



EMPOWERING THE RURAL YOUTH THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN KARNATAKA

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Abstract:

Entrepreneurship can have transformative impacts that benefit rural areas and uplift underserved communities. In higher education, entrepreneurship instruction has grown over the last half-century but is in its nascent stage in nonformal youth development settings. A growing body of academic research has examined the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in raising youths' awareness of self-employment as a career option and creating an enterprising culture among them. The move towards self-employment is and will continue to become, an increasingly important element of economic growth and development. This paper aims to explore and investigate entrepreneurship education among youths, especially in rural Karnataka, to determine and evaluate its effectiveness.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Challenges, Job Creation, Youth Empowerment, Recommendations.

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship education is a transformative tool that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. This type of education is pivotal in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among youths, especially in rural areas where traditional employment opportunities might be scarce. The aim is to prepare young people to become enterprising individuals who can identify opportunities, take calculated risks, and create value through new ventures.

In the context of rural Karnataka, entrepreneurship education holds significant potential for economic and social upliftment. By instilling entrepreneurial qualities and skills, this education can empower youths to pursue self-employment and contribute to the economic development of their communities. The focus is not just on business creation but also on enhancing the ability to respond to societal changes, innovate, and sustain business ventures.

The examination of entrepreneurship education in rural Karnataka aims to evaluate its effectiveness in creating awareness about self-employment, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, and ultimately contributing to job creation and youth empowerment. This study also seeks to address the challenges faced in implementing entrepreneurship education and to propose strategies for enhancing its impact on rural youth.

Key areas of exploration include the design and delivery of entrepreneurship programs, the integration of practical and theoretical knowledge, the role of educators, and the broader socio-economic environment that influences entrepreneurial activities. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to provide insights and recommendations for improving entrepreneurship education to better serve the needs of rural youths in Karnataka.

Entrepreneurship Education:

Entrepreneurship Education provides learners with the knowledge, skills and motivation to undertake entrepreneurial ventures in various settings or outfits. Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools to university level. This aspect/area of education focuses on the realization of opportunity. Entrepreneurship education offers solutions as it seeks to prepare people particularly youths, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them to real-life learning experiences where they can take risks, manage the results, and learn from the outcomes.

According to the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Training (2004), entrepreneurship education is a purposeful intervention by an educator in the learner's life to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the business world. It is also the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn refer to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures (Albert, Sciascia, and Poli, 2004). In their view, Garavan and O'cinneide (1994), entrepreneurship education is a discipline that seeks to prepare people especially youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustained communities. Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds (UNESCO, 2008).

It goes beyond business creation, it is about increasing students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. Entrepreneurship Education is also the process of imparting knowledge and teaching skills to potential entrepreneurs on how to venture into a business that is relatively small for future advancement of the business (Aminu, 2009). Entrepreneurship Education is also an education that embraces skill-building programmes, creative thinking, product development and marketing negotiation, leadership training and wealth generation (Kurato, 2003). The goal of Entrepreneurship Education is, therefore, to teach young people to see business opportunities, and ideas and act on them promptly to take advantage over others. By this, Entrepreneurship education does not stop at imparting knowledge alone but extends to teaching entrepreneurial skills in various disciplines that a potential entrepreneur might need, such as managerial skills, accounting skills, financial competencies, secretarial skills, computing skills, important marketing and several business competencies.

Therefore, entrepreneurship educators are vested with the task of producing people who have imbibed those characteristics as enduring dispositions which always regulate their choices of action. Entrepreneurship Education is an aspect of education that is geared towards developing students' skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal reliance (Nwokolo, 1997). It is also the type of education given to a set of people to instill in them the principles, skills and practices required to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather necessary resources and take advantage of them as well as initiate appropriate action to ensure success in any chosen profession or occupation (Adebeye, 2002). The knowledge of entrepreneurship education enables the youths to understand how the economic decisions

they make will influence their present and future lives. It therefore prepares the youth to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic growth. It goes as far as equipping them through instructions, with the self-reliant skills so that if jobs are not readily available, they will be able to set up their business ventures.

