



Entrepreneurship: a path for empowerment of *Dalit* women in rural area

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Abstract

The present study was carried out in Tumkur district aiming at to know the Empowerment of Dalit women through the Micro-Entrepreneurship in rural area. This study is attempting to assess the impact of small-entrepreneurship on empowering the Dalit women which broke the traditional occupation system. The main aim of the study is to understand the impact of small micro-Entrepreneurship in empowering the Dalit women and also to find out the problems of Dalit women entrepreneurs on the operational area. Descriptive research design was used. For the convenience of the study 50 respondents had selected as sample size using purposive sampling technique. The study found that after entering the entrepreneurship their standard of living and social-economic status had increased. And the level of participation had increased in socio-economic and political aspects. It was highlighted that, there is a greater awaking among Dalit women about the entrepreneurship. They are gradually achieving recognition and are making valuable contributions to the family economy and as well as national economy. And they also being experiencing the new forms of caste discrimination. This article seeks to contribute to such social problem solving by enhancing the public awareness and education on the developmental possibilities of social entrepreneurship and demands suitable policies need to be formulated to cater the needs and aspiration of the small and micro-entrepreneurship.

Keywords: dalit women, entrepreneurship, Tumkur

1. Introduction

Rural development is more than ever before linked to entrepreneurship. Institutions and individuals promoting rural development now see entrepreneurship as a strategic development intervention that could accelerate the rural development process. Furthermore, institutions and individuals seem to agree on the urgent need to promote rural enterprises: development agencies see rural entrepreneurship as an enormous employment potential; politicians see it as the key strategy to prevent rural unrest; farmers see it as an instrument for improving farm earnings; and women see it as an employment possibility near their homes which provides autonomy, independence and a reduced need for social support^[1].

Class is gradually replacing caste as the dominant factor in Indian society and entrepreneurship is the way forward for *Dalits* to change their social status, Scheduled Caste Community has shown their keen interest to adopt entrepreneurship to raise their socio-economic status at par with the developed community. For centuries, *Dalits* have been at the bottom of the income and social ladders, despised and exploited. Independent India aimed to improve their lot through job reservations, but with very limited results. Nevertheless, empowerment through democracy and economic opportunities created by 20 years of economic reform has created an astonishing new phenomenon. Entrepreneurship is universally acknowledged as playing a leading role in economic growth and there is growing evidence to suggest that there is a significant causal relationship between entrepreneurship, economic growth and poverty reduction.

Karnataka State Government has been giving package of incentives to new/expansion of industries set up in the developing regions of the State since 1964. The State has declared a new Industrial Policy 2013 and through this Government is also committed for development of the society by up-liftment of socially disadvantaged groups, viz. SC/ST entrepreneurs. This can be achieved through active involvement of this sector in the main stream of industrial growth, hence the special package of incentives have been proposed for economic development for inclusive growth. Karnataka has ranked second place in SC Enterprises sectors report revealed by *Dalit* Indian Chamber for Commerce and Industry 2015 (DICCI-2015). The below mentioned table explore that Dalit entrepreneurship status of few states viz. Tamil Nadu 18.12%, Karnataka 16.58% *et al*, Uttar Pradesh 14.14%, Madya Pradesh 13.65% and Punjab 6.35% has the scheduled caste entrepreneurship field.

Table 1

Rank	State	SC Enterprises
1	Tamil Nadu	18.12
2	Karnataka	16.58
3	Uttar Pradesh	14.14
4	Madya Pradesh	13.65
5	Punjab	6.35

Tumkur district constitutes 18.4% *Dalit* of population. So far various research has been taken up on various issues on *Dalit* in Karnataka. But there are less studies on the small-entrepreneur *Dalit* women and their activity in terms of

investment, sources of fund, income and the problems in the area of operation. This study is attempting to assess the impact of small-entrepreneurship on empowering the *Dalit* women which broke the traditional occupation system. The main aim of the study is to understand the impact of small micro-Entrepreneurship on empowering the *Dalit* women and the associated problems of *Dalit* entrepreneurship. There is a need for systematic study to assess the obstacles faced by the rural *Dalit* entrepreneurs and also to assess the level of entrepreneurship activities among rural *Dalit* women.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the socio-economic status of the *Dalit* women entrepreneurs in rural area
- To study the pattern of distribution of women entrepreneurs and their concentration on different business units.
- To analyze the impact of entrepreneurship among their socio-economic status

4. Results and Discussion

- To find out the challenges faced during operation entrepreneurship activity among the *Dalit* women

3. Method and Materials

This study based on the field work where the data was restricted to the selected village of the study area. This study was conducted in Tumkur District Karnataka state. The design of the study was descriptive in nature. For the purpose of the study 50 *Dalit* small-entrepreneur women were selected in 5 blocks of Tumkur district.. Tiptur, Turuvekere, Kunigal, Chikkanayakanahalli, and Tumkur taluk, in each block equal representation of respondents were considered, by using purposive sampling method. The study contains primary and secondary method of data. Observation was also made to elicit the required data. While analyzing the data observational remarks were also discussed in the discussion. Personal interview was carried out with the aid of self structured interview schedule. The collected data was analyzed by using simple statistical percentage analyses method.

