Analysis of Entrepreneurial Skill Development of Disadvantaged Group Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is considered as a panacea to socioeconomic problems. Small enterprises not only provide self-employment, but help in correcting regional disparities and more equal distribution of wealth. Entrepreneurship development among weaker sections, that is, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, is the need of the hour in the present context of privatization. The disinvestment policies of the government have adverse effects on generation of employment opportunities in the public sector. Obviously, the most affected people are from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes for which there are reservations in government jobs. The socioeconomic backwardness of scheduled castes and tribes, VJNT/NT, other backward classes and ultra poor from upper classes can be found in their dependence on agriculture, illiteracy, lower awareness levels, incidence of poverty, and underemployment. I attempted to probe into the research question such as whether there is an association between demographic characteristics and entrepreneurship development of people from marginalized groups ? The study inferred that there was an association between gender, social status, marital status, education, occupational background, entrepreneurship development programme except age of the respondents. The study suggested that special EDPs should be framed to train disadvantaged group entrepreneurs. In addition, necessary support of finance, infrastructure, and marketing should be extended to the entrepreneurs adequately and timely.

Key words : **occupational mobility, demographic characteristics entrepreneurial skills, self employment**

JEL Classification : E24, J62, J11, L26

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The social environment in India has been changing gradually. Spread of education, industrialization, reservation policy, legal protection, and democratic values etc. are the factors instrumental for enhanced social and occupational mobility of disadvantaged groups in India. Research studies have shown that entrepreneurial skill development depends on the factors such as, family background, occupation, assets, money, sex, education, knowledge, and caste. In order to understand the level of skill development among the respondents, the responses were collected regarding the entrepreneurial skills, that is, creative thinking, business planning, decision making, organization, communication and team building, risk management, adaptability, resources management, and marketing.

Review of Literature

A few research studies have been conducted on entrepreneurship development of disadvantaged groups in India. Some of the earlier research studies have found association between demographic variables and entrepreneurial skill development. Occupational background of a person has a deep impact on entrepreneurship development.

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The hereditary nature of occupation has relevance even today. Yale (1954) explained that social marginality promotes entrepreneurship among individuals or groups. Sadana and Thorat (2009) observed that the restriction on the ownership of property rights in the past had resulted in a large proportion of low caste persons remaining without capital assets. According to the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Report (2007), the enterprises owned by SC, ST, and OBC entrepreneurs accounted 7.60%, 2.67%, and 38.28%, respectively ; whereas, others owned 51.26% of the 1.56 million MSMEs in India. This sheds light on the significant lower share of SC/STs and other backward classes in ownership of small enterprises.

Iyer, Khanna, and Varshney (2003) observed that the OBCs have made progress in entrepreneurship, but SCs and STs have remained considerably underrepresented in entrepreneurship. Kamble and Mahajan (2014) concluded that the Mahatma Phule Backward Development Corporation has been instrumental in promoting and supporting entrepreneurship among scheduled caste beneficiaries under its schemes, that is, margin money scheme and 50% subsidy scheme. Hegde (2013) pointed out that the thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar gave a lot of inspiration, courage, and constitutional support to dalits to get education, fight for socioeconomic causes, and participate in the development process. Lokhande (2006) inferred that the equity base of SC / ST entrepreneurs was very weak and they had to rely on borrowed funds.

Sambasivaiah, Rajaiah, and Sivasankar (2014) investigated the impact of socioeconomic factors on entrepreneurship development and pointed out that the growth of entrepreneurship had more or less been influenced by the factors like previous experience, strong desire to do something, independent in life and motivation by the family members. Deshpande and Sharma (2013) argued that certain castes and communities have traditionally been business communities, and entrepreneurs from these communities start with clear natural advantages of available knowledge, know-how and strong business networks passed down through the generations.

