

IMPACT OF BUSINESS BLASTER PROGRAM ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF DELHI SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The government of India has been pushing enterprise as a prominent policy aim under its administration. The young polity of the nation is uniquely susceptible to enterprise- encouraging programs. This paper studies the impact of one such program, The Delhi Government's Business blaster program, in promoting entrepreneurship amongst its high school participants. The study is based on primary data collected from the actual participants of the program and studies the impact of the program on the entrepreneurial intentions of the participants vis-a-vis the academic prowess of participants, the family background of participants (income and occupation), and gender.

Keywords: Business Blaster program, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Entrepreneurial education.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been one of the most frequently talked about policy issues in the Indian political climate with the incumbent political party positioning "made in India " as an engine for long-term economic growth in the nation. India's demographics are uniquely susceptible to the growth of entrepreneurial activities with over 52% of the country's population being under 30 years of age and the country boasting a large workforce of 437.2 million workers. The importance of small and medium-sized businesses in the Indian economy cannot be overstated with these firms coordinating and working with the administrative armature of the country to help develop its industrializing economy. India has an estimated 633.88 lakh MSMEs, of which 324.88 lakh MSMEs are based in rural areas and 309 lakhs are from urban areas. The MSME sector in India has often been touted as the backbone of the Indian economy imitating the Mittel stand structure of Germany, the 633 lakh firms contributed 30.5% to India's GDP in FY19 and 30% in FY20 the split being, 6.11% of GDP from the manufacturing sector and 24.63% of GDP from the services sector. It also accounts for 40% of the nation's exports and based on a study

conducted by the Ministry of Statistics & PI between July 2015 and June 2016, the MSME sector employs 111 million workers.

Medium and small-scale enterprises also have the added benefit of having a low capital cost which further augments their ability to aid in the industrialization of rural areas. These factors exacerbate the Indian government's willingness to support entrepreneurship in the nation.

The polity of the country has indicated its support for entrepreneurship by launching several schemes meant to aid the setting up of businesses, these schemes consist of the Atal Incubation Centre scheme under the NITI Aayog of India. The AIC scheme supports entrepreneurs by covering their operating costs of capital with eligible ventures being able to avail of up to Rs. 10 crores over a five-year term. Another scheme that has been held in high regard in the country has been the **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana** which provides loans of up to ten lakhs without collateral to budding entrepreneurs.

Overview of Business Blasters program:

In September 2021, Govt. of Delhi launched the Business Blasters program under EMC (Entrepreneurial Mindset Curriculum) to provide real-world experience to business-savvy teenagers and develop their skill set by exposure rather than theory with a stated goal of "Nurturing their own abilities, **empower students to take charge of their career paths** in employment or entrepreneurship." The program was launched for students in classes 9-12 in government schools in Delhi. The curriculum directly impacted 3.5 lakh students and over 1000 schools. Govt spent more than Rupees 60 crores on the program. The program tries to create a platform for the students in these schools to develop business ideas and seek investments for the same.

The program is composed of three stages and in stage one, 03 lakh students of class 11th and 12th in Delhi government schools were given seed money of Rs 2000 each. This money was supposed to be used to "**either earn profit or create social impact**". A total of 51,000 teams were formed with a maximum seed capital of 20,000 rupees. In stage two, the teams entered an elimination process which was conducted on a zonal level. Zonal panels of judges eliminated 50,000 teams. 1,000 remaining teams were provided business coaches to further augment and refine their ideas. In the last and third stage, entrepreneurs picked the top 100+ businesses that were robust enough to be invested in. The business ideas were also presented to investors in a televised fashion where student entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to investors and an investment summit was held for the businesses in a local stadium. These businesses are being incubated in the Business Blasters Incubation Cell under the aegis of the Delhi Skills & Entrepreneurship University.

Accordingly, this paper studies the impact of the program on the entrepreneurial intentions of the

participants vis-a-vis the academic prowess of participants, the family background of participants (income and occupation), and gender.

Literature Review

Rattan & Jones (2021) asserted that entrepreneurship education has the ability to link theory with practice and thus can impart entrepreneurial skills to students. Furthermore (Ferreira, Fayolle, Ratten, and Raposo, 2018) noted that equipping students with key competencies required to become entrepreneurs and discover new opportunities is a primary benefit of entrepreneurship education.

Working with these broad ideas researchers claim that entrepreneurship education at a basal level is about education and training that augment participants' ability and willingness to undertake the enterprise. This view is echoed in Linan (2004:166) which defines entrepreneurship education as “the whole set of education and training activities-within the education system or not-that try to develop in the participants the intention to perform entrepreneurial behaviours, or some of the elements that affect that intention, such as entrepreneurial knowledge, desirability of the entrepreneurial activity or its feasibility”.

Extrapolating from Linan (2004:166) it is clear that entrepreneurship education must serve as an armature to convert theoretical know-how into tangible action in the modern paradigm. It is claimed that entrepreneurial intention is contingent on several factors and research also indicates that entrepreneurial intention correlates to how intensely one is prepared to carry out entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger et al., 2000 a, b).

Muntean and Ozkazanc-Pan (2015) postulate entrepreneurship to be a male-dominated field (), meaning that gender is one of the variables that play a part in dictating one's propensity toward enterprise (Haus et al., 2013; Guzman and Kacperczyk, 2019). Thus, it can be concluded that despite educational institutions being centers of entrepreneurship the impact of gender on their students undertaking entrepreneurial activities in the future must be studied (Dilli and Westerhuis, 2018).