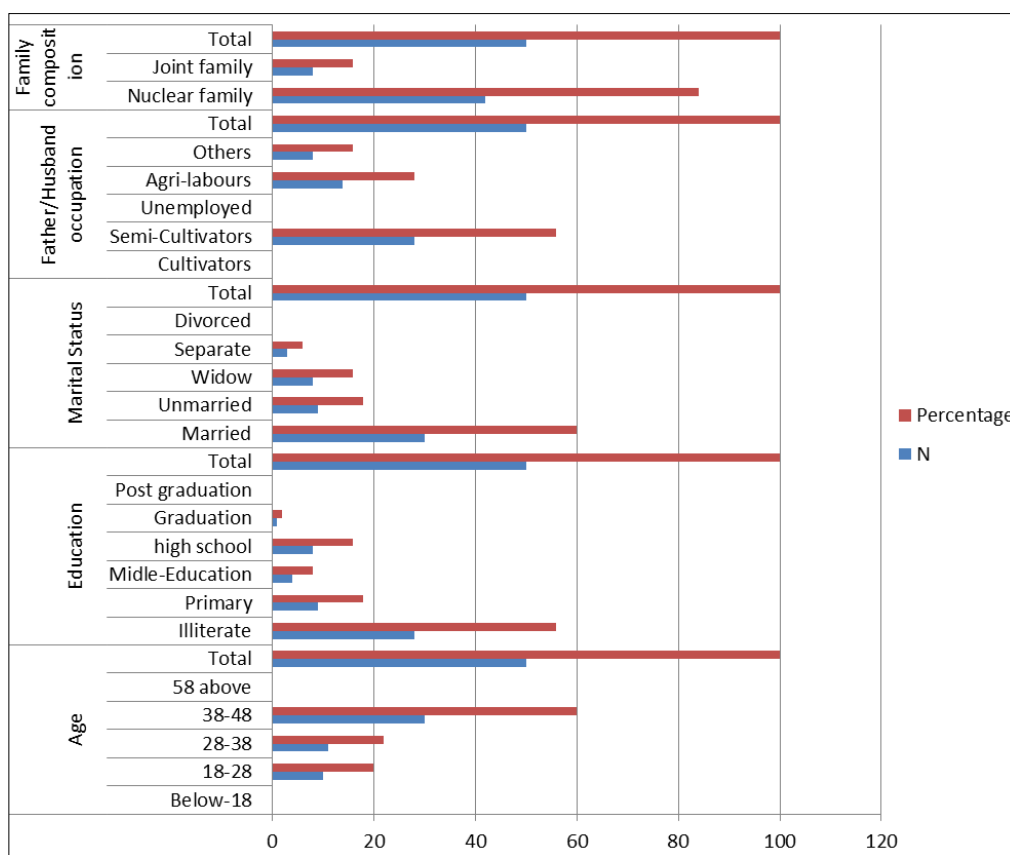


Fig 1: Socio-Economic profile

The above Graph -1 is showing the social-economic condition of the respondents. The above information table it is been highlighted that, majority 60% of the respondents are comes under the age group of 38-48. The majority 56% of the respondents are illiterate, not had any formal education but capable of handling all the accounts of business. The majorities 60% of the respondents were married and 18% of the women were widower and they are the main livelihood

earner for their family. Majority 56% of the women’s spouse or their father’s occupations was semi-cultivators and remaining 28% of the respondents works as agricultural labours. It highlights that traditional occupation were broken. Now they are identifying the new avenues for their livelihood. Miller (1971) further reveals that Indian economic problems are largely due to its social problems of which caste constraints are the toughest to be overcome [2].

