

Entrepreneurial Educators Response to the Covid - 19 Pandemic in India with Special Reference to Madurai City

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Abstract: Covid - 19 has dragged the world a long way, from first being declared a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' after its initial breakout in December 2019 and then, a pandemic by March of 2020. The Indian government's declaration of a 14-hour voluntary public curfew on 22nd March 2020, and the subsequent 21-day lockdown, now called as Phase 1 of the lockdown from 25th March 2020 till 14th April 2020, clearly showed the nations fear for the health and safety of its citizens. Although, with the approach of Unlock 7.0, it is clear now, that the pandemics impact has been much more than just loss of life. This paper aims at highlighting the impact of the pandemic on higher education with special reference to entrepreneurial education in India, and also discuss how entrepreneurial educators need to bring about changes to existing entrepreneurship curriculums in order for entrepreneurship education to be successful and effective in training potential entrepreneurs post the pandemic.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Educator, Pandemic, Education

1. Introduction

Covid - 19 has dragged the world a long way, from first being declared a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' after its initial breakout in December 2019 and then, a pandemic by March of 2020. The Indian government's declaration of a 14-hour voluntary public curfew on 22nd March 2020, and the subsequent 21 day lockdown, now called as Phase 1 of the lockdown from 25th March 2020 till 14th April 2020, clearly showed the nations fear for the health and safety of its citizens. Although, with the approach of Unlock 7.0, it is clear now, that the pandemics impact has been much more than just loss of life.

This paper aims at highlighting the impact of the pandemic on higher education with special reference to entrepreneurial education in India, and also discuss how entrepreneurial educators need to bring about changes to existing entrepreneurship curriculums in order for entrepreneurship education to be successful and effective in training potential entrepreneurs post the pandemic.

1.1 Background of Entrepreneurial Education in India

India has come a long way from the time when education was caste specific and monastic in nature. While early forms of education in India were mainly religion related, it soon grew to include grammar, philosophy, medicine, agriculture, other languages, geography, mathematics, art, and crafts, etc. Furthermore, it remained purely male dominated until the British in India introduced the 'modern education' system. Even though over the years the education system has evolved from traditional gurukuls to online teaching, the fact is, learning is a process, continuous and endless.

Freed from British rule in 1947 was only political in nature. Only in the early 60's did India truly begin to experience economic freedom, when it was realized that freedom from unemployment and poverty lay in the development of small scale industries which could utilize entrepreneurial skills to generate employment opportunities. This realization led the government to offer various support packages to entrepreneurs in the areas of finance, infrastructure, and technological support. And further to the realization that beyond governmental support, there was a need to develop the skills necessary for entrepreneurship to grow which resulted in the establishment of the Small Industry Extension and Training Institute (SIET), Hyderabad now called as National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (NISJET).

The SIET in collaboration with Harvard University conducted the Kakinada Experiment (1964) which proved that the need for achievement is the key contributing factor to entrepreneurial success. This became the basis for other training institutes and management institutions to develop Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDP).

It was in the 80's that faculty driven entrepreneurship training in education was nurtured and promoted by the government and financial institutions to encourage self-employment. With liberalization taking place in the 90's entrepreneurship was no longer necessary as an exclusive tool for generation of employment opportunities, but it was seen as a generator of wealth as well. Lower capital requirements and success stories fueled the interest in entrepreneurship.

Though teaching methodologies have evolved, majority of entrepreneurship students today have more book knowledge than practical knowledge as major part

of the entrepreneurship educational ecosystem still lacks the ability to foster student start-ups as well as provide a degree. The current educational system has evolved dynamically and now most B - Schools provide entrepreneurship as a core area of study. In 2010, there were 1500 students enrolled in exclusive entrepreneurship educational institutions, and 4,700 students enrolled in various entrepreneurship programmes. The number of students enrolled in various entrepreneurship programmes dramatically increased to 44,500 by 2012 and this number is expected to grow at a CAGR of 20.4%. Finally, complete content and organizational editing before formatting. Please take note of the following items when proofreading spelling and grammar:

1.2 Review of Literature

In order for the researcher to have a better understanding, a review of literature relating to the entrepreneurial education and educators has been carried out. It is as follows:

The paper titled, 'Entrepreneurship Education in India: Need for Policy Interventions' by Paltasingh, Tattwamasi ^[1] (2005), highlights the various methods that can be used to inculcate entrepreneurial knowledge in students at various levels of education.

