



Innovative Minds: Merging Entrepreneurship with Career Education

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How to Cite: Dr. Vishal Goel. Innovative Minds: Merging Entrepreneurship with Career Education. International Journal of South Asian and Global South Studies, 01(01), 01

Received Date: 08/07/2026 | Revised Date: 17/08/2026 | Accepted Date: 07/09/2026 | Published Date: 30/09/2026

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the critical significance of entrepreneurship education in career-oriented programmes as a catalyst for instilling a spirit of innovation in students. The incorporation of entrepreneurship education into career curricula has become an absolute necessity in light of the rapid evolution of industries and the growing demand for new solutions. This abstract delves into the significance of entrepreneurship education in equipping students with the necessary skills, mindset, and knowledge to thrive in today's dynamic workforce. By examining the benefits, challenges, and best practices of integrating entrepreneurship education into vocational programs, this paper aims to provide insights and recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders seeking to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit and drive innovation within vocational education. This conceptual paper highlights the transformative potential of entrepreneurship education in training students to take initiative, think critically, and have a positive impact in a range of professional contexts through secondary data and theoretical frameworks.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Vocational programs, Innovation, Skills development

Introduction

The fast-paced corporate environment of today demands constant innovation to stay competitive. This rapid pace of innovation is facilitated by advancements in technology, leading to shorter product lifecycles and increased product development. In such a landscape, organizations must adapt quickly to changing market demands and technological advancements to thrive. Internationally, governments acknowledge the significance of creativity and invention for long-

lasting socioeconomic progress, and allocate resources to establish educational settings that cultivate these skill. It is well-known that an entrepreneurial spirit is essential to a thriving economy. As the economy evolves and global marketplaces become more interconnected, entrepreneurial spirit becomes increasingly vital in fostering innovation, increasing employment opportunities, and enhancing overall productivity. There has been a great deal of enthusiasm for the concept of entrepreneurial education in schools during the last several decades. An era of economic



uncertainty and global difficulties highlights the need of entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurship education fosters a mindset for spotting and grasping opportunities and transforms society. Entrepreneurship education allows people across industries to innovate, adapt, and generate value, driving economic growth and addressing global social issues. In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the underlying policy driving this integration, which has emerged as a major reform aimed at transforming the education system from a traditional, theory-heavy approach to a holistic and skill-oriented one (Bharvad, G., & Bharvad, B. 2024; Shivakumar, B. 2026; Masaye, M. R. 2025). NEP 2020 aims to integrate entrepreneurship skills and vocational education from the school level itself, acknowledging the long-standing gap between academic knowledge and employability (Mishra, P. 2025; Mundhe, D. E. 2025). NEP suggests integrating vocational training beginning in grade 6, with the goal of exposing students to a variety of skill-based activities and real-world job contexts through internships and hands-on experiences (Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. 2024; Bhoi, C., Behera, B., & Mohanty, S. S. 2025; Maurya, R. 2026).

Therefore, to foster the development of entrepreneurial abilities, the world's top universities and colleges have integrated courses in both education and entrepreneurship into their curricula. Individuals and organizations alike can reap several rewards from embracing an entrepreneurial mindset. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a very important notion. Learners of entrepreneurship can explore and develop key entrepreneurial values, which are thought to be psychological in nature and include traits like intuition, extroversion, taking risks, flexibility, and a feeling of control. The concept of entrepreneurship is being widely used in educational institutions as a means to teach students how to create and manage their own successful firms. Researchers have shown

that teaching students to think creatively and critically is an important way to help them become better problem solvers and risk-takers. To professionally engage in entrepreneurial practices, learning about entrepreneurship is crucial.

Thus, vocational education is absolutely essential for arming people with the required competencies to satisfy the needs of the modern labour market. Vocational programs impart practical skills and knowledge within certain disciplines, enabling individuals to make a meaningful effect on their companies and society. Vocational education fosters employment and societal advancement by giving students the required skills and knowledge. Entrepreneurship education boosts students' prospects for pursuing entrepreneurial careers. Unfortunately, many Indian adolescents with entrepreneurial potential graduate from college without the necessary skills. However, while the benefits of entrepreneurship education in vocational programs are evident, there remains a need to explore and understand its implementation challenges, best practices, and potential impact comprehensively. This paper argues for the necessity of such integration, highlighting its potential benefits and the steps required for effective implementation.

