

“Dalit Entrepreneurship in Dakshina Kannada District-Status, Problems and Prospects”

**Radhakrishna Gowda V.
Dr. Pramod Gonchikar**

Assistant Professor, & Research scholar, Dept. of Business Management, St Philomena
College Darbe, Puttur DK 574202
Assistant Professor, & Research Guide, Govt. RC College, Bangalore

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a volatile concept. The concept of entrepreneurship has been a widely debated and is defined differently by different authors. It has been interpreted in various ways and in various senses. The word entrepreneurship has been derived from a French root ‘entreprendre’ which means “to undertake”. Today, it is considered as the inevitable quality of the business people such as, ‘risk bearing’, ‘innovations,’ ‘thrill seeking’ etc. It is only in recent years that entrepreneurship and the role of entrepreneurs in the process of industrialisation and economic development has been recognised in both developed and developing countries. . Dalits are the marginalised section of the society have historically been poor, deprived of basic human rights, and treated as social inferiors in India .The term ‘Dalit’ has different meanings for different people.. 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 law of the land guarantees equality 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. Employment gives economic status to Dalits and economic status paves the way of social status. Dalits constitute almost 25% of Indian population. Majority of the Dalit population in the rural sector is idle and unutilised. This is mainly due to existing social customs. 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, Innovation, Motivation, Risk bearing.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a volatile concept. The concept of entrepreneurship has been a widely debated and is defined differently by different authors. It has been interpreted in various ways and in various senses. The word entrepreneurship has been derived from a French root ‘entreprendre’ which means “to undertake”. Today, it is considered as the inevitable quality of the business people such as, ‘risk bearing’, ‘innovations,’ ‘thrill seeking’ etc. The concept and its theory have evolved over more than two centuries. In a classical economic theory, it was a shady concept. In the run and under perfect competition the entrepreneur either disappeared or at least changed over into a sort of ‘general manager’. It is only in recent years that entrepreneurship and the role of entrepreneurs in the process of industrialisation and economic development has been recognised in both developed and developing countries.

Entrepreneurship can be defined as the 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. According to the social and economic perspective, 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.

According to Higgins, “Entrepreneurship is meant the function of seeking investment and production opportunity, organising an enterprise to undertake a new production process, raising capital, hiring labour, arranging the supply of raw materials, finding site, introducing a new technique and commodities, discovering new sources of raw materials and selecting top managers of day-to-day operations of the enterprise”.

The above definition identify two basic elements of entrepreneurship namely ‘innovation’ and ‘risk bearing’

Dalit entrepreneurship:

The law of the land guarantees equality 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. Dalits are the marginalised section of the society have historically been poor, deprived of basic human rights, and treated as social inferiors in India .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 caste 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 concerns for Dalits lead to more radical movement headed by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, who viewed Dalit problems as political and economic problem created by upper caste people.

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 evidence 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 felling of self-worth and independence that it generates.

Significance of Dalit Entrepreneurship

Employment gives economic status to Dalits. Economic status paves the way of social status. Dalits constitute almost 25% of Indian population. In the rural sector 57% of the upper caste people and 26% of the Dalits are in labour force. About 56% of the Dalit population in the rural sector is idle and unutilised. This is mainly due to existing social customs. But now the scenarios are changing fast with modernisation, urbanisation and development of education and business. Dalits are now seeking gainful employment in several fields in increasing numbers. With the liberal education policy of the nation and new awareness, Dalit entrepreneurs are spreading their wing to the higher levels of entrepreneurship like, engineering, electronics and energy. So today, no field is unapproachable to trained and determined modern Indian. But still it cannot be said that the Dalit entrepreneurship movement has taken off the ground and it is felt that movement is still in transition period. Dalit entrepreneurs can be planned and developed and the need for

providing appropriate awareness and environment to promote entrepreneurship is vital importance.