Rehman ur, Anis and Dr. Yaasir Arafat Elahi ^[2] (2012), in their paper 'Entrepreneurship Education in India - Scope, challenges and Role of B-Schools in Promoting Entrepreneurship Education', mentions that while B - Schools play a significant role in the growth of entrepreneurs, it is absolutely essential, that the government should also take appropriate measures to promote entrepreneurial education.

Basu, Rituparna ^[3] (2014) in the paper titled, 'Entrepreneurship Education in India: A Critical Assessment and a Proposed Framework', infers that a framework for entrepreneurship as a core course for business management students is necessary to build an effective entrepreneurship education ecosystem. Further empirical studies will be of great help to policy makers.

Zhang, J., Price, A. ^[4] (2020) in the article 'Developing the enterprise educators' mindset to change the teaching methodology: the case of Creating Entrepreneurial Outcomes (CEO) Programme' discuss about the very first UK - China co-created educator training programme with the objective of shifting entrepreneurial education from the tradition of being content-centric to student-centric.

Carol, Langston ^[5] (2020) proposes in the paper 'Entrepreneurial educators: vital enablers to support the education sector to reimagine and respond to the challenges of COVID-19', a conceptual model that identifies shared values, multiple identities and

innovative practices of entrepreneurship educators. It was found that the educators personal values influence how they behave beyond entrepreneurial knowledge helping to design student centric learning opportunities.

In the article 'The CRADLE teaching methodology: developing foreign language and entrepreneurial skills in primary school pupils', Weicht, R., Ivanova, I. & Gikopoulou, O. ^[6] (2020) show how the CRADLE teaching methodology develops entrepreneurial skills such as self-efficacy, creativity, valuing ideas, taking initiatives, planning and management, and working with others. This therefore requires training to be provided to primary school teachers in such methodology. The study showed this methodology of teaching to be successful.

2. Objectives

1. To study the framework of entrepreneurial education in India
2. To identify weaknesses in the entrepreneurial education system in India post the pandemic
3. To assess the mindset of entrepreneurial educators in the Madurai city area.
4. To offer suitable suggestions to encourage the growth of young entrepreneurs

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive design is followed to study the framework of entrepreneurial education in India and to identify weaknesses in the entrepreneurial education system in India post the pandemic. An empirical study has been conducted to assess the mindset of entrepreneurial educators in the Madurai city area.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The study was conducted based on primary data collected through convenience sampling using a structured questionnaire sent electronically to the respondents. The respondents (...) for this study are entrepreneurial educators in higher educational institutions across Madurai city. Secondary data was also collected through the usage of various internet portals, magazines, journals, and the like. Analysis has been done using simple percentage, weighted average and garette ranking

4. Scope of the Study

The study covers various higher educational institutions and centres providing entrepreneurial training in Madurai city and the sample size is limited to 30. The paper aims to identify whether educators in the field of

entrepreneurship had evolved and adapted to the changing scenario as a result of the pandemic.

Table.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Factors	Variables	Frequency	%
Educational Qualification	SSLC	1	3.33
	HSC	2	6.67
	Undergraduate (Non-Technical)	2	6.67
	Postgraduate (Non-Technical)	4	13.33
	Professional (Non-Technical)	6	20.00
	Diploma (Technical)	1	3.33
	B.E.	2	6.67
	M.E.	3	10.00
	Doctorate Degree/M. Phil	9	30.00
	Gender	Male	7
Female		23	76.67
Family Type	Joint	9	30
	Nuclear	21	70
Marital Status	Married	22	73.33
	Unmarried	8	26.67
Religious Background	Hindu	26	86.67
	Christian	4	13.33
Caste	FC	3	10.00
	BC	16	53.33
	MBC	10	33.33
	SC/ST	1	3.33

