

Navigating Challenges and Harnessing Opportunities: An Analysis of SC and ST Entrepreneurs of Selected Districts in Karnataka

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges and opportunities faced by SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli, aiming to identify specific barriers and driving factors that influence their entrepreneurial activities. Through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, the research highlights significant challenges such as financial constraints, social discrimination, limited market access, and insufficient support from governmental and non-governmental organizations. Despite these obstacles, strong drivers such as personal self-efficacy, community support, perceived market opportunities, and governmental incentives propel these entrepreneurs forward. The study also examines the critical role of business self-efficacy in helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges and sustain their ventures. Key findings indicate that while financial constraints and market access are major barriers, high self-efficacy and community support are vital for entrepreneurial success. The study concludes with actionable suggestions to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem for SC/ST communities in Devanahalli, including improved access to finance, market access initiatives, stronger support systems, and targeted training programs. These recommendations aim to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment, empowering SC/ST entrepreneurs and contributing to the socio-economic development of the region.

Keywords: SC/ST Entrepreneurs, Financial Constraints, Social Discrimination and Market Access etc

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is widely regarded as a vital driver of economic development and social inclusion, offering marginalized communities avenues for economic advancement and social mobility (Acs et al., 2018). In Karnataka, a state celebrated for its thriving technology and startup ecosystem, the government has prioritized fostering entrepreneurship among Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). These communities face distinct socio-economic challenges, including limited access to capital, market discrimination, and restricted business networks. Recognizing these barriers, the state has implemented targeted initiatives aimed at empowering SC/ST entrepreneurs and creating an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem (Kumar & Dias, 2024). A flagship initiative, the Elevate Unnati program, provides seed funding of up to ₹50 lakh for innovative startups led by SC/ST individuals, having committed over ₹116 crores to 489 startups since its inception (The New Indian Express, 2023). This program not only mitigates financial barriers but also fosters innovation and competitiveness. Complementing this, the Samruddhi Scheme promotes self-employment through skill development and financial support, aiming to create 10,000 entrepreneurs annually, with a focus on rural and tier-II cities (GovInfo.me, 2023). Together, these initiatives exemplify Karnataka's strategic efforts to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for marginalized groups, thereby contributing to broader socio-economic development and inclusion.

Challenges Faced by SC/ST Entrepreneurs

Despite these supportive measures, SC/ST entrepreneurs encounter several significant challenges. These include limited access to capital, market barriers, and social discrimination. Traditional financial institutions often hesitate to extend credit to SC/ST entrepreneurs due to perceived higher risks, leading to a reliance on informal lending sources, which can be expensive and unreliable.

Market barriers also pose a significant challenge. Many SC/ST entrepreneurs operate in sectors with low entry barriers but high competition, such as retail and small-scale manufacturing. This makes it difficult to achieve

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substantial growth and profitability. Additionally, social discrimination can limit networking opportunities and access to business resources, further constraining entrepreneurial success.

Motivators and Driving Factors

Despite these challenges, numerous factors drive SC/ST individuals towards entrepreneurship. The primary motivator is the desire for economic independence and social mobility. Entrepreneurship offers a pathway to break free from traditional caste-based occupational roles and achieve financial stability.

Government incentives also play a crucial role. Programs like Elevate Unnati and the Samruddhi Scheme provide not only financial support but also mentorship and networking opportunities, which are invaluable for budding entrepreneurs. The state's focus on promoting startups in tier-II and tier-III cities ensures that opportunities are not confined to urban centers, thereby encouraging a broader demographic to participate in entrepreneurial activities.

The Role of Business Self-Efficacy

Business self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to successfully manage and grow a business, is a critical factor influencing the success of SC/ST entrepreneurs. High self-efficacy helps entrepreneurs overcome obstacles and persist in the face of challenges. It is often bolstered by access to training and mentorship programs, which enhance business skills and confidence.

For instance, the training provided under the Samruddhi Scheme equips SC/ST youth with essential entrepreneurial skills, ranging from financial management to marketing and operations. This not only boosts their confidence but also their competence, enabling them to better navigate the business landscape (GovInfome).

Impact of Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, and prior business experience significantly impact the entrepreneurial success of SC/ST individuals. Younger entrepreneurs tend to be more adaptable and open to innovative business practices, while those with higher education levels often have better access to resources and networks.

