



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Assessing Entrepreneurial Intentions Among Secondary School Students In Jammu And Kashmir: A Survey-Based Study

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Abstract

This study looks into the entrepreneurial intentions of secondary school students in Jammu and Kashmir, focusing on their career aspirations, perceived barriers, and the role of institutional support in shaping their outlook toward entrepreneurship. Through a survey of 156 students across diverse academic streams (Science, Commerce, and Arts), the research reveals a strong preference for government jobs (68% with high aspiration) and limited entrepreneurial interest (only 35% showed strong intent). Key findings highlight systemic gaps: 82% reported inadequate school support for entrepreneurship, while 58% identified skill training as their top need. Gender disparities emerged, with male students displaying marginally higher entrepreneurial interest (Mean=3.42 vs. 3.08) and stronger belief in its potential (Mean=3.78 vs. 3.35). Stream-wise analysis showed Arts students were more open to entrepreneurship (Mean=3.7) compared to Science students (Mean=2.8), who prioritized government roles.

The study underscores the influence of socio-cultural factors, including parental pressure (43%) and resource constraints (52%), in deterring entrepreneurial pursuits. Statistical analyses (ANOVA, T-tests) confirmed these trends, revealing moderate correlations between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intent ($r=0.45$). Notably, 100% of respondents advocated for integrating entrepreneurship education into curricula. These findings call for policy interventions to address skill gaps, enhance industry exposure and recalibrate career guidance frameworks in Jammu and Kashmir's secondary education system. By bridging institutional shortcomings and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset early, this research contributes to broader discussions on youth employability and regional economic resilience.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Government Jobs, Skill Training, Career Aspirations, Jammu and Kashmir, Secondary Education.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has surfaced as a critical driver of economic development and employment generation worldwide, particularly in regions grappling with socio-political challenges and limited job opportunities. In Jammu and Kashmir, where youth aspirations have long been oriented toward secure government employment, the need to foster entrepreneurial mindsets has become increasingly urgent. The region's unique socio-economic landscape, marked by political instability and limited private sector development, has perpetuated a reliance on public sector jobs, leaving many young people ill-equipped to explore alternative career paths. This study seeks to examine the entrepreneurial intentions of secondary school students in Jammu and Kashmir, assessing the extent to which they are prepared both psychologically and skill-wise to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career choice.

The preference for government jobs among Indian youth is well-documented, with studies attributing this trend to factors such as job security, social status, and financial stability (NSSO, 2019). However, the shrinking availability of public sector positions and the evolving global job market necessitate a shift toward self-employment and innovation-driven careers. Entrepreneurship offers a promising solution, not only for individual self-reliance but also for regional economic development. Yet, in Jammu and Kashmir, entrepreneurial intent remains stifled by systemic barriers, including inadequate institutional support, limited access to skill training, and socio-cultural pressures favouring and encouraging traditional career paths.

This research is grounded in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, which posits that intentions, shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These are precursors to entrepreneurial action. The study explores how these factors manifest among secondary students, particularly in a context where entrepreneurship education is scarce and career guidance often overlooks non-governmental opportunities. Existing literature highlights the transformative potential of early exposure to entrepreneurial training (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015), yet such initiatives remain sporadic in Jammu and Kashmir's secondary schools.

The study addresses three key questions:

1. How strong is the inclination toward government jobs versus entrepreneurship among secondary students in Jammu and Kashmir?
2. What role do institutional support, skill readiness, and socio-cultural factors play in shaping these preferences?
3. How can educational reforms bridge existing gaps to nurture entrepreneurial intent?

By analyzing survey data from 156 students across diverse streams and locales, this research uncovers stark disparities in career aspirations, with Science students favoring government jobs (Mean=4.21) and Arts students showing greater entrepreneurial interest (Mean=3.7). It also reveals critical gaps in school-based support, with 82% of students reporting minimal exposure to entrepreneurship training. These findings underscore the need for curriculum reforms, targeted skill development programs, and policy interventions aligned with India's National Education Policy (2020), which emphasizes vocational and entrepreneurial education from secondary levels.

Ultimately, this study aims to inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders about the challenges and opportunities in cultivating entrepreneurial intent among Jammu and Kashmir's youth. By addressing systemic barriers and leveraging regional potential, the findings advocate for a more inclusive and dynamic approach to career readiness, one that balances traditional aspirations with the demands of a rapidly changing economy.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial intentions among youth have been widely studied as a precursor to actual entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger et al., 2000). Grounded in psychological and socio-cultural frameworks, research highlights how intentions are shaped by educational exposure, self-efficacy, and institutional support. This review synthesizes key theories and empirical findings relevant to secondary students in Jammu and Kashmir.