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

- **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.
- **Modernisation of dalit society:** The development of entrepreneurship is urgently needed of 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.
- **Be the job giver:** Dalits can become the job givers, instead of job seekers if they get the sufficient entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Inclusive growth:** 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 looking 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.
- **Up-gradation of technologies:** Modern Information technologies like internet, mobile, cloud computing, apps etc. are throwing unlimited entrepreneurial opportunities to all the youths particularly the Dalit youths. The I T enabled business like e-commerce, e-trading, online trading of stocks etc. are giving innumerable opportunities for Dalit entrepreneurship.
- **Interest-free financial policy:** 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.
- **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 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 northeast, Hassan district to the east and Kasaragodu district in Kerala to the south. Mangalore is the district head quarters of the district. The district is divided into five talukas 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 Dalits in the district includes the sub castes - Baira, Maila, Adi- Dravida, Marati, Malekudiya, Nalke, Parava and Koragas. 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 key role in organising entrepreneurship training to the buddy upcoming entrepreneurs.

Objectives:

The current study on 'Dalit Entrepreneurship in Dakshina Kannada District- Status, Problems and Prospects' was formulated with the following objectives.

- ✓ To identify the socio-economic profile of the Dalit entrepreneurs in the study area
- ✓ To analyse the various entrepreneurial activities of the Dalit entrepreneurs under study
- ✓ To determine the motivational factors influencing the sample respondents to start their present ventures.
- ✓ To study the constraints and challenges encountered by the Dalit entrepreneurs in the study area.

Methodology:

In order to analyze the topic, the questionnaire has been used. The sample consists of 50 respondents randomly selected from all the five talukas 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 interrelationship between various variables, the following statistical tools are employed.

- i. Simple percentages.
- ii. 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

$$X^2 = \sum \left[\frac{\text{Observed} - \text{Expected}}{\text{Expected}} \right]^2$$

