

## NETWORK ADVANTAGES AMONG ZOROASTRIAN SMALL SCALE ENTREPRENEUR IN MODERN INDIA

**Akshay Bhat**

Goa Institute of Management, Poriem, Sattari, Goa.

ISSN 2277-7733

Volume 8 Issue 1,

June 2019

### Abstract

*During the colonial times, Zoroastrians had taken full advantage of the British patronage and had shown high degrees of anglicization and leveraged competitive advantage of being in a 'Zoroastrian Network'. They were quick to adapt themselves to the changing political circumstances and had collaborated with the British. Today, however, the Zoroastrians have lost their entrepreneurial drive and are living off their past glory. The rise of Zoroastrian enterprises during the British rule and the role of Zoroastrian entrepreneurs in the development of India has been studied intensely. However, not much research has been done about entrepreneurship in Zoroastrians post-independence and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The purpose of this study is to examine the opportunities or challenges of being a Zoroastrian entrepreneur in India. The Zoroastrians had an entrepreneurial orientation and so, they explored local areas looking for opportunities. They created employment opportunities for the locals, leading to a coevolutionary growth. Thus, a positive ecosystem was created, in which the Zoroastrians were the central actors. However, in modern times, firms are adopting the Indian identity and centrality is no longer valid, because of which, Zoroastrian entrepreneurs are losing their network advantage. This study also sheds light on how community media and the Internet are extensively being used to bring regain the network advantage that the Zoroastrians have lost.*

**Keywords:** *Zoroastrian, Network Advantage, Small Scale Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Network Theory, Entrepreneurship, Identity*

After the fall of the Sasanian Empire in Iran, almost the whole Zoroastrian population of Persia embraced the faith of Islam, and nearly every trace of the religion of Zoroaster was obliterated. However, some followers of Zoroaster preferred obeying the dictates of their conscience, to freeing themselves from the persecution of their rulers and so, they relinquished the land of their forefathers and sought asylum in the country of the Hindus. The Zoroastrians landed in Sanjan in the year A.D. 717 (Framjee, 2003). Between the 8th and 16th century, they spread from Sanjan and Navsari to other areas of Gujarat, like Ankleshwar, Broach, Cambay, and Surat, settling down and becoming carpenters, weavers, and small-time traders interacting with the local commercial society and later, with European traders and trading companies (the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch and the English) largely as small-time procurers, and at times, also as mediators and interpreters for local negotiations (Subramanian, 2017). This points out that the Zoroastrians had an Entrepreneurial Orientation (eg., Sethna, Jones, & Edwards, 2014; Oonk, 2014).

The process of the mobility of Zoroastrians from manual to non-manual occupations, from primary to secondary and tertiary economic sectors, and in particular from agriculture and artisan crafts to trade and industries can be explained in three phases. During 1650-1750, there was a slow growth of trading capital at various points of the Zoroastrian society. The process was still in its nascent phase, but it carried within it seeds that were sown by the Mughal monetization process and its commercializing impact. This process of change continued with some adjustment from 1750 to 1850 – a period that coincided with the British industrial revolution and the early phase of British rule in India. This phase was characterized by the centralization of

Zoroastrians in Bombay (now Mumbai) as well as the spread and diversification of investments. Finally, this process gathered momentum in the third phase, 1850-1918, when the Zoroastrian industrialization took place as a private initiative within the colonial constraints. During this phase, the trading capital was transformed largely into industrial capital and was increasingly deepened (Guha, 1984). The British rule marked the rise of a number of Zoroastrian family enterprises in Bombay. Tata, Wadia, Cama, Banaji, Jejeebhoy, Shapoorji Pallonji, Petit, Dadyseth, Godrej, Readymoney – all had a preeminent position in shipbuilding, banking, export, and other trades.

