Introducing Entrepreneurship in Curriculum

K. Parthasarathy
Center for Adult, Continuing Education and Extension
Bharathidasan University
Tiruchirappalli-620 024
E-mail: drkpsbard@yahoo.com
Tel.: (0431) 2407028

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a creative process in which resources are organized and used in a venture that satisfies both personal needs or wants and the needs or wants of others. The introduction of entrepreneurship in universities, colleges and schools are much needed, timely and relevant in our country than ever before. In this context the course on entrepreneurship aims at instilling and stimulating human urge for excellence by realizing individual potential for generating and putting to use the inputs, relevant to social prosperity and thereby ensure decent means of living for every individual. In India, where over 300 million people are still living below the poverty line, it is simply impossible for any government to provide means of livelihood to everyone. Such situations surely demand for a continuous effort from the society, where the people are encouraged to come up with their entrepreneurial initiatives.

Bharathidasan University in this effort has established the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Caree
Development (IECD) with a view to fill the serious gap in our educational system for promoting entrepreneurship among students, non-students, youth, general public and other needed persons. This paper deals with the need for promoting entrepreneurship in educational curriculum and designing and implementing strategies of number of entrepreneurship promotion oriented short –term and long-term courses at Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli,TamilNadu.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

This paper has been presented at the Sixth Biennial Conference on Advances and Trends in Entrepreneurship Research organized by EDI, Ahmedabad during February, 2005.
Introducing Entrepreneurship in Curriculum

“The education system should highlight the importance of entrepreneurship and prepare students right from college education to get oriented towards setting up of enterprises. Diversity of skills and perseverance in work makes an entrepreneur. In addition, college syllabi even for arts, science and commerce courses should include topics and practical’s where such entrepreneurship is possible”.

----His Excellency Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
President of India

Introduction

The youth of India are a vital and vibrant segment of the country. The youth population of the country is expected to increase to 356 million very soon. They are basic investments for the future and will shape the society of India. Unemployment and channalisation of youth have become serious concerns of society. It is time that their preferences for vocations took priority. These, in turn, need to be built into the curriculum. The future of any developing country depends on the lines on which the youth are moulded. The importance of youth in India is self-evident. The Indian youth population is not only large in number but is also vigorous and active, open and responsive to new ideas and changes. About 30 percent of the population in India is in the age group of 15-35 years. For this reason, the youth in India represent an extraordinarily important group. India is still predominantly agricultural; more than 70 per cent of the youth population in the age group of 15-35 years lives in rural areas and is mostly engaged in agriculture. The problem of unemployment cannot be resolved unless the educated rural youth are trained and involved in entrepreneurship-oriented vocations. In this context, the Government of India lays special emphasis on vocational education. Earlier, the previous governments wanted at least 10 per cent of higher secondary school students to be enrolled for vocational courses. But even that target has not been achieved.

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship as a complex set of abilities that are normally connected with the business sector and not so much with educational organizations. Forced by the ongoing changes in all areas of societies, schools are in a situation to change themselves into the direction of organizations that can answer not only on the long-term needs of young people, but also getting flexible to cope with actual needs of education and training of individuals, institutions and companies.
Entrepreneurship is a practice: it requires that one act; it is not an abstract or purely theoretical process. Acting entrepreneurially, of course, may involve a wide range of activities and contexts: It may involve operating major corporations and public agencies with greater flexibility, innovation and responsiveness; it may involve the generation and implementation of economic development plans to encourage the growth of new businesses within specific geographical areas; it may involve the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes to support the development of individual career paths. And, in perhaps the most commonly used sense; it may involve the process of recognizing opportunities and starting and operating a growth oriented business venture. But entrepreneurship is also a process, an orientation, and a way of working and relating to the world. Acting and thinking entrepreneurially, in whatever context requires the development of concepts, including the areas of traditional management education, business creation processes, opportunity creation and recognition; skills and behaviors such as presentation skills, interpersonal skills, team building and team working skills, and the ability to construct a business plan; mentalities, including creative thinking, developing a vision, embracing change, using opportunistic thinking and living proactively.