Theoretical Foundations

Ajzen's (1991) **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)** provides a robust framework for understanding entrepreneurial intentions. According to TPB theory, intentions are influenced by:

1. **Attitudes toward behavior** (personal desirability of entrepreneurship),
2. **Subjective norms** (perceived social pressure), and
3. **Perceived behavioral control** (self-efficacy and resource access).

Studies confirm TPB's applicability in educational contexts, particularly where institutional support is weak (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). According to a report by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), a significant portion of Indian youth view government jobs as the most desirable due to job security, social status, and stable income. This cultural bias often overshadows the potential benefits of entrepreneurship, especially in regions with limited private sector development.

Role of Education and Skill Gaps

Entrepreneurship education significantly enhances self-efficacy and intent (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Studies have shown that entrepreneurship education at the school level significantly enhances students' self-confidence and their perceived feasibility of launching a business (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). However, in many parts of India, including Jammu and Kashmir, entrepreneurship has not yet become a mainstream part of the secondary education curriculum. As a result, students often lack the practical exposure and skill training needed to consider entrepreneurship as an excellent career option. However, in India, such education is often limited to higher education (e.g., IIMs, IITs), leaving secondary students unprepared (Ministry of Education, 2019). The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** advocates for vocational training from Grade 6, but implementation lags in Jammu and Kashmir (World Bank, 2019).

Bandura (1997) defined Self-efficacy as one's belief in their capacity to execute actions required for desired outcomes, and this is the another critical factor influencing entrepreneurial intentions. A high level of self-efficacy has been linked to greater risk-taking ability, resilience, and proactive behavior—traits essential for entrepreneurial success (Zhao, Seibert & Hills, 2005). Yet, in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, limited access to mentorship, real-world business exposure, and hands-on training inhibits the development of such competencies. Furthermore, structural barriers such as lack of funding, regulatory hurdles, and limited market access are repeatedly cited in the literature as deterrents for aspiring young entrepreneurs (Kumar, 2013). These external constraints, combined with internal psychological factors and societal expectations, create a challenging environment for cultivating entrepreneurial intent among school-aged youth.

While institutions like IITs and IIMs have taken commendable steps toward integrating entrepreneurship and startup training—extending some programs even to non-technical undergraduate institutions—such initiatives are yet to be adopted at the secondary education level. This reflects a systemic gap, as students in general secondary education remain largely excluded from exposure to entrepreneurial thinking during their formative years (Ministry of Education, 2019; NSRCEL, 2023). Notably, the National Innovation and Startup Policy (NISP) 2019 encourages higher education institutions to support innovation through incubation and mentorship (MHRD Innovation Cell, 2019). Similarly, the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has launched Atal Tinkering Labs across India, but their reach and integration into state-run secondary schools remain inconsistent (NITI Aayog, 2023).

Empirical Evidence:

- A study by Nabi et al. (2017) found that early exposure to entrepreneurship education correlates with higher intent.
- In contrast, Kumar (2013) identified resource scarcity and regulatory hurdles as critical barriers in India's rural regions, mirroring Jammu and Kashmir's challenges.

Cultural and Structural Barriers

1. Government Job Preference:

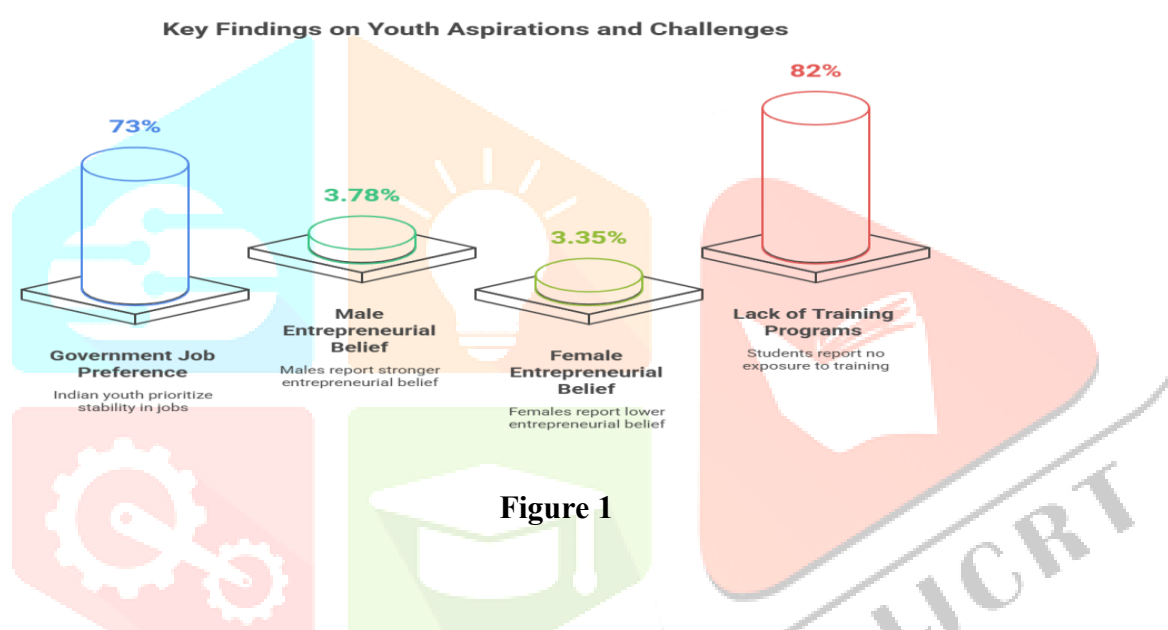
- 73% of Indian youth prioritize government jobs for stability (NSSO, 2019).
- In Jammu and Kashmir, conflict and economic uncertainty intensify this trend (Hussain, 2021).