The above table reveals that majority of the respondents were Married (73.33%) Hindu (86.67%) Women (76.67%) who were Doctorate or M. Phil degree holders (30%) belonging to a Nuclear family (70%) belonging to the BC Community (53.33%)

Table.2. Classification Based on Conducting of Entrepreneurial Awareness Programmes

Yes/No	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	30	100

The above table shows that 100% of the Institutions where the respondents worked conducted some form of Entrepreneurial Awareness Programmes

Table.3. Table Showing Nature of Training Programmes Taught

Factors	SD A	DA	N	A	SA	Wgt. Avg	RA NK
Hands on Training	0	3	2	3	22	31.3	10
Lectures	0	1	1	6	22	36.3	8
Mentoring	1	2	5	9	13	60.3	1
Group Discussions	5	13	0	5	7	53.3	2
Internships	6	4	2	7	11	51.6	4
Research Projects	2	7	3	6	12	53.0	3
Training Workshops	1	0	1	6	22	35.3	9
Guest lectures	1	1	0	9	19	45.3	6
Project Based Learning	0	2	3	6	19	43.3	7
Site Visits	2	2	2	7	17	45.6	5

Based on weighted average method from the above table we can understand that Mentoring (60.33) forms a major part of Entrepreneurial Training Programmes, followed by Group Discussions (53.33) and Research Projects (53.00)..

Table.4. Table Classification Based on Follow Up with Students after Completion of Training

	Frequency	%
Yes	28	93.33
No	2	6.67
TOTAL	30	100

The data reveals that almost all (93.33%) of the respondents follow up with their students on completion of the training programme

Table.5. Table Showing Likelihood of Students to Become Entrepreneurs After Completion of Entrepreneurial Training

	Frequency	%
Highly Likely	8	26.67
Likely	17	56.67
Neutral	5	16.67
Unlikely	0	0.00
Highly Unlikely	0	0.00
TOTAL	30	100.00

It can be noted from the above table that majority of the respondents feel that their students are Likely (56.67%) or Highly Likely (26.67%) to become entrepreneurs upon completion of the training programmes conducted by them.

Table.6. Table Showing Changes to be Made in the Syllabus and Teaching Methodology Post the Pandemic

Factors	SD A	D A	N	A	S A	Wgt d Avg	RAN K
Focus on Teaching Crisis and Risk Management	1	5	5	6	13	54.33	1
Incorporation of Enhanced Technology Usage that supports social distancing requirements	0	6	2	6	16	47.33	5
Process of Design Thinking	3	11	6	2	8	53.67	2
More research and innovations in entrepreneurship	2	8	2	5	13	48.33	4
Conversion of Research efforts into an effective	1	4	3	6	16	47.33	5

business							
Development of long-term, sustainable and inclusive business models	0	1	3	6	20	41.67	7
Encouraging Social Entrepreneurship	0	0	2	10	18	52.00	3

It can be understood from the above table based on weighted averages, that majority of the respondents (52.00) believe that there is a need to Focus on the Teaching of Crisis and Risk Management post the pandemic, followed by the including the teaching of Design Thinking (53.67) and encouraging Social Entrepreneurship (52.00).

Table.7. Classification Based on Whether Syllabus Was Changed Post Pandemic

	Frequency	%
Yes	8	26.67
No	22	73.33
TOTAL	30	100

Although changes in the syllabus were suggested by the entrepreneurial educators, majority of the respondents (73.33%) were yet to implement any such suggested changes

Table.8. Table Showing Respondents Opinion Post the Pandemic

Factors	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Wgtd Avg	RANK
Post the pandemic more entrepreneurship awareness programmes need to be conducted	0	4	1	6	19	41.33	3
I attended online training workshops and seminars during the lockdown	8	4	0	2	16	29.33	5
I am well versed in conducting classes online	7	3	2	2	16	32.33	4

I am aware of the latest developments in my field post the pandemic	0	2	7	5	16	50.33	1
I am part of an online community of faculty and students	0	0	0	1	29	13.67	6
The demand for entrepreneurial training has increased	1	5	5	4	15	47.00	2

The above table reveals that majority of the respondents (50.33%) were aware of the developments in their respective fields (if any) post the pandemic. They perceived that there was an increase in the demand for entrepreneurial training (47.00) yet there was a need for more entrepreneurship awareness programmes to be conducted (41.33) post the pandemic.