The evidence suggests that entrepreneurship, as a significant vehicle for social mobility for Dalits, is yet to become a reality for India. David, Werner, and Jagannadha (2007) found that belonging to a backward caste inhibits entry in the field of entrepreneurship. Barman (2014) observed in his study that the socioeconomic status of SC people was low and because of their backwardness, entrepreneurship could not develop as expected by the policy makers. Aaijaz, Ibrahim, and Ahmad (2012) inferred in their study that male and female respondents were equally interested in becoming entrepreneurs. Rao, Rao, and Suri Ganesh (2012) suggested that women should be provided with adequate training in developing entrepreneurial skills.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship development among weaker section people having no-business background is a new area of research. There has been a phenomenal growth in micro enterprises run by self-help groups of poor members. In recent years, artisans, craftsmen, farmers, and unemployed people belonging to the lower strata of the society, that is, SC, ST, and other backward class people are joining entrepreneurship. I intended to probe into the research questions as to understand the entrepreneurial skills developed among the sample entrepreneurs and find out the association between demographic characteristics and entrepreneurial skills development of the sample entrepreneurs.

Principal Objectives of the Study

(1) To identify the association between demographic variables and entrepreneurship development among the disadvantaged group entrepreneurs.

(2) To find out the impact of entrepreneurship development programmes on the disadvantaged group entrepreneurs.

Hypotheses

- **H01 :** There is no association between age and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.
- **Ha1 :** There is a significant association between age and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.

- **H02 :** There is no association between gender and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.
- **Ha2 :** There is a significant association between gender and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.

- **H03 :** There is no association between cast category and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.
- **Ha3:** There is an association between cast category and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.

- **H04:** There is no association between marital status and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.
- **Ha4:** There is an association between marital status and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.

- **H05:** There is no association between educational and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.
- **Ha5:** There is a significant association between education and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.

- **H06 :** There is no association between occupational background and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.
- **Ha6:** There is a significant association between occupational background and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents.

- **H07 :** There is no association between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial skills development of marginalized group entrepreneurs.
- **Ha7 :** There is a significant association between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial skills development of marginalized group entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology

(1) Scope, Universe, and Period of the Study : The study is confined to micro and small entrepreneurs belonging to disadvantaged groups from nine districts, that is, Aurangabad, Jalna, Akola, Buldhana, Ratnagiri, Dhule, Ahemadnagar, Wardha, and Bhandara districts of Maharashtra. The study survey was conducted during 2015-16 with the help of a well designed questionnaire. The study focused on understanding the demographic

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample Entrepreneurs

District Industries Centre	Registered and working Micro & Small Entrepreneurs	Sample Entrepreneurs (3.30%)
Aurangabad	4,424	146
Jalna	2,270	75
Akola	1,025	34
Buldhana	1,434	47
Ratnagiri	885	30
Dhule	1814	59
Ahmednagar	1,510	50
Wardha	1,399	46
Bhandara	1,272	42
Total	**16,033**	**529**

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Planning Department, Government of Maharashtra (2016)

characteristics and their association with entrepreneurial skill development levels of the respondents.

The study attempted to focus on the development of entrepreneurship among the disadvantaged group people with no background of business. The study examined as to how demographic characteristics, that is, age, education, marital status, social status, and occupational background of entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial skills development are associated. The basic concepts used in this research are: Disadvantaged group entrepreneurs are defined as those entrepreneurs who belong to SC, ST, NT/VJNT, OBC communities. Demographic characteristics mean age, education, marital status, social status, and occupational background. Entrepreneurship training refers to management development programme, vocational training programme, technical training, and skill development programme.

(2) Data Sources : The study is based on both types of data, that is, primary data and secondary data. The primary data were tapped by requesting the respondents to participate in the study by filling up the questionnaires and partly from the interactions with the respondents. The secondary data were collected from reports, books, and journals. The data were systematically compiled, tabulated, and analyzed with tools such as simple percentage and chi-square test.