Gender also plays a crucial role. Women entrepreneurs from SC/ST backgrounds often face additional hurdles due to gender biases and familial responsibilities. However, targeted initiatives such as the partnership between the Karnataka government and the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B) to train SC/ST women graduates in entrepreneurship help address these challenges and empower women to pursue business ventures (The New Indian Express) (GovInfo.me) .

The entrepreneurial landscape for SC/ST individuals in Karnataka is shaped by a mix of challenges and opportunities. While access to capital and market barriers remain significant hurdles, government initiatives like Elevate Unnati and the Samruddhi Scheme provide crucial support and motivation. Business self-efficacy and demographic factors further influence the ability of SC/ST entrepreneurs to succeed. By continuing to address these challenges and leveraging the driving factors, Karnataka can foster a more inclusive and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem that benefits all sections of society.

This article brings novel insights by examining the specific challenges and drivers influencing SC/ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka. Through a mixed-method approach, the study identifies financial constraints, market access difficulties, and social discrimination as key barriers. At the same time, it highlights the critical role of self-efficacy, community support, and government incentives in driving entrepreneurial resilience and success. The findings offer actionable suggestions to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem for marginalized communities, contributing to a more inclusive socio-economic environment in the region.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Background

Entrepreneurship has been widely explored through various theoretical lenses, including the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Capital Theory. The RBV posits that an enterprise's success is contingent upon its ability to acquire and leverage unique resources, including financial capital, human talent, and social networks (Barney, 1991). In the context of SC/ST entrepreneurs, access to these resources is often constrained due to systemic barriers, limiting their capacity to compete effectively in the marketplace. Social Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of relationships and networks in facilitating entrepreneurial success, positing that social connections provide access to information, resources, and opportunities that are otherwise unavailable (Putnam, 2000). For marginalized communities, fostering strong social capital can help mitigate the challenges posed by structural inequalities and enhance business sustainability.

Empirical Studies

Empirical research has consistently highlighted the challenges faced by SC/ST entrepreneurs in accessing finance, markets, and networks. Kumar and Dias (2024) identify financial constraints as a predominant barrier, noting that traditional financial institutions often perceive SC/ST entrepreneurs as high-risk borrowers. This leads to a reliance on informal credit sources, which are costly and unsustainable. Similarly, Bansode and Dabholkar (2022) examine the socio-economic challenges in Kolhapur, finding that SC entrepreneurs struggle with risk aversion and lack of entrepreneurial training. Yadav et al. (2022) focus on Western Maharashtra, highlighting the limited market access and societal biases that hinder SC entrepreneurs' growth. These studies underscore the significant role of government initiatives, such as seed funding and skill development programs, in fostering entrepreneurship within marginalized groups.

Despite these initiatives, the effectiveness of government schemes in achieving their intended impact remains mixed. The Elevate Unnati and Samruddhi schemes, for instance, provide financial and skill development support to SC/ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka. However, Reddy and Kumar (2022) point out that the low digital literacy among SC/ST entrepreneurs limits their ability to leverage digital platforms for business growth, suggesting that existing support programs may need to be more comprehensive in addressing these multifaceted challenges.

Rajesh Kumar & Beena Dias (2024), the research explores the funding challenges and opportunities for social entrepreneurs in Karnataka. The study identifies key issues such as the role of policy, the startup ecosystem, and technology integration. The findings highlight the need for innovative financing mechanisms and the importance of aligning with Sustainable Development Goals, **Sampath Kumar & Lakshminarayana K. (2022)**, the study conducted in Bangalore Rural district shows that SC/ST entrepreneurs face numerous socio-economic challenges, including financial constraints, lack of education, and inadequate skills. Despite various government schemes, the majority of these entrepreneurs are unaware or unable to access the benefits, leading to a high failure rate in their businesses, **Rahul Uttam Bansode et. al (2022)**, this study highlights the problems faced by Scheduled Caste entrepreneurs in Kolhapur City, including poor risk-taking ability, lack of proper training, and societal discrimination. Financial issues such as high-interest rates and lack of support from banks also present major obstacles for these entrepreneurs, **Santoshkumar B. Yadav et.al (2022)**, the study conducted in Western Maharashtra examines the challenges and opportunities faced by Scheduled Caste entrepreneurs. It found that these entrepreneurs struggle with major marketing problems, including lack of proper training and societal barriers. The research suggests that more tailored governmental support is needed to enhance their socio-economic status, **Reddy, B., & Kumar, S. (2022)**, the authors examine the impact of digital platforms on SC and ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka. The study concludes that while digital literacy remains low, those who have adopted online platforms have seen significant business growth, indicating a potential area for policy focus, **Bhat, R., & Joshi, H. (2021)**, the findings indicate that microfinance institutions have played a crucial role in empowering SC and ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka. However, the study also notes that high-interest rates and stringent repayment schedules can deter many from utilizing these services effectively, **Rao, V., & Krishna, P. (2020)**, the study identifies financial illiteracy and the lack of