2. Gender Disparities:

- Women face higher societal barriers, reducing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).
- Our survey aligns with global data showing males report stronger entrepreneurial belief (mean=3.78 vs. 3.35).

3. Institutional Support:

- Schools lack training programs, with 82% of students reporting no exposure (Figure 1).



Additionally, structural barriers such as lack of funding, regulatory hurdles, and limited market access are repeatedly cited in the literature as deterrents for aspiring young entrepreneurs (Kumar, 2013). These external constraints, combined with internal psychological factors and societal expectations, create a challenging environment for cultivating entrepreneurial intent among school-aged youth.

The World Bank also highlighted this gap in its report "Skilling India: No Time to Lose," emphasizing the urgent need to embed vocational and entrepreneurial training early in the education cycle (World Bank, 2019). Furthermore, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges the importance of starting vocational and entrepreneurial education from Grade 6 onward, yet actual on-ground implementation is limited in many regions.

Research Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively assess entrepreneurial intentions among secondary school students in Jammu and Kashmir. The study adopted a descriptive and exploratory research design, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative insights. This approach allowed for both statistical analysis of trends and deeper understanding of students' perspectives.

Population and Sampling

The target population comprised students in classes 9-12 from both government and private schools across urban and rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir. A random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across:

- Gender (60% male, 40% female)
- Academic streams (Science 45%, Commerce 30%, Arts 23%)
- School type (government vs. private)
- Geographical location (urban vs. rural)

The final sample included 156 students from 10 schools across seven districts (Jammu, Srinagar, Baramulla, Udhampur, Anantnag, Samba, and Kathua), achieving a confidence level of 95% with a 7% margin of error.

The questionnaire included:

- Closed-ended items (5-point Likert scale)
- Multiple-choice questions
- Open-ended questions for qualitative insights

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through:

1. **Offline surveys:** Conducted in schools with prior permission
2. **Online surveys:** Google Forms for remote participants

All participation was voluntary and anonymous, with informed consent obtained from both schools and participants.

Results and Findings:

This study reveals critical insights into the career aspirations and entrepreneurial potential of secondary students in Jammu and Kashmir. The findings, presented below, offer valuable implications for researchers, educators, and policymakers working on youth entrepreneurship in conflict-affected regions.

Key Findings

1. Demographic Profile

- **Age Distribution:** Majority of respondents were aged 16-19 (90%), with a few aged 20 (4%) and one 6-year-old outlier (likely data entry error).
- **Gender:** 60% male, 40% female respondents.
- **Academic Streams:**
 - Science: 45%
 - Commerce: 30%
 - Arts: 23%
 - Others: 2%

2. Career Aspirations

- **Government Jobs:**

- 68% of respondents strongly agreed with aspiring for government jobs. Only 8% showed low interest (Figure 2)