(3) Sample Size : There were 1, 65,214 micro and small enterprises operating in 37 districts of Maharashtra state until March 31, 2015 (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Planning Department, Government of Maharashtra, 2016). As the number of registered micro and small enterprises is huge and no specific data was available regarding disadvantaged group entrepreneurs, I selected 529 (3.30%) entrepreneurs belonging to disadvantaged groups out of 16033 entrepreneurs from nine districts of Maharashtra on the basis of convenience sampling as given in the Table 1.

Results and Discussion

The study attempts to understand the demographic characteristics, that is, age, gender, education, caste, occupational background, and income of the sample entrepreneurs (529) in nine districts, that is, Aurangabad, Jalna, Akola, Buldhana, Ratnagiri, Dhule, Ahmednagar, Wardha, and Bhandara districts in Maharashtra state. The data were based upon the responses collected through a structured questionnaire and partly interviews with the respondents. The research studies have suggested that demographic characteristics and entrepreneurship have a strong association. The studies conducted by Madsen, Neergaard, and Ulohi (2003) ; Hisrich and Brusch (1984) ;

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Disadvantaged Group Entrepreneurs

Sr.no.	Demographic variables	No. of respondents	%
Age (Yrs.)			
1	Up to 25	72	13.61
2	25-35	180	34.03
3	35-45	199	37.62
4	45-55	59	11.15
5	Above 55	19	3.59
	Total	529	100
Gender			
1	Male	421	79.58
2	Female	108	20.42
	Total	529	100
Social Category			
1	SC	113	21.36
2	ST	51	9.648
3	NT	59	11.15
4	DNT	31	5.86
5	VJNT	58	10.96
6	OBC	217	41.020
	Total	529	100
Marital status			
1	Married	376	71.08
2	Unmarried	117	22.12
3	Divorced.	19	3.59
4	Separated	17	3.21
	Total	529	100
Education			
1	Illiterate	25	4.72
2	Primary	36	6.80
3	Secondary	81	15.31
4	Higher secondary	172	32.51
5	Graduation	157	29.68
6	Post graduation	45	8.51
7	Technical -ITI/Polytechnic	13	2.46
	Total	529	100
Occupational Background			
1	Agriculture	189	35.73
2	Agriculture labor	165	31.19
3	Small business	80	15.12
4	Service	95	17.96
	Total	529	100

and Haynes (2003) argued that occupational background, education, training, and previous experience can develop entrepreneurial qualities.

As shown in the Table 2, out of a total of 529 disadvantaged group entrepreneur respondents, 379 (71.65%) respondents were in the age group of 25 - 45 years ; whereas, 13.61% were up to the age of 25 years. The respondents in the age group of 45 - 55 years and above 55 years of age accounted for 11.15% and 3.59%, respectively. With regard to gender wise distribution of the respondents, it was found that of the 529 respondents, 79.58% were male and 20.42% respondents were female (Table 2).

Social status of the entrepreneurs given in the Table 2 indicates that of 529 disadvantaged group entrepreneurs under the study, 41.03% respondents were OBCs; 21.36% respondents belonged to SC; 11.15% respondents were from the NT category ; 10.96% respondents belonged to VJNT; 9.64% of the respondents were from scheduled tribes, and 5.86% belonged to DNT. As shown in the Table 2, out of 529 marginalized group entrepreneurs, 336 (71.07%) respondents were married; 117 (22.12%) were unmarried ; 19(3.59%) respondents were divorcees, and 17(3.22%) were separated. The percentage of women entrepreneurs in India is less than 2%.

