

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE UNIVERSITIES OF ASSAM IN PROVIDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**¹Subit Dutta and ²Amrita Dutta**¹Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Assam University Diphu Campus, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Gurucharan University Silchar, Cachar, Assam
¹subit.dutta@gmail.com and ²amritaduttasil@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

Entrepreneurship Education can be provided by all the higher educational institutions in various ways. It may be a part of syllabus or a separate course like certificate or diploma course. In many research studies, it is revealed that the content and management of the syllabus are not sufficient enough to create skills and knowledge required for entrepreneurial activities in India. It means that the purpose for which entrepreneurship is implemented in the course content, have not been attained. However, it needs a different approach; the students would be motivated to become an entrepreneur after pursuing the entrepreneurship education and students should have the capacity to develop his/her own enterprises. In this process, the universities will have a number of challenges. It is the time to give special attention to overcome those challenges and needs to give prime attention towards entrepreneurship education in a way to capitalize the chunk unutilized resource with skilled personnel. This study is to examine the challenges encountered by the Universities of Assam in providing entrepreneurship education.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The main objective of running academic programmes and introduction of entrepreneurship in higher education is to reduce the problem of unemployment by skilling the youth and motivating them to become “a job provider not job seeker”. The unemployment is a serious problem that world is facing today. Fajana (2000) defines unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges.

Youth is a specific period of life when performance of actively participating labour forces represents how economically capable a country is. This has made bound the policy makers launches new policies and programs so that employment can be generated. But, somehow it has become a challenge for some developing nations like India including its state Assam. Assam is one among the literate states of India ((87.0% with male literacy 90.3% and the female literacy 83.6%) as on 2024 (PLFS Report). Deka (2021) has mentioned in his study that the employment scenario of Assam is not as bright as the literacy rates. The rapid expansion of higher education in the last few years has contributed to the problem of educated unemployment in the state. As compared to the rapidly rising population of educated youths, the potential of the agro-based Assam's economy to provide employment is not sufficient. In the report of ILO, (2007), the increase in the number of youths in secondary and tertiary education is a positive development; however, labour markets in many countries are presently unable to accommodate the expanding pool of the skilled young graduates. The youth and the educated group migrate from rural to urban areas and more specifically to cities in search of a stable and better-paid job (Marchang, 2019).

Nature of unemployment varies across rural and urban areas. Educated unemployment is largely urban phenomenon. Marchang (2019) added that in India, there is widespread unemployment among all classes. There is unemployment among the educated class, uneducated masses, industrial workers, agriculturists and others. Although Deka (2021) has revealed that one of prime factor behind educated unemployment in Assam is “defective education system” and industrial sickness. He also added that issue of unemployment among the educated youths is even more dangerous as it leads to the wastage of human resource which ultimately reduces the value of education in the society. Therefore, it is high time to capitalize the abounded human resource and to diversify this resource towards Young Entrepreneurship like USA (Singh and Bagchi 2013).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process and Youth Entrepreneurs has been defined in various ways by various authors. According to Chigunta (2002), it is the practical application of enterprising qualities such as initiative, motivation, creativity and risk taking into the work environment (either in self employment or employment in small start-up firms), using the appropriate skills necessary for success in that environment and culture.

This results in the revitalization of the local community. It has also been observed that new small firms tend to raise the degree of competition in the product market, thereby bringing gains to consumers. To produce more number of young entrepreneurs, universities has to play a number of roles.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chigunta (2002) outlined that entrepreneurs are risk takers, implementers and innovators, who can bring the change in socio economic status of the society via creation, exploitation and exploration of emerging opportunities in the market. Entrepreneurs create new technologies, products and services to meet society's needs. Youth run enterprises also provide valuable goods and services to society, especially the local community

Paltasingh (2005) explained how better policy can be implemented to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit among the students. The author has used descriptive analysis.

Basu (2014) conducted a study on 10 reputed business schools across India and has considered sample and Qualitative case-based methodology for the study. According to him a development and promotion of effective and indigenous entrepreneurship education system needs to be implemented in India for economic growth.

Gautam and Singh (2015) revealed that for the new role of entrepreneurial teacher, the teacher should take regular training on skill development. The study is descriptive in nature; it is conducted in India and based on secondary data.

