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Topic of Research: Role of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes in Promoting Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of National Small Industries Corporation

Findings

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth, employment generation and socio-economic development, particularly through the expansion of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In developing economies like India, entrepreneurship development has gained strategic importance as a means of fostering innovation, self-employment and inclusive growth. Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) play a pivotal role in nurturing entrepreneurial intent, enhancing skills and facilitating the transition from wage employment to enterprise creation. Despite significant government investment and institutional support, empirical evidence evaluating the effectiveness of specific entrepreneurship training initiatives remains limited. This study addresses this gap by examining the impact and effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme conducted by the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), Okhla, New Delhi.

The National Small Industries Corporation, established in 1955, is a premier Government of India enterprise mandated to support MSMEs through integrated services in marketing, technology, finance and skill development. Through its NSIC Technical Services Centres (NTSCs), NSIC offers entrepreneurship training, technical skill development and incubation support. At NTSC Okhla, NSIC operates both Entrepreneurship Orientation Programmes (EOPs) and Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs), targeting students, unemployed youth and aspiring entrepreneurs. These programmes combine theoretical instruction with hands-on training across multiple technologies, including food processing, garment manufacturing, packaging, beauty care and small-scale manufacturing projects.

This study evaluates the NSIC EDP conducted between 2018 and 2023, focusing on trainee outcomes and program effectiveness using the Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model. The research adopts a descriptive and explanatory design, employing a cross-sectional survey strategy. Primary data were collected from trainees who participated in the EDP during the study period, along with qualitative inputs from mentors involved in programme delivery. Out of a total population of 1,581 trainees, 523 valid responses were obtained and analysed, exceeding the minimum sample size requirement determined using G*Power software. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 mentors to enrich the quantitative findings.

The Kirkpatrick Model, comprising four levels: reaction, learning, behaviour and results, served as the theoretical framework. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4 was employed to test the hypothesised relationships among the constructs. Measurement

model assessment confirmed strong reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The structural model results reveal that all proposed hypotheses are statistically significant. Trainees' positive reactions to the programme significantly enhanced learning outcomes; learning, in turn, led to meaningful behavioural changes; and behavioural changes strongly influenced tangible results such as business start-ups, employment and income generation. The model demonstrated satisfactory explanatory power and predictive relevance, confirming the suitability of the Kirkpatrick framework for evaluating entrepreneurship training programmes.

Descriptive analysis highlights important demographic and program-related insights. The majority of trainees were young (below 35 years), male and urban-based, with moderate to high educational qualifications. A significant proportion of participants reported prior exposure to business activities, while others entered the programme seeking better income prospects, autonomy and social status. Post-training outcomes indicate that 23% of respondents started their own enterprises, with nearly 80% of these ventures remaining operational, reflecting encouraging sustainability. Another 23% secured employment, demonstrating the programme's broader employability impact.

However, the study also identifies critical challenges. Enrollment trends show a steady decline in trainee numbers over the six-year period, with a sharp drop during the COVID-19 pandemic and only partial recovery thereafter. Mentor feedback highlights issues such as heterogeneous trainee backgrounds, limited training duration, outdated infrastructure, inadequate digital facilities and low attendance in some batches. Trainees also expressed the need for more practical exposure, simplified learning materials, industry visits and extended post-training support.

In conclusion, the study finds that NSIC's Entrepreneurship Development Programme is effective in building entrepreneurial competencies and generating positive economic outcomes. The application of the Kirkpatrick Model confirms a strong link between training experience, learning, behavioural change and results. Nevertheless, to enhance relevance and impact, the programme requires continuous curriculum updates, improved infrastructure, stronger industry linkages, targeted support for different age groups and robust post-training mentoring mechanisms. The study contributes to the entrepreneurship development literature by providing institution-specific evidence and offers actionable recommendations for policymakers and training institutions. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, include multiple NSIC centres and assess long-term entrepreneurial performance to further strengthen understanding of entrepreneurship training effectiveness in India