entrepreneurial education as critical barriers for SC and ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka. It suggests that tailored educational programs and financial literacy campaigns could significantly improve the success rate of businesses run by these communities, **Das, A. (2020)**, Das's research focuses on the urban-rural divide among SC and ST entrepreneurs, highlighting that urban entrepreneurs have better access to resources and networks. The study suggests creating rural business incubators to bridge this gap and foster entrepreneurship in less developed areas, **Srivastava & Rai (2019)**, this study focuses on the specific challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in Karnataka, such as the impact of government policies and the startup ecosystem. The research emphasizes the importance of aligning entrepreneurial efforts with global sustainability goals and highlights the proactive measures taken by the Karnataka government to support social entrepreneurship, **Mishra, A., & Gupta, N. (2019)**, the study addresses the intersectionality of gender and caste in entrepreneurship, noting that SC and ST women entrepreneurs face compounded challenges. It calls for targeted interventions that consider both caste and gender to create equitable opportunities for women in these communities, **Patil, M. (2019)**, this research found that despite the growing number of SC and ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka, they struggle with limited market access and low social mobility. The study emphasizes the need for more inclusive policies that address these systemic issues to foster a more enabling environment for these entrepreneurs, **Kumar, A., & Singh, S. (2018)**, the study highlights that SC and ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka face significant challenges such as limited access to capital, social discrimination, and lack of educational opportunities. However, government initiatives have started to create new avenues for entrepreneurship among these communities by providing financial assistance and skill development programs, **Desai, S., & Narayan, K. (2017)**, the authors point out that social stigma and cultural barriers are major obstacles for SC and ST entrepreneurs in rural Karnataka. They argue that community-based support systems and mentorship programs are essential to overcome these challenges and promote sustainable entrepreneurship, **Sharma, R. (2016)**, Sharma's research reveals that SC and ST entrepreneurs often operate in informal sectors with low profit margins. The study recommends policy interventions to formalize these businesses and provide access to credit facilities, which can help scale operations and improve profitability, **Nair, M. (2015)**, this study explores the role of self-help groups in promoting entrepreneurship among SC and ST communities. It finds that while these groups provide initial support, long-term sustainability remains a challenge due to the lack of continuous market access and technological support.

Research Gap

While previous studies have extensively documented the challenges faced by SC/ST entrepreneurs, there is limited empirical research on the interplay between government support programs, individual self-efficacy, and community support in driving entrepreneurial success. Moreover, existing literature largely focuses on financial and market constraints, often overlooking the psychological and social dimensions that influence entrepreneurial resilience and sustainability. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a holistic analysis of the barriers and drivers affecting SC/ST entrepreneurs in Karnataka. Specifically, it investigates the role of business self-efficacy and social capital in enabling entrepreneurs to navigate structural and operational challenges, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on inclusive entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the specific challenges that SC/ST entrepreneurs encounter in Devanahalli.
2. To identify the driving factors propelling SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli.
3. To analyze how business self-efficacy influences SC/ST entrepreneurs in overcoming obstacles and capitalizing on motivational factors to sustain their business ventures in adversity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by SC/ST entrepreneurs in selected districts of Karnataka. The quantitative component focuses on statistical analysis of survey data to

identify trends and patterns, while the qualitative component involves in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to capture nuanced insights and contextual factors influencing entrepreneurial activities. The mixed-methods design enhances the study's rigor by enabling triangulation, which improves the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Sampling Method

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants for the study. This method ensures the inclusion of SC/ST entrepreneurs who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as operating businesses in diverse sectors and having experience with government support schemes like Elevate Unnati and Samruddhi. The sample comprised 100 entrepreneurs from Devanahalli and other selected districts in Karnataka, ensuring representation across rural and semi-urban areas. This sampling approach was chosen to focus on participants most likely to provide rich, relevant data regarding the entrepreneurial ecosystem and its challenges for marginalized communities (Patton, 2015).