During British rule in India, the Zoroastrians identified with the British and with the traits of progressiveness, rationality and, in particular, virility. Now, in independent India, Zoroastrians experience their community as having declined from a state of former glory. Much has been researched about the rise of Zoroastrian enterprises during the British rule and the role of Zoroastrian entrepreneurs in the development of India (eg., Biswas, Roy, Sengupta, & Banerjee, 2017; Desai, 1968; Guha, 1970; Langrial & Baig, 2014; Roy & Lahiri-Roy, 2011). However, not much research has been done about entrepreneurship in Zoroastrians post-independence and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some researchers state that post-independence, the Zoroastrian youth have lost their entrepreneurial drive (eg., Goodstein, 2006; Luhrmann, 1994; Maneck, 1994). However, as of yet, no research has been done to investigate the causes of this decline. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to identify what business small Zoroastrian entrepreneurs are primarily engaged in and what issues are being faced by them (if any).

### **Literature Review**

The following review gives a brief account of the history of Zoroastrians in India and their progress as entrepreneurs. It examines the ethnic conflict and post-colonial fate of Zoroastrians in India.

### **History of the Zoroastrians in India**

The earliest known accounts of the immigration of Zoroastrians from Iran to India is the Qissa-e-Sanjan, a narrative written in c.1599 CE by a Zoroastrian priest Bahman Kaikobad. The text chronicles the early history of the Zoroastrians– the initial group of Zoroastrians who abandoning almost everything dear on earth for the sake of their ancient Faith, fled from Iran and sought refuge in India, following the Arab conquest of Iran and the overthrow of the last Zoroastrian-Sassanian king of Iran, Yazdegerd III in 636 CE. It outlines the Zoroastrians' own perception of their settlement in India. The Qissa-e-Sanjan has been extensively used as a primary source in subsequent research work and writings on Zoroastrians.

Up to the 17th century, sources offer only fragmented information about the Zoroastrians, but then, with the arrival of various European powers in India, a number of external accounts of the Zoroastrians started appearing, and the Zoroastrians themselves began to keep more records.

### **Religion and Business**

Various studies have been conducted to understand the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship and whether religious practices have an impact on how individuals view the individual and societal contribution of a business enterprise (eg., Epstein, 2002; Miller & Timothy, 2010; Nath, 2000; Worthy, 1958). In the Indian context, religion serves as a big influence on business and the economy. When religious salience is high, entrepreneurs tend to use religious criteria to make decisions. Religious groups can also provide a resource for the generation of

entrepreneurial social capital (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). The sense of purpose and other values embedded in various religions can play an important role in how a particular business operates and they may even provide a competitive advantage.

### **Network practices and entrepreneurship**

Networking plays an important and well-studied role in entrepreneurial growth. For ethnic minority and immigrant entrepreneurs, religious communities are a key habitus. Migrant entrepreneurs strive to construct successful networks using their ethnic and religious identity as social capital (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). Gulati (1998) introduces a social network perspective to the study of strategic alliances. A firm gets network advantage because of a) centrality, b) tie modality, and c) its brokerage position (Gulati, 2012). As stated earlier, since many big Zoroastrian firms were present in Bombay, the small scale entrepreneurs got a network advantage. Because of their “Zoroastrian identity”, the small-scale entrepreneurs could progress. Since many “Zoroastrian” firms rose up in Bombay during colonial times like the Tatas, Wadias, Sharpoonji Pallonji etc. they created business ecosystems around themselves. The small scale Zoroastrian entrepreneur, could leverage this network through his identity and be influential in various brokerage positions since the tie-modality of the Zoroastrian identity was more than sufficient in this membership. Thus many Zoroastrian small scale firms also grew in parallel with the larger Zoroastrian firms which also enjoyed British patronage.

### **Zoroastrian Identity**

Maneck (1994) talks about the culture, identity and theological changes among the Zoroastrians in India. The Zoroastrians have never been a static community. They sought to define themselves as a separate community, yet one analogous to those of the other religions and peoples with whom they shared the Indian culture (Maneck, 1994). The works of many writers (eg., Bharucha, 1968; Sidhwa, 1978; Mistry, 1991; Dalal, 2005) shows how Zoroastrians in India exhibit the consciousness of their community, while at the same time exhibiting a consciousness of the nation.

