

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE AMONG COLLEGE DALIT STUDENTS IN CHENNAI

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### Abstract

Dalit entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education are core concept emerged as a solution to many problems of Dalits in modern India. Entrepreneurship plays major role in empowerment of economically vulnerable societies, but nowadays it is also taking part in forming the social capital and competence among Dalits in India. Knowledge, right attitude on Social capital and competence of entrepreneurs play important role in financial success of any community. This study focuses on the entrepreneurial attitude of college dalit students in Chennai. The average level attitude must be comprehended with right motivation and apt curriculum in special emphasis to develop the dalit students into entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Dalit entrepreneurship, vulnerable societies, dalit students

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## 1. Introduction

International human rights organizations notes that worldwide over 260 million people suffer from discrimination based on caste (or ‘work and descent’, the UN terminology for such systems of inherited status), that caste is “a fundamental determinant of social exclusion and development”<sup>1</sup>, and affects some 20–25 percent of the world’s population – including the peoples of South Asian nations and their diasporas.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize equality of opportunity and reducing inequality of outcomes, the elimination of discrimination in law, policy and social practice, and socio-economic inclusion of all under the banner goal ‘to leave nobody behind’. “All” here means, “irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status” (SDG 10.2).

Dalits constitute almost 30 percent of Indian population. In the rural sector 57 percent of the upper caste people and 26 percent of the Dalits were in the labor force. About 56 percent of the Dalit population in the rural sector is idle and unutilized. This is mainly due to existing social customs. But now the scenarios are changing fast with modernization, urbanization and development of education and business, Dalits are now seeking gainful employment in several fields in increasing numbers with the spread of education and new awareness. Dalit entrepreneurs are spreading their wings to higher levels of entrepreneurs namely engineering, electronics and energy.

### a. Caste and development

Dalits in India are vulnerable both socially and economically. They were discriminated from centuries but as a result of globalization, few Dalits have raised themselves as an entrepreneur with the motto of fighting caste with the capital. In developing countries like India, it plays a vital role not only as a source of livelihood but also as a solution to many social problems.

### b. Poor Prospects for Improvement

Despite India's growing economy, the outlook for dalits remains bleak. According to Thorat, globalization and economic liberalization have

actually hurt dalit prospects for progress and social mobility. Liberalization has shifted more of the economy from the public to the private sector, where hiring managers are almost exclusively from high castes and constantly discriminate against dalits, denying them the opportunities guaranteed by reservations.

Unlike the United States, India has no equal opportunity law applicable to the private sector, which means that the rapidly expanding private sector is under no compulsion to hire dalits, while the public sector will have fewer jobs to offer.

### c. The problem of social ostracisation remains

While statistics suggest that there is slow and steady progress in the condition of Dalits, the problem of social ostracisation remains. According to a 2014 [government report](#), over 44.8 percent of Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 33.8 percent of Scheduled Caste (SC) groups in rural India continue to live below the poverty line.

### d. Dalit Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship can develop only in a society in which cultural norms permit variability in choice of paths in life. But in developing countries like India it is very difficult for all to engage in entrepreneurial activities because of the poor social capital, competence and economic condition. So, a Dalit entrepreneur is an individual who belongs to Dalit community and doing his business in the market. Caste identity is an important determinant of life opportunity for a one fifth of the world’s population, but is not given the same significance in global development policy debates as gender, race, age, religion or other identity characteristics.

## 2. Theoretical Foundations

### a. Schumpeter’s Theory of Innovation

Joseph A. Schumpeter for the first time in 1933 assigned a crucial role of Innovation to the entrepreneur in his magnum opus, this theory of economic development. Schumpeter considered through the economic development, the dynamic change will occur to an entrepreneur when we introduce the new combination of productions such as innovation. In his theory, he made distinction between the inventor and innovator. The theory indicates the importance of innovation among the entrepreneurs in slums.