Halvadia (2017) identified seven motivational factors of Financial and Monetary Reforms research: greater business achievement, goal setting, problem solving, economic condition, social approval and support, independence and risk taking are the important factors that motivate the students to become an entrepreneur. The study was based on both Exploratory and descriptive research method. Statistical tool like factor analysis has been applied and calculated with the help of SPSS.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to examine the challenges encountered by the Universities of Assam in providing entrepreneurship education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design has been applied and both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in this study. Questionnaires, consisting of both open and close ended questions, have been used to collect data from students of select universities of Assam to get information on the current entrepreneurship education. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Primary data have been collected through questionnaire and personal interview. The secondary data have been obtained through the use of literature search involving review of related books, reports, text books, journal articles, government gazettes, official publications, published and unpublished research, newspapers, and electronic literatures.

The present study has used descriptive statistics like simple tabulation, simple percentage to analyse data. Amongst the 24 universities, keeping in mind the objectives of the present study, three universities viz. Assam University, Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University have been considered because, these three universities are collegiate universities. Snow ball and purposive methods are applied in selection of student respondents.

Challenges of Educational Institutions like Universities to run entrepreneurship education in Assam

The emergence of economically empower become necessary for India after liberalization. On the other hand, in India where job is scare for few graduates it has become necessary to convert human resource into human capital with proper entrepreneurial talent emerges for entrepreneurship education. It is same in case of developing states of the country like Assam.

Since, the government has limited capacity to absorb all the educated youths; India needs to produce more entrepreneurs so that the large chunk of human resources is utilized in productive way. It can also not be denied that the social and cultural environment also play an important role in shaping the entrepreneurial culture in our society. It can be observed that in recent years, numbers of student enrollment in colleges and universities has increased with substantial number; however there is limited number of employment opportunities. It has become a challenge for universities and colleges for better performance. As per UGC 2006, all the colleges and universities revised the syllabus and Entrepreneurship has been included the undergraduate and post graduate courses. The studies reveal that after getting entrepreneurship education, most of the students prefer a secure job. And those who want to become an entrepreneurs are those whose parents are involved in business activities. Many reasons are there for poor entrepreneurial culture; hence, there is urgent need to find those reasons.

Entrepreneurship Education can be provided by all the higher educational institutions in various ways. It may be a part of syllabus or a separate course like certificate or diploma course. In many research studies, it is revealed that the content and management of the syllabus are not sufficient enough to create skills and knowledge required for entrepreneurial activities in India. It means that the purpose for which entrepreneurship is implemented in the course content, have not been attained. However, it needs a different approach; the students would be motivated to become an entrepreneur after pursuing the entrepreneurship education and students should have the capacity to develop his/her own enterprises. Gibb (2007) mentioned in his study that entrepreneurship education needs to get serious attention so that it could be a fundamental part of academic programme. In this process, the universities will have a number of challenges. It is the time to give special attention to overcome those challenges and needs to give prime attention towards entrepreneurship education in a way to capitalize the chunk unutilized resource with skilled personnel. Some of those challenges are discussed below:

1. **Lack of qualified Faculty members:** Lack of qualified Faculty members is a big challenge of imparting entrepreneurship education. Karimi, (2010) revealed that most of the sanctioned posts especially in colleges either remain vacant or managed by the unqualified teachers. Hence, stress should be given on recruitment, proper planning and careful implementation in higher educational institutions (Chudhuri 2019). Poor remuneration and incentives they receive reduce the willingness among the teachers in better performance. A trained teacher with entrepreneurship education is highly required in higher educational institutions in Assam. According to Xianming (2013), in management studies most of the teachers teach entrepreneurship are from different field. So the teacher's willingness towards teaching entrepreneurship is less effective. To foster the innovative ideas among the students it is necessary to give them open field where the students can practice and think about new business ideas.
2. **Lack of motivation among the students:** There are number of motivating factors- environment, cultural, social, economic, etc., which can influence a student to become an entrepreneur. All the factors may be clubbed into push and pull factors. In the present study, it is found that 86.37% of the respondents belonging to teachers agree that students are less motivated towards entrepreneurship education and 13.63% teachers do not think that due to lack of motivation towards entrepreneurship education for which their college/university are facing challenges.
3. **Lack of Inadequate Content in the syllabus of entrepreneurship:** A number of studies reveal that academic curriculum associated with Entrepreneurship Education is ineffective and not sufficient enough to build the skill and personality required for Entrepreneurship. According to Pradhan (2013), entrepreneurship as a part of academic study was implemented by many educational institutions but the contents of the syllabus is not enough. Illayaraja (2016) has identified various methods used in imparting entrepreneurship education in India. Whereas, Vinay (2020) have found in their study that the course contents on Entrepreneurship in Indian universities and institutes are not enough to develop the entrepreneurial skill among its" students. There is need to develop the contents so that students get the proper knowledge of entrepreneurship and opt it as their career.
4. **Lack of separate funding for entrepreneurship education:** Separate Funding for entrepreneurship education is another important factor for which an effective course curriculum is hard to implement. In other professional subject where practical classes or field visit are there, universities and colleges are getting special funds for those activities. But no such funding facility for establishing entrepreneurship center or inadequate fund facility is the reason for full implementation and entrenchment of practical

