertaken by dalit entrepreneurs, since the calculated $\chi^2_{0.05}$ was 1.338 and it was less than table value $\chi^2_{0.05}=12.6$.

3 Motivational and Facilitating Factors of Dalit Entrepreneurs

The present study has been made with an aim to bring out the motivational factors of Dalit entrepreneur.

Table 3:

Reasons	Number of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Making Money	16	32
Securing Self-Employment	8	16
Desire to be Independent	7	14
Hereditary Occupation	9	18
Govt Policy	10	20

Source: Survey Analysis

Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain behaviour. It gives the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs. The table 3 states that making money (32%) is the main facilitating factor of starting entrepreneurship, followed by necessity of continuing family business (18%). Concept of self employment had the share of 16 percent, whereas the desire to be independent is 14 percent, 10 percent of the respondents are motivated by pro-dalit policies of the Government at large.

4 Profit Earned by Dalit Entrepreneurs

Table 4: Brings out the profit earned by Dalit Entrepreneurs

Table 4: Profit Earned by Dalit Entrepreneurs

Profit earned (per month)	Number of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Below 4000	16	32
4000-6000	20	40
Above 6000	14	28

Source: Survey Analysis

Earning profit cannot be the objective of a business; more than eating is the objective of living. As such profit is the reward for an entrepreneur for undertaking risk in the business. The table 4 states that the majority of the entrepreneurs (40%) have earned a profit of Rs. 4000-6000, followed by 32 percent with below 4000 and 28 percent of respondents have earned above 6000. The application of chi square test indicates that there was no significant association between the type of family and profit earned by the Dalit entrepreneurs, since the calculated $\chi^2_{0.05}$ was 2.41 against the table value of $\chi^2_{0.05}=9.49$.

5 Major Problems Encountered by Dalit Entrepreneurs

Risk bearing is the common element of any kind of business; as no business can be run without risk. The following table illustrates the various problems faced by Dalit Entrepreneurs.

Table 5:

Constrains	Number of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Scarcity of Raw Materials	9	18
Problem of Marketing	15	30
Lack of Exposure	5	10
Lack of Technical Skills	11	22
Social Constraints	4	8
Tight Repayment Schedule	6	12

Source: Survey Analysis

The table 5, reveals that the main problem faced by the Dalit entrepreneurs is the marketing (30%) of the products manufactured by them. The globalised corporate world demands for hard core marketing efforts on the part of the entrepreneur but in the study area, Dalits who have set up small enterprises to sustain themselves facing the real problem is in the marketing phase due to less capital. Along with this 22 percent of the respondents are suffering with lack of technical skill wherein they need entrepreneurship training programmes to overcome this.

Suggestions

To empower the budding dalit entrepreneur, the society as well as the government must continue to make efforts to increase opportunities for them in all walks of life, especially making them self employed, the following steps may be adopted.

1. Policies for Dalit entrepreneurship should follow a comprehensive approach rather than be piecemeal
2. The procedures and formalities should be simplified for the registration of business, financial and legal assistance, subsidies concessions relief etc. from government and non government departments
3. The government should assist dalit entrepreneurs to participate in international, national and local trade fairs, exhibitions and conferences
4. Dalit India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI) which has been formed at the national level to make the Dalits to be the job givers instead of job seekers. They need technical and financial assistance from the government to organise training programmes for the upcoming Dalit entrepreneurs
5. Banks must work along with government by granting the sufficient funds without many formalities to bring them into the main stream of the society.

Conclusion

In the modern technology dominated and development driven times, to fulfil the mission of, 'Subka Saath - Subka Vikas', there is an urgent need as well as wide scope for research on Dalit entrepreneurship in a developing country like India. It is necessary to reflect on the factors that have imprisoned them in the dungeon of depravity and shed light on how to push them to the mainstream of the economy with access to means of better livelihood and opportunities. The present research is an effort in this direction with intensive hope and confident belief to make positive contributions and bench-mark in the field of research and its implications on Dalit Entrepreneurs.

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