Findings of the Study

1. General Information:

Table 1: General Information of the Respondents

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

Source: Survey Analysis

TABLE 1.1 AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

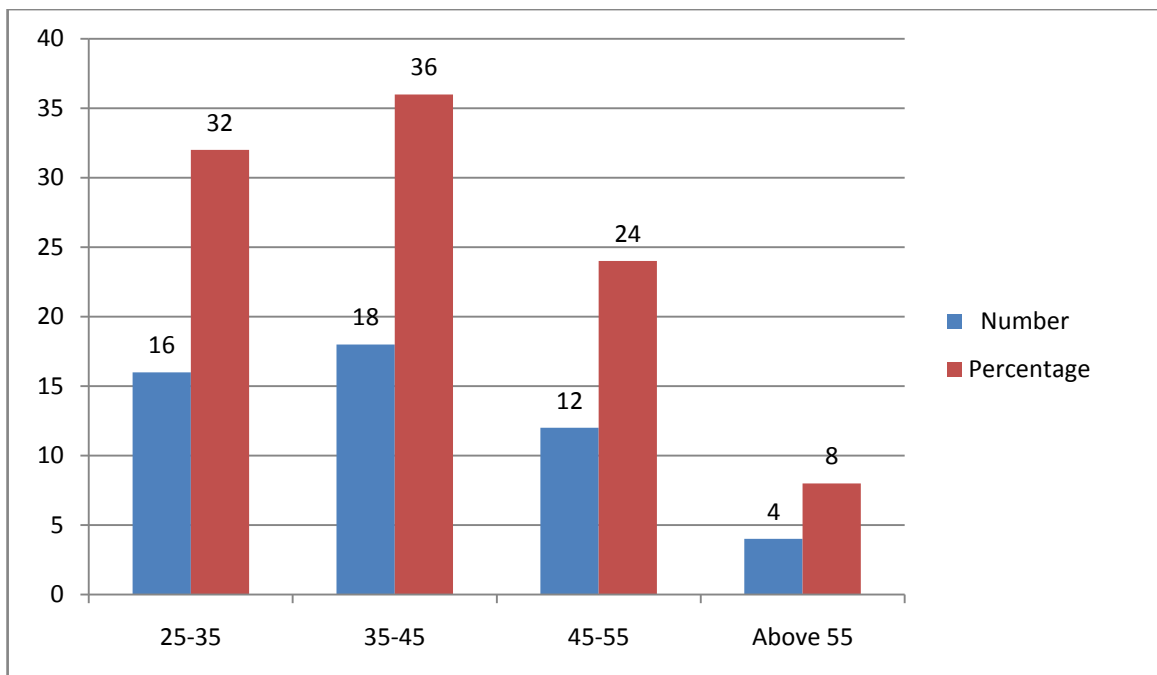