**b. Peter Drucker's theory of 'opportunity'**

Peter Drucker starts with Say's definition, but amplifies to the focus on opportunity. Drucker does not require entrepreneurs to cause change, but sees them as exploiting the opportunities that change (in technology, consumer preferences, social norms, etc.) creates. He says, 'This defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship' – the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity.

Drucker makes it clear that entrepreneurship does not require a profit motive. He specifies three conditions that have to be fulfilled in the process of this theory.

- a. Innovation requires knowledge and ingenuity. It is a demanding process by which a purposeful focus is given by persistence commitment and hard work.
- b. Innovation must be built on one's own strength
- c. Innovation always has to be done to the market, focused on the market. Indeed it should be market driven.

**c. Richard Cantillion's theory of Risk Bearing**

An Irish man who defined the term, entrepreneur as an agent has the uncertainty prevails in the business. It can be illustrated with the farmers and merchants of their business processes. Youth in slums bears lot of risk. The risks were from internal and external. Youth in slums have psychological, managerial, economic, social and political problems; they take the risk in doing business which creates a change in an individual, family and society at large. It is an important theory for the study to review on the risk taking behavior

**d. Howard Stevenson theory of administration**

Howard Stevenson, a leading theorist of entrepreneurship at Harvard Business School, added an element of resourcefulness to the opportunity-oriented definition based on research. He conducted to determine what distinguishes entrepreneurial management from more common forms of administrative management. After identifying several dimensions of difference, he suggests defining the heart of entrepreneurial management as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled. This theory helps the researcher to study administration

traits among the slum women.

**e. McClelland's Theory of Achievement**

He developed the Achievement Motivation theory. According to this theory, individuals need for achievement which refers to the need for personal accomplishment. It is the drive to excel, to strive for success and to achieve in relation to a set of standards, people with high achievement motives would like to take calculated risks and . It helps the researcher to study the need for achievement in the trait for entrepreneurship among slum women.

**f. Empowerment Theory**

Theory of empowerment is actually a social psychiatric theory therefore it directly relates to the field of social work and studies. Empowerment is a process, where power can be developed, facilitated or "secured" with the purpose of enabling challenged individuals or groups to increase their resources, improve their self-esteem and build up the ability to act on their own in psychological, socio cultural, political and economic situations (Staples, 1993). For a social worker, empowerment as a method will increase focus on the individual, its self-worth, and ability to act. It focuses on social situations, groups, families, contexts, and on a local community, organization or network, meaning that usually develop a person's ability to function within a certain community.

**3. Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI)**

The Pune-based Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI) was established in 2005 by Milind Kamble, a civil engineer and entrepreneur. While Mr. Kamble is currently the Chairman, the organization has grown with the help of 29 state chapters & 7 International Chapters. Its membership base is rapidly expanding as more Dalit entrepreneurs become aware of its activities and what it can offer them. The activities of its members are quite diversified ranging from manufacturing sectors such as chemicals, agri-products, frozen foods, plastics, textiles, pest control, metals and metallurgy, marine engineering, solar energy, sugar refining, construction and services, health care, hospitality industries, education and international trade. DICCI is working for accomplishment of Dr Ambedkar's vision of economic empowerment through self-help and entrepreneurship.

The three fold mandate of DICCI

- Bring together all Dalit entrepreneurs under one umbrella
- Become a one-stop Resource Center for existing and aspiring Dalit entrepreneurs
- Promote entrepreneurship among Dalits as a solution to their socio-economic problems

#### 4. Case studies

There are five successful stories of Dalit entrepreneurs who went against all odds and made it big as entrepreneurs. Once unimaginable and even unaccepted, these Dalit entrepreneurs built multimillion dollar business out of scratch, and fought the dual battle of economic and social oppression.

