Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the growth and development of economy and it is a key contributor to innovativeness and product improvement. As a change agent, they initiate economic activity by taking initiatives through business ventures. Most of the developing countries, consider entrepreneurship as an engine of economic growth, job creation and social adjustment. The role of entrepreneurs is of fundamental importance to a country like India, where the twin problems of poverty and unemployment coexist. Fostering entrepreneurship has become a topic of the highest priority in public policy since well-educated entrepreneurs are of paramount importance.

Portals of higher education are the centers where new products and processes consolidate the foundation for the new enterprises. More specifically, college students are the most promising sources of entrepreneurship. Because attitude and intention are precursors of entrepreneurial action, an understanding of the attitude and the factors influencing the attitude including educational background, is a critical step in promoting greater entrepreneurial initiative.

Jason Fitzshimmons and Douglas (2005), Francisco Linan et al., (2005), Urve Venesaar et al., (2006) and Isidore Ekpe and Norsiah Mat (2012) have examined entrepreneurial attitude orientation and intention of students in various countries such as Thailand, China, Australia and Spain. Despite the importance of entrepreneurship to economic development, the role of students in promoting entrepreneurship remains to be an area scarcely studied and addressed. Thus, a better understanding of the entrepreneurial attitude of the students and their entrepreneurial intention could have theoretical and practical implications to policy makers.

In this context, the current study on “Entrepreneurial attitude orientation and intention among various Categories of students” was carried out with the following objectives.
➢ To find out demographic and biographic characteristics of the various categories of students

➢ To study the extent of awareness and the participation in entrepreneurial training programmes

➢ To examine entrepreneurial attitude orientation among male and female students pursuing various streams of study

➢ To analyse entrepreneurial intention among male and female students pursuing various streams of study

➢ To find out the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude orientation, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour among the students and

➢ To identify the support required from the educational institutions to promote entrepreneurship

In the course of the study, the following hypotheses were examined:

➢ There is no significant association between attitude towards entrepreneurship and socio-economic characteristics of the students

➢ Age, gender, place of residence, father’s education, mother’s education, father’s occupation, mother’s occupation, family income, family property, family influence, membership in entrepreneurship development programme cell and participation in entrepreneurship development training programme are insignificant determinants of intention towards entrepreneurship among the students.

➢ The male and female students would remain to be homogenous on all subscales of entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale - achievement, innovation, personal control and self-esteem

➢ The students belonging to various streams of study would remain to be homogenous on all subscales of entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale - achievement, innovation, personal control and self-esteem
➢ The students belonging to different gender and various streams of study would remain to be homogenous on all subscales of entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale - achievement, innovation, personal control and self-esteem.

➢ The male and female students would remain to be homogenous on all subscales of entrepreneurial intention scale - commitment, attitude, risk taking, desirability, feasibility, and motivation.

➢ The students belonging to various streams of study would remain to be homogenous on all subscales of entrepreneurial intention scale - commitment, attitude, risk taking, desirability, feasibility and motivation.

➢ The students belonging to different gender and various streams of study would remain to be homogenous on all subscales of entrepreneurial intention scale - commitment, attitude, risk taking, desirability, feasibility and motivation and

➢ There is no significant relationship between the entrepreneurial attitude orientation, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour.

The current study was related to Coimbatore. The study adopted multi-stage stratified random sampling method. At the first stage, the University for the study was selected. Among the various Universities in Coimbatore, Bharathiar University was selected for the study since the study was focused on affiliating type of University offering postgraduate programmes in Arts, Science and Commerce.

In the second stage, the colleges for the study were selected. The colleges, which have successfully completed ten academic years, offering all three streams of study - Arts, Science and Commerce and admitting both boys and girls were included in the sampling frame.

Based on the above considerations-seven colleges, namely VLB college of Arts and Science, Dr.SNS Rajalakshmi college of Arts and Science, Dr.NGP college of Arts and Science, Hindusthan college of Arts and Science,
GRD college of Science, SNR sons college and CMS college of Science and Commerce were selected for the study. The study covered a sample of 701 postgraduate students. Of the total sample, 178 students (26%) were belonging to arts, 234 students (33%) were belonging to science and 289 students (41%) were belonging to commerce streams of study.