The literature frequently sees entrepreneurship and vocational education as distinct fields, despite the fact that the advantages of entrepreneurship education are widely recognised. A critical gap exists in literature that specifically addresses the implementation challenges and policy-contextualized synthesis for the Indian vocational education system, which has long struggled with issues of perception and skill gaps. This conceptual paper fills this gap by presenting a comprehensive, policy-anchored framework that connects theoretical reasons for entrepreneurship education to the practical realities of India's vocational training landscape. It brings together



current knowledge within the context of India's National Education Policy and rising state-level initiatives to provide a cohesive path for Indian educators and policymakers looking to encourage innovation through vocational entrepreneurship. This is not just a synthesis; rather, it is a contextualised analysis that converts broad entrepreneurial concepts into practical tactics for the Indian labour market.

Entrepreneurship education and its importance

Entrepreneurship is portrayed as a catalyst for wealth creation, job generation, and overall economic growth. The phrase "entrepreneurship education" suggests that entrepreneurship is something that can be taught, and study on this issue has been quite popular. One area of study is whether entrepreneurship is something that can be taught. Entrepreneurship education helps people succeed in a fast-changing, competitive world. It boosts personal growth, employability, and economic development by encouraging entrepreneurial skills, recognizing talent, and encouraging creativity. Students are able to significantly improve their "opportunity recognition," "networking ability," and "social astuteness" by participating in educational programs that focus on entrepreneurship. Not only do these abilities help individuals succeed as entrepreneurs, but they also improve their capacity to find problems and come up with creative solutions.

Vocational Programs Context in India

There has been a long-standing perception in India that vocational programs are of low repute. Following independence, policymakers in India have increasingly resorted to VET, i.e., (vocational education and training) as a stopgap measure to address the issue of unemployment; consequently, VET remains an essential policy instrument to this day. Vocational education, on the other hand, plays a

significant part in providing students with the specific professional skills that are prerequisite for the job market. Although many Indian students have great ambition to start a business, the country's education system is not yet prepared to meet the average standards set by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). The reason behind this is that there isn't a strong ecosystem in place to teach entrepreneurship. The Indian government has responded to the dire situation of university employment placements by launching programs to increase exposure to entrepreneurship courses in Indian universities. India was placed second out of 49 economies worldwide on the National Entrepreneurship Context Index (NECI) in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2023/2024 report (Hill et al., 2024). India's outstanding performance is reinforced by high ratings on framework conditions such as 'social and cultural norms' in favour of entrepreneurship and 'entrepreneurship education at the school and post-school level'. It is one of just three GEM nations where every requirement of the Entrepreneurship Framework was deemed to be more than adequate. This enormous leap—going from 16th in 2021 to second in 2023. It illustrates the success of programs like the Atal Tinkering Labs and NEP 2020's focus on innovation and design attitudes. This shows that the goal of the policy is to foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem, which makes it strategically necessary to incorporate entrepreneurship education within occupational curriculum.

Several obstacles stand in the way of innovation and entrepreneurship in India's higher education system. The pervasiveness of conventional methods of memorization, which inhibit original thought and analysis, is a major barrier. A study conducted in China looked at the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurship education. The study involved 243 participants in entrepreneurship education programs in China, with a



majority aged between 21 to 30 years and 40.3% being female. Results indicate a substantial positive influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention. One drawback of schooling is that many graduates do not possess the necessary skills to secure employment. We are still using Education 1.0 because there is a disconnect between theoretical understanding and practical application. Going from version 1.0 to version 4.0 in education, particularly at the university level, can boost a country's economy and its profile abroad. The interdisciplinary nature of entrepreneurship in the classroom means that students in any field, not just business and economics, will benefit from developing an entrepreneurial attitude. There is a pressing need to shift towards more experiential and project-based learning methodologies. Indian vocational schools should use this concept as a guide to include entrepreneurial education in their curricula.

The 'Kaushal Bodh' program in Uttarakhand, which has made the state the first in India to adopt a continuous entrepreneurial learning pathway from Class VI to XII across more than 4,000 government schools is a tangible illustration of this integration in action. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 are in line with the curriculum. It emphasises activity-based courses on Human Services, Machines and Materials, and Life Forms. Kaushal Bodh is organised into nine modules: Life Forms, Machines and Materials, and Human Services. This journey begins in middle school with Kaushal Bodh and then continues to the Kaushalam program, which is already in over 2,200 schools for grades 9 to 12, where students establish and run actual ventures and face real-world issues." In an effort to integrate skills into the educational system, the government think tank, NITI Aayog has suggested implementing employability and entrepreneurship skills from Class 6 and organised vocational tracks