Table 3. Opinion of the Respondents About Their Entrepreneurial Skill Development

Entrepreneurial Skills	Opinions of Respondents according to skill developed			
	Low (1)@	Medium (2)@	High (3)@	Total
Creative thinking- I am always in search of new ideas and new methods of doing work.	153	274	102	529
Business Planning - I can do business planning, understand budgeting, and implement it.	175	257	97	529
Decision making- I can understand the priorities and take quick decisions.	167	271	91	529
Organization- I can organize and utilize human, financial, and material resources effectively.	147	282	100	529
Communication- I can communicate effectively with people in and outside of the organization.	238	212	79	529
Team building & Motivation- I can build a devoted and committed team and motivate the team.	288	153	88	529
Risk Management- I am aware about business risks and can manage them properly.	261	213	55	529
Adaptability- I am always ready to adopt new things and adapt to changes in a positive manner.	146	284	99	529
Resources Management- I can manage men, machines, material, money, and other resources for the effective performance of the organization.	154	288	87	529
Marketing- I can promote my products and sell them effectively.	202	237	90	529
Total	1931*1	2234*2	888*3	
Total score	1931	4468	2264	9063
Percentage to total score	21.30	49.30	29.40	100.00

Note: @ indicates respective score

Table 4. Classification of the Respondents on the Basis of Their Opinion About Entrepreneurial Skills

Sr.no.	Skill Development level	No. of Respondents	%
1	Low	113	21.30
2	Medium	261	49.30
3	High	155	29.40
Total		529	100

Table 5. Chi-Square Test for Opinion of the Respondents About Their Entrepreneurial Skill Development Levels

Sr.no.	Demographic variables	Entrepreneurial skill development level			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
a)	**Age**				
1	Up to 25	15	30	27	72
2	25-35	33	102	45	180
3	35-45	46	101	52	199
4	45-55	14	21	24	59
5	Above 55	5	7	7	19
	Total	113	261	155	529
	Pearson's Chi-square value = 13.64		***df* = 8**	***p* - value= 0.0914**	
b)	**Gender**				
1	Male	100	210	111	421
2	Female	13	51	44	108
	Total	113	261	155	529
	Pearson's Chi-square value = 11.71		***df* = 2**	***p* - value = 0.003**	
c)	**Social Category**				
1	SC	28	63	22	113
2	ST	4	33	14	51
3	NT	6	41	12	59
4	DNT	4	11	16	31
5	VJNT	5	22	31	58
6	OBC	66	91	60	217
	Total	113	261	155	529
	Pearson's Chi-square value = 58.015		***df* = 10**	***p* - value = 0.000**	
d)	**Marital status**				
1	Married	75	165	136	376
2	Unmarried	31	77	9	117
3	Divorced.	4	10	5	19
4	Separated	3	9	5	17
	Total	113	261	155	529
	Pearson's Chi-square value = 35.45		***df* = 6**	***p* - value= 0.000**	
e)	**Education**				
1	Illiterate	6	14	5	25
2	Primary	6	23	7	36
3	Secondary	19	52	20	81
4	Higher secondary	34	71	67	172
5	Graduation	37	61	59	157
6	Post graduation	8	32	5	45
7	Technical -ITI/Polytechnic	3	8	2	13
	Total	113	261	155	529
	Pearson's Chi-square value = 32.40		***df* = 12**	***p* - value= 0.001**	
f)	Occupational Background				
1	Agriculture	43	102	44	189
2	Agriculture labor	36	88	41	165
3	Small business	21	40	19	80
4	Service	13	31	51	95
	Total	113	261	155	529
	Pearson's Chi-square value = 34.012		***df* = 6**	***p* - value= 0.000**	

Sharma (1980) observed that an educated person has a better understanding of business opportunities and changing environment and adaptability. An educated entrepreneur can acquire entrepreneurial skills easily and has more mobility than an uneducated one. Vocational and professional education offer opportunities of self-employment. As disclosed by the data given in the Table 2, out of 529 respondents, 4.73% had not attended school; 6.81% respondents were educated upto the primary level ; 15.31% respondents had completed secondary education ; and 32.51% of the respondents were educated up to the higher secondary level. As far as higher education is concerned, 29.68% and 8.51% of the respondents had completed graduation and post graduation, respectively. Technical education was obtained by 13 (2.45%) respondents.

