



THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS ON THE EMERGENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Contribution of entrepreneurship towards economic development is evident. It helps in raising the standard of living by alleviating poverty, reduces unemployment and also helps in balancing regional development. However, it is seen that distribution of entrepreneurship is uneven between different regions and amongst the different communities within the same region as well. There may be different reasons which restrain the development of entrepreneurship in a particular region among which, the socio-cultural characteristics is one of them. The socio-cultural environment within which a person is brought up can influence a person in different aspects. Therefore, the study on how socio-cultural characteristics influence the emergence of entrepreneurship is important. This paper focus on how such factors influence entrepreneurial emergence by reviewing existing literatures.

KEYWORDS : entrepreneurship, regional development, socio-cultural, emergence

I. Introduction:

Entrepreneurship has always been considered as a driving force in developing an economy of any region. The relevance of entrepreneurship in economic growth and development with regards to job creation and poverty alleviation cannot be over-emphasized (Gree and Thurnik, 2003). Entrepreneurship leads to industrialization which translates to provision of employment and indeed, poverty reduction as a result of entrepreneurial activities that follow it (Duru, 2011). Entrepreneur mobilizes the untapped resources or use the existing resource, manage them innovatively and exploit the opportunity by assuming risk that are involved therein.

Entrepreneurship does not take place in vacuum. There are various factors which encourage and motivate a person or any group of people to take up entrepreneurship. Among the various factors, Socio-Cultural factors plays an important role in influencing a person to be an entrepreneur or not. One of the reason for uneven distribution and presence of entrepreneurship is the social and cultural factors where a person has been raised. According to Casson (2005) one of the important characteristics of an entrepreneur is the specialization in judgemental decision making which is not culture-neutral. Cultural and social norms are emphasized as the major strength of entrepreneurial orientation and seem to be the differentiating factor for higher levels of entrepreneurial activity (Minniti and Bygrave, 2003). Akeredolu-Ale (1974) also writes on the importance of socio-cultural imperatives in entrepreneurial event.

The European Commission in 2003 in the document "Green Paper" has also highlighted about the future of entrepreneurship in Europe. The commission pointed out that, building an entrepreneurial society involves everybody and positive attitudes towards entrepreneurial initiative and failure can help develop entrepreneurial ventures.

Therefore, the term socio-culture is a broad term and consist of the social system and the culture of a people which consists intangible elements created by man and affects people's behavior, relationship, perception and way of life and their survival and existence (Akhter & Sumi, 2014).

To gain deeper insights into the concept of culture and social characteristics in respect of entrepreneurial emergence, it will be beneficial to have a brief discussion and find out how does these factors influence entrepreneurial emergence.

Culture and Entrepreneurship:

Usually, culture is defined as a set of shared values, beliefs and behavior which is passed on from one generation to another within a particular society and is deeply implanted in the life of every individual. Culture is also considered to have an influence on

managerial practices and serves as a mediator that can guide and shape behavior (Smirchich, 1983). According to Geertz, Culture is a constitutive part in generating and preserving a collective identity (Gertz, 1973). Culture is always intertwined with meaning. Max Webber has pointed out that, "From the human stand point, culture is a finite segment, of the meaningless infinity of occurrences in the world that has been imbued with sense and meaning" (Webber, 1988). From the sociological point of view, culture is a set of standards, values and norms and are symbolic. The broader, Ethnological concept of culture defines culture as the "epitome of human life style". Kroeber and Parson (1958) defines culture as, "Patterns of values, ideas and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behaviour".