Subjects chosen may have an impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of people simply because commerce majors will be exposed to the processes of business in a more structured fashion. However, the research on the correlation between subjects and entrepreneurial intentions is inconclusive with some proving a correlation (Fayolle and Lassas-Clerc, 2006; Marques et al., 2012; Maresch et al., 2016), and other studies not showing any correlation (*Rodrigues et al., 2012*)

Growing up in a business-centric household may promote people to start businesses of their own

(Crant, 1996). This trend can be attributed to children of entrepreneurs having easy access to the knowledge needed to run a business making entrepreneurship a natural choice for them (Cooper et al., 1994). These assertions are further supported by Alsos et al. (2011) who conclude that family background has an important role in the entrepreneurial intentions of individuals. Mueller (2006) tells us that parents often act as role models for their children ergo coming from a business family would make it more likely for children to become entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial intention refers to a psychological state that guides our attention toward specific business goals in order to achieve entrepreneurial results (Kong, Zhao, & Tsai, 2020). The study of Entrepreneurial Intention is important as it is often the most critical ingredient in forming entrepreneurial ventures (Nguyen et al., 2019). Research is inconclusive on whether entrepreneurial intention can be a taught trait. Some argue that entrepreneurial education plays a direct impact in nurturing entrepreneurial intention (Souitaris et al., 2007) while others question this assertion (Colette et al., 2005).

In 2017, Ferreira, Fernandes, & Ratten (2017) declared that policymakers are interested in fostering entrepreneurial activity for economic and social growth. This declaration is in line with colloquial wisdom.

However, a research gap exists as there have been no studies conducted on the impact of entrepreneurship promotion programs in high schools and more specifically high schools in Delhi. This study looks to fill that gap and measure the impact of the business blaster program on the entrepreneurial intentions of high schoolers while also establishing the impact of the 3 conditions outlined above on the effectiveness of the policy.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses:

1). To study the impact of the Family profession on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

2). To study the impact of gender on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of gender on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

3). To study the impact of academic performance on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

H₀₂: There is no significant impact of academic performance on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

4). To study the impact of family income on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

H₀₃: There is no significant impact of family income on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program

Research Methodology:

The study is based on primary and secondary data. Secondary data were used to ascertain the research gap and primary data were collected to test the hypothesis. Responses were collected from the students studying in various Delhi Govt schools using a questionnaire (in Hindi and English) having a five-point scale to study their entrepreneurial intentions. Students were selected using convenience sampling.

Results of Statistical analysis and implications:

Total 72 responses were collected and all the respondents were aware of the business blaster program but only 62 had participated in the program. Out of these 62, 10 reached up to stage 1, 01 up to stage 2, and 51 up to stage 3. These 62 responses were analysed further to achieve the objectives and test the hypotheses. Out of these, 44 were male (71%) and 18 (29%) were female. The average age of the respondents was 17.9 years. The majority of the respondents' fathers (88.7%) were in private jobs or self-employed. A vast majority (75.8%) of the mothers were housewives. 75.8% of respondents' family income was less than Rs 30,000/- per month and 61.3% scored more than 60 % in 10th board exams. However, 64.5% scored less than 70% marks in 10th board exams. Only 22.6 % scored more than 80% marks in 10th board exams. The mean value of Entrepreneurial Intentions of the participants was 4.6 (translating to strongly agree on a scale of 1-5 where 1 stood for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree).

Results of independent T-tests:

For H₀₁: On average, Male students exhibited greater Entrepreneurial intentions (M=4.58, SE=.11) than females (M= 4.52, SE= .14). However, the difference is not significant $t(60) = -.281, p > .05$. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of gender on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program is supported.

For H₀₂: On average, students having better academic performance exhibited lesser Entrepreneurial intentions (M=4.47, SE=.13) than students having not so academic performance (M= 4.71, SE= .10). However, the difference is not significant $t(60) = -1.331, p > .05$. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of academic performance on

the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program is supported.

For H_{03} : On average, students having family income greater than Rs. 30,000/- exhibited lesser Entrepreneurial intentions ($M=4.21$, $SE=.31$) than students having not so academic performance ($M= 4.66$, $SE= .07$). However, the difference is not significant $t(60) = -1.415$, $p > .05$. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of family income on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program is supported.

Results imply that participation in the business blaster program has positively impacted the entrepreneurial intentions (Mean value 4.6) of Delhi School Students. Though, the results revealed that there is no impact of gender, academic performance, and family income on the entrepreneurial intentions of Delhi School Students participating in the business blaster program. However, data also revealed that most of the parents were not doing Govt jobs and a large percentage were self-employed.

Study indicates that Govt should keep on running such programs as these programs are positively impacting the students to take up entrepreneurship. This will lead to the growth of the economy and help the government to achieve the goal of a self-reliant India.

Limitations, future research directions, and conclusion:

The limitation of the study is that it is based on fewer data. More data collected using probability sampling would yield better results. Data collected from non-participants and from non-participating schools would give more information about the awareness and efficacy of the program. Future studies may be conducted to look into this. Overall, the study indicates that the inclusion of such programs in the curriculum can have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of the students and can fuel economic growth.

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