TABLE 1.2 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENT

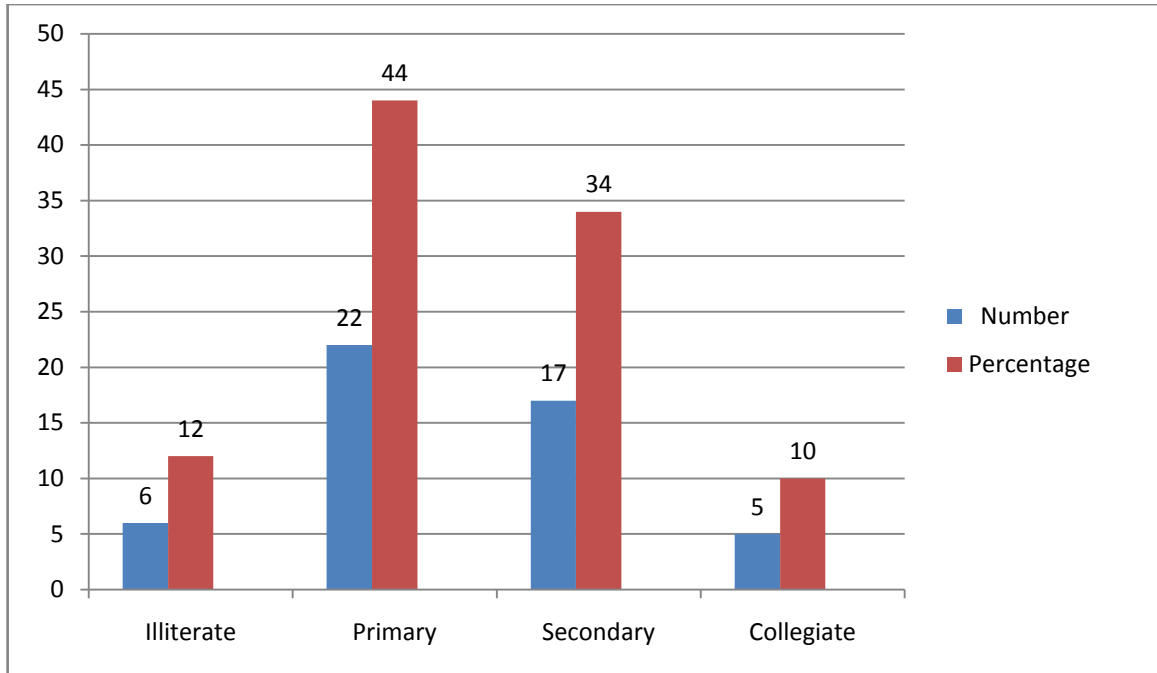


TABLE 1.3 MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS

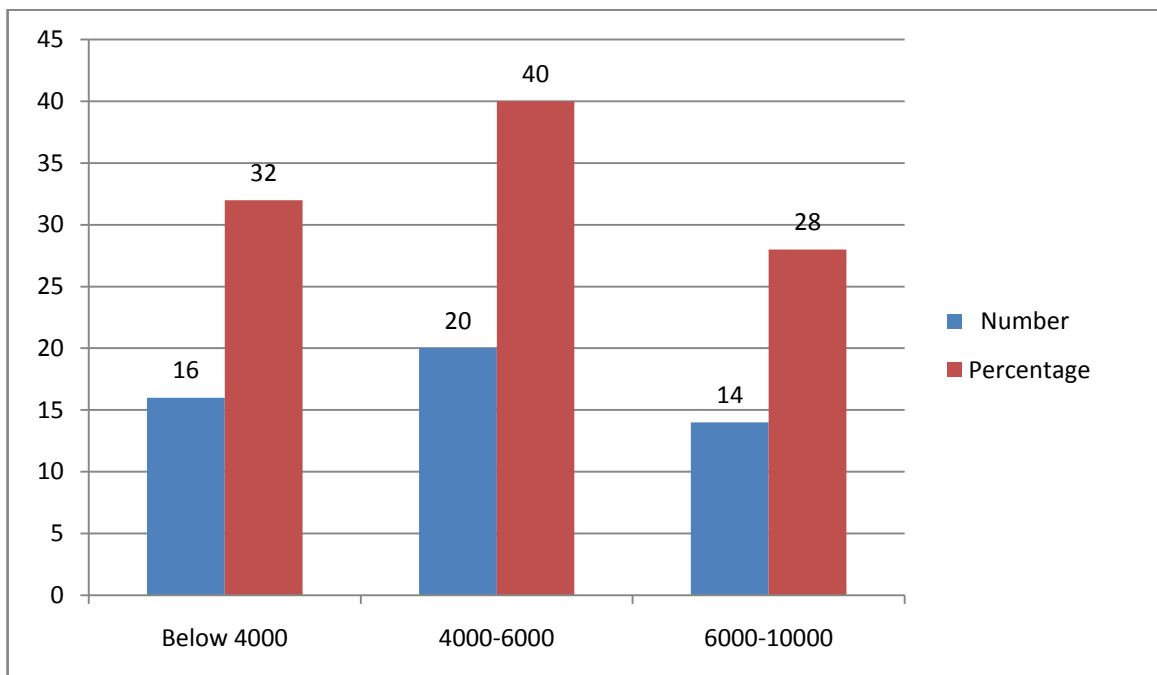


TABLE 1.4 TYPE OF FAMILY OF THE RESPONDENTS

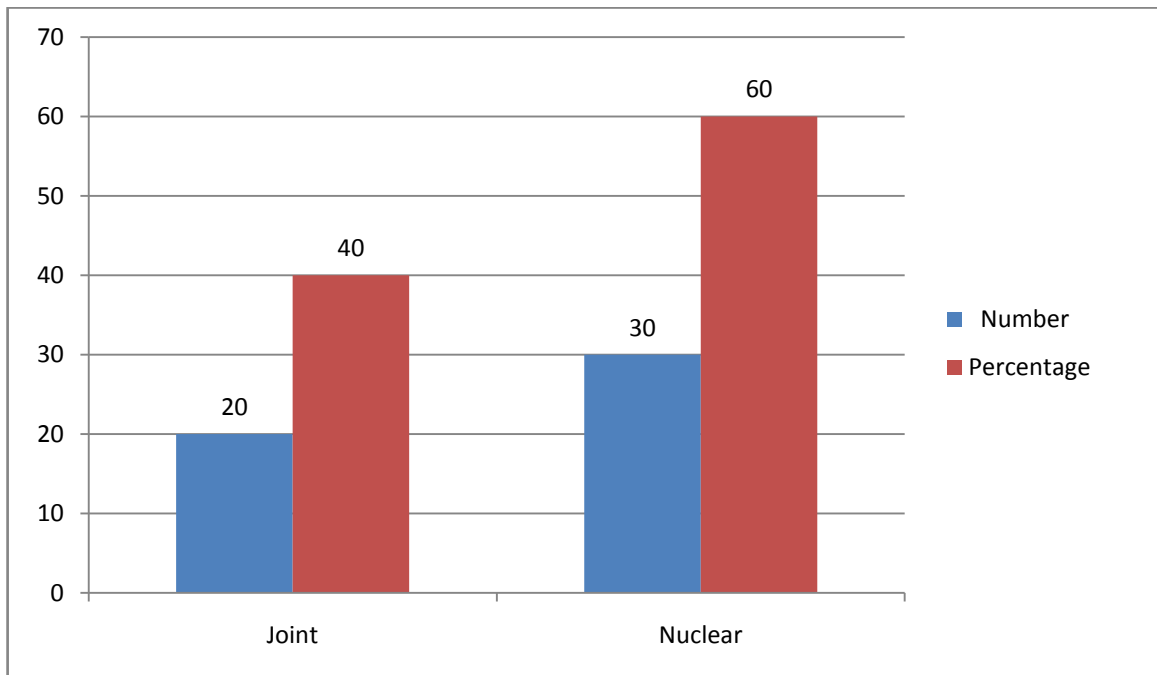
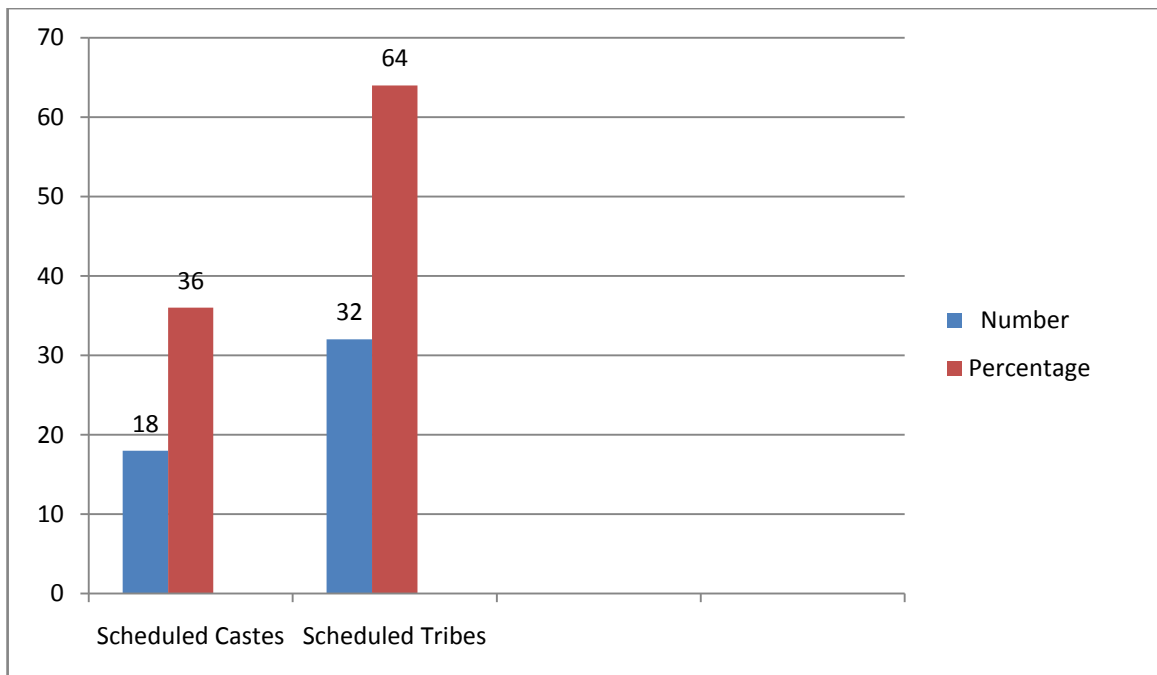