Objectives:

The objectives of this paper on entrepreneurship education among youths in rural areas of Karnataka are:

- **Evaluate the Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education:** To determine how effective current entrepreneurship education programs are in raising awareness about self-employment as a viable career option among rural youths.
- **Assess the Impact on Entrepreneurial Culture:** To explore the extent to which these educational programs foster an entrepreneurial mindset and culture among rural youths.
- **Identify Challenges:** To identify the challenges faced in the implementation of entrepreneurship education in rural areas and suggest ways to overcome these obstacles.
- **Contribute to Job Creation and Youth Empowerment:** To analyze the role of entrepreneurship education in job creation and empowerment of rural youth by equipping them with necessary entrepreneurial skills.
- **Provide Recommendations:** To propose actionable recommendations for improving the delivery and impact of entrepreneurship education in rural Karnataka.
- **Investigate Socio-Economic Contributions:** To examine how entrepreneurship education contributes to the broader socio-economic development of rural areas by encouraging self-employment and local enterprise.

These objectives aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of entrepreneurship education in rural Karnataka and its potential to drive economic and social transformation.

Research Methodology:

The research methodology for the study on entrepreneurship education among youths in rural areas of Karnataka includes the following approaches:

Literature Review: A comprehensive review of existing literature related to entrepreneurship education, its impact, challenges, and implementation in various contexts. The literature includes research papers, books, articles, and PhD theses relevant to the topic.

Survey Method: Surveys were conducted to gather primary data from the target population, which includes youths in rural areas of Karnataka. The surveys aimed to assess the awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of entrepreneurship among these youths.

Interviews and Focus Groups: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were held with key stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and young entrepreneurs. These qualitative methods provided deeper insights into the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs and the challenges faced.

Case Studies: Case studies of successful entrepreneurship education initiatives and entrepreneurial ventures in rural areas were examined. These case studies helped to identify best practices and the factors contributing to their success.

Data Analysis: Both quantitative and qualitative data collected from surveys, interviews, and case studies were analyzed. Statistical tools and software were used to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data.

Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis was conducted to compare the state of entrepreneurship education in rural areas with other regions or countries. This helped to benchmark the findings and draw relevant conclusions.

Field Visits: Field visits to rural areas were undertaken to observe the implementation of entrepreneurship education programs and interact with the participants. These visits provided firsthand information and a contextual understanding of the ground realities.

This methodology ensured a holistic understanding of the current state and impact of entrepreneurship education among rural youths in Karnataka.

Review of Literature:

Existing literature is by and large in favour of the understanding that entrepreneurial education has a positive impact on youths. There are few books published on entrepreneurship education but none was found by researchers on rural entrepreneurship education. Although the researcher found research papers, news articles and some PhD thesis related to this topic. A summary of their titles is as follows.

Research Papers

Robert E Nelson has mentioned in his paper on “Entrepreneurship Education in Developing Countries” that Entrepreneurship Education can bring employment generation activities and in turn economic growth to the country. He has also said in his paper that UNESCO in one of its studies reported that infrastructure, education and entrepreneurship contribute 50% to the economic development of a country. He also gave a reference to the work of famous psychologist Abraham Maslow, where Maslow has written in Readings in Economics of Education, United Nations, UNESCO, 1968, p.623, “The most valuable 100 people to bring into a deteriorating society would not be economists or politicians or engineers but rather 100 entrepreneurs”

Shaheen Naseer, Farhat Rasool and Ahmed Gulzar in their paper “Drivers of Entrepreneurship: Linking with Economic Growth and Employment 39 Generation” wrote that every country wants growth and sustainable development. For any country to achieve growth and sustainable development, the key is entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Selection and Performance: A meta-analysis of the impact of education in developing countries, a paper written by Justin, Mirjam and Wim found that the more educated people are, the more their inclination to take up wage employment and they may also look for non-farm entrepreneurship instead of farming.

Rural Entrepreneurship: One Key to Rural Revitalization, a paper by Gladwin, Long and Others studied the progress of the rural entrepreneurs in North Florida and their impact on the local economy.

Dr. Kalpana P Nandanwar in her paper Role of Rural Entrepreneurship in Rural Development emphasizes that rural entrepreneurship should employ rural population and use rural resources as raw material for production of the finished goods. She has given reference to project Shakti by HLL where women were educated by HLL for sales of their products and also bookkeeping was taught to them. This made the women capable enough to develop as entrepreneurs. HLL made efforts to develop entrepreneurship in these women, which in turn helped the company to expand its consumer base and profits.

As regards entrepreneurship education structure, Katz (2003) developed the most comprehensive chronology of entrepreneurship education where it's clear the enormous proliferation of entrepreneurship education courses in business schools in the early 1970s since the first entrepreneurship course was

proposed by Myles Mace at Harvard University in 1947. He concluded that in the USA, the field has reached maturity in business schools; outside business schools, demand is growing: entrepreneurship offerings continue to grow in other areas and if new approaches are developed there, business schools are not likely to know, much less to benefit.