Culture strongly influences a degree to which a country or region considers entrepreneurial initiative, risk taking as a desirable career and by that strongly influences on self-confidence of the individual and on their decision to start business (J.C. Hayton, G. George, Shaker A. Zahra, 2002). The earliest theory on the influence of socio-cultural environment on entrepreneurship is that of Max Weber, which explains that society plays a big role in developing entrepreneurs. According to Max Weber (1864-1920) an entrepreneur becomes a role performer in conformity with the role expectations of the society, and such role expectations base on religious beliefs, taboos and customs. Weber held religion as the major driver of entrepreneurship and stressed on the spirit of capitalism, which highlights economic freedom and private enterprise. According to his observation, Capitalism thrives under the protestant work ethics that harp on these values. Based on Weber's observation Gadgil (1959) in his study showed that Muslims, Christians, and Jews were the chief traders of Kerala, in South India, and Jenkins (1984) showed that Protestants in Northern Ireland manipulated ethnicity in the realm of economic transactions and thus dominated the country. Sayigh (1952), in his study has also found Christians and Jews to be the prominent entrepreneurs of Lebanon. Kong, Soon, and Hwa (1991) showed how Singaporean Chinese are active entrepreneurs in Malaysia. International Economic Organizations such as Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) has been giving due importance on the environmental drivers of entrepreneurship, especially the social and cultural factors that influence the individual career choice to be an entrepreneur and to create a new business (European Commission, 2004, 2009; OECD, 1998,2000).

Social Factors and Entrepreneurship:

Social environment and networks by and large influences the process of entrepreneurship. It acts as a road map which guide an entrepreneur. Therefore, Embedded-ness and relational networks Understanding entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon allows us to draw on the well-developed more general literatures on social capital and social networks(Akhter & Sumi, 2014). The concept of

social capital is arguably one of the most successful “exports” from sociology to the other social sciences (Portes, 2000). Social capital is defined as the tangible and virtual resources that facilitate actors attainment of goals and that accrue to actors through social structure (Portes, 1999). Given the central proposition that networks of relationships constitute a valuable resource (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), many of the insights of social capital theory relative to entrepreneurial activity can be found in the social network literature (Casson and Della Giusta, 2007).

In general terms, social networks are defined by a set of actors (individuals and organizations) and a set of linkages between those actors (Brass, 1992). Social networks are the relationships through which one receives opportunities to use financial and human capital - relationships in which ownership is not solely the property of an individual, but is jointly held among the members of a network (Burt, 1992). This broad conception of social networks and social capital implies that the dynamics of economic exchange are socially embedded (Granovetter, 1985; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). As distinct from rational choice perspectives, the social embeddedness perspective emphasizes that, in embedded contexts, entrepreneurial agency, that is the ability to garner entrepreneurial ideas and the resources to develop them, is shaped by implicit norms and social mores. Thus, social capital is conceptualized as a set of resources embedded in relationships (Burt, 1992). Many studies have drawn the significance of social network analysis in the field of entrepreneurship and has illustrated that entrepreneurs access to resources that are not possessed internally (Bowey and Easton, 2007). The most important point is that, even as entrepreneurs usually hold some of the resources necessary to create a business (e.g. ideas, knowledge and competence to run the business), generally they also need complementary resources which they obtain through their contacts (e.g. information, financial capital, labour) to produce and deliver their goods or services (Greve and Salaff, 2003).

Objectives of the study:

The core objectives of this study are:

1. To find out how influential is the socio-cultural characteristics in the emergence of entrepreneurship.
2. To identify the various socio-cultural variables influencing entrepreneurial emergence.

Methodology:

This study is done reviewing the available literatures through various journals, articles, publications, etc. The study is exploratory in nature and has been analysed qualitatively. Tables are prepared for quick and easy understanding.

Review of Literature:

Emergence of an enterprise in diverse areas is essence for economic growth. This emergence of enterprise demands conducive environment which would help build up a wider base of population capable of successful entrepreneurial behavior. Some social scientists has therefore viewed that an entrepreneur is a product of socio-cultural milieu. On this backdrop, sufficient published literature has been reviewed to gain more insights on how social and cultural characters influence entrepreneurship.

Becker (1956) suggested that some societies, because of their non-entrepreneurial culture, welcome outsiders to perform entrepreneurial functions. In effect, some groups with entrepreneurial values do become the predominant entrepreneurs of host societies.

Shapiro (1984) concluded that culture was an explanatory variable for entrepreneurial activity or the lack of it. He also noted that some cultures value *entrepreneurship* more than do others. "Some cultures that value *entrepreneurship* are: Ibos in Africa, Gujaratis, Jains, and Parsis in India, overseas Chinese in southeast Asia, Antioqueros in Colombia, Jews, Lebanese, Mennonites and Mormons in the United States."