Entrepreneurship brings together the ability to identify promising opportunities for career or business development with the skills, knowledge and motivation to realize these opportunities. It is a set of enabling skills and knowledge partnered with a determined and confident mindset. Entrepreneurship is the future. The skills and competencies associated with entrepreneurship are essential in the competitive business world. In addition to the ability to bring together the necessary skills to recognize and realize an opportunity, entrepreneurs must have the enthusiasm, the ambition, and the confidence to carry such a project forward. Learning about the personal experience of the entrepreneurs of business who have seized opportunities and created significant enterprises in industry, science or medicine, is an effective way to develop entrepreneurial ambition and confidence.

NEED FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CURRICULUM

Most schools in many countries are public organizations, founded and run by the state and its institutions, working on the basis of a more or less fixed curriculum, being responsible for pupils of a defined area or of defined professions with teachers as civil servants. Development of school curriculum is a dynamic process responsive to the society and reflecting the needs and aspiration of its learners. Fast changing society deserves changes in educational curriculum particularly to establish relevance to emerging socio-economic environment; to ensure equity of opportunity and participation and finally promoting concern for excellence. In this context the course on entrepreneurship aims at instilling and stimulating human urge for excellence by realizing individual potential for generating and putting to use the inputs, relevant to social prosperity and thereby ensure decent means of living for every individual.
An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and manages a business undertaking and assumes a risk for the sake of profit. Operating a business takes a certain skills. Few people have all the skills needed to run a business, but they can compensate for their weaknesses by hiring staff or consultants and by becoming more knowledgeable through education or training.

Teaching entrepreneurship to students must be introduced in order to motivate that entrepreneurship is also a career opportunity available to the students. Teaching entrepreneurship to students demands additional responsibilities on the part of the teachers. Entrepreneurship is more 'person-oriented' and 'behaviour-oriented'. It aims at identifying and developing potential students lead and prepare them to take up entrepreneurial careers. Unlike other courses/subjects, it is not only 'information' or' knowledge' based but it is a combination of skills, attitudes, competencies and knowledge. Therefore, it focuses more on 'learning' and 'development' rather than only teaching. Entrepreneurship, if taught as a subject like any other subject, would again become 'academic' for which student's attitude will be the same, i.e., to get marks and pass examination. Hence, the curriculum planning of entrepreneurship should be carefully thought and developed involving the leading entrepreneurship development institutions / organizations.

The course may be designed from the following inputs.
- Creativity and innovation
- Entrepreneurial values and awareness
- Road blocks or hurdles to entrepreneurship development in India
- Entrepreneurial competencies
- Entrepreneurial motivation
- Entrepreneurial opportunities and its selection
- Enterprise management, and
- Schemes and facilities available to new entrepreneurs.

The future of any developing country depends on the lines on which the youth are moulded. The importance of youth in India is self-evident. The Indian youth population is not only large in number but is also vigorous and active, open and responsive to new ideas and changes. Unemployment amongst educated rural youth has been one of the burning problems faced by the country in recent years. Wastage of manpower causes poverty, backwardness and ultimately results in migration to urban areas. Today’s educated youth is interested in white and blue-collar jobs after completing or leaving school and college education. The problem of unemployment is omnipresent in India for the youth. This is more serious among rural youth, be they tribal or non-tribal. The problem of unemployment cannot be resolved unless the educated rural youth are trained and involved in entrepreneurship—oriented vocations. In this context, the government of India lays special emphasis on vocational education. Earlier, the previous government wanted at least 10 percent of higher secondary school students to be enrolled for
vocational courses. But even that target has not been achieved. It is high time we took a look at the preferential choice of educated tribal and non-tribal rural youth regarding entrepreneurship-oriented vocations, so that these could be incorporated in the school curriculum, thereby helping these youth in getting employment opportunities after completing their education. The youth of India are a vital and vibrant segment of the country. The youth population of the country is expected to increase to 356 million very soon. They are basic investments for the future and will shape the society of India. Unemployment and channelization of youth have become serious concerns of society. It is time that their preferences for vocations took priority. These, in turn, need to be built into the curriculum.

