

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM: AN ASSESSMENT STUDY OF
J&K STATE**

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education comprises of the activities mostly undertaken by the educational institutions to enlighten the mindset of the students towards the better understanding and knowledge about the subject of entrepreneurship. It helps in the development of the enterprising behaviours, attributes and skills as well as entrepreneurial mindsets and capabilities among the students. The core objective is to generate a cadre of entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs among the educated youth for the overall development of the economies. In view of the important role of the vocational, professional and continuing education systems towards the development of 'Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem' in any economy, the present study has been undertaken to assess the contribution of existing state government of Jammu and Kashmir run educational institutions towards the development of this ecosystem. The assessment is based on the survey involving 250 students enrolled in these institutions across the three regions of the state against the parameters of : entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component in all the existing systems of education, enough entrepreneurship education course offerings, and research & need based entrepreneurship education. The findings reveal that the contributions of the state run educational institutions towards the development of 'Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem is not significant.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem, Vocational education, Professional education, Continuing education, Entrepreneurship development

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education is perceived to be crucial in assisting young people to develop entrepreneurial skills, attributes, behaviours, enterprise awareness and to realize entrepreneurship as a career option. Generally, youths experience certain changes that are all

pervasive when they are pursuing their education. These experiences shape one's views, principles and decisions later in life. If during these years, result oriented values and skills are ploughed, the results later on are very fruitful. Many psychologists believe that this should be the underlying rule for churning out entrepreneurs among the educated youth.

As such, there is an increasing recognition that there are substantial benefits from entrepreneurship education if integrated into the vocational, professional and continuing education systems. At a general level, the multi-dimensional nature of the required entrepreneurial skills originates in education and involves a combination of critical as well as creative and empathetic thinking. Imparting such skills is a process, which starts right from the school stage. As has been rightly put by Henry Ford that 'a country's competitiveness starts not on the factory floor or in the engineering lab it starts in the classroom.'. Hence, there is an imperative need to integrate the entrepreneurship education in the contemporary educational systems, if the dream of an entrepreneurial society is to be realized. Additionally, the educational institutions need to make conscious and concerted efforts to Promote entrepreneurship as a profession, make students think innovatively, provide help in identifying business opportunities, expose students to various aspects of business management, help develop business plans through faculty and professional mentors, Network with venture capitalists, banks and financial institutions, extend help in understanding and completing legal formalities, develop incubation cells to facilitate the young entrepreneur in fertilization of their dream ideas and promote interactive sessions with successful business icons. To meet all these objectives there is a terrific need of introducing entrepreneurship education as a regular course component in all the vocational, professional and continuing educational institutions besides the other academic courses. It is because of this understanding that in the past 10 to 15 years, entrepreneurship education has grown dramatically throughout the world, particularly in those countries already known as entrepreneurial such as the US, Canada and Australia. This growth is reflected in the development of numerous new entrepreneurship curricula, study programmes and initiatives, as well as increasing research activities on enterprise education in general, and on its various effects and best practices in particular.

Against this setting, realising the important role of the vocational, professional and continuing education systems towards the development of 'Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem' in any economy, the present study has been undertaken to assess the contribution of existing state government of Jammu and Kashmir run educational institutions like State universities, State Colleges, State Polytechnics and other state professional institutions towards the development of this ecosystem based on the survey involving students enrolled in these institutions across the three regions of the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship education refers to activities aimed at developing enterprising or entrepreneurial people and increasing their understanding and knowledge about entrepreneurship and enterprise” (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006). Entrepreneurship education ecosystem equips students with the additional knowledge, attributes and capabilities required to apply these abilities in the context of setting up a new venture or business, to work as an entrepreneurial employee and to be an entrepreneurial member of society. The Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) has defined entrepreneurship education as: “Learning directed towards developing in young people those skills, competencies, understandings, and attributes which equip them to be innovative, to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, community, business and work opportunities, including working for themselves.” According to Schoof (2006) entrepreneurship education is not only a means to foster youth entrepreneurship and self-employment but at the same time to equip young people with the attitudes (e.g. More personal responsibility) and skills (e.g. Flexibility and creativity), necessary to cope with the uncertain employment paths of today’s societies.