In a similar vein, Kuratko (2005) states that there are more than 2,200 courses at over 1600 schools, 277 endowed positions, 44 refereed academic journals, the number of special issues dedicated to entrepreneurship have increased and more than 200 centres. Although the demand and the supply of entrepreneurship faculty have increased during the last nine years, reflecting the progress in the field, one could think that the field is well established in what concerns its institutionalization, however, there has been no mandate from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business for the incorporation of entrepreneurship into the curriculum of all accredited schools (Finkle & Deeds, 2001).

PhD Thesis

The research scholar R. Ponmani in the study on Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation and Intention among various Categories of Students found that for the development of any country, entrepreneurship is the main agent. It brings innovations and new products and services. All these development later creates employment for other people. Entrepreneurship development will solve the problems of poverty and unemployment in India.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education:

Entrepreneurship Education as far as it is concerned is faced with several challenges which include the following:

Programme Design: According to Akpomi (2009), a considerable challenge facing educators and trainers is in designing programmes which are appropriate for preparing graduates for the outside world and that the current education system is not helping issues. The system does not prepare students adequately to harness their potential and become self-employed. The use of lecture methods which is too mechanistic does not promote or encourage entrepreneurial behaviour (Akpomi, 2009).

Lack of Harmonized Entrepreneurship Curriculum: The inability of the government to introduce a harmonized curriculum has also bedevilled the system of training youths for self-reliance.

Harsh Business Environment: The business environment is so complex that it makes it difficult for people to operate. The legal, political, social, economic and technological factors among others have made it practically impossible or difficult to operate.

Poor Funding and Infrastructure: The desire and drive to go into entrepreneurship have been hampered by the poor state of funding and infrastructural decay. Going into these types of ventures will mean providing huge funds and making available infrastructural facilities.

Theoretical Graduates as Against Practicality: The main concern of entrepreneurship is the production of graduates who are capable of being innovative and who can create opportunities, take risks, make decisions solve problems and communicate clearly and effectively (Fleming, 1999). However, the reverse is the case where most graduates cannot put into practice what they have learnt in school.

Orientation of Students: Entrepreneurship is not yet a popular vocational choice among young people in Karnataka. The dominant culture at the moment is a wage-earner culture. Therefore, the socio-cultural environment does not favour entrepreneurship due to the collectivists' value of society. However, there is no guarantee, that the students will act entrepreneurially unless their mindsets, willingness to take risks, confidence, attitude and behaviour have been influenced as well. This will go a long way in repositioning the economy.

Instructional Resource: There is a dearth of instructional materials that are recommended for entrepreneurship education delivery, such as textbooks, journals, videos, films, etc. Study materials suitable for teaching entrepreneurial studies are rare in our institutions (Inebenebor, 2005).

Teachers/Educators: Entrepreneurship teachers /educators are very few for successful entrepreneurship education. Most Karnataka tertiary institutions cannot boast of having strong teachers in terms of quantity and quality, more so, the entrepreneurship programme is a new course in the curricula of most institutions, and a special teacher's team cannot be achievable in the short run, therefore teachers who start entrepreneurship education and engage in entrepreneurship require special training and experience (Inebenebor, 2005).

Assessment of Entrepreneurship Courses: There is no standard method for assessing the result of the entrepreneurship programme towards individuals and society as a whole (Falkang and Albeti, 2000). According to Gift (2002), effective evaluation and assessment of entrepreneurship education appears to

occur via projects and also relies on classroom assessment. However, Falkang and Albeti (2000) have declared that some of the reasons for the lack of generally accepted measures are:

- I. The variety of target groups.
- II. The University/school philosophy that is contrary to entrepreneurship education.
- III. The multiplicity of entrepreneurship education objectives.
- IV. Level of analysis (i.e. society level and individual level).
- V. Time dimension (i.e. Short term output and long-term output).

Teaching Method: How to teach entrepreneurship addresses the issues of how best to transfer information, skills and attitudes relevant for successful venture creation and sustenance. Therefore, the growing number of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in Karnataka incorporating entrepreneurship into their curriculum is an acknowledgement of entrepreneurship as a course that can be taught. In Karnataka, as in many other countries in the world, the lecture method is the most used teaching method in entrepreneurship delivery.