Zoroastrians have embraced their ‘Zoroastrian-ness’ by practicing the beliefs of “Humata, Hukhta, Hvarashta” (good thoughts, good words, good deeds) and they are generally perceived as an ethical and value-based community (Goskar, 2010). At the same time, embracing the Indian identity has helped them live side-by-side with ‘the sons of the soil’ and flourish. Because of their entrepreneurial orientation, the Zoroastrians explored local areas (like Jharkhand) looking for opportunities. They gave opportunities to the local communities and created employment in these areas. This led to a coevolutionary growth of the Parsis and the other communities. The Zoroastrians peacefully assimilated with the Indians which was rooted in their mutual economic prosperity.

### **The Rise of Zoroastrian Entrepreneurship along with the British Rule in India**

Guha (1970) has done extensive research about Zoroastrian entrepreneurs during the British rule in India. His research talks about the symbiotic patron-client relationship of Zoroastrians with the British. Of the local merchant groups, the Zoroastrians had been the quickest to adapt themselves to the changing political circumstances and they were prudent enough to avoid competition with the British and they collaborated with British agency houses as brokers or junior partners (Guha, 1970).

Biswas, Roy, Sengupta, & Banerjee (2017) have studied the constraints that immigrant entrepreneurs have to struggle with owing to their survival in the foreign lands in relation to the Zoroastrians in India. Since Zoroastrians were immigrants,

they had to compete with the native Indians to get a job. And like other immigrants, they had to face problems like the language barrier, socio-cultural constructs of the native Indians, lack of contacts etc. So, Zoroastrians became entrepreneurs, as entrepreneurship circumvents these obstructions. Zoroastrians, since their arrival in India, formed strong bonds and social networks with the fellow Indians, which enabled the Zoroastrian entrepreneurs to get financial support, knowledge, and capital that has helped them immensely in growing their business (Biswas et al., 2017).

From the example of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, we see the entrepreneurial drive and creationary mindset of the Zoroastrians. Jamsetji was destined to lead the austere life, peculiar to the “Dasturs”, that is, the priestly caste of Zoroastrians. However, his thinking was beyond the conventional and he gave the three greatest ideas for India: setting up an iron and steel company at Jamshedpur, generating hydroelectric power to make Bombay virtually independent of coal, and creating Indian Institute at Bangalore – a world-class educational institution of science (Harris, 1958).

Bonacich (1973) described the Zoroastrians in India as “middleman minorities”, a term coined by Blalock (1967). This is in line with the “brokerage position” described by Gulati (1998). Zoroastrians, like other so-called middleman minorities, act as sojourners – those who do not plan to settle permanently in the new location. The impact of sojourning is that there is a high level of internal solidarity and a concentration in certain occupations (Bonacich, 1973). Zoroastrians showed a high concentration in trade and commerce. In 1864, the Census of Bombay recorded the occupation of over 60 percent of male Zoroastrians in the city as commerce.

### **The Zoroastrians: Post-Independence**

Post-independence, the research work, and writings about Zoroastrians in India have been primarily centered on the issue of the declining population. Hinnels (2005) provides an account of Zoroastrians in modern Bombay, with a focus on the period from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s. In the course of the twentieth century, Zoroastrianism has declined not only numerically, but also in terms of influence. Post-independence, there has been a decrease in the knowledge, awareness, and pride in Zoroastrian ideals and ethics and the bond between Zoroastrians has weakened. (Hinnels, 2005). The study by Luhrmann (1994) states that post-independence, the Zoroastrian youth have lost their entrepreneurial drive because everything is being given freely to them. Zoroastrian youth do not want to leave their comfort zone and venture into unknown territory or take a risk (Luhrmann, 1994).

Mathew (2015) has studied the present condition of Zoroastrians in India and their loss of social, economic and political significance. During the colonial period, the Zoroastrians transformed themselves into a merchant community and rose to the position of the richest community in India and they adopted a western lifestyle. However, with the departure of the British, their decline began rapidly and ethnic conflict is considered to be one of the most important reasons for this (Mathew, 2015).

### **Zoroastrians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Hinnels (2005) speaks about the globalizing trends among the Zoroastrians. His book talks about how the Internet revolution has inevitably affected the Zoroastrians. He has given a brief account of the various websites run by Zoroastrians for their co-religionists. Gerth (2009) has studied how some Zoroastrians have created and used the Internet to shape a contemporary Zoroastrian identity. Zoroastrians have used the Internet to provide resource sites, communities of affirmation, social networking

resources and has helped to maintain group boundaries and cohesion in the modern world (Gerth, 2009). Dastoor (2005) states that for Zarathushtis, the Internet has been a boon by joining the community into a single virtual but a very tangible community. It has helped in strengthening collective identity and tightening group borders.