According to Harper (1988), White and Kenyon (2001), and Chigunta (2002) entrepreneurship education results in multiple benefits in addition to creating employment opportunities, such as incorporating alienated and marginalized youth into the economic mainstream, addressing delinquency and psychosocial issues arising from unemployment, developing new skills and experiences to be applied to general challenges in life, promoting innovation and resilience, revitalizing local communities, and using the dynamism of young entrepreneurs to respond to new economic trends. However, the need to differentiate programs that aim at inculcating entrepreneurial attitudes for employability from those aimed at increasing business start-ups is emphasized (Karen Ellis and Carolin Williams, 2011) Schoof (2006) acclaims, that early entrepreneurship education in particular is perceived to be crucial in assisting young people to develop entrepreneurial skills, attributes and behaviours as well as to develop enterprise awareness and to realize entrepreneurship as a career option. There is an increasing recognition that entrepreneurship education brings number of positive results if being integrated into national curricula from primary level. At a general level, the multi-dimensional nature of the required entrepreneurial skills originates in education and involves a combination of critical (objective, analytical and logical) as well as creative and empathetic (lateral, imaginative and emotional) thinking. Imparting such skills is a process, which starts right from the school stage (Ulrich, 2006). “A country’s competitiveness starts not on the factory floor or in the engineering lab. It starts in the classroom.” (Henry Ford). Hence, there is an imperative need to integrate the entrepreneurship education in the contemporary educational system, if the

dream of an entrepreneurial society is to be realized (Uma, J. And D. Saluja, 2009). Additionally, the educational institutions need to make conscious and concerted efforts to Promote entrepreneurship as a profession, make students think innovatively, provide help in identifying business opportunities, expose students to various aspects of business management, help develop business plans through faculty and professional mentors, Network with venture capitalists, banks and financial institutions, extend help in understanding and completing legal formalities, develop incubation cells to facilitate the young entrepreneur in fertilization of their dream ideas and promote interactive sessions with successful business icons (Uma, J. And D. Saluja, 2009). To meet all these objectives there is a tremendous need to introduce entrepreneurship education in all the educational institutions besides the other academic courses. It is because of this understanding that in the past 10 to 15 years, entrepreneurship education has grown dramatically throughout the world, particularly in those countries already known as entrepreneurial such as the US, Canada and Australia. This growth is reflected in the development of numerous new entrepreneurship curricula, study programmes and initiatives, as well as increasing research activities on enterprise education in general, and on its various effects and best practices in particular (Ulrich, 2006). Some of the comprehensive studies like Botham and Mason (2007) looking at outcomes and impact of entrepreneurship education assessed the relevance and quality of the education, business start-up and expansion rates, changes in business practices, business indicators, and employment generation. All this review analysis necessities importance of the development of entrepreneurship education ecosystem and its assessment across the economies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In view of the important role of the vocational, professional and continuing education systems towards the development of 'Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem' in any economy, the present study has been undertaken to assess the contribution of existing state run educational institutions like State universities, State Colleges, State Polytechnics and other state professional institutions towards the development of this ecosystem.

OBJECTIVES

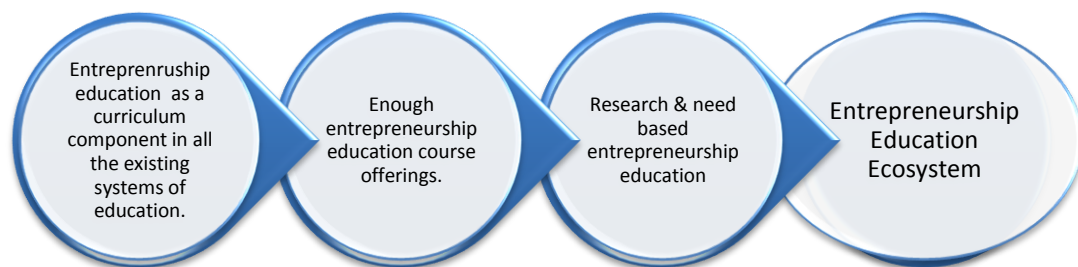
1. To assess the existing entrepreneurship education ecosystem in the state.
2. To suggest measures for the improvement in the existing entrepreneurship education ecosystem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The focus of the study was to assess the existing entrepreneurship education ecosystem in the state on the basis of the response of the students enrolled in different government run