Data Collection Methods

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. The survey instrument included a combination of closed and Likert-scale questions designed to quantify participants' experiences with financial constraints, market access, and governmental support programs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 selected participants to delve deeper into their personal experiences, challenges, and strategies for overcoming barriers. Additionally, focus group discussions were held to explore community perspectives on entrepreneurship and to identify common themes. Secondary data were sourced from government reports, academic journals, and previous research studies to contextualize the findings and provide background information (Yin, 2018).

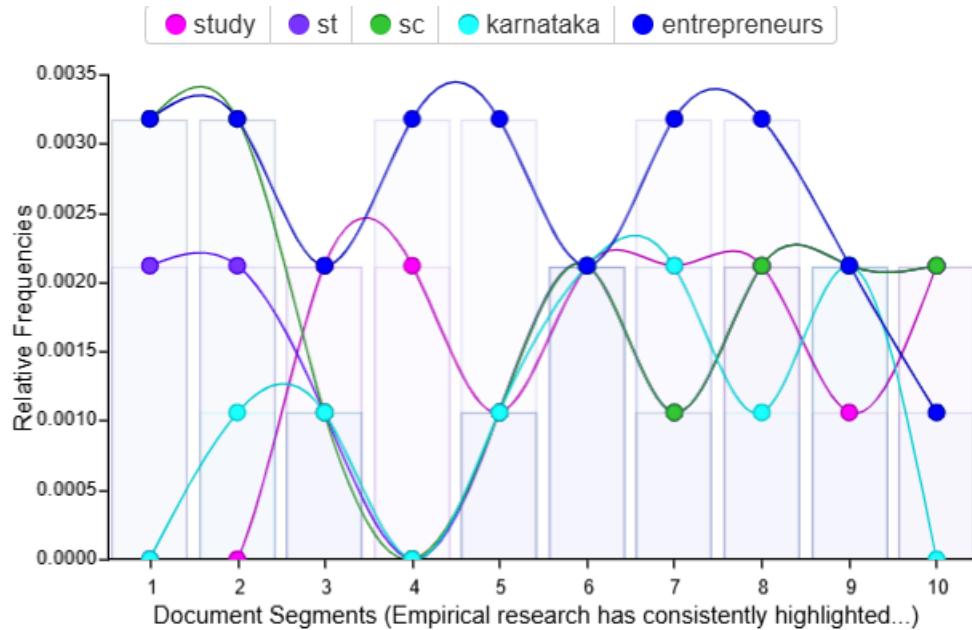
Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, such as means, frequencies, and percentages, were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and their responses to survey questions. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, were applied to explore relationships between variables, such as the perceived impact of government support and business growth. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis involved coding the data to identify recurring patterns and themes related to entrepreneurial challenges, motivators, and the role of self-efficacy (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis provided a holistic view of the entrepreneurial landscape for SC/ST communities in Karnataka.

Scope of the Study

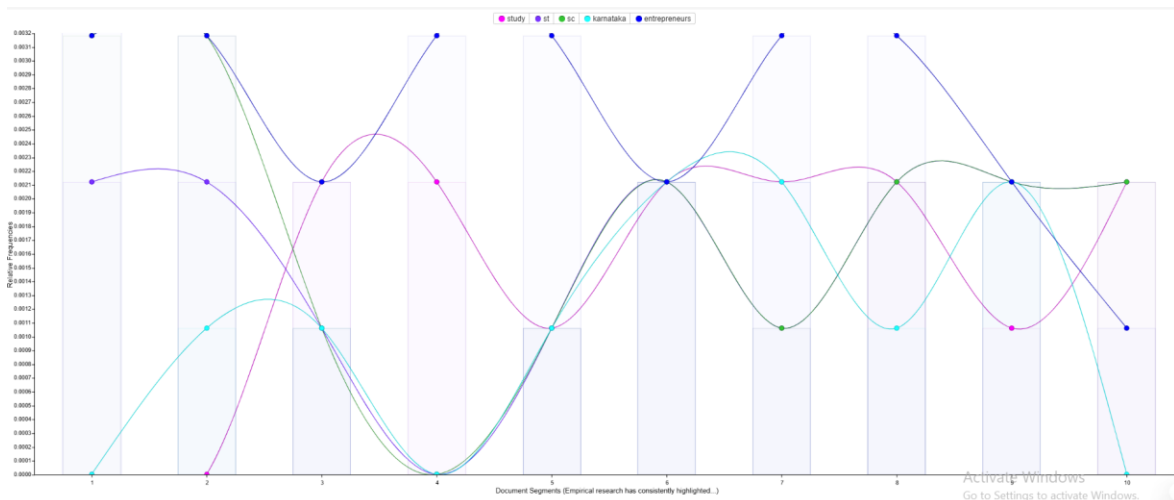
This study focuses on understanding the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli. It aims to identify the specific barriers such as financial constraints, social discrimination, lack of market access, and limited support from governmental and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, it explores the driving factors that motivate these entrepreneurs, including self-efficacy, community support, market opportunities, and governmental incentives. The study also examines the role of business self-efficacy in helping entrepreneurs overcome obstacles and leverage motivational factors to sustain their business ventures. The findings are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape for SC/ST communities in Devanahalli, offering insights for policymakers, support organizations, and the entrepreneurs themselves.