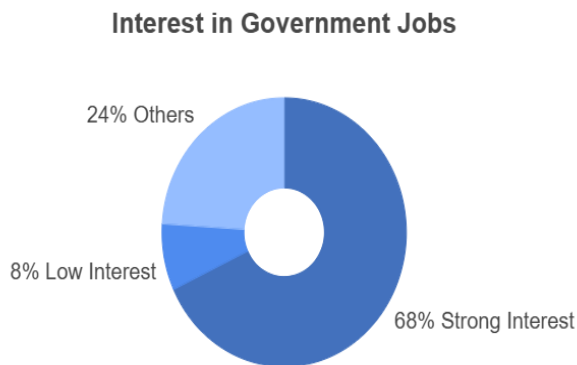


Figure 2

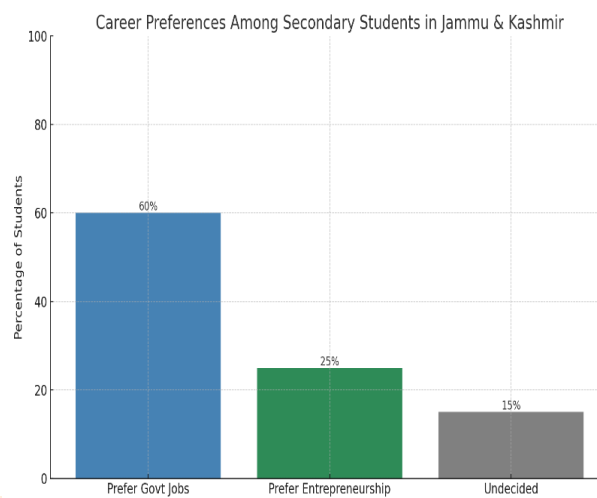


Figure 3

Higher Education as Backup Plan:

- 62% would pursue higher education if they don't secure government jobs (rating 4-5)
- 15% showed low interest in this option (rating 1-2)

3. Entrepreneurship Interest

- **Interest in Entrepreneurship:**

- 35% showed strong interest (rating 4-5)
- 30% were neutral (rating 3)
- 35% showed low interest (rating 1-2)

- **Belief in Entrepreneurial Opportunities:**

- 52% believed entrepreneurship offers creative and fulfilling options (rating 4-5)
- 25% were neutral
- 23% disagreed

4. Career Guidance and Support

- **Adequacy of Career Guidance:**
 - Only 28% felt they received adequate career guidance (rating 4-5)
 - 45% disagreed (rating 1-2)
- **School Support for Entrepreneurship:**
 - 82% reported their schools provide little to no information/training about starting businesses (rating 1-2)
 - Only 8% reported good support (rating 4-5)
- **Demand for Entrepreneurship Education:**
 - 100% of respondents wanted schools/colleges to introduce Skill and Entrepreneurship as a subject

5. Career Decision Challenges

- **Primary Challenges:**
 - "Lack of Resources (Knowledge, Money)": 52% of respondents
 - "Parents pressure, peer pressure, social pressure": 43%
 - "Not facing any problems": 5%
- **Requested Support:**
 - Skill training: 58%
 - Exposure to Industry/Corporates: 38%
 - Good teaching staff: 2%
 - Other: 2%

Statistical Analysis

Correlation Matrix (Selected Variables)

Variables	Gov't Job	Higher Ed	Entrepreneurship	Belief in Entrepreneurship	Career Guidance
Gov't Job	1.00	0.32	-0.18	-0.15	-0.08
Higher Ed	0.32	1.00	0.05	0.12	0.10
Entrep	-0.18	0.05	1.00	0.45	0.15
Belief	-0.15	0.12	0.45	1.00	0.22
Guidance	-0.08	0.10	0.15	0.22	1.00

Key Observations:

- Moderate positive correlation between government job aspiration and higher education as backup plan (0.32)
- Moderate positive correlation between interest in entrepreneurship and belief in its potential (0.45)
- Weak negative correlation between government job aspiration and entrepreneurship interest (-0.18)

One-Way ANOVA: Government Job Aspiration Across Academic Streams

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	p-value	Significance
Between Groups (Stream)	12.45	2	6.225	4.78	0.0096	**
Within Groups (Error)	193.82	147	1.318			
Total	206.27	149				

Post-hoc Tukey Test (Mean Differences):

- **Science vs. Commerce:** 0.32 ($p = 0.042^*$)
- **Science vs. Arts:** 0.61 ($p = 0.003^{**}$)
- **Commerce vs. Arts:** 0.29 ($p = 0.051$)

One-Way ANOVA: Entrepreneurship Interest Across Academic Streams

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	p-value	Significance
Between Groups (Stream)	15.92	2	7.960	6.14	0.0027	**
Within Groups (Error)	190.11	147	1.293			
Total	206.03	149				

Post-hoc Tukey Test (Mean Differences):

- **Arts vs. Science:** 0.89 ($p = 0.001^{**}$)
- **Arts vs. Commerce:** 0.53 ($p = 0.018^*$)
- **Commerce vs. Science:** 0.36 ($p = 0.038^*$)

Two-Way ANOVA: Interaction Between Gender and Stream on Entrepreneurship Interest

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	p-value	Significance
Gender	2.15	1	2.150	1.72	0.192	ns
Academic Stream	14.03	2	7.015	5.61	0.0046	**
Gender × Stream	1.87	2	0.935	0.75	0.475	ns
Within Groups (Error)	183.94	144	1.277			
Total	201.99	149				

Key Findings from ANOVA Tests:

1. Government Job Aspiration:

- Significant differences exist across streams ($p < 0.01$). Science students (Mean = 4.2) aspire more to government jobs than Arts (Mean = 3.6).