Although entrepreneurship has always been an option in our career transition programmes, preparation for entrepreneurial endeavors is now offered as a stand-alone programme, which is a reflection of the fact that half of the population is expected to become self-employed by the end of the century. The new competitive landscape has led to the emergence of entrepreneurship in a big way, with the myth that entrepreneurs are only born, gradually fading away. Entrepreneurs with the right competencies and high need for achievement are the forces that initiate economic development of a country. They are also a means of gainful employment for the masses. Although entrepreneurial talents exist in all societies, its emergence depends upon right training interventions and counseling. Moreover, entrepreneurship being a viable career alternative, training in this area is acquiring paramount importance across the globe. As a result of the impact of a structured programme on entrepreneurship development, the students imbibe entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, attitude and receptivity to business opportunities. They then emerge as successful entrepreneurs with the right mindset, orientation and aptitude. The need of the day is to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship into the psyche of the present generation through teaching, training and research.

EMERGING MODEL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AT BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

Conceptualization

The Bharathidasan University during the short span of its existence since 1982 has emerged as one of the most reputed Centres of higher education in the country. The university has 30 departments/centres/schools of studies and research in the disciplines ranging from fundamental sciences, arts and languages to engineering and technology, remote sensing, geo-sciences, biotechnology, non-linear dynamics, management, educational technology, yoga and media training. The Bharathidasan University has established the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (IECD) with a view to fill the serious gap in our educational system, viz. lack of opportunities for promoting entrepreneurship among the students. Most of our conventional programmes at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the university system turn out
graduates and postgraduates who are neither inclined nor equipped to establish and run enterprise of their own involving managerial and organizational skills. The IECD has a unique concept and organization in more than one sense. The course would lead to short-term certificate, diploma, post-diploma, PG diploma, PG diploma of varied duration; of course, subject to fulfillment of the requisite credit hours of skill learning. So also, the faculty /trainers would be drawn from both the academics and the professionals in the relevant field. The goal of IECD is to make it a vibrant nursery –bed for shaping nurturing successful entrepreneurs both in form and content. Entrepreneurs turned out of IECD would go with appropriate entrepreneurial attitudes and values (achievement motivation), besides the skills, attitudes and expertise in their hands. Another major innovation of the programme structure of the IECD in Bharathidasan University is that the university undertakes to facilitate the vertical mobility of the IECD trainees to catch up with the formal higher education, by providing for appropriate lateral entry provisions. Similarly the regular graduates and postgraduates in the university and its affiliated colleges would be facilitated to undergo any of these certificate/ diploma programmes of IECD concurrently, along with their regular programmes of study.

Mission

The mission of IECD is that the educated should become skilled and be self-employed rather than serving under someone; be job creators, rather than jobseekers; be innovators rather than meek and bid imitators; and be the problem solvers rather than answer-givers in classrooms and examinations halls.

Specific Operational Objectives

- To organize entrepreneurship and career development programmes/courses and entrepreneurship sensitization camps for the various target groups.

- To develop and deliver a course on “entrepreneurship development” to all the UG students of the university under part-IV extension.

- To conduct training programmes in the field of entrepreneurship and career development for trainers drawn from schools, colleges, polytechniques and other institutions like SHGs, PRIs, NYKs, etc., so that they can, in turn, inculcate entrepreneurship among others in the schools /colleges.

- To develop skills in successfully initiating, expanding, diversifying and managing a business enterprise with focus on understanding real life business situations and business practices.
• To develop a competent entrepreneur of tomorrow through an accelerated course marked by intensive personal counseling, nurturing achievement motivation, inculcating self-confidence. Goal-setting, planning, information seeking, problem solving and planned risk taking; bringing out the latent entrepreneurial potential in order to be successful innovators.

• To equip college students with requisite skills, knowledge and competencies for effective initiation of entrepreneurship development camps in their campuses.

• To train in the art and nuances of identifying and analyzing the constraints and barriers to entrepreneurship development and devise appropriate strategies.