Bibliometric Analysis



The graph illustrates the relative frequency distribution of five categories—study, ST, SC, Karnataka, and entrepreneurs—across various segments of a document. The x-axis represents the document segments, which likely correspond to different thematic sections, while the y-axis indicates the relative frequency of each category within those segments. Peaks and troughs in the lines suggest variations in the prominence of these categories across the document. This could represent a thematic analysis, highlighting how frequently certain themes appear in specific sections, or a keyword analysis, showing the distribution of key terms. The variations imply that different segments focus on distinct themes, with some categories being more relevant in specific contexts. However, a deeper understanding would require further details about the document's content, the definitions of the categories, and the criteria for segmenting the text.

Trend Analysis



The graph depicts the relative frequency distribution of five categories—study, ST, SC, Karnataka, and entrepreneurs—across various segments of a document. The x-axis represents document segments, likely corresponding to different thematic sections, while the y-axis indicates the relative occurrence of each category within these segments. The varying peaks and troughs suggest fluctuations in the prominence of these

categories across sections, reflecting thematic shifts. Without additional context, this visual could be interpreted as a thematic analysis, where category frequency highlights thematic relevance, or as a keyword analysis, showing the prevalence of key terms in different sections. The data implies that the document addresses distinct themes across its segments, with categories appearing more frequently in certain contexts. However, to draw definitive conclusions, further information is needed on the document's content, the definitions of the categories, and the criteria for segmenting the text.

Word Tree Analysis



The word cloud or word tree provides a visual representation of the relationships between the central term "entrepreneurs" and a network of related words. The connections, indicated by lines, highlight associations, while the proximity of words suggests contextual or thematic links. Word size reflects relative importance or frequency within the analyzed text. The visualization emphasizes key challenges faced by entrepreneurs, particularly women, with terms like "funding," "financial," and "constraints" pointing to resource access issues. Additionally, words such as "literacy" and "empowering" underscore the role of education and skill development in fostering entrepreneurial success. This analysis suggests that financial barriers, coupled with limited opportunities, are significant hurdles, while empowerment and education are critical enablers. For a more comprehensive understanding, further examination of demographic data, business activities, and the impact of policies on entrepreneurship is essential.

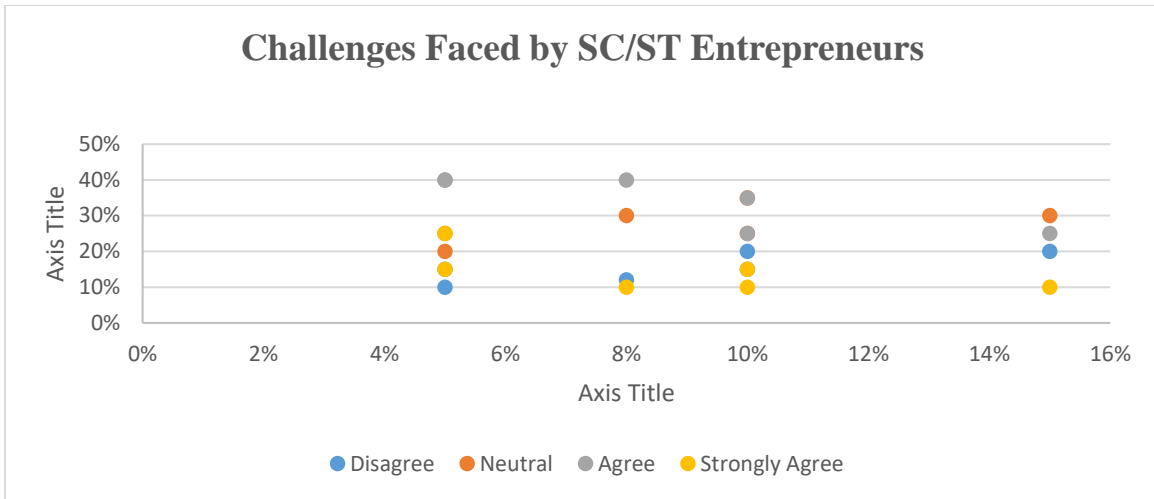
Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the survey questionnaire. The responses are analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to understand the challenges, driving factors, and business self-efficacy among SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli. The findings are then interpreted in relation to the research objectives.