Shaver and Scott (1991) are of the view that the growth and sustainability of an entrepreneurial activity also depends on self confidence in one's own skills and competency of an entrepreneur. They pointed out that a person should have the capacity, skills, knowledge and motivation to turn opportunities to sustainable business.

Tripathi (1992) following the analysis of Weber, Dwijendra Tripathi, have also argued that, because of the religious philosophy of resignation embodied in the doctrine of 'Karma' and the rigid social organization of the caste system the Indian personality remained largely unentrepreneurial if not anti-entrepreneurial.

Deresky (1997) has observed that, many people in the world understand and relate to others only in terms of their own cultural values. In such cases, where people live in a society which discourage entrepreneurship will find hard in taking up entrepreneurial activity. The interpretation of things, establishment of priorities and making of choices and reaching decisions are the issues which are given shape by values before the outcome of these is reflected in behavior.

Lipset (2000) has observed the view of Max Weber (1864-1920) and has concluded that non-economic factors including concepts developed in sociology and psychology plays an important role in economic growth. According to him, an appropriate socio-cultural environment is a pre-requisite for industries or economic growth. The event of enterprise creation, the essential activity in entrepreneurship, can therefore be seen as a consequence of congruence between environmental condition and the entrepreneurial behavior of individuals determined by their socio-cultural backgrounds.

Deakins & Freel (2003) has discussed about the importance of Social capital (experience and advice available from extended family and social networks) in start-up and entrepreneurial development. From an entrepreneurial perspective, social capital provides networks that facilitate the discovery of opportunities, as well as the identification, collection and allocation of scarce resources. They indicate that sources of social capital are important for predicting start-up entrepreneurial activity. Social capital replaces the role of institutional sources of advice in the same way that informal finance can replace and substitute for the role of institutional sources of formal finance.

Damaraju et al. (2010) has suggested that in collectivistic cultures and in cultures with high levels of fear and insecurity, the fear of stigma associated with entrepreneurial failure leads to relatively low levels of entrepreneurial activity.

Barjaballav (2014) say that the factors that are responsible for the entry and success of entrepreneurship which includes the socio cultural factors of entrepreneurship. He designed a framework of entrepreneurship which involves all the three school of thoughts of entrepreneurship. According to him, education involves two levels of attitudes for becoming entrepreneurs one as motivating factors for becoming entrepreneurs with self-efficacy and ambition and other involves for having of wage related motivation for entrepreneurs.

From an anthropological perspective, attention to social and cultural factors related to the creation of a new business has provided interesting contribution to the understanding of entrepreneurship, especially through the study of Social constraints (Garlick, 1971; Kennedy, 1988; Wiewel & Hunter, 1985) and collective approaches (such as, family business, community-Centered business, ethnic or organizational entrepreneurship) to business formation and growth (Benedict, 1968; Davis and Ward, 1990; Kleinberg, 1983; Parker, 1988).

The Socio-Cultural Attributes

Dharmendra (2014) in his article "Socio-Cultural influence on

women entrepreneurs: A study of Uttarakhand State says that age, gender, education, caste, religion, marital status, family income and housing conditions play an important role in the socio cultural entrepreneurship. Rahma *et al.*, (2014) in his article "socio cultural factors influencing entrepreneurship activities: A study on Bangladesh" say that religion, family, education, socio cultural features, poverty, gender role values, peer group influence to be an entrepreneurs, political instability play an important role in the socio cultural entrepreneurship. They concluded that this socio cultural factors influence on entrepreneurship will be positive or negative based on the society.

Thomas (2014) in his article "Attitude of rural women towards Entrepreneurship in Kerala" says that attitude contains norms, beliefs and values of the society in an individual. The study found that Kerala entrepreneurs have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Maria (2013) in his article "Economic and Entrepreneurship education- a Prerequisite for the Development of Local Entrepreneurship" says that education is responsible for the acceptance of economic changes in the society. Entrepreneurial education itself motivates for knowledge gaining and national culture oriented entrepreneurs. Culture itself also motivates an individual to become an entrepreneur and makes successful in their business growth and turnover.