teaching of entrepreneurship education in many universities. Practical knowledge or on job training is utmost necessary to build entrepreneurship skill and fostering those knowledge-based education, a separate and regular facility can be implemented. Entrepreneurship and venture creation is also involving with required cost. Anand and Singh (2013) have mentioned in their study how it is difficult for anyone to accumulate finance for start-ups business in India compare with the other developed countries.

5. **Lack of Entrepreneurship Cell:** An entrepreneurship cell is utmost necessary to functioning and regulating of Entrepreneurship Education smoothly. The basic aim of entrepreneurship cell is to promote students and motivate them towards entrepreneurship. It is revealed that most of entrepreneurship cell in universities of Assam is available for those MBA students; a number of students take admission to UG courses in Commerce in colleges of Assam every year for pursuing degree in general studies; hence, entrepreneurship cell is utmost important for B.Com and as well as for M.Com students.
6. **Lack of Technical Knowledge and Field Visits:** Introduction of technical knowledge and inclusion of field visit is another way to motivate the students towards entrepreneurship. It is found that in other professional education like IT or engineering students often go for field visit in their academic career. But, it is found that very less in general studies of universities or there is no such opportunity for college students in Assam. Learning through actual practice and experience is also an effective method to develop human resource skills. There is hardly interaction between students and successful entrepreneurs in the colleges. Nwaoba (2014) have found that in many professional studies students often go for industrial visit which is very informative and attractive to motivate the students. Frequent industrial visit always help to maintain a good relationship between educational institutions and industry which also bring opportunity for students.
7. **Lack of Seminars and Youth Conferences:** It is another challenge associated with entrepreneurship education. Seminar and conference is an open field where anyone can share his or her views or ideas and gather knowledge on current issues related to their fields. These seminars and conference are utmost needed for job creation with entrepreneurship skills. A seminar and conference is always organized by a resource based experts, who can easily motivate student's self-esteem towards entrepreneurship. Nwaoba (2014) also mentioned that seminars and conference is very effective method for building up the entrepreneurship skills. Seminars and conference can easily motivate large number of youth by creating a positive environment through counseling. In his study he mentioned that a trained counselor can make a seminar and conference successful to develop the students\ skills and knowledge towards entrepreneurship.
8. **Lack of conducting Workshops:** Workshop is one of the important aspects especially for the college students. Motivation among the students to choose entrepreneurship as a career option is less in Assam. One of the reasons is about the risk involved in business or prior experience on business. Workshop is such an opportunity for the students where they can get practical knowledge and develop their ideas on business by working with existing entrepreneurs. Universities or colleges needs to think seriously to organize such programmes with the help of local entrepreneur and small industries. Jianping and Chao (2010) has identified the workshop is utmost important to imbibe entrepreneurial qualities and abilities.
9. **Lack of Infrastructural Facilities:** Vinay (2021) explores that Indian education is a third tier system which consists of private self-funded and state funded institutions. In Assam majority of the students are belonging to lower middle class family or poor family. It is hard to avail a personnel laptop or computer for them. Most of the colleges are situated in rural area. It has become difficult for the students to avail better infrastructural facilities in those institutions located in rural areas. It is observed that the infrastructure like Desk, Bench, Room Size, Books or internet facilities are much less than the norm after considering number of students admitted in the college. To impart entrepreneurship education, there is need to develop infrastructure like incubation centers, etc.
10. **Lack of Training or FDP among the teachers who teach entrepreneurship:** There are national institutions like Entrepreneurship Development Institutions (EDI) which organises FDP on entrepreneurship regularly. The aim of NEP-2020 is to provide cognitive education which can develop creative and innovative mind is utmost important for entrepreneurial talent. To nurture those skills, an experts or specialized teacher trained with FDP is key. It is hardly found specialized teacher in the field of

entrepreneurship who are trained or participated in FDP in entrepreneurship in Assam’s higher educational institutions. The performances of the teachers are not satisfactory or desired standard. Through FDP, the all round development among the teachers can be achieved which is required for proper regulation of entrepreneurship education.