It has been found that although the business community is the major source of entrepreneurship in India, a new class of entrepreneurs having earlier occupations such as technicians, business executives, and government servants have become entrepreneurs because of education and access to technology and required resources. With regard to occupational background of the respondents, it was noticed that of 529 respondents, 35.73% respondents had agriculture as the occupational background; 31.19% belonged to agricultural labour families; 15.12% of the respondents belonged to business families, and 17.96% were engaged in services.

(1) Responses about Entrepreneurial Skill Development : In order to understand the level of skill development among the respondents, the responses were collected regarding the entrepreneurial skills, that is, creative thinking, business planning, decision making, organization, communication, team building, risk management, adaptability, resources management, and marketing. As shown in the Table 3, three levels of skill development, that is, low, medium, and high having scores 1, 2, and 3, respectively were suggested for recording responses as perceived by the respondents. Of the total 529 respondents, 21.30% respondents had low level of skill development ; 49.30% of the respondents had medium level of skill development ; whereas, 29.40 % of the respondents had high level of skill development. The data analysis indicates that the entrepreneurial skill development among the respondents varied due to education, family background, occupational background, and other variables.

(2) Opinion of the Respondents about their Entrepreneurial Skill Development : On the basis of the data shown in the Table 4, the respondents were classified having low skill development level, medium skill development level, and high skill development level.

(3) Interpretation of the Results on the Basis of Hypotheses Testing : To investigate into the association between demographic variables, that is, age, gender, marital status, caste category, education, occupational background, and entrepreneurial skill development level of the marginalized group entrepreneurs, the hypotheses were tested with chi-square test using the formula, that is, $X^2 = \Sigma (O - E)^2/E$. The demographic variables and chi-square values are given in the Table 5.

The Table 5 (a) indicates that the p - value is greater than 0.05 (p>0.05) ; so, I accept H01, that is, there is no association between age and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. Ruth and Birren (1985) discussed the decline in the ability to conduct logical thinking and reasoning as an individual ages.

The Table 5 (b) indicates that the p - value is less than 0.05 (p <0.05) ; so, I reject H02 , that is, there is no significant association between gender and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significant association between gender and entrepreneurial skill development. The results are similar to the inferences drawn by Still and Timms (2000) and Buttner (1993).

The Table 5 (c) indicates that the p - value is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05) ; so, I reject H03, that is, there is no significant association between the caste category and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant association between caste category and entrepreneurial skill

development. Iyer, Khanna, and Varshney (2003) also observed an association between entrepreneurial skill development and members of OBCs, SCs, and STs.

The Table 5 (d) indicates that the *p* - value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) ; so, I reject H04, that is, there is no significant association between marital status and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. On this basis, it is concluded that there is a significant association between marital status and entrepreneurial skill development of the respondents.

The Table 5 (e) indicates that the *p* - value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) ; so, I reject H05, that is, there is no significant association between the educational level and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. It can be concluded that there is a significant association between education and entrepreneurial skill development. Similarly, Hisrich and Brusch (1984) had advocated that education was mandatory for entrepreneurship development. Dissimilar to this, Selvakumar, Jegatheesan, and Karthiga (2012) found no significant association between educational level and entrepreneurial skill development.

The Table 5 (f) indicates that the *p* - value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) ; so, I reject H06, that is there is no significant association between the occupational background and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. Hence, it can be inferred that there is a significant association between occupational background and entrepreneurial skill development. The results are similar to the results obtained by Fieldsmen, Davidson, and Makin (2000), who also found a significant association between occupational background level and entrepreneurial skill development.