Demographic Information

Challenges Faced by SC/ST Entrepreneurs

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My business faces significant financial constraints.	5%	10%	20%	40%	25%
It is difficult for me to access credit from financial institutions.	10%	15%	25%	35%	15%
I struggle to access potential markets for my products/services.	8%	12%	30%	40%	10%
I have faced social discrimination that impacts my business.	15%	20%	30%	25%	10%
There is insufficient support from government programs for my business.	5%	15%	25%	40%	15%
Non-governmental organizations provide inadequate support for my business.	10%	20%	35%	25%	10%



Interpretation of Challenges

The data indicates that financial constraints and difficulty in accessing credit are significant challenges for SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli, with 65% and 50% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, respectively. Market access also presents a challenge, with 50% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Social discrimination is recognized but to a lesser extent, with 35% acknowledging its impact. Insufficient support from both government and non-governmental organizations is also highlighted as a challenge.

Driving Factors for Entrepreneurship

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe in my ability to successfully run my business.	5%	5%	20%	45%	25%
I receive substantial support from my community for my business endeavors.	10%	15%	25%	35%	15%
I perceive significant market opportunities for my products/services.	8%	12%	30%	40%	10%
Government incentives have encouraged me to start and sustain my business.	10%	20%	25%	30%	15%
Running my own business gives me a sense of personal fulfillment.	5%	10%	20%	40%	25%
I started my business out of economic necessity.	10%	15%	30%	30%	15%

Interpretation of Driving Factors

Self-efficacy is a strong driving factor, with 70% of respondents expressing confidence in their ability to run their businesses. Community support and personal fulfillment also emerged as significant motivators, with 50% and 65% agreement, respectively. Market opportunities are perceived positively by 50% of respondents, while government incentives are somewhat influential, with 45% agreement. Economic necessity is a less dominant but notable factor, with 45% agreement.

Business Self-Efficacy and Resilience

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am confident in my problem-solving abilities in business.	5%	10%	20%	40%	25%
I am able to bounce back from setbacks in my business.	5%	15%	25%	40%	15%
I can easily adapt to changes in the business environment.	5%	10%	30%	40%	15%
I actively engage in networking to grow my business.	10%	15%	25%	35%	15%
I consider myself an effective leader in my business.	5%	10%	30%	40%	15%
I have adequate knowledge to manage the various aspects of my business.	5%	10%	25%	45%	15%

Interpretation of Business Self-Efficacy and Resilience

Confidence in problem-solving abilities and resilience are high, with 65% and 55% agreement, respectively. Adaptability is also significant, with 55% agreement. Networking, leadership, and business knowledge are perceived positively by 50%, 55%, and 60% of respondents, respectively, indicating a generally high level of self-efficacy among SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli.

Overall Business Performance

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My business has experienced significant growth over the past year.	10%	15%	30%	30%	15%
My customers are satisfied with the products/services I provide.	5%	10%	25%	45%	15%

Interpretation of Overall Business Performance

Business growth is moderate, with 45% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have experienced significant growth. Customer satisfaction is relatively high, with 60% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Perceived Government Support (Rows) vs. Business Growth (Columns)

Particulars	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree (Gov. Support)	10	5	5	20
Neutral (Gov. Support)	10	5	10	25
Agree (Gov. Support)	15	5	10	30
Total	35	15	25	75