H₀: $\mu =$ There is NO significant change in the nature, objectives, and syllabus of training programmes conducted post the pandemic

H₁: $\mu \neq$ There is NO significant change in the nature, objectives, and syllabus of training programmes conducted post the pandemic

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Nature	4.0567	.69117	30
Objectives	4.4762	.55940	30
Syllabus	3.9429	.81212	30

Correlations

	Nature	Obj.	Syllabus
Nature	Pearson Correlation	1	.381*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038
	N	30	30
Objectives	Pearson Correlation	.381*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038
	N	30	30
Syllabus	Pearson Correlation	.618**	.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038		.443
	N	30	30	30
Syllabus	Pearson Correlation	.618**	.146	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.443	
	N	30	30	30

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Pearson Correlation is 1 for the Nature of Training Programmes conducted, 0.381 for the Objectives behind conducting Entrepreneurial Training and 0.618 for Syllabus changes that need to be made post the pandemic.

The 'p' value for objectives behind conducting Entrepreneurial Training is 0.038 which is less than the 0.05 significance level and the 'p' value for syllabus changes that need to be made post the pandemic is 0.000 which is less than 0.01 significance level.

Since the 'r' values are positive and the significant (2 - tailed) values are below 0.05 and 0.01 respectively we reject the null hypothesis and we can infer that there is a correlation between the nature of training programmes conducted, the objectives behind conducting the entrepreneurial training and the syllabus changes that need to be made post the pandemic.

Summary

- Majority of the respondents were Married (73.33%) Hindu (86.67%) Women (76.67%) who were Doctorate or M. Phil degree holders (30%) belonging to a Nuclear family (70%) belonging to the BC Community (53.33%)
- 100% of the Institutions where the respondents worked conducted some form of Entrepreneurial Awareness Programmes.
- Mentoring (60.33) forms a major part of Entrepreneurial Training Programmes, followed by Group Discussions (53.33) and Research Projects (53.00).
- Almost all (93.33%) of the respondents follow up with their students on completion of the training programme.
- It is Likely (56.67%) or Highly Likely (26.67%) for students to become entrepreneurs upon

completion of the training programmes conducted by them.

- There is a need to Focus on the Teaching of Crisis and Risk Management post the pandemic (52.00), followed by the including the teaching of Design Thinking (53.67) and encouraging Social Entrepreneurship (52.00).
- Although changes in the syllabus were suggested by the entrepreneurial educators, majority of the respondents (73.33%) were yet to implement any such suggested changes.
- the respondents (50.33%) were aware of the developments in their respective fields (if any) post the pandemic. They perceived that there was an increase in the demand for entrepreneurial training (47.00) yet there was a need for more entrepreneurship awareness programmes to be conducted (41.33) post the pandemic.
- We can infer that there is a correlation between the nature of training programmes conducted, the objectives behind conducting the entrepreneurial training and the syllabus changes that need to be made post the pandemic.

Suggestions and Conclusions

Even though the study shows that only a minority of the respondents (26.67%) introduced changes in the syllabus post the pandemic, a notable point is that the trainers engaged primarily in hands on training, introduced simple yet essential elements such as basic computer knowledge including how to attend virtual meets, how to record, send, and receive messages and videos through WhatsApp and teaching women to stitch face masks.

On the other hand, the reason cited for lack of change in syllabus was that since most of the entrepreneurial training was directed towards uplifting the downtrodden people living in backward and rural areas, there was limited scope for broadening the syllabus. Furthermore, a common thought shared by entrepreneurial educators regarding the need for awareness on entrepreneurial training was that interested persons with inherent interest would seek out such training programmes irrespective of any hurdles that might present itself.

Further Research

While this paper has been limited to the response of entrepreneurial educators, there is further scope for research in identifying areas of change that need to be incorporated into the existing syllabus in order to better equip and attract potential entrepreneurs to face a future that is most certainly filled with risk.

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