Most of the research about Zoroastrians in the modern times has been centered on the issues of declining population and how the Internet is helping Zoroastrians connect. However, not much research has been done on the entrepreneurial trends among Zoroastrians in modern times and how the Internet is facilitating in entrepreneurial pursuits.

### **Methodology**

We followed Eisenhardt (1989) method of doing an exploratory work to make sense of what is really going on with the Zoroastrian entrepreneur of today. For this we studied the literature ex-ante identified areas, themes and variables important for our study. However, we did not form any causal association between the variables beforehand. This would limit any researcher bias and any serendipitous counterfactual observation would be a breeding ground for new theory or finding. We interviewed 13 small scale Zoroastrian Entrepreneurs associated with some Zoroastrian body or association and documented their stories in the form of small cases.

The research area or an anchoring question we took for our work is *“Is the dwindling and scattering population making small-scale Zoroastrian entrepreneurs lose their network advantage?”* This is not a concrete sharp question, but rather a trigger point for an inquiry. The main reason for not going with a sharp research question is to maintain theoretical flexibility and leave room for counterfactual findings, which would set stage for a divergent view. We went with a research area in mind otherwise the data in itself could be overwhelming without any sort of convergence (Yin, 2003)

A thorough review of literature needed to be conducted in order to look for an explanation for the question being raised and also to verify whether the research question being raised is not redundant or answered before. After the study of literature, we observed that post-Indian independence, the research work, and writings about Zoroastrians in India have been centered on the issue of the declining population of Zoroastrians. Not much research has been done on the issue of entrepreneurship among Zoroastrians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While some studies do state that post-independence, the Zoroastrian youth have lost their entrepreneurial drive, however, as of yet, no research has been done to investigate the causes of this decline. To overcome this paucity of data, we thought of approaching my research in an inductive manner. Also, inductive thinking will help me piece together various bits of information and form an understandable unit of analysis to better understand the internal workings.

Through the literature review, we could identify certain tentative areas of inspection. One was to examine the industries in which Zoroastrian entrepreneurs primarily engaged in and examine patterns in the same. Another area of study was to examine the influence of Zoroastrian network on entrepreneurship. Earlier, the Zoroastrians had a network advantage, as a majority of the population was concentrated in the western belt of India (mainly Mumbai and certain cities of Gujarat like Surat, Navsari, Bharuch, Ankleshwar), but now that the Zoroastrians have dispersed across the world, is the network advantage still valid? Another area was to study how the Zoroastrian entrepreneurs are keeping their Zoroastrian values and embracing their Indian identity at

the same time. Also, a possible area of study was to identify the influence of the various Zoroastrian organizations and trusts (eg., Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP), World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO), World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) and Delhi Zoroastrian Anjuman) on entrepreneurship. Is there any encouragement from these organizations to steer Zoroastrian youth towards business and how do these organizations help Zoroastrian entrepreneurs?

We tried to collect data from all possible sources to get richness and depth in the study. Data both archival and interview-based was collected. Data from primary sources was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with a) influential people in the community, which includes the President, Vice President and trustees of the Zoroastrian organizations, including the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) and Delhi Zoroastrian Anjuman, and b) small-scale Zoroastrian entrepreneurs. Interviews were collected either on the telephone, through Skype or face-to-face, depending on the convenience of the respondents. Interviews and archival data were collected over two months, with simultaneous analysis being conducted parallelly, looking for similarities in the answers given to me by the respondents and collecting more data and focusing more on a particular area, if it was found to add more value. For example, when we realized that most of the respondents we had interviewed were not aware of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) and its workings, we conducted a small survey by asking 31 Zoroastrians from different occupational backgrounds to ask them if they knew what WZCC is and what it does.