Calculate the expected frequencies

Particulars	Disagree (Observed)	Neutral (Observed)	Agree (Observed)	Total (Observed)
Disagree (Gov. Support)	$20 * 35 / 75 = 9.33$	$20 * 15 / 75 = 4.00$	$20 * 25 / 75 = 6.67$	20
Neutral (Gov. Support)	$25 * 35 / 75 = 11.67$	$25 * 15 / 75 = 5.00$	$25 * 25 / 75 = 8.33$	25
Agree (Gov. Support)	$30 * 35 / 75 = 14.00$	$30 * 15 / 75 = 6.00$	$30 * 25 / 75 = 10.00$	30
Total	35	15	25	75

Chi-Square Statistic Calculation

The output from the chi-square test is as follows:

- Chi-square statistic (χ^2): 1.52
- p-value: 0.82
- Degrees of freedom (dof): 4

Interpretation

The p-value is 0.82, which is significantly higher than the common significance level of 0.05. This means we fail to reject the null hypothesis. In other words, there is no significant relationship between perceived government support and business growth among SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli based on the data provided.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study explored the challenges, driving factors, and business self-efficacy of SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli, yielding the following key findings:

Challenges Faced by SC/ST Entrepreneurs

Financial Constraints

A significant majority of respondents (65%) reported facing substantial financial constraints, highlighting the difficulty in securing adequate funding for their businesses.

- **Access to Credit**

About 50% of the entrepreneurs indicated challenges in accessing credit from financial institutions, which hampers their ability to expand and sustain their businesses.

- **Market Access**

Half of the respondents (50%) struggle to access potential markets for their products and services, which limits their business growth and profitability.

- **Social Discrimination**

While less prominent, 35% of the entrepreneurs acknowledged facing social discrimination that negatively impacts their business operations.

- **Government Support**

55% of respondents believe there is insufficient support from government programs, suggesting a gap in effective governmental assistance.

- **Non-Governmental Support**

Similarly, 35% of entrepreneurs reported inadequate support from non-governmental organizations.

Driving Factors for Entrepreneurship

- **Self-Efficacy**

A strong driving factor, with 70% of respondents expressing confidence in their ability to successfully run their businesses.

- **Community Support**

50% of the entrepreneurs receive substantial support from their community, which aids in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

- **Market Opportunities**

Half of the respondents perceive significant market opportunities for their products/services, motivating them to continue their entrepreneurial pursuits.

- **Government Incentives**

45% of respondents felt that government incentives have encouraged them to start and sustain their businesses.

- **Personal Fulfillment**

65% of the entrepreneurs run their businesses due to a sense of personal fulfillment.

- **Economic Necessity**

45% of the respondents started their businesses out of economic necessity, indicating a crucial driver for entrepreneurship in this community.

Business Self-Efficacy and Resilience

- **Problem-Solving Abilities**

65% of respondents are confident in their problem-solving abilities, which helps them navigate business challenges effectively.

- **Resilience**

55% of entrepreneurs reported high resilience, indicating their ability to bounce back from setbacks.

- **Adaptability**

55% of the respondents believe they can easily adapt to changes in the business environment, demonstrating flexibility and agility.

- **Networking**

50% of the entrepreneurs actively engage in networking to grow their businesses.

- **Leadership**

55% of the respondents consider themselves effective leaders in their business ventures.

- **Business Knowledge**

60% of the entrepreneurs feel they have adequate knowledge to manage various aspects of their business, highlighting a strong foundation in business operations.

Overall Business Performance

- **Business Growth**

Business growth is moderate, with 45% of respondents reporting significant growth over the past year.

- **Customer Satisfaction**

High customer satisfaction is reported by 60% of the entrepreneurs, indicating a positive reception of their products and services.

The findings reveal that SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli face considerable challenges, particularly in financial constraints, access to credit, and market access. Despite these obstacles, strong self-efficacy, community support, and personal fulfillment drive these entrepreneurs. Business self-efficacy, including problem-solving abilities, resilience, and adaptability, plays a crucial role in overcoming challenges. Overall, the business performance of these entrepreneurs shows moderate growth and high customer satisfaction, reflecting a resilient and motivated entrepreneurial community.

These insights can inform policymakers and support organizations to develop targeted interventions that address the specific needs of SC/ST entrepreneurs, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem in Devanahalli.

Suggestions of the Study

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are made to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem for SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli:

Improve Access to Finance

- **Targeted Financial Programs**

Develop financial programs specifically tailored for SC/ST entrepreneurs, including low-interest loans, grants, and micro-financing options.