Content of the Courses: Entrepreneurship education should be viewed in terms of the skills that can be taught and characteristics that can be engaged in the students to help them develop new and innovative plans (Brown, 2000). However, Alberti, Sciascia, and Poli(2004) cited four types of knowledge useful for entrepreneurship which should form the content areas:

- I. Business knowledge
- II. Venture general knowledge
- III. Opportunity specific knowledge
- IV. Venture specific knowledge

However, opportunity and venture-specific knowledge are the most important for entrepreneurial success. Most entrepreneurs have failed because they have only married the Business knowledge and venture general knowledge to run their business.

Ways Forward for Entrepreneurship Education:

It is important to note that a culture of entrepreneurship needs to be built at an early age throughout the education system in the country. Therefore, tertiary institutions can contribute to creating entrepreneurial skills among students by providing the following:

Developing Effective Educators: Growing the base of experienced educators not only means providing the necessary training and education but also requires expanding the definition of educators beyond professors to include entrepreneurs, alumni, business professionals and even students (Shepherd, 2003). Therefore, the current pool of entrepreneurship teachers should be expanded by allowing entrepreneurs and others with entrepreneurial experience to be encouraged and trained to teach entrepreneurship to the students.

Building Effective Entrepreneurial Education: It is important to take the local context into account as well as the level and background of the students. Opportunities should be available to students at all levels and from all disciplines, especially the technology and science departments.

Integrating Entrepreneurship/Professionals in Curricula Design and Delivery: Engaging entrepreneurs and other professionals in both design and delivery should be allowed and encouraged to ensure a balance between theory and practice.

Development of Research: Priority attention should be given to the promotion of research and innovation. This can be achieved through the provision of critical elements such as a central research facility, standard library, funding, consultancy, workshops, etc.

Career Counselling: There is a need to counsel undergraduates and youths for possible attitudinal re-orientation towards self-employment and self-reliance. Counselling should be incorporated along with entrepreneurship education.

Funding of Entrepreneurship Activities: There should be a special fund arrangement such as a risk fund or venture capital (Adejimola and Olufumilola, 2009). This will be to provide funds at concessionary rates for entrepreneurship development centres of higher institutions for them to be able to fund research and innovations.

Reshaping the Institutional Paradigm: Institutional leaders such as the Vice Chancellors, the Rectors, and the Provosts must prepare students to work in a dynamic, rapidly changing and global environment. This however requires a complete paradigm shift for the entire institution, including changing the fundamentals of how the institutions operate and are shaped.

How Entrepreneurship Education Could Help in Job Creation and Youth Empowerment:

Quality Entrepreneurship Education plays a vital role in the social, political and economic development of any Nation. This is possible when jobs are created for the citizenry by establishing a lot of businesses that will accommodate the unemployed youth in India. A qualified graduate of entrepreneurship education would have acquired enough skills relevant to the management of a small business centre.

Creation of self-employment: An entrepreneur provides a job for himself by establishing a small business centre. This helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices in India. The entrepreneur does not only provide jobs/employment for himself alone but provides for others too. This in turn helps the individual to increase per capita income hence improving standard living..

Mobilizes and organizes the resources: The Entrepreneur determines or identifies the specific wants of the people and the type of goods and services that will fulfil those wants most comfortably. The entrepreneur does not only identify but mobilizes and organizes the resources to tap the opportunities by assisting men, materials, money and machines to explore the opportunity.

Maximizes the production of goods and services: Production of goods and services that are important to the well-being, comfort and happiness of individuals in the society at large.

Rural, economic and industrial development: Entrepreneurship stimulates rural, economic and industrial development. They contribute to the development of rural areas. They do this by establishing their small/medium scale enterprise in such areas by discouraging rural migration. They provide ample job opportunities to the rural dwellers. They also provide goods and services, which could be found in an urban area and sometimes provide infrastructural facilities.

Motivated for the welfare of the communities: Entrepreneurs are usually motivated in their activities not only by the need for material contributions to the welfare of the communities but also desire to make a profit. This uplifts the dignity of labour.

Utilization of local resources is made possible: Through entrepreneurship education, utilization of local resources is made possible. The graduates of this specialized education set up their small/medium-scale businesses, which will enable them to utilize the local resources available in their vicinity. The uses of local raw materials are discarded by-products of large firms as a primary input in their production processes. In terms of their economic benefits small firms can be said to be greater in local resources maximizes than their large counterparts. The provision of raw materials for the big firms helps them to

increase their production hence employing more personnel thereby creating jobs for unemployed youth in the country.