Griffiths *et al.*, (2013) in the article "The socio-political, economic and cultural determinants of social entrepreneurial activity" investigates the macro environmental factors of entrepreneurship and identifies some of the social factors like social norms, social values, and religion based social capital will affect entrepreneurship. He discusses the role of culture values and norms in evolving the entrepreneurial behaviours. The study explores the factors determining entrepreneurial activity.

David *et al.*, (2011) in his article "Socio-Cultural factors and transnational entrepreneurship: A multiple case study in Spain" say that role models, entrepreneurial attitudes, social networks and entrepreneurial culture and opportunities play an important role in developing and emerging of transnational entrepreneurship. The study defines the socio cultural factors affecting the transnational entrepreneurs in multinational Spain.

Masud Chand & Majid Ghorbani (2011) in their article "National culture, networks and ethnic entrepreneurship: A comparison of Indian and Chinese immigrants in the US" say that social networks are crucial in the formation of entrepreneurial enterprises. They have discussed Global project issues like assertiveness orientation, family collectivism, societal collectivism and performance orientation factors to describe the Entrepreneurship among Indian and Chinese Entrepreneurs in the US.

Rajesh Kumar Shastri & Avaniika Sinha (2010) in their article "The sociocultural and economic effect on the development of women Entrepreneurs (with special reference to India) says that women's are starting business more in beauty and household activities. Educational background, husband's educational profile, finance gathering and business experience were identified as socio cultural factors of entrepreneurs. They concluded that government should support women both families and social circles.

Alwis and Senathiraja (2003) put that Socio-cultural and personal factors like education, religion, ethnicity, age, etc have a significant influence on the business value formation and again, the mind-set of the individuals is a portrait of their past experience generated from the Socio-cultural Business Environment they have mingled with. The pattern of behaviour or lifestyle in the Business Environment determines whether or not people become entrepreneurs.

Hayton *et al.*, (2002) in his article "National culture and

Entrepreneurship: A review of Behavioural Research" say that association between national cultural values characteristics, individual characteristics of entrepreneurs, total measures of entrepreneurship and aspects of corporate entrepreneurship. They constructed a conceptual framework with 8 dimensions as cultural values, cognition, needs and motives, beliefs and behaviours, institutional context, economic context and entrepreneurship.

Stephen L Mueller & Anisya S Thomas (2000) in his article "Culture and Entrepreneurial potential: A Nine country study of Locus of control and Innovativeness" say that Hofstede's did not explained the relationship between culture and entrepreneurial activity but in his article with the Hofstede's cultural dimensions the relationship has been explained by taking two of four dimensions as individualism and uncertainty avoidance. The results of the study say that some cultures are really conducive to other cultures. High uncertainty avoidance cultures are taking low risks and low uncertainty cultures are willing to take risks hence becoming entrepreneurs. The study was well accepted by many eminent scholars in entrepreneurship.

Per Davidson (1997) in his article "Values, beliefs and regional variations in new firm formation rates" say that values and beliefs both has an effect on regional firm formation rates whereas cultural variation is low in new firm formation rates. They believe that social factors have an important role compared to the cultural factors of socio culture environment of entrepreneurship

Shane (1993) in his article "Cultural influences on National rates of innovation" say that cultural values has to be changed for having increased innovation. Uncertainty plays a role in national rates of innovation. He in his study undertakes Hofstede's cultural dimensions to explain the cultural variables. Most of the researcher's used Hofstede's cultural dimensions like uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism and masculinity for explaining the cultural factors of entrepreneurship.

Robert J Baum *et al.*, (1993) in his article "Nationality and work role interactions: A Cultural contrast of Israeli and U.S. Entrepreneurs versus Managers' needs" say that need for achievement, need for affiliation, need for autonomy and need for dominance play an important role in the national culture. They concluded those cultural influences on the self and the expressed needs of entrepreneurs with the self-representation theory defined by Smith.

Discussion and Conclusion:

From the above literature that are reviewed, various socio-cultural factors that affect entrepreneurship are revealed. These factors plays an important role in influencing an individual to become an entrepreneur or not. The factors that are found from the literature review are presented in tabular form.