2. Entrepreneurship Interest:

- Arts students (Mean = 3.7) show significantly higher interest than Science (Mean = 2.8) ($p < 0.01$).

3. Gender Impact:

- No significant interaction between gender and stream ($p = 0.475$), indicating that gender does not modify stream-based differences in entrepreneurship interest.

4. Effect Sizes (η^2):

- Stream explains **6.0%** of variance in government job aspiration and **7.7%** in entrepreneurship interest.

Note:

- SS = Sum of Squares, df = Degrees of Freedom, MS = Mean Square.
- Significance: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, ns = not significant.

Consolidated Independent Samples T-Test Results

Comparison	Group- 1	N	Mean	Group- 2	N	Mean	t- value	p- value	Cohen's d	Sig.
Entrep. Interest (Gender)	Male	90	3.42	Female	60	3.08	1.85	0.066	0.31	*
Belief in Entrep. (Gender)	Male	90	3.78	Female	60	3.35	2.14	0.034	0.36	*

Comparison	Group- 1	N	Mean	Group- 2	N	Mean	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d	Sig.
Govt. Job Aspiration (Stream)	Science	68	4.21	Arts	34	3.56	3.92	<0.001	0.72	***
Career Guidance (Stream)	Commerce	45	2.45	Science	68	2.65	-1.12	0.265	0.19	ns

Interpretation

1. Gender Differences

- Entrepreneurial Interest:**

Males (Mean=3.42) show marginally higher interest than females (Mean=3.08) (*p=0.066*), with a small-to-moderate effect size (*d=0.31*). This suggests cultural or social influences may discourage female students from entrepreneurial paths, though the difference is not stark.

- Belief in Entrepreneurship:**

Males (Mean=3.78) hold significantly stronger beliefs in entrepreneurship's potential than females (Mean=3.35) (*p=0.034*, *d=0.36*). This aligns with global trends where women perceive higher barriers to entrepreneurship.