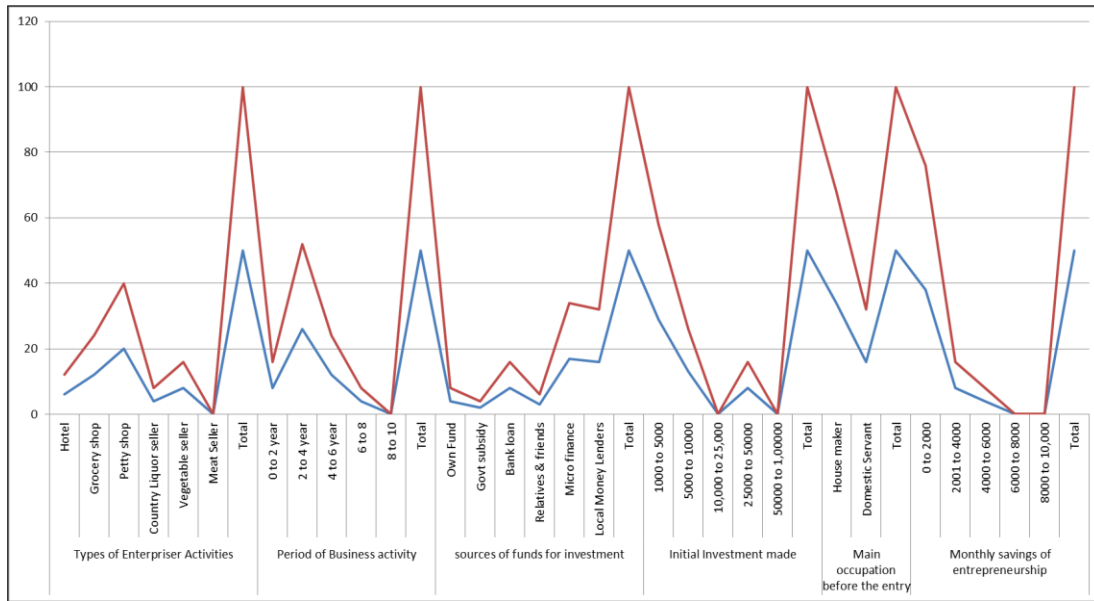


Fig 2: showing the nature entrepreneurship

Graph-2 indicates the respondents entrepreneurship nature. It could be seen that, 40% of the respondents are running petty shops and respectively distributed 24%, 16%, 12%, 8% and 0% on grocery shop, vegetable sellers, Hotel entrepreneurs, country liquor sellers and meat sellers. Further the table also shows that, the period of entrepreneurship, majority 52% of the respondents are been in entrepreneurship for period of 2 to 4 years. While, the sources of income are respectively distributed 34%, 32%, 16%, 8%, 6% and 4% on microfinance, local money lender, bank loan, own fund, relatives and friends and government subsidy. It also found that many of them are

depend on local money lenders. Majority 58% of the respondents shared that, initially they invested 1000 to 5000 Rs for their business. And rest of the 26% and 16% of the respondents initial investment is 5000 to 10000 Rs and 25000 to 50000 Rs. Majority 68% of the respondents were house maker before entering to the entrepreneurship and remaining 32% of the respondents were working as agricultural labors before entering to the entrepreneurship. Majority 76% of the respondents said that, they could able to save 0 to 2000 Rs for monthly. It can be understood that their entrepreneurship activities increased their saving capacity.

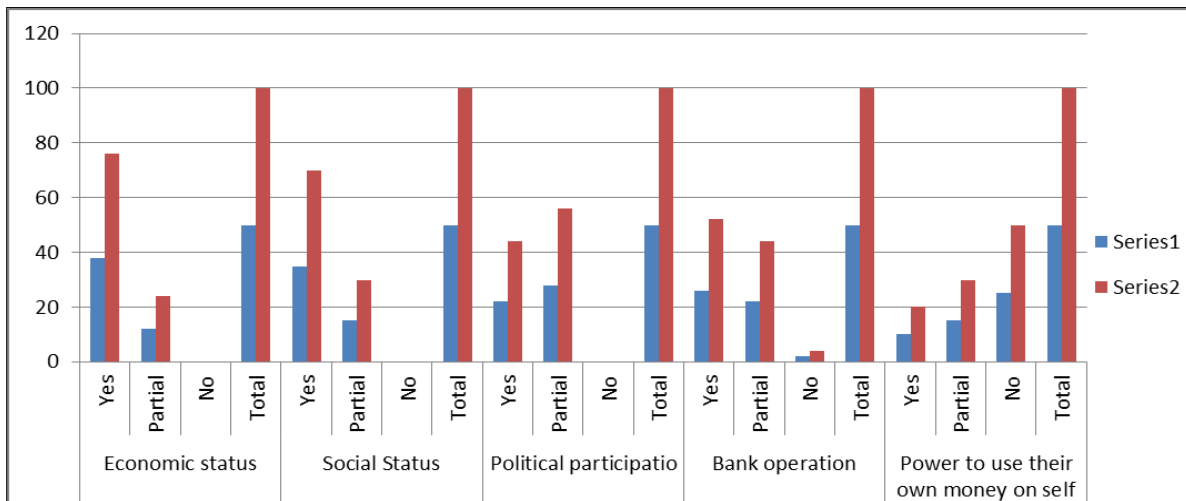


Fig 3: showing the impact of Entrepreneurship

The above Graph-3 indicates the impact of entrepreneurship among the respondents. Majority 70% of the respondents shared that their economic status has increased after starting entrepreneurship. Majority 70% of the respondents revealed that their social status has increased. 56% of the respondents shared that, political participation has increased. And 52% of the respondents said their bank operation skills are developed.