TABLE 1.5 CASTE OF THE RESPONDENT



The table 1 states that the majority of the respondents (68 percent) were in the age group of 25-45years, wherein only 32 percent of the respondents belongs to the age group of above 45. The district is ranking 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

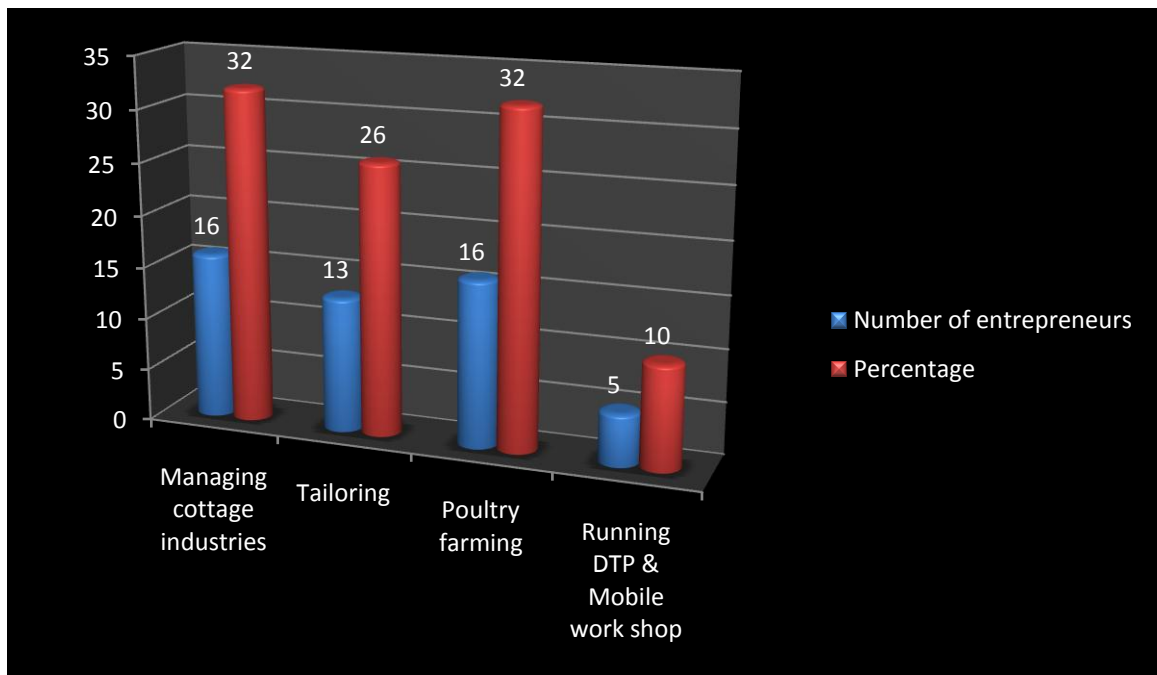
the respondents were belonging to nuclear family and majority of (64 percent) the respondents belongs to the scheduled tribe category

2. ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE RESPONDENTS:

Table 2: Activities undertaken by the Dalit entrepreneur

| Activities | Number of entrepreneurs | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Managing cottage industries | 16 | 32 |
| Tailoring | 13 | 26 |
| Poultry farming | 16 | 32 |
| Running DTP & Mobile work shop | 5 | 10 |

Source: Survey Analysis



The 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, followed by tailoring with 26percent and 10 percent of the respondents are 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 $\chi^2_{0.05}=12.6$.

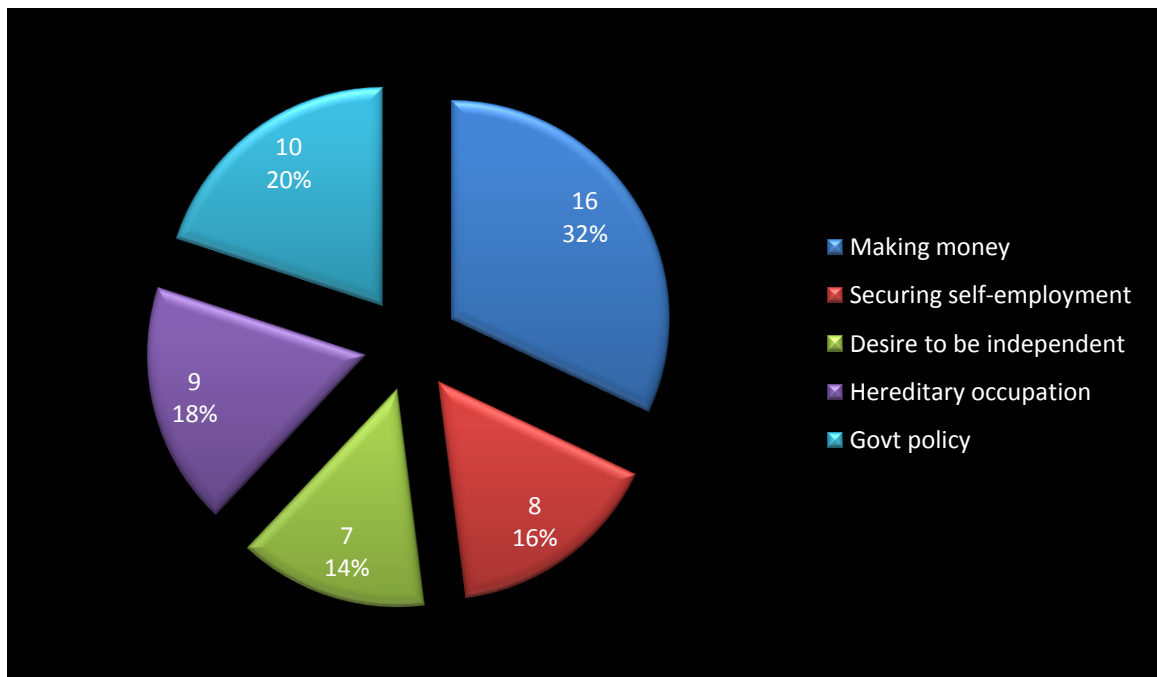
3. Motivational and Facilitating Factors of Dalit Entrepreneurs:

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

Table 3: Motivational Factors of Dalit Entrepreneurs

| Reasons | Making money | Securing self-employment | Desire to be independent | Hereditary occupation | Govt policy |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Number of Entrepreneurs | 16 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 10 |
| Percentage | 32 | 16 | 14 | 18 | 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 stating entrepreneurship, followed by necessity of continuing family business(18%). Concept of self employment had the share of 16%, whereas the desire to be independent is 14%, 10% of the respondents are motivated by pro-dalit policies of the Government at large.