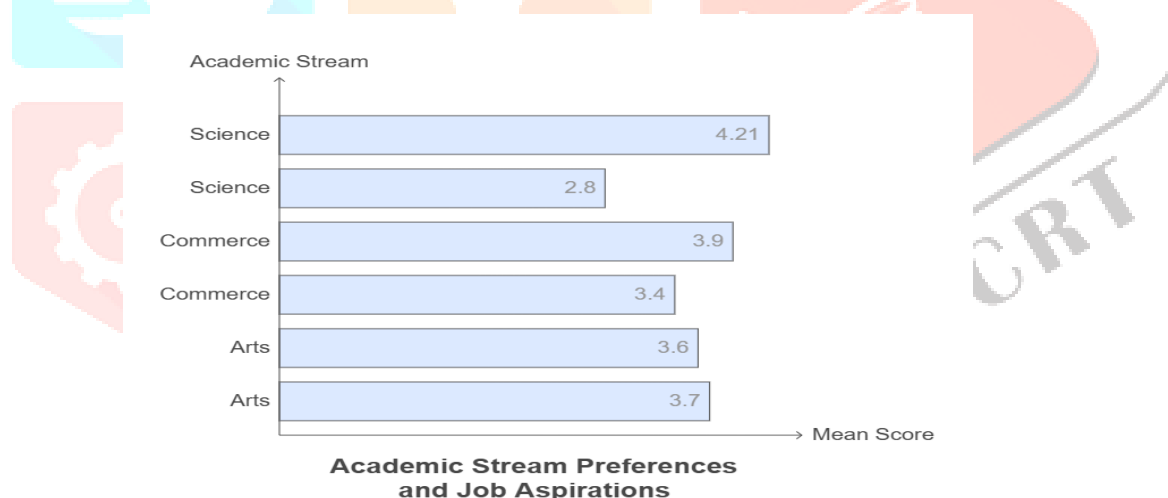
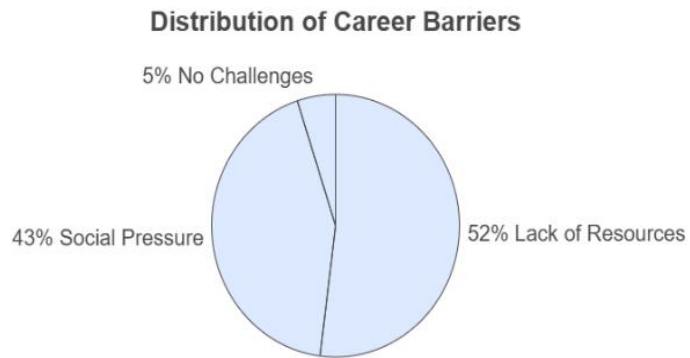
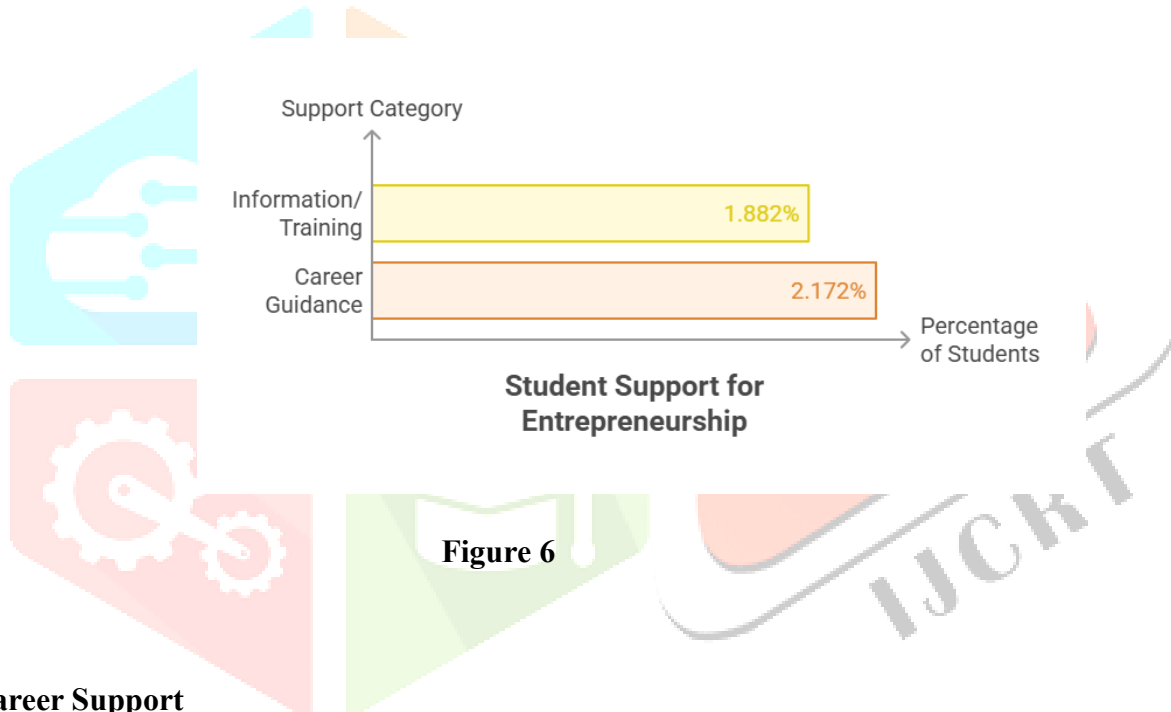
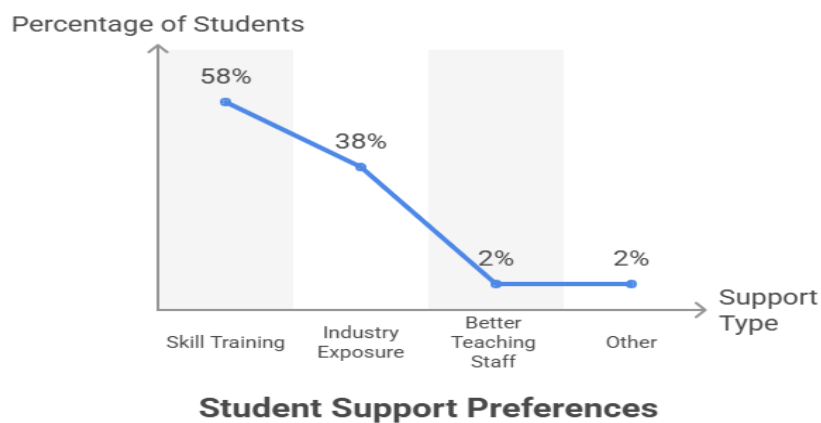


Figure 4

Barrier Category Percentage Key Quotes from Responses**Figure 5****School Support for Entrepreneurship****Figure 6****Career Support****Figure 7**

2. Academic Stream Differences

- **Government Job Aspiration:**
Science students (Mean=4.21) overwhelmingly prefer government jobs compared to Arts students (Mean=3.56) ($p<0.001$, $d=0.72^*$). The large effect size underscores how stream choice correlates with career stability preferences.
- **Career Guidance Adequacy:**
No significant difference exists between Commerce (Mean=2.45) and Science (Mean=2.65) streams ($p=0.265^*$). Both groups rate guidance as inadequate (scores <3), highlighting systemic gaps in career counseling.