Table no.1 Table showing the different socio-cultural factors influencing entrepreneurship

Authors	Socio-cultural factors cited
Dharmendra (2014)	Age, Gender, education, caste, religion, marital status, family income, housing condition.
Rahma et al., (2014)	Religion, family, education, poverty, gender role, values, peer group, political instability.
Thomas (2014)	Attitude towards entrepreneurship
Maria(2013)	Education
Griffiths et.al(2013)	Social and cultural norms and values, religion based social capital.
David ed.al(2013)	Role models, entrepreneurial attitudes, social networks, entrepreneurial culture, opportunities.
Chand & Ghorbani(2011)	Social networks(assertiveness orientation, family collectivism, societal collectivism, performance orientation)

Shashtri & Sinha(2010)	Educational background, husbands' educational profile, finance gathering, business experience.
Hayton et.al(2002)	Cultural values, cognition, needs and motives, beliefs and behaviours, institutional context and economic context
Meuller & Thomas(2010)	Individualism, uncertainty avoidance
Davidson(1977)	Values and beliefs
Shane(1993)	Uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism, masculinity.

Conceptual Framework:

Geert Hofstede an influential Dutch social psychologist and anthropologist who is a well-known pioneer in research of cross-cultural groups and organizations has identified four value oriented dimensions of culture that may be used to define their aspects of behaviours in different cultural groups. He has played a major role in developing a systematic framework for assessing and differentiating national cultures and organizational cultures. The four values identified by him are: (1) power distance, (2) uncertainty avoidance, (3) individualism and (4) masculinity (Russell, 2004). These dimensions have an implication on entrepreneurship development too.

Table No.2 Hofstede Cultural Dimension

Hofstede's Cultural dimension	Determinants of Entrepreneurship
Power Distance	High Power distance people are likely to be entrepreneur Low power distance people are less likely to be entrepreneurs
Individualism Vs Collectivism	Individualistic people are more likely to be entrepreneurs Collectivistic people are less likely to be entrepreneur
Uncertainty Avoidance	People with low level of uncertainty avoidance are more likely to be an entrepreneur People with high level of uncertainty avoidance are less likely to be entrepreneur
Masculinity Vs Femininity	People with masculinity culture are more likely to be an entrepreneur People with femininity culture are less likely to be an entrepreneur People with short-term Confucian dynamism are less likely to be entrepreneurs.

Source: Adapted from Hofstede 1980.

From this Hofstede Cultural dimension we can construct a conceptual framework assuming culture as independent variable and entrepreneurship development as a dependent variable.

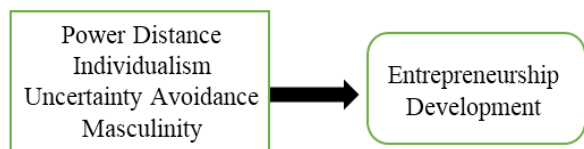


Fig.1: Hofstede's 4 cultural dimension framework.

To evaluate the socio-cultural factors empirically, Bhoganadam & Rao (2016) has listed around 18 socio-cultural factors. These factors will influence entrepreneurship either positively or negatively. Moreover, deep examination into the various cultural theory supporting entrepreneurship will give more insights as to how different factors such as family orientation, educational incubation, societal displacement and Need achievement affect entrepreneurship.

From the available literatures and the conceptual framework formulated by different researcher there are ample evidence that, there exist a relationship between socio-cultural characters and entrepreneurship emergence. This relationship directs a person either to take up entrepreneurship or not. This the reason why we find uneven distribution of entrepreneurship under the same set of entrepreneurial ecosystem. The difference is seen among different countries in the global scenario and also among the different communities within the same countries. Therefore, the socio-cultural factors has to be given due importance. This will boost entrepreneurial emergence and help solving numbers of problems that society is facing today.

This study concludes that, socio-cultural do influence entrepreneurial emergence. The conclusion is done purely on the basis of reviewing available literatures. Empirical research is recommended for bringing into much concrete relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and entrepreneurship emergence.

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