Well equipped with skills and technical know-how Through entrepreneurship education, A pool of potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped with skills and technical know-how to manage small/medium scale industries are produced. This will equally help in job creation. Through quality entrepreneurship education, India could produce a lot of entrepreneurs who could establish and manage businesses on their own. Based on the above merits, there is no doubt that entrepreneurship education could be used as a major weapon in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by empowering the individual in society to be self-reliant. This will help to empower the youth in India.

Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurship (Source: A news cutting from The Hindu Newspaper):

Starting from scratch since its inception in mid-2004, the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (IECD), Bharathidasan University, has come a long way, filling the serious gap in the university educational system by organising entrepreneurship and career development programmes/courses and entrepreneurship sensitization camps for various target groups. It has been designing and operating various skills-based and career-oriented short-term certificate courses, diploma, advanced diploma and PG diploma courses for student and non-student school dropouts and unemployed youth. So far, the institute has trained 14,567 candidates: 7,187 through EDPs; 4,398 through short-term courses at the campus; and 2,982 through the off-campus mode. Of them, 2,576 candidates availed themselves of the benefit of a scholarship. Employment opportunities were created for 2,339 students of affiliated colleges, including 1,448 girl students, through campus interviews; 2,476 non-student youths through the on-campus programmes, and 2,561 youths through the off-campus programme. Currently, 1,007 students, including 557 girls, are undergoing the various certificate and diploma programmes. As many as 6,778 students have been enrolled under the SUITS programme. The institute has trained 7,187 persons, mostly belonging to weaker sections of society, in entrepreneurship development, and has shaped 64 trainees as young entrepreneurs in the service sector.

Empowerment and Rehabilitation of Youth (Through Vocational Skills, Entrepreneurship Development and Involvement In Creative Activities):

Engaging is a major concern. Utilising the leisure time of the youth and harnessing their exuberance and raw energy for creative activities is essential. Simultaneously, but more substantially there is a need to provide opportunities for vocational skill development of the youth and inculcate self-entrepreneurship in them to motivate them towards self-reliance. This becomes all the more important in the context of shrinking job opportunities in the existing infrastructure and the need for promoting entrepreneurship which serves the triple objective of self-sustainability, creating new jobs and thereby supporting economic growth.

Conclusion:

Entrepreneurship Education comes with lots of accruable benefits. Therefore, a well-structured entrepreneurship education programme can fast-track the reduction of unemployment, create new jobs and wealth and hence, contribute significantly to national economic development and transformation. However, the current education method is too mechanistic, using the lecture method, which does not promote or encourage entrepreneurial attitude and self-reliance. Moreover, the entrepreneurship education programme in Karnataka tertiary institutions is yet to be properly harnessed and it is also bedevilled by several challenges including the dearth of teachers, funding, unstable social/political climate, teaching method, orientation, etc. Finally, for the country to fully reap the benefits of entrepreneurship education, which includes developing a pool of future entrepreneurs, a lot still needs to be done by both the federal government and tertiary institutions.

With entrepreneurial education, young people can develop a strong self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. With the proper growth mindset, they can identify the areas they need to improve and do it since they are still young and time is on their side. Young entrepreneurs are in a better position to make decisions that are in alignment with their values and goals. This self-awareness is crucial for young entrepreneurs who wish to be successful in the long run.

In addition to the many benefits of entrepreneurial education for young people, it is also important to note that entrepreneurship offers young people the opportunity to make a positive impact in their local communities and on the world. Entrepreneurship is about more than just making money – it's about creating jobs, solving problems, and making a difference in people's lives. By investing in their

entrepreneurial education, young people are not only preparing themselves for success in the business world, but they are also helping to create a better future for themselves and those around them.

Recommendations:

The following have been recommended to strengthen and foster entrepreneurship education in Karnataka:

- ❖ The government should provide support for the mobility and exchange of educators across tertiary institutions within and outside the country.
- ❖ The government should assist in training entrepreneurship educators.
- ❖ The funding base of tertiary institutions in the country should be improved through the establishment of a robust funding mechanism.
- ❖ There should be continuous application and refinement of effective teaching methods.
- ❖ All tertiary institutions should broaden the entrepreneurship base of educators through training, workshops, seminars, symposiums, etc.
- ❖ All fields of study should develop opportunities for students at every level to experience entrepreneurship education.
- ❖ Graduates on completion of their programmes should be provided with soft loans to develop and practice entrepreneurship.

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