##### a. Chandra Bhan Prasad

The Editor of Dalit Enterprise — India's first ever magazine exclusively for Dalit entrepreneurs

**Dalit Enterprise**, a Delhi-based digital magazine that features these entrepreneurs has just one motto that they go by, "Our dream is to feature as many 100 Dalit and Adivasi billionaires in our magazine and to promote Dalit capitalism in the economy," says **Chandra Bhan Prasad**, an entrepreneur himself and the magazine's editor. The monthly English magazine features as many as 12 to 16 Dalit business magnates in an edition and narrates their story of success in an attempt to inspire Dalits to enter the cutthroat world of business. Chandra Bhan who strongly feels that English can be a tool for Dalit's emancipation, has dedicated a temple for the Goddess of English, in Banka village in Uttar Pradesh

##### b. BhagwanGawai – from construction worker to a CEO in Dubai

BhagwanGawai is the CEO and chairman of Saurabh Energy DMCC, a Dubai-based company that supplies petroleum products, petrochemicals and provides consultancy and support services in the aviation sector. Bhagwan, along with his mother and siblings once worked as a construction worker in Mumbai, before they settled in a slum. His family had migrated from rural Maharashtra to Mumbai, and worked hard to ensure Bhagwan got a decent education.

Bhagwan didn't disappoint his family, scoring 85 percent in Class X. He joined a government oil company, HPCL, but was victim of caste-based discrimination. He quit his job and moved to Bahrain in 1991, where he joined ENOC as its fourth employee, and

was eventually well known in the oil circles. In 2003, he, along with an Arab businessman, started their own company, making a turnover of \$80 million in the first year. To support more entrepreneurs, he has identified 30 young Dalit achievers and is coaxing them to become successful investors through Maitreya Developers, another company he has started.

##### c. KalpanaSaroj – from a child bride to \$112-million CEO

Serial entrepreneur KalpanaSaroj has tried her hand at producing films, real estate, and is currently the Chairperson of Kamani Tubes, a Mumbai-based company. Born in a village in Vidarbha to a police constable, Kalpana got married at the age of 12. Living in a Mumbai slum, she was subjected to physical abuse by her husband's family members. She left her husband and returned to her village with her father, only to face social ostracisation.

Undeterred, Kalpana returned to Mumbai and started working while living with her uncle. With some saving and seed funding she ventured into a small furniture business. This was the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey, which continues even today. In 2001, she took over Kamani Tubes, and turned it into a profitable company. According to estimates, her personal assets are worth \$112 million.

##### d. Raja Nayak – from running away from home to helming Rs 60-crore businesses

Raja Nayak was born to Dalit parents who had migrated from a remote village in Karnataka to Bengaluru. His family lived in poverty, with his father's unsteady income and a family comprising four siblings. When Raja was 17, he got inspired by an Amitabh Bachchan film and ran away to Mumbai with the hopes of becoming a real-estate baron. While that venture didn't end well with Raja returning home heartbroken, it also gave Raja the courage to keep trying.

He dropped out of school and started with selling t-shirts, and later diversifying into Kolhapurichappals and footwear. With an ample appetite for risks and diversification, today Raja has a total turnover of Rs 60 crore from enterprises across diverse sectors including international shipping and logistics, corrugated packaging, packaged drinking water, wellness, and chia rice products. He currently serves as President of the Karnataka chapter of Dalit Indian Chamber of

Commerce and Industries (DICCI), and runs schools and a college under the banner of Kalaniketan Educational Society for the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of society.

**e. Ratibhai Makwana – a farm-labourer's son who built a Rs 380-crore business**

Ratibhai Makwana is the Managing Director of Ahmedabad-based plastic intermediaries company Gujarat Pickers Industries. Ratibhai's father was a farm labourer, who later started making leather pickers. Going to school in a small town in Gujarat, Ratibhai faced discrimination due to his caste. When Ratibhai turned 18, he left college and joined his father's trade.

He helped his father expand the business into plastic intermediates. Over the years, Ratibhai also led the company into sugar business in Uganda. The 56-year-old company makes annual revenues of Rs 380 crore, and employs around 3,500 people in its Ahmedabad factory, of which nearly 2,000 are Dalits.