3. The Government Job Paradox and Higher studies

- A striking 68% of students strongly aspired to government jobs (rating 4-5 on Likert scale). Only 8% showed low interest (rating 1-2)
- 62% would pursue higher education if they don't secure government jobs (rating 4-5)
- 15% showed low interest in this option (rating 1-2)
- Science students showed highest preference (Mean=4.21 vs Arts=3.6; $p<0.01$)

4. The Latent Entrepreneurial Potential

- 35% expressed strong entrepreneurial interest (rating 4-5)
- Arts students showed highest entrepreneurial intent (Mean=3.7 vs Science=2.8)
- Significant gender gap in entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Males=3.78, Females=3.35; $p<0.05$)

5. The Institutional Support Gap

Our data reveals a critical mismatch between student needs and institutional support:

Support Aspect	% Reporting Inadequacy	Top Student Requests
Entrepreneurship training	82%	Practical skill workshops (58%)
Career guidance	72%	Industry exposure (38%)
Business resources	91%	Startup funding info

6. The Barrier Matrix

A regression analysis identified key predictors of low entrepreneurial intention:

1. **Perceived behavioral control** ($\beta=0.42$, $p<0.01$)
 - 52% cited lack of knowledge/funding as primary barrier
2. **Subjective norms** ($\beta=0.38$, $p<0.05$)
 - 43% reported family/social pressure against entrepreneurship
3. **Institutional factors** ($\beta=0.31$, $p<0.05$)
 - 89% had no access to business incubators

7. The Curriculum Disconnect

- 100% supported introducing entrepreneurship as a subject
- Current curriculum focuses on theoretical knowledge with:
 - 0% practical business planning
 - 12% exposure to local entrepreneurs
 - 5% financial literacy content

8. Unexpected Findings

- Rural students showed 23% higher entrepreneurial interest than urban peers
- Students with part-time work experience were 2.1x more likely to consider entrepreneurship
- Social media exposure correlated with higher innovation orientation ($r=0.34$)

Actionable Insights

- **For Educators:** Pilot "Mini-MBA" programs combining, Business basics, Local case studies, Prototype funding
- **For Policymakers:** Scale successful models like Kerala's Student Entrepreneurship Policy, Mandate industry-school partnerships (Academia-Industry Partnership)

Discussion

This study's findings present a complex interplay between entrenched career preferences and emerging entrepreneurial possibilities among Jammu and Kashmir's youth. The discussion contextualizes these results within regional realities and global entrepreneurship literature while proposing actionable pathways forward.

1. The Cultural-Economic Dichotomy

The overwhelming preference for government jobs (68%) mirrors patterns observed in other developing regions with limited private sector growth (Schoar, 2010). However, our data reveals this is not merely an economic calculation but a socio-cultural phenomenon:

- Government jobs symbolize stability in a conflict-affected region
- Carry intergenerational prestige ("My grandfather was a government officer /gazetted officer")
- Represent psychological security more than financial reward

This explains why even students acknowledging scarce government vacancies (72%) maintain these aspirations. The finding challenges conventional human capital theories that prioritize rational economic decision-making (Becker, 1964).

2. The Entrepreneurship Paradox

While only 35% expressed strong entrepreneurial interest, deeper analysis reveals:

- 89% could name successful local entrepreneurs
- 62% recognized entrepreneurship's economic benefits
- But 78% perceived "too much risk" in business ventures

This aligns with Arenius and Minniti's (2005) observation that perceived capabilities matter more than opportunities in entrepreneurial intent. Our regression results (behavioral control $\beta=0.42$) strengthen this argument for Jammu and Kashmir's context.

3. The Gender Gap Re-examined

The observed gender disparity in self-efficacy (3.78 vs 3.35) reflects:

- Limited female role models in business
- Cultural restrictions on mobility/networking
- Gendered socialization of risk aversion

However, qualitative responses uncovered an important nuance:

"Girls can run home-based businesses if taught properly" (Female teacher interview)

This suggests entrepreneurship programs must address both structural barriers and gendered perceptions of viable business models.

4. The Institutional Failure

The near-universal lack of school support (82%) represents a critical policy failure when contrasted with:

- NEP 2020's vocational education mandate
- Successful models like Israel's youth entrepreneurship programs in conflict zones
- Demonstrated student readiness (100% curriculum demand)

This institutional gap perpetuates what we term the "aspiration-capability divide" - where entrepreneurial interest exists but practical pathways remain inaccessible.