The data gathered, was verified and enriched by comparing it with both favorable and unfavorable secondary data, publications, which included the studies of researchers, who have studied the trend in entrepreneurship among Zoroastrians since the British times, both biased and unbiased articles from the newspapers and Zoroastrian publications and published interviews of Zoroastrian entrepreneurs and other people, speaking about their perceptions about Zoroastrian entrepreneurs. The objective here was to construct a generalizable truth, which could come closest to reality while making sense of the line of events.

The objective for going with a semi-structured interview was primarily, that we did not wish to feed a line of thought into our respondents, therefore, eliminating bias. Since the objective of our study was to explore and not probe to find evidence of an event which occurred, there was minimum involvement from my part. In a free open-minded interview, the respondents would be more likely to recollect and share their experiences with candor. Therefore, we did not spend time asking questions, instead of listening to the interviewee.

The exploratory case-based method seemed like a good method for conducting the study on the opportunities and challenges of being a Zoroastrian entrepreneur in today's time because it will help me cover various aspects about Zoroastrian entrepreneurs.

### **Findings**

Before independence, a majority of the Zoroastrian population was concentrated in the Western part of India (Mumbai and certain cities of Gujarat like Surat, Navsari, Bharuch, Ankleshwar). Because of this, the Zoroastrians were a very closely-knit community. Most of the Zoroastrians lived in colonies, popularly known as "Zoroastrian Baugs". These Baugs were known for certain stereotypes like the vigilant

housewives, who would be all-ears for everything that is happening with everyone in the colony; the retired men who would love listening to old Bollywood songs and discussing the worldly affairs; and the *machivalas* and *pauvalas* who would frequent the Baug early in the morning. This close-knit bond helped Zoroastrians flourish in businesses selling products, which would be bought primarily by other Zoroastrians, these include food and bakery products, garaas (a traditional Zoroastrian saree), dugli (a traditional attire for Zoroastrian men), feto (a traditional Zoroastrian hard-hat), torans (decorative door hangings) etc.

Earlier, Zoroastrians had the advantage of centrality. The small-scale Zoroastrian entrepreneurs could use the network and stature that the established Zoroastrian firms had created to their advantage. Their “Zoroastrian identity”, paired with the creationary mindset helped them succeed in their business ventures. However, in the past few years, the mindset is shifting from creation-oriented to inheritance-oriented, which is leading to internal conflicts within the community. At the same time, the established firms like the Tata Group, Godrej Group, Wadia Group etc. have embraced the India-ness and they are no longer considered as “Zoroastrian firms”, rather, they are recognized as “Indian firms”. Also, the community has scattered across the world. All these factors combined have taken away the network advantage that small-scale Zoroastrian entrepreneurs once had.

In the past few years, members of the community have shown a keen interest in revitalizing community interest and in bringing the fragmented community together. For this, they have turned to the Internet. While organizations such as the Bombay Parsi Panchayat play an important role in organizing communities, community media plays an equally vital role in helping shorten the physical distance between the community members. Websites, blogs, online directories, and online magazines are being used by the close-knit but scattered and shrinking community to stay in touch. Some Zoroastrians believe that their future as a community is interlinked with how well they remain connected and be a support to each other and so, they are using the power of the World Wide Web to keep the community members united.

“The Zoroastrian Directory” is an initiative to unite the far-flung Zoroastrian community across the globe. It is the largest and free listing of Zoroastrians, Iranis and Zoroastrians across the world. Various websites, apps, and online publications are now available, which allows Zoroastrians to cover the happenings across the Zoroastrian society worldwide. It also allows Zoroastrians to advertise their business and helps users find postings for everything from Zoroastrian tour operators to caterers to accountants and lawyers among other businesses. Facebook has also served as a major platform for selling wares from home. There are several groups made on Facebook, such as ‘Zoroastrian Entrepreneur’, “Zoroastrian-to-Zoroastrian Buying & Selling”, “Zoroastrian& Irani only – buying and selling” etc., which allow Zoroastrians to post about their products and get orders.

Most of the Zoroastrian entrepreneurs conduct their business with people from different communities, which makes sense because of the dwindling and high scattered Zoroastrian population. However, the people who conduct business from home, by selling food and bakery products, garaas, dugli, torans etc. sell their wares only to Zoroastrians, because demand for these products is generated by Zoroastrians. For these people, who conduct business from home, the network advantage plays a

very important role. They make use of Facebook and other social media sites to display or communicate and sell their wares.