11. **Lack of Free- Ship or Scholarships:** Universities or colleges always provide free-ship or scholarship for eligible and deserving students for their study. But it is revealed that number of quality students apply for those scholarships is more than the scholarship available for. It is very difficult for quality students belonging from poor family to get higher education like M Phil or PhD as they involve high cost. It is utmost necessary that universities with the help of government facilitate more scholarships for students for their higher education in the area of entrepreneurship so that more students get motivated and encourage towards entrepreneurship.
12. **Lack of time and course content within Entrepreneurship Syllabus:** To qualify with a diploma or a particular degree on a subject minimum two to three years is required. Entrepreneurship is a skill based professional experience required minimum two to three years. Whereas, Entrepreneurship in academic syllabus included in general study only for a semester or 6 months and students learn and get knowledge for 100 marks exam. In some colleges it is prepared by the students only for 50 marks which is very minimal for building up entrepreneurial skills.
13. **Lack of proper policy for promotion of Entrepreneurship Education:** Policies are essential part for keeping operations from devolving into complete chaos. When everyone follows policies and procedures any programmers can run smoothly and successfully. When a strong policy is implemented, time and resources can be used more efficiently helping it to reach its goals and achieve growth. Similarly, a strong policy towards entrepreneurship education can be the only solution to create talent with creative individuals and stimulate domestic product and serve in the global market.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

With regard to the opinion of teacher respondents on challenges of Entrepreneurship Education, it is revealed that majority of the teacher respondents (72.27%), think that this is a challenging factor. With regard to Lack of motivation among teachers, majority of the student respondents (83.64 %), think that this is a challenging factor. With regard to Lack of separate funds, majority of the teacher respondents (72.73%), think that this is a challenging factor. According to 95.45% of the teacher respondents, Lack of Entrepreneurship Cell and Lack of Training or FDP of teachers are challenging factors. About 82% of the teachers respondents, Lack of Technical Knowledge and Field Visits, Lack of proper policy for promotion of Entrepreneurship Education, Lack of Free- Ship or Scholarships are the challenging factors.

Table 1 Opinion of student respondents on challenges of Entrepreneurship Education

Sl. No.	Challenging Factors		Think that this is a challenging factor	Do not think this is a challenging Factor	Total No. of Respondents
1.	Lack of specialised faculty members	N	17	5	22
		%	77.27	22.73	100
2.	Lack of motivation among students	N	18	4	22
		%	83.64	13.64	100
3.	Lack of separate funds	N	16	6	22
		%	72.73		
4.	Lack of awareness on Entrepreneurship	N	18	4	22
		%	83.64	13.64	100
5	Lack of Entrepreneurship Cell	N	21	1	22
		%	95.45	4.55	100
6	Lack of Technical Knowledge and Field Visits	N	18	2	22
		%	81.82	18.18	100
7	Lack of Seminars and Youth Conferences	N	17	5	22
		%	77.7	27.27	100
8	Lack of conducting Workshops	N	6	16	22

		%	27.27	72.73	100
9	Lack of Research work on entrepreneurship	N	7	15	22
		%	31.82	68.18	100
10	Lack of Infrastructural Facilities	N	5	17	22
		%	27.27	72.73	100
11	Lack of Training or FDP	N	21	1	22
		%	95.45	4.55	100
12	Lack of Free-Ship or Scholarships	N	18	4	22
		%	81.82	18.18	100
13	Lack of time and course content within Entrepreneurship Syllabus	N	17	5	22
		%	77.7	27.27	100
14	Lack of proper policy for promotion of Entrepreneurship Education	N	18	4	22
		%	81.82	18.18	100

Source: Field Survey.

5. CONCLUSION

This study helps in understanding the impact of entrepreneurship education on the attitude of the students in Assam. The result shows that students after pursuing entrepreneurship education, their attitude towards entrepreneurship education is positive but there are certain factors like family members, friends, teachers and society at large are less supportive towards choosing entrepreneurship as a career option. Furthermore, it can also be seen that though less number of parents are supportive towards choosing entrepreneurship as a career option but there are a few students whose parents are positively oriented towards choosing entrepreneurship as a career option. This indicates that within the changing environment mind and attitude of parents are also becoming positive towards entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education can help in developing human mind by creating knowledge and skills required to become an entrepreneur. In Assam, colleges and universities are facing many challenges in running entrepreneurship education. Challenges may be internal or external but to deal with and find the solution of those challenges is utmost necessary.

A quality education and research based activities and approaches will help to overcome those challenges and positive mind towards entrepreneurship can reduce the problem like unemployment.

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