• To design, initiate and promote innovative programmes in entrepreneurship, micro credit women empowerment and social development with special emphasis on need based conditions.

• To create a pool of data-base on rich successful strategies and experiences of socio-economic development and share it for its effective replication and adaptability at different level.

• To train skilled personnel at self-employed technician level in the fields of industrial, medical and domestic electronics and process instrumentation by organizing short term and long term courses according to the needs of the clientele.

• To provide career guidance and counseling services to the current students as well as the passed out students.

• To help in consultation with a self-employment specialists to prepare a credible self-employment plan for those who are interested in self-employment.

• To organize seminars/conferences/training workshops etc., related to entrepreneurship and career development at different levels.

• To create networking with relevant bodies/ agencies at different levels for the promotion of entrepreneurship and career development.

• To provide consultancy services to public and private sectors and other institutions in the field of entrepreneurship development.

**Target Groups**

IECD will concentrate, among others, on the socio-economically backward and educationally disadvantaged groups of city/ rural / tribal population such as men,
women, youth, employed and unemployed youth; priority will be given to SC/ST/MBC/BC/Women/Girls hailing from rural and tribal areas and also the physically handicapped. Skill oriented training programmes for illiterates /neo-literates /school drop-outs, 8th passed or failed and all other interested persons.

Programmes/ Courses
IECD provides skill oriented training programmes for illiterates/ neo-literates/ school drop-outs, 8th passed or failed and all other interested persons in various disciplines including arts, science, commerce, culture etc. It offers short-term training programmes ranging from the duration of one week to 3-4 weeks to 2-3 months, Certificate Programmes for +2 and above qualified learners for the duration of 6 months, Diploma Programmes for +2 and above qualified learners for the duration of 12 months and PG Diploma Programmes for UG and above degree qualified learners for the duration of 12 months. The various skill oriented courses introduced by IECD in multidisciplinary subjects are Entrepreneurship Development, Herbal Medicine, Performing Folk Arts, Literary Arts and Biotechnology, Electrician Technician, UPS and Inverter Manufacture, Computer Aided Textile Designing, Bakery Products, Fast Foods, Data Entry Operators, Beauty Culture and Health Care, Personality Development, Nursing Assistant, Herbal Farming, Fire Safety Engineering, GIS Management, Marketing Management, Multimedia, Rain Water Harvesting, Interior Decoration, Visual Communication, Journalism and Mass Communication, Public Relations , Industrial Bio-technology etc.,

Conclusion
Entrepreneurship is fast emerging as a premier field of study in school, colleges and universities the world over. Although entrepreneurs have existed and enriched life on the planet right through the ages, it is only recently that research in the field has kindled interest for a systematic study of the entrepreneurial processes and qualities. Forces of globalization and knowledge engineering have engendered a radical transformation in occupational stereotypes. The impact of this phenomenon has been most strongly felt in education compelling a close scrutiny of epistemological issues against the changing dynamics of wealth formation. The course in Entrepreneurship and the growing popularity of the course augurs well for our nation. The students who have opted for this subject will acquire motivation, skills and knowledge to become successful entrepreneurs in the future. Another important objective is to bring about a change in the mindset of students: that it is always not necessary to seek employment after completing their studies; they can themselves create employment. Such a change will produce a vibrant and motivated youth population who will strive to achieve their potential and who will pursue the path of excellence. Seeing all these above, this is clear a course in entrepreneurship is must for the students, youths and all categories of people and it should be incorporated in the curriculum of different stages at different levels.
REFERENCES


Parthasarathy, K., Anadamoorthy, V. and Harikumar, V., (Ed), (2003), “Literacy and Development” (Vol-I), State Resource Centre for Non-Formal, Adult and Continuing Education (SRC), Chennai and Centre for Adult, Continuing Education and Extension, Bharathidasan university, Tiruchirappalli


Ramachandran, K., Pandey, I M., Rajesh Nair, Dinesh Awasthi, Kaushal Mehta, Vishnu Varshney and Rakesh Rewari (2004)- Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital-www.isb.edu