The data required for the study was obtained by administering three sections of interview schedule to the respondents. Section- A of the interview schedule was related to the biographic and demographic profile. Section - B was related to entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale. The scale consists of 74 statements and it comprises four sub scales viz., achievement, innovation, personal control and self-esteem. Section- C was related to Entrepreneurial intention scale. The entrepreneurial intention scale comprises of 62 items consisting of six sub scales viz., commitment, attitude, risk taking, feasibility, desirability and motivation.

The reliability of entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale and entrepreneurial intention scale was found out by calculating Spearman-Brown split-half coefficient. The validity of entrepreneurial attitude orientation and entrepreneurial intention scale was tested by calculating model fit indices- CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, CFI, TLI and Hoelter’s critical N. The study used chi-square analysis, analysis of variance, logistic regression and structural equation modelling. To check the accuracy and validity of entrepreneurial attitude and intention scale, a pilot study was conducted in September 2013 for the sample of 60 students. Final data was collected during December 2013 to March 2014.

5.1 Findings of the study

5.1.1 Biographic and demographic profile of the respondents

- Majority of the male and female respondents belonged to the age group of 22-23 years. More than 50 percent belonged to the rural area and majority of the respondents were belonging to small family.
Majority of the fathers of male respondents (40.63 percent) have completed secondary education and 17.58 percent had completed collegiate education. Majority of the fathers of female respondents have completed secondary education (31.07 percent) and 22.32 percent had finished collegiate education. Majority of the mothers of male respondents (40.63 percent) had completed primary education and 37.18 percent had completed secondary education.

With regard to occupational status of the parents, majority of the fathers of respondents (40.09 percent) were industrial workers and only 15.12 percent were self-employed. In contrast, 43.52 percent of the mothers of male respondents and 40.96 percent of the mothers of female respondents were self-employed.

The average family income for the respondents was estimated to be Rs. 25,970/-. The average family income for the students from the arts group (Rs. 27129/-) was higher compared to the students from science and commerce groups.

The average value of property for the respondents was estimated to be Rs. 3,19,800/-. The average value of property of the students enrolled in arts (Rs. 3, 71,792) was higher as compared to science (Rs 2, 99,831) and commerce group (Rs. 3, 03,401).

5.1.2 Analysis about the willingness to opt for job or to start business

Of the total respondents, 55.76 percent were willing to be employed in public sector. The essential motivating factor for preferring job in public sector and private sector were regular income, job security and constant support to the family.

The estimated Chi-square analysis revealed that gender, place of residence, streams of study and family income were significantly associated with attitude towards entrepreneurship since the calculated chi-square values were greater than table value.
Among arts, science and commerce streams of study, 56.18 percent, 72.65 percent and 59.17 percent respectively were interested to start business on their own. For majority of the respondents (64.17 percent), family was the essential influencing factor to venture into entrepreneurship.

Among the male students 68.59 percent and among the female students 43.22 percent were members of entrepreneurial development cell. Further 87.32 percent of the male respondents and 91.81 percent of the female respondents participated in the entrepreneurial training programme.

5.1.3 Identification of factors causing intention towards entrepreneurship

- For the students from arts group, father’s occupation was identified to be the significant factor determining intention towards entrepreneurship.

- For the science stream of students, father’s education and membership in entrepreneurial development cell were the significant factors causing intention towards entrepreneurship.

- For the commerce stream of students, participation in entrepreneurial training programme was the significant factor causing intention towards entrepreneurship.

- For the students belonging to all the streams of study, father’s occupation, family influence and participation in entrepreneurial training programme were the essential factors causing intention towards entrepreneurship.

5.1.4 Analysis about entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale

- The male and female students significantly differ in their scores on the achievement and innovation subscale of the entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale.

- The students belonging to various streams of study differ among themselves in innovation subscale of the entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale. The students from the commerce and science streams significantly differ in innovation sub scale of entrepreneurial orientation scale.
The male and female students and the students belonging to various streams of study do not differ among themselves in the subscales of the entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale.

5.1.5 Analysis about entrepreneurial intention scale

The male and female students significantly differ in their scores on the commitment and motivation subscales of the entrepreneurial intention scale.