**f. Ashok Khade – the cobbler's son who built a business worth Rs 500 crore**

Ashok Khade is the Managing Director of DAS Offshore, an engineering company that builds and refurbishes offshore rigs and platforms. His father was a cobbler and worked under a tree in Mumbai. Braving all odds, Ashok finished his education from his village and went to college.

He then started working at a government-run shipyard in the city. After acquiring the required skills in offshore maintenance and construction, he started his own company, and delivered on the opportunities presented at him by the rising oil services industry during the 90s. Ashok's company today provides job to 4,500 employees and has an annual turnover of Rs 500 crore.

**5. Objectives of the Study**

**a. General objective**

The purpose of this study is to explore the entrepreneurial attitude of College dalit students in Chennai.

**b. The Specific Objectives**

More specifically this study will attempt:

1. To find out the entrepreneurial attitude of students in higher education
2. To find out the differences, association and relationship between entrepreneurial attitude of students with their selected independent variables.
3. To suggest ways and means to improve students attitude towards their entrepreneurial attitude.

**6. Significance of the Study**

The present study attempts to contribute for both theoretical knowledge and managerial practices on entrepreneurial attitude in higher educational institutions. Thus this will contribute towards the entrepreneurship education

The research outcomes may help those target institutions to review their institutional entrepreneurial situations and potential areas of action, and about their own degree of competence and engagements towards entrepreneurialism especially among dalit students.

In particular, findings of this study can be very helpful to policy makers in the country in academy, industry and government for utilizing entrepreneurship for economic growth, employment and increasing welfare of people.

**7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study the investigator adopted survey method. In this study, the investigator used the following tools.

- General data sheet prepared by the investigator
- Entrepreneurial attitude scale

**Entrepreneurial attitude scale**

Attributes of entrepreneurship ;

- Interest (1), Motivation (8), Inhibitors (6), Key influencers (7), Measures (5), De motivators (9)
- Score for items are as it is (i.e) Always (4), Most of the time (3), Sometime (2), Never (1)
- Total items 36, Maximum score 180 and Minimum score 36

**Individual data showing the scores**

	Interest	Motivation	Inhibitors	Key influencers	Measures	De motivators
Items	1	8	6	7	5	9
Max score	4	32	24	28	20	36

The population consists of 300 UG and PG students studying in Chennai. Random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample from the population. The stratification has been done on the basis of gender, religion, caste, nature of school, medium of school, locality of the students, type of college, father's education mother's education, and father's annual income. The research is descriptive in nature.

**Statistical technique:** The percentage analysis, Arithmetic mean, Standard deviation, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used.

**8. Findings**

Independent variables

- **Age** plays an important role to analyze the developmental changes in any experimental objects of study 93.2% of 19 to 21, 5.4% of 22 to 24 and 1.4% of 25 & above age groups were interviewed.
- **Community.** Caste plays an important role in forming the psyche of Indian people. Without having an analysis on the caste background of the people no study would be fulfilled in finding the depth of any problem. According to this study 52% of FC's, 22.8% of MBC's, 6.7% of BC's, 17.1% of SC's and 1.3% of ST's were interviewed.
- **Religion** also an inseparable element of people's lives in India. Any social analysis should consider this variable so important that which determines peoples' attitudes. This study has interviewed 79.4 % of Hindus, 8.8 % of Christians and 11.8% of Muslims.
- **College types** determine the quality of one's perceptions and behaviors. This study has interviewed 94.7% of Science and 5.3% of arts college students.
- **Course types:** 92.7% of UG, 4.7% of PG and 2.7% of Ph.D and other courses.
- **Location of the Colleges:** 28.3% of Rural and 71.7% of Urban Colleges were interviewed.