4. 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

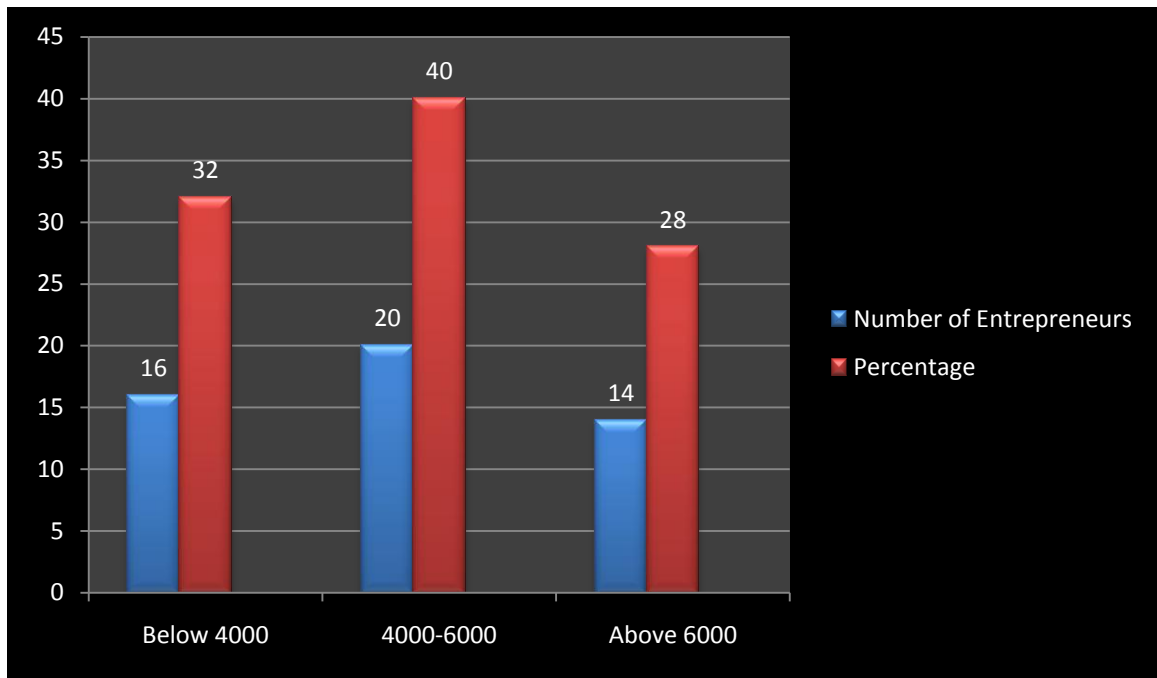


Table 4 brings out the profit earned by Dalit Entrepreneurs. Earning profit cannot be the objective of a business; any more than eating is the objective of living. As such profit is the reward for an entrepreneur for undertaking risk in the business. The table 4 states that the majority of the entrepreneurs (40%) have earned a profit of Rs.4000-6000, followed by 32% with below 4000 and 28% 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 $\chi^2_{0.05}=9.49$.