The students belonging to various streams of study differ among themselves in commitment, risk taking, feasibility and desirability subscales of the entrepreneurial intention scale. The students from the commerce and science streams significantly differ in the mean scores of commitment and desirability subscales of entrepreneurial intention scale. The students from arts and science, commerce and science significantly differ in their scores on risk taking and feasibility subscales of entrepreneurial intention scale.

The male and female students and the students belonging to various streams of study do not differ among themselves in all the subscales of the entrepreneurial intention scale.

5.1.6 Relationship between entrepreneurial attitude orientation, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour

Among the arts students, achievement has more impact on entrepreneurial attitude and one unit change in achievement brings about 1.035 unit of change in entrepreneurial attitude. One unit change in desirability brings about 1.31 unit of change in entrepreneurial intention. The attitude and intention has significant impact on entrepreneurial behaviour of students in arts group and respectively they have accounted for 42 percent and 43 percent change in entrepreneurial behaviour.
Among the science students, achievement has more impact on entrepreneurial attitude and one unit change in achievement brings about 1.204 unit change in entrepreneurial attitude. Commitment has more impact on entrepreneurial intention since one unit change of commitment brings about 1.095 unit of change in entrepreneurial intention. The attitude has significant impact on entrepreneurial behaviour of science students since it has accounted for 86 percent of entrepreneurial behaviour.

Among the commerce students, achievement has more impact on entrepreneurial attitude and one unit change in achievement brings about 1.079 unit of change in entrepreneurial attitude. Commitment has more impact on entrepreneurial intention since one unit change of commitment brings about 1.03 unit of change in entrepreneurial intention. Among the commerce students entrepreneurial attitude has significant impact on entrepreneurial behaviour and it accounted for 80 percent change in entrepreneurial behaviour.

Among the various streams of study, entrepreneurial attitude and intention has significant impact on entrepreneurial behaviour and it accounted for 74 percent and 14 percent change in entrepreneurial behaviour. All the fit indices GFI, AGFI, CFI, and TLI, were above the threshold level of 0.90, which suggests that the hypothesized model has a good fit.

5.1.7 Type of support required from the educational institutions to promote entrepreneurship

Of the total male students enrolled in different courses of study, 36.31 percent have expressed the need for change in course content and 21.61 percent have expressed the need for industrial training. Comparatively, 31.07 percent of the female students have expressed the need for change in course content.
5.2 Conclusion

- Entrepreneurial attitude orientation and intention differentiate male and female students pursuing various streams of study.
- The willingness to start the business by the students is significantly influenced by the socioeconomic characteristics of the households.
- The students with high achievement and commitment are more likely to take up entrepreneurial activity.
- There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial attitude orientation, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour.
- Students reporting higher entrepreneurial attitude and intention were more likely to enroll in entrepreneurial endeavor and formation of entrepreneurial activity and
- There is a possibility of fostering entrepreneurship among the students through change in curriculum.

5.3 Recommendations

- The entrepreneurial attitude may be nurtured by creating awareness among the students about the importance of entrepreneurship as a career option.
- Greater number of entrepreneurial awareness camps need to be conducted to orient the students to take up entrepreneurship.
- The facilities and the benefits need to be highlighted since the students across the stream and the different gender need exposure towards entrepreneurship.
- Male students need to be encouraged to take up the venture initiation practices and female students need to be encouraged by proper counselling and guidance interventions.
- The male and female students of science stream need to develop risk taking propensities and
To promote awareness, the institutions of higher learning should introduce entrepreneurship as part of the curriculum across all faculties.

5.4 Directions for future research

- The cross sections of the rural students need to be studied.
- The study can be carried out among the courses like biotechnology, logistics and supply chain, bioinformatics and home science where the scope of applying the entrepreneurial concepts and practices are radical and significant.
- A longitudinal study of the number of students scoring high on entrepreneurial attitude and intention need to be tracked over a period of time to assess the transformation of attitude and intention as behaviour.
- The similar and distinctly different States may be considered for an overall analysis of the National Sample Survey to encourage the Government planning bodies to take cognizance of the entrepreneurial supply in the near future and
- Research need to be undertaken to determine students’ entrepreneurial attitude and intention among other ethnic groups.