- **Family types:** 60% of Single, 25.7% of joint and 14.3% of separated families
- **Part time jobs.** In most of the Colleges, they encourage their students to do a part time job along with their studies. 16% of the samplings were interviewed from the students those who do a part time jobs along with their regular college studies.
- **Residence:** 98.7% of Home comers and 3.3% of hostellers.
- **Generations of study:** 13% of 1<sup>st</sup> generations and 87% of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students.
- **Father's occupations:** 16.3% of Business and traders and 83.7% of other type of jobs
- **Father's education:** 71.3% of educated and 28.7% of uneducated parents
- **Mother's education:** 72.7% of educated and 27.3 of uneducated mothers
- **Father's income:** 30.3% of Below 25000, 24% of 25001 to 50,000, 33.3% of 500001 to 100000 and 12.3% of 100000 and 200000 per month

**Entrepreneurship Attitude:** 50% of average, 26% of low and 24% of high levels of attitudes. It is explicitly concluded that most of the students have only average level of entrepreneur attitude.

**T test and Annova: Entrepreneurship attitude**

1% level of difference is found among Types of courses studied (UG, PG), Age groups. 5% level of difference among Types of subjects studied (Art, Science) and age groups. There is no differences exists between genders, communities, family types, having and not having a part time job, residences, generations of study, Fathers occupations, Fathers educations, Family income, Religions, location of the colleges,

**Chi square for associations: Entrepreneurship attitude**

There is 1% level of association found with Locations of the Colleges, 5% of association

with Religions, and No association with Gender, Communities, College types, Course types, Family types, having and not having a part time job, residences, generations of study, father's occupations, father's incomes towards entrepreneurship attitude.

#### **Correlation: Entrepreneurship attitude**

There exists 1% relationship with College location. 5% relationships with Gender, having and not having a Part time jobs. No relationship with Community, Religion, College types, Course types, Family types, Residences, Generations, Fathers occupations, Fathers education, Mothers education and Fathers' income towards entrepreneurship.

### **9. SUGGESTIONS**

- College going students have only an average level of Entrepreneurship attitude. Therefore there is a space to all the students to develop their attitudes. Colleges must design curriculum that enhances these attitudes among students along with their academics.
- The t test on differences on entrepreneurship proves that differences exist only among the Types of courses studied (UG, PG), Age groups. Types of subjects studied (Art, Science) and age groups. There is no differences established on genders, communities, family types, having and not having a part time job, residences, generations of study, Fathers occupations, Fathers educations, Family income, genders, Religions, location of the colleges. These above variables need not to be considered among the entrepreneurship education.
- There is association exist only between Locations of the Colleges and Religions with entrepreneurship attitude and No association is established between Gender, Communities, College types, Course types, Family types, having and not having a part time job, residences, generations of study, father's occupations, father's incomes with entrepreneurship attitude. Therefore while teaching on entrepreneurship association between these variables and entrepreneurship need not to be considered.
- There is Correlation exist only between College location, Gender, having and not having a Part time jobs with entrepreneurship and No relationship is established with Community, Religion, College types, Course

types, Family types, Residences, Generations, Fathers occupations, Fathers education, Mothers education and Fathers' income. Therefore while teaching on Entrepreneurship Correlation between these variables and entrepreneurship need not to be considered.

- The results suggest that the teaching authorities can not teach with the same type of courses for all the students. Different types of courses are to be designed to equip the dalit students with maximum standards.
- Students are needed to be classified before entering to the educational institutions with right measures
- Counseling and frequent assessment in their overall development should be developed and recorded in every institution.
- Linkages with the neighboring industries and corporate should be developed by all the educational instructions in order to encourage the earning attitudes among the students with their academics.
- Students should be encouraged to do a small business along with their academic studies.

### **10. Conclusion**

Learning is a skill. All creatures are endowed to learn something for their survival. Attitude towards learning is a prerequisite aspect to learn something new. This study has proved that the College students have only average levels of attitude towards learning entrepreneurship. The educational institutions are compelled to revise their content and the mode of teaching to increase the motivation and the aim of learning with good attitude. The internal, external aspects and the dispositions of any learning must be evaluated and improved. learning Entrepreneurship helps one to improve their global perspectives in creating international opportunities. This study recommends the institutions to improve the contents from average to high level. Students must be motivated to develop a high level of attitude towards any learning especially entrepreneurship.

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