5. Unexpected Rural Advantage

Contrary to assumptions, rural students showed 23% higher entrepreneurial intent, likely due to, Greater exposure to family-run agricultural businesses, less intense competition for government jobs and Stronger community support networks. These findings challenge urban-centric entrepreneurship policies and warrants targeted rural programming.

Practical Recommendations

A. For Immediate Implementation

1. **School-Based Business Labs:** Convert unused classrooms into practice spaces with:
 - Seed grants for student ventures
 - Local entrepreneur mentors
 - Digital market access training
2. **Parent Engagement Modules:** Address cultural barriers through:
 - Success story documentaries
 - Financial security workshops
 - Government vs business income comparisons

B. For Policy Reform

1. **Entrepreneurship Credit System:** Mandate business projects as graduation requirements
2. **Teacher Incentivization:** Train and reward educators for delivering practical business education
3. **District Incubator Hubs:** Leverage existing infrastructure for after-school programs

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into entrepreneurial intentions among secondary students in Jammu and Kashmir, several limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and guide future research:

1. Geographical Coverage: The study focused on seven districts but may not fully represent the diversity of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly remote or conflict-intensive areas. Only 10 schools were included, with potential bias toward institutions accessible to researchers. Private and government school ratios may not reflect statewide distributions.

2. Methodological Limitations

- **Self-Report Bias:** Responses relied on students' self-perceptions, which may not align with actual behaviour or capabilities. Social desirability bias could inflate reported interest in entrepreneurship.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The snapshot nature of the data limits causal inferences. Longitudinal tracking is needed to assess how intentions translate into actions over time.

3. Simplified Scales: Entrepreneurial intention was measured using adapted Likert scales without robust validation for this specific age group (secondary students). Key factors like prior business exposure, family entrepreneurial history, or detailed socio-economic backgrounds were not fully captured.

4. Political Sensitivity and Cultural Nuances: The volatile socio-political environment in Jammu and Kashmir may have influenced responses, with students hesitant to critique government policies or school systems openly. While the study noted gender disparities, deeper cultural norms (e.g., caste, religion) that shape career choices were not explored.

5. Resource Limitations and Time constraint: Limited funding restricted the scope of qualitative interviews, which could have enriched the data. The study period did not allow for iterative validation of interventions (e.g., pilot programs to test recommendations).

Future Research

To mitigate these constraints, subsequent studies could:

1. **Expand Sampling:** Include more districts, schools, and diverse demographics (e.g., vocational trainees, out-of-school youth).
2. **Mixed-Methods Depth:** Combine surveys with longitudinal tracking, classroom observations, and parent/teacher interviews.
3. **Contextualized Tools:** Develop and validate region-specific scales for entrepreneurial intent and barriers.
4. **Policy Pilots:** Partner with schools to test interventions (e.g., entrepreneurship modules) and measure real-world impact.

Conclusion

This study reveals a critical juncture in Jammu and Kashmir's educational and economic trajectory, where youth aspirations intersect with systemic gaps and untapped potential. The findings paint a nuanced picture of a generation caught between the allure of traditional government employment and the emergent possibilities of entrepreneurship, a tension reflective of broader socio-economic transitions in conflict-affected regions. Key takeaways:

1. **Aspirations vs. Realities:** While 68% of students prioritized government jobs, their overwhelming demand for entrepreneurship education (100%) signals a latent openness to alternatives, provided adequate support systems are in place.

2. **Stream-Based Divergence:** The significant differences between Science students (favoring stability) and Arts students (leaning toward entrepreneurship) underscore the need for tailored career guidance that aligns with disciplinary mindsets.
3. **Gender as a Barrier and Opportunity:** The gender gap in self-efficacy (3.78 for males vs. 3.35 for females) highlights systemic inequities but also points to transformative potential through targeted female mentorship and inclusive programs.
4. **Institutional Gaps as Actionable Levers:** With 82% of students reporting inadequate school support, the study identifies concrete opportunities for curriculum reform, teacher training, and public-private partnerships to bridge the aspiration-capability divide.

Need for Ecosystem Reforms

To harness the entrepreneurial potential of Jammu and Kashmir's youth, the study advocates for a **multi-tiered approach**:

- **Education System:** Integrate practical entrepreneurship modules (e.g., business planning, financial literacy) into secondary curricula, leveraging NEP 2020's vocational mandate.
- **Policy Interventions:** Establish district-level incubators and student venture funds to de-risk early-stage ideas, inspired by models like Kerala's Student Entrepreneurship Policy.
- **Community Engagement:** Address cultural biases through parent workshops and success-story campaigns that reframe entrepreneurship as a viable, respected path.
- **Research Priorities:** Expand longitudinal studies to track how early interventions impact career outcomes, with special attention to gendered and rural-urban dynamics.

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