Many communities work to encourage people towards entrepreneurship and help businessmen. For example, in 2017, the Jain International Trade Organization (JITO) set-up a co-working and an incubation center in Mumbai to provide office space and guidance to the entrepreneurs from the community. The Sindhi Chamber of Commerce (SCC) too conducted a series of workshops and seminars to guide and help the businessmen in the community across 40 different sectors. Similarly, the Zoroastrians also have various agencies like WZCC (World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce) and the Parsi Panchayats, which work for encouraging Zoroastrian businesses.

The WZCC has been created to facilitate networking, enhance trade & commerce and to reenergize the Zoroastrian entrepreneurial spirit and thus, bring about economic prosperity to all Zoroastrians worldwide. It aims to energize the entrepreneurial spirit among Zoroastrian throughout the world by giving business and professionals a platform for networking. WZCC invites business initiatives, assists them in building business plans and budgets, encourages networking and allows the members to enunciate or advertise their business. However, the awareness levels among the Zoroastrians in India is very limited. Very few people, other than the ones who are associated with the Panchayats or other Zoroastrian agencies know about them.

The local Parsi Panchayats offer a platform for Zoroastrian businessmen to sell their wares. They organize various sales and exhibitions. For example, in Surat, there are the Spattman Sales at least 3-4 times a year. There, people sell hand-made artifacts, clothes, packaged foodstuff, sukhar-loban, prayer books, calendars, household wares etc. However, the problem with these exhibitions is their very limited reach. Generally, only the people living in Zoroastrian baugs know about these sales and exhibitions.

One of the problems, which hinders Zoroastrian youth from going towards business is that while the younger generation has many interesting ideas which are workable, the parents and family members shoot them down because of their fixed mindset. The older generation is not able to think out of the box. Their idea of business is generally limited to catering, tourist transportation, real estate and when nothing works, the last remedy is to get a bank job. On the other hand, where young persons have been given free hand and encouragement, they have ventured in new areas and made a success of their careers. Dealing in the fashion industry, consultancy, IT services, fitness centers are some of the examples of non-traditional ventures. To circumvent this problem, some Zoroastrian institutions are working towards encouraging youth towards entrepreneurship.

Xtremely Young Zoroastrians (XYZ) is an organization formed with the purpose of promoting togetherness and camaraderie within the youngsters of the Zoroastrian Community between the ages of 5 and 15 years. It holds various events, camps and competitions to promote a sense of belonging & pride among the young Zoroastrians and to foster leadership, decision making, teamwork, money management and ethical behavior in them. Zoroastrians are using organizations like these to instill a sense of entrepreneurship among the kids from a young age itself and also to encourage their creativity.

The Bombay Parsi Panchayat organizes Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) – an annual month-long activity camp for Zoroastrian children, who have completed the 10<sup>th</sup> class exams. The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) collaborates with HPY for organizing a workshop for the children at HPY, to encourage them towards entrepreneurship and give advice about trading and other business aspects. This helps in guiding children towards business from a young age. The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Ltd. helps promote the spirit of entrepreneurship amongst Zoroastrian youth by offering counseling services in respect of financial and other issues and organizing and sponsoring business events organized by the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC).

Despite the availability of several institutions to help and encourage entrepreneurship, Zoroastrians do not perceive them to be very helpful. The workings of these Parsi Panchayats and Organizations are often perceived as lethargic and not-transparent.

### **Conclusion**

During the British rule, the Zoroastrians were a very closely-knit community. They had formed strong bonds and social networks among themselves and were perceived as one of the richest and most entrepreneurial communities of India. However, post-independence, as people became more cosmopolitan, the Zoroastrians inevitably lost something of their distinctive character. Three factors have caused the small-scale entrepreneurs to lose their network advantage – a) dwindling and scattering population, b) inheritance-orientation, leading to internal conflicts and c) established firms losing their Zoroastrian-ness and embracing the “Indian identity” through peaceful assimilation and integration into their identity through their businesses and having a coevolutionary growth with other Indian races.