Majority 50% of the respondents shared that, they do not have the power to utilize their earned money for themselves. It may conclude that the path of empowerment is still need to be reached. Many of them were not fully aware about the government program schemes and believe that it will be difficult to get loan from government institution.

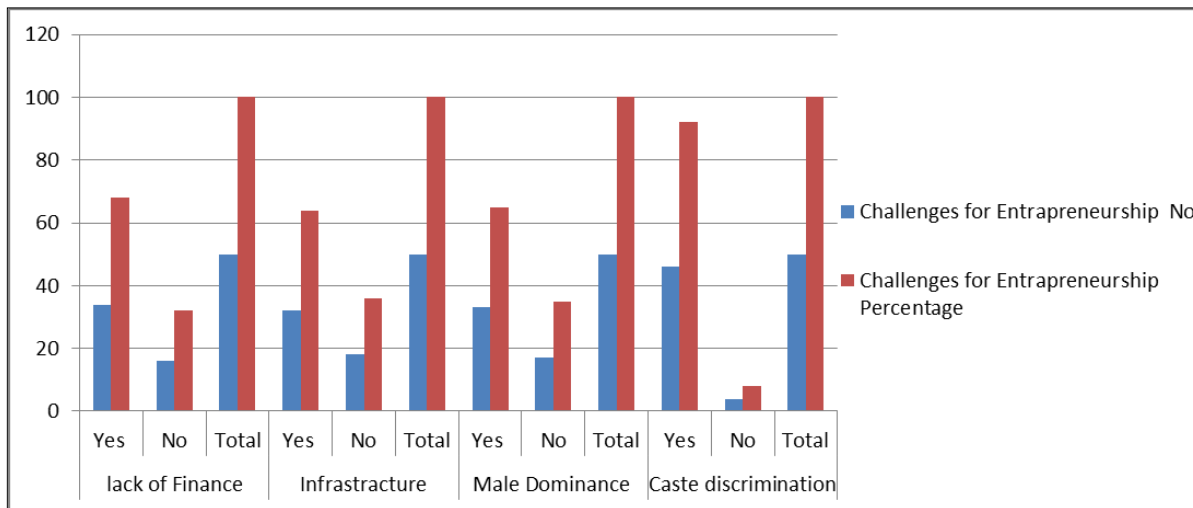


Table 4: showing the problems of women entrepreneurs

The above graphs indicate the social problems encountered by the women entrepreneurs. The majority 68 % of the respondents revealed that lack of finance is also the major problem for their entrepreneurship. Majority 64% of the respondents shared that, there is lack of primary amenities on the operational area. Majority 65% of the respondents expressed the existence of the male dominance in the operational area. Majority 92% of the women disclosed that, there is a large extent of invisible caste discrimination practice still prevalent in the business operational area. *Dalit* entrepreneurs continue to face discrimination, particularly those who want get into the business of food. Apart from that women also shared the lack of infrastructure and weak market. Beside all this problems women showed much keen interest to grow in this entrepreneurship.

5. Conclusion

It could be summarized that, *Dalit* women were in actively participating in earning the bread of their family. *Dalit* women participation in market oriented activities was much less than the men. It was highlighted that, there is a greater awaking among *Dalit* women about the entrepreneurship, but unfortunately they are not aware about the Dalit Indian Chamber and Industry (DICCI). Even Karnataka state also have a chapter of DICCI, which is assisting to remove the barriers relating to business helping to establish the firms. The Study found Dalits need much more hand holding. Entrepreneurial quality is depends on the network of existing entrepreneurs, where Dalits are poor in this context. Enterprises growth and inclusion economic development of the Dalits are the two weapons for their economic development. Majority of them were unable to get the government subsidy amount or loans. They are minuscule achieving recognition and were contributing to the family economy and as well as national economy. The policies need to made flexible to cater the needs and aspiration of the small and micro-entrepreneurship and special provisions should be made for the Rural *Dalit* entrepreneurship.

6. References

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