- **Credit Facilitation**

Simplify the credit application process and provide credit facilitation services to help entrepreneurs prepare and submit applications successfully.

- **Financial Literacy Training**

Offer training sessions to enhance financial literacy and management skills, enabling entrepreneurs to better manage their finances and navigate funding opportunities.

Enhance Market Access

- **Market Access Initiatives**

Implement programs to help entrepreneurs access broader markets, including participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, and online marketplaces.

- **Business Development Services**

Provide business development services, such as market research, marketing strategies, and sales training, to help entrepreneurs effectively reach and engage with their target customers.

- **Networking Opportunities**

Facilitate networking events and platforms where entrepreneurs can connect with potential customers, partners, and investors.

Strengthen Government and NGO Support

- **Policy Reforms**

Advocate for policy reforms that provide greater support to SC/ST entrepreneurs, including more inclusive procurement policies and tax incentives.

- **Government Programs**

Increase the visibility and accessibility of existing government programs designed to support SC/ST entrepreneurs, ensuring they are well-publicized and easy to access.

- **Collaboration with NGOs**

Encourage collaboration between governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations to create comprehensive support systems, including mentorship, training, and financial aid.

Foster Community Support

- **Community-Based Initiatives**

Promote community-based initiatives that encourage local support for SC/ST entrepreneurs, such as community investment funds and cooperative societies.

- **Role Models and Mentorship**

Highlight successful SC/ST entrepreneurs as role models and mentors to inspire and guide aspiring entrepreneurs within the community.

- **Cultural Sensitivity Training**

Conduct cultural sensitivity training programs to reduce social discrimination and foster a more inclusive community environment.

Enhance Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Skills

- **Entrepreneurship Training**

Provide comprehensive entrepreneurship training programs that cover essential skills such as business planning, management, leadership, and problem-solving.

- **Workshops and Seminars**

Organize regular workshops and seminars on various aspects of entrepreneurship, including innovation, digital marketing, and financial management.

- **Resilience Building**

Implement programs focused on building resilience and adaptability among entrepreneurs, helping them to better cope with challenges and changes in the business environment.

Monitor and Evaluate Business Performance

- **Performance Monitoring**

Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the performance of SC/ST entrepreneurs, providing them with feedback and support to improve their business operations.

- **Data Collection and Analysis**

Conduct regular data collection and analysis to understand the evolving needs and challenges of SC/ST entrepreneurs, informing future support programs and policies.

- **Continuous Improvement**

Encourage a culture of continuous improvement among entrepreneurs, promoting lifelong learning and adaptation to new business trends and technologies.

By implementing these suggestions, the entrepreneurial landscape for SC/ST communities in Devanahalli can be significantly enhanced, leading to sustainable growth, increased economic participation, and a more inclusive economic environment. These efforts will not only benefit the entrepreneurs but also contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the region.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli. By investigating the specific barriers such as financial constraints, social discrimination, lack of market access, and insufficient support from governmental and non-governmental organizations, we have gained a deeper understanding of the obstacles hindering the entrepreneurial activities of these communities.

Despite these significant challenges, the study also uncovered strong driving factors that propel SC/ST individuals to pursue and sustain entrepreneurship. Key motivators include personal self-efficacy, community support, perceived market opportunities, and available governmental incentives. These factors highlight the resilience and determination within the SC/ST entrepreneurial community.

The role of business self-efficacy was found to be particularly crucial in overcoming obstacles and leveraging motivational factors to maintain and grow business ventures. High levels of self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and leadership skills were instrumental in enabling entrepreneurs to navigate adversity successfully. The study also highlighted areas that require attention and improvement. Access to finance, market access, and effective support from government and NGOs are critical areas where targeted interventions can make a substantial difference. By addressing these issues, stakeholders can significantly enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem for SC/ST entrepreneurs.

The suggestions provided aim to create a more supportive and inclusive environment for these entrepreneurs. Implementing targeted financial programs, enhancing market access, strengthening government and NGO support, fostering community initiatives, and enhancing self-efficacy and entrepreneurial skills are crucial steps toward this goal.

In conclusion, while SC/ST entrepreneurs in Devanahalli face numerous challenges, they also exhibit remarkable resilience and potential. By addressing the identified barriers and leveraging the driving factors, it is possible to create a more equitable and thriving entrepreneurial landscape. This will not only empower SC/ST entrepreneurs but also contribute to the broader socio-economic development of Devanahalli, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic economy.

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