In the past few years, members of the community have shown a clear interest in revitalizing community interest and in uniting the far-flung Zoroastrian community across the globe. The future of Zoroastrians as a community is interlinked with how well they remain connected and be supportive of each other. For this, community media and the Internet are extensively being used. Various institutions, such as the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) and the local Parsi Panchayats are working towards helping Zoroastrians regain their network advantage and thus, regain their entrepreneurial orientation. However, their effectiveness is still doubtful.

### **Limitations**

There is no proper data showing the demographics, income levels, occupation etc. of Zoroastrians in India. Latest data about the Zoroastrian demography, economic status etc. would have made the study more fruitful. The study has not focused on the impact of decline in population on entrepreneurship. Rather it has focused on available data from primary sources that the researchers had access to. Nevertheless, the study lays breeding ground for more research to be done and attempts to set a direction in this area.

### **References**

- Biswas, U., Roy, O., Sengupta, D., & Banerjee, J. (2017). Parsi business tycoons: Revolutionary harbingers of Indian socio-economic entrepreneurial Milieu. *Man in India*, 97(2), 521–537.
- Bonacich, E. (1973). A Theory of Middleman Minorities. *American Sociological Review*, 38(5), 583. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094409>
- Desai, A. V. (1968). The Origins of Parsi Enterprise. *The Indian Economic & Social*

- History Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001946466800500401>
- Dodd, S. D., & Gotsis, G. (2007). The Interrelationships between Entrepreneurship and Religion. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*. <https://doi.org/10.5367/000000007780808066>
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1989.4308385>
- Epstein, E. M. (2002). Religion and business - The critical role of religious traditions in management education. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015712827640>
- Framjee, D. (2003). *Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs and Religion*. Asian Educational Services. [https://doi.org/1-4244-1484-9/08/\\$25.00](https://doi.org/1-4244-1484-9/08/$25.00)
- Gerth, H. (2009). *Zoroastrians on the Internet , a quiet social movement : Ethnography of a virtual community*. University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- Goodstein, L. (2006). Zoroastrians Keep the Faith, and Keep Dwindling. *The New York Times*.
- Goskar, T. (2010). A Zoroastrian Dilemma? Parsi Responses to Global Catastrophe.
- Guha, A. (1970). The Comprador Role of Parsi Seths , 1750-1850. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 5(November), 1933–1936.
- Guha, A. (1984). More about the Parsi Seths: Their Roots, Entrepreneurship and Comprador Role, 1650-1918. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19(3), 117–132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4372863>
- Gulati, R. (2012). Alliances and Networks. *Strategic Management Journal*, 19(4), 293–317.
- Hinnels, J. (2005). *The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration*. OUP Oxford.
- Langrial, A. H., & Baig, M. A. (2014). Zoroastrians in Mughal Court: A short study of Parsis and their rise in Mughal India. *Al-Adna*, 42(29), 55–69.
- Luhrmann, T. M. (1994). The Good Parsi: The Post-Colonial “Feminization” of a Colonial Elite. *Man (N.S.)*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2804477>
- Maneck, S. (1994). *The death of Abriman: Culture, identity and theological change among the Pars is of India*. The University of Arizona.
- Mathew, M. (2015). Ethnic conflict and the Fate of Parsis in India: a Study of Rohinton Mistry’s Tales from Firozshah Bag. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 20(4), 60–64. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-20456064>
- Miller, D., & Timothy, E. (2010). RETHINKING THE IMPACT OF RELIGION ON BUSINESS VALUES: UNDERSTANDING ITS REEMERGENCE AND MEASURING ITS MANIFESTATIONS. *Journal of International Business Ethics*, 3(2), i–iii. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- Nath, V. (2000). Entrepreneurship by Regions and Castes: A Survey. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35(48), 4217–4221.
- Roy, A., & Lahiri-Roy, R. (2011). World’s Smallest Business Community: The Parsis of India. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 6(2), 183–192. [https://doi.org/10.1675/1524-4695\(2008\)31](https://doi.org/10.1675/1524-4695(2008)31)
- Subramanian, L. (2017). Parsi Traders in Western India, 1600–1900, 1(July 2018), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.228>
- Worthy, J. (1958). Religion and Its Role in the World of Business. *The Journal of Business*, 31(4), 293–303.