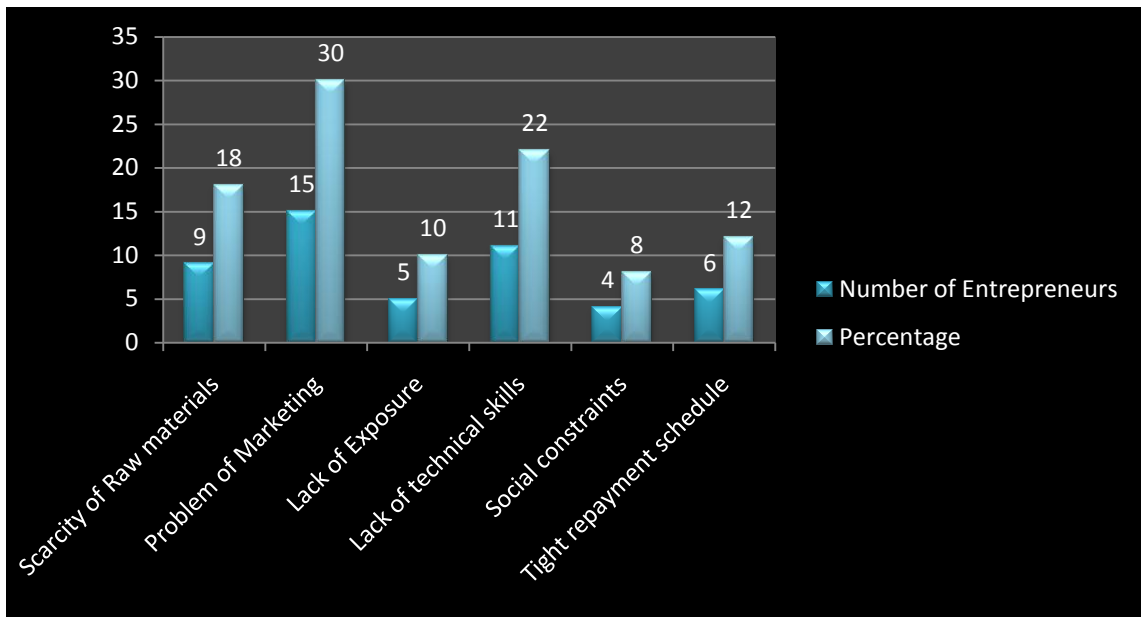
5. Major problems encountered by dalit entrepreneurs:

Risk bearing is the common element of any kind of business; no business can be run out of risk. The following table illustrates the various problems faced by dalit entrepreneurs

Table 5 Constrains faced by Dalit Entrepreneurs

| 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% 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 adopted.

- ✓ Policies for Dalit entrepreneurship should follow a comprehensive approach rather than be piecemeal
- ✓ 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
- ✓ The government should assist dalit entrepreneurs to participate in international, national and local trade fairs, exhibitions and conferences
- ✓ Dalit India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI) which has been formed at the national level to make the Dalits to job givers instead of job seekers need technical and financial assistance from the government to organise training programmes for the upcoming Dalit entrepreneurs
- ✓ Banks must work along with government by granting the sufficient funds without many formalities to bring them into the main stream of 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.

References

- 1 Hutton J.H (1969): “Castes in India”, London. Cambridge University Press.
- 2 Sharma Anuradha (1998): “Castes and Tribes in India”. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers.
- 3 D.V. Kumar (1989): “Tribal Development in India”. N. Patil and B. Jena Publication
- 4 Ghuyee, G.S (1932): “Castes and Race in India”. London; Routledge and Kegan Paul (Edi, 1969) Bombay G.R. Bhatkal
- 5 Satyanarayana and Reddy (2005) ‘Ambedkar and Dalits in contemporary India’ contains the papers presented in the national seminar on “Ambedkar and India’s Socio-economic Scenerio” organised by Mangalore University, published by academic Publishers, Kanaka Nagar Bangalore.
- 6 Paramasivan and Mari Selvam: ‘Dalit Owned Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in India’: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259187042>.
- 7 Devi Bhuvaneshwari and Annapoorni: ‘Dalit women empowerment through entrepreneurship of Coimbatore district’ article published in ‘International Journal of Research in Commerce and Management’ Vol. No.4 (2013) Issue No. 01 (January) ISSN 0976-2183
- 8 Ramesh Sardar: “Problems and Prospects of dalit Entrepreneurship” article published in ‘International Journal of Engineering Technology, Management and Applied Sciences’ Volume No 3 January 2015 Issue 1, ISSN 2349-4476.
- 9 Paramasivan and Mari Selvam: ‘Status Dalit Entrepreneurs in India’ article published in ‘Asia Pacific Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research (APJMER)’ Volume No. 2 Issue No. 2 April 2013. ISSN 2277
- 10 Anil S Suttar (1999): “education and social change among Scheduled castes, A sociological study” Unpublished M.Phil thesis
- 11 Bhatt A (1989): “Development of Social Justice: Micro Action by Weaker Sections” Sage Publications, New Delhi.