vocational, professional and educational institutions in all the three regions (Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh) of the state against the given parameters of; entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component in all the existing systems of education, enough entrepreneurship education course offerings, and research & need based entrepreneurship education. For this purpose a survey was conducted to collect the relevant data through the instrument of questionnaires (personal/telephonic & online interviews) from a reasonable region wise representative sample of 250 students (100 students each from kashmir & Jammu regions whileas 50 from Ladakh region) enrolled in different government run educational institutions. The respondents were asked to express their level of agreement/disagreement against the given parameters ,as shown in the figure 1 below, on 5-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used to evaluate the responses of the respondents.

Figure 1: Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem Parameters



ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The present study shows some interesting findings. Table 1 presents the findings about the Entrepreneurship education ecosystem existing in the state against given parameters, as follows:

Table 1: the Entrepreneurship education ecosystem existing in the state

Parameters	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component	250	2.0000	1.04516	15.128	.000
Enough entrepreneurship education course offerings	250	1.9240	1.02490	14.255	.000
Research and need based entrepreneurship education	250	2.6600	.87376	30.039	.000

*Significant at 0.01 level $df = 249$

The findings reveal that the contributions of the state run educational institutions towards the development of 'Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem is not significant. In all the three forms of education systems entrepreneurship education does not reflect as a core component of curriculum ($t= 15.128$). Further the courses offered in the existing education systems on entrepreneurship education shows a very grim situation($t= 14.255$) to the extent that on record no state university offers any regular PG courses on entrepreneurship nor has the creation of regular faculty positions in the area of entrepreneurship. The table also reflects that the when there is no courses or curriculum then one cannot assess the quality of the entrepreneurship education courses ($t=30.039$). In this perspective a correlation test was conducted and following results were obtained.

Table 2: Correlations among variables

	Entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component	Enough entrepreneurship education course offerings	Research and need based entrepreneurship education
Entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component	1		
Enough entrepreneurship education course offerings	.667**	1	
Research and need based entrepreneurship education	.281**	.240**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 depicts a significant correlations between *Entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component* and *enough entrepreneurship education course offerings*. By this, it is safely concluded that a need is felt badly to introduce entrepreneurship education as a curriculum component.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this empirical study, it can be safely concluded that the 'Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem' existing in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is not satisfactory. Almost its existence is negligible across all the three regions of the state.

On the basis of results obtained from the present study, the following suggestions are put forth for the improvement in the existing entrepreneurship ecosystem in the state:

1. In view of the emergence of entrepreneurship as a necessity career option with huge growth potential, entrepreneurship education as a core curriculum component should be introduced in vocational, professional and continuous education systems on priority basis.

2. More and more entrepreneurship education courses should be offered to the students enrolled in different educational institutions across all the three regions of the state at different levels.
3. Regular post-graduation courses should be introduced especially in all the state universities.
4. For the better design and delivery of entrepreneurship education, specialized faculty positions in the area of entrepreneurship be created and filled up on fast track basis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study suffers from following limitations:

- Scope of the present study is limited and does not deal with the assessment of entrepreneurship education ecosystem in the non-government educational institutions.
- The study does not deal with the impact of the poor enterprise development scenario existing in the state on the development of entrepreneurship education ecosystem due to the non-availability of data in this regard.
- The study does not cover the accreditation, system and legal hiccups in the way of offering entrepreneurship courses in different educational institutions.

SCOPE OF FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study offers a lot of scope for future research. The influence of each of the parameters taken to assess the entrepreneurship education ecosystem can be explored further one by one to find their influence on entrepreneurship development. This study also provides a lead for undertaking further research towards the development of need and research based entrepreneurship education policies, programs and course modules.

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