(4) Participation of the Respondents in Entrepreneurship Development Programmes : Participation in entrepreneurship development programme is mandatory for the beneficiaries of self- employment programmes supported by the government and financial institutions in India. Entrepreneurship development programmes, as it is evident by research studies, are instrumental in developing entrepreneurship among non-business communities and marginalized groups. Awasthi and Sebastian (1996) studied the impact of the EDP organized by EDII, Ahmedabad and found that out of 430 trainees, 32% had started their ventures ; 29% of the trainees had given up the idea of starting their units ; 17% of the trainees had not started their ventures as they were engaged in other activities ; 10% of trainees could not start enterprises because of problems ; whereas 12% had not responded. The data given in the Table 6 points out that of 401 respondents, 34.41% had participated in the entrepreneurship development programme; 39.15% of the respondents had joined the management development programme ; 11.97% of the respondents participated in the vocational training programme, and 14.47% of the respondents had participated in the technical training and skill development programme.

(5) Participation in Entrepreneurship Development Programme and Entrepreneurial Skill Development Level of the Respondents : The responses regarding attendance/ participation of the entrepreneurs in four EDP

Table 6. Participation of the Respondents in Entrepreneurship Development Programme

Entrepreneurship Training Programme	No. of respondents	Percentage
EDP*	138	34.41
MDP	157	39.15
VTP	48	11.97
TSDP	58	14.47
Total	401	100

Note: *EDP- Entrepreneurship Development Programme; MDP- Management Development Programme; VTP-Vocational Training Programme; TSDP-Technical Training & Skills Development Programme

Table 7. Participation in Entrepreneurship Development Programme and Entrepreneurial Skill Development Level of the Respondents

Responses regarding EDPs	Entrepreneurial skill development level			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
EDP	14	97	27	138
MDP	16	117	24	157
VTP	5	37	6	48
TSDP	6	44	8	58
Total	41	295	65	401
Pearson's Chi-square value = 2.004		***df* = 6**	***p*- value = 0.919**	

programmes and their entrepreneurial skill development level is given in the Table 7. To investigate the association between participation in entrepreneurship development programme and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents, the hypotheses H07 and Ha7 were tested using the formula: $X^2 = \Sigma (O-E)^2/E$. The Table 7 shows the entrepreneurship training completed by the respondents and their entrepreneurial skill development level. As shown in the Table 7, the Table indicates that the p - value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), so we accept H07, that is, there is no significant association between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial skill development level of the respondents. In contrast to this, Akola and Heinonen (2006) observed from their study that the training programmes positively influenced the entrepreneurial behaviour of the participants.

Conclusion and Implications

The major conclusion of the study is that there is a significant association between demographic characteristics such as, gender, education, social status, occupational background, and marital status and entrepreneurial skill development of disadvantaged group entrepreneurs. However, the study found no significant association between age and entrepreneurial skill development of disadvantaged group entrepreneurs. In order to enhance the participation and share of disadvantaged group people in entrepreneurial activities, entrepreneurial education needs to be imparted at the school level. Entrepreneurship training programmes have a deep impact on the entrepreneurship development process. Special EDPs should be framed to train disadvantaged group entrepreneurs. In addition, necessary support of finance, infrastructure, and marketing should be extended to the entrepreneurs adequately and timely. In spite of the policy measures and welfare schemes, there is under-representation of marginalized groups in the business sector. They are coming up from socio - economically disadvantaged groups having no or less access to the resources. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to create a conducive socioeconomic environment to enhance the participation of disadvantaged people in the business sector. In this regard, it is suggested that financial inclusion programmes should be implemented effectively; every person irrespective of caste, creed, and religion must have easy access to financial services and basic facilities required for starting ventures should be provided promptly by the concerned agencies.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

The present study focused on development of entrepreneurial skill development of disadvantaged group entrepreneurs who did not have a business background by family or community. The study was confined to understanding the association between demographic characteristics and level of entrepreneurial skill

development of disadvantaged group entrepreneurs only. Further studies can be undertaken for analyzing the qualities of successful entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups and their competitive edge over other entrepreneurs.

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