from Class 9. The recommendations are part of NITI Aayog's report, *Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047*. In addition to Kaushal Tracks (organised vocational pathways) starting in Grade 9, which allow for further vocational specialisation in line with local and national skill demand, General Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills (GEES) can be taught to all students from Grade 6 through Grade 12. According to the report, despite the NEP 2020 requirement, fewer than one in every twelve secondary schools presently offers vocational courses, emphasising the implementation gap that this research aims to overcome. In the framework of the Class 10 and Class 12 board exams, vocational subjects could potentially be given equal weight. The Aayog also underlined the need to reframe apprenticeships as a reliable and popular approach to connect education with employment Mishra, A. (2024). According to the survey, 61% of college students who want to start their own business are not aware of the possibilities.

Integrating Entrepreneurship Education into Vocational Programs

Due to the competitive nature of the global job market, higher education institutions must find new ways to educate their students beyond the conventional classroom setting. In higher education, entrepreneurship learning from successful entrepreneurs may foster sustainable development. Incorporating entrepreneurial education into higher education is crucial for 21st-century colleges to drive technical advancement and economic prosperity. Embedding entrepreneurship into the educational system is a critical step towards fostering creativity and cultivating an entrepreneurial attitude among Indian higher education students. Education, as defined by SDG-4, i.e., Sustainable Development Goal 4: "Quality Education," encompasses lifelong learning that leads to rewarding employment prospects that match individual interests and talents,



fostering both professional and personal development. In India, vocational education is structured through various programs. The Human Resource and Development Ministry is in charge of secondary education and diploma programmes, whilst the Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Ministry is in charge of National Trade Certificate programmes .

To encourage the next generation of business owners, entrepreneurship education (EE) is a top priority in many Indian schools and government programmes. A number of efforts have been put into place by the government of India in order to improve the ecosystem of entrepreneurship and to increase the connection between education and entrepreneurship . Despite progress, we must continue to promote Entrepreneurship Education (EE). MSDE, i.e., the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of India, launched several programmes to promote young entrepreneurship. Three thousand Indian institutions will teach entrepreneurship through MOOCs, and fifty E-hubs will support present and future business owners in every state. To encourage prospective young business owners, the government created a web and mobile platform that connects all entrepreneurial ecosystem participants. Users can network, learn about government services, and get mentorship here. Young entrepreneurs will benefit from a new incubator tied to government programmes like the AIM (Atal Innovation Mission) and SETU (Self Employment Talent Utilization). Entrepreneurs will use inventive and cutting-edge technologies

Improving innovation via entrepreneurship education integration into vocational programmes can be aided by the findings of a meta-analysis that examined the correlation connecting entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial inclinations. With a comprehensive review of seventy three papers involving a substantial sample size of 37,285 people, the study found a statistically significant but low correlation ($r^2 = .143$)

between entrepreneurial inclinations and entrepreneurship education. This study result indicates that while entrepreneurship education may have a discernible impact on fostering entrepreneurial intentions, the effect size is relatively small. Entrepreneurship education correlated more with entrepreneurial intents than regular business education, suggesting it may be more effective at developing entrepreneurial mindsets. On the other hand, when pre-education entrepreneurial ambitions were considered, the correlation between education in entrepreneurship and post-education entrepreneurial aspirations was demonstrated to be statistically insignificant. This highlights the importance of considering individuals' pre-existing entrepreneurial aspirations when evaluating the usefulness of entrepreneurship education programs. The study's examination of moderators, including cultural values and entrepreneurship education features, further highlights the intricate nature of the connection between the two. These findings underscore the need for a nuanced method for integrating entrepreneurship education into vocational programmes, considering individual differences and contextual factors. By understanding the nuances of this relationship, vocational educators and policymakers can design more effective entrepreneurship education initiatives aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurial success among students within vocational programs .

A study conducted by examines how young people in India might access easily formal and informal entrepreneurial education. It highlights the need for accessible and comprehensive entrepreneurship education while acknowledging limitations such as biases and challenges in survey methodology. The research emphasizes the pressing need to cover the gap concerning the formal and informal education channels to address high youth unemployment and skill gaps among graduates. Blended learning approaches are recommended to leverage



technological advancements and promote economic growth. Despite challenges, the study underscores the importance of critically evaluating entrepreneurship education effectiveness to inform stakeholders and improve entrepreneurial outcomes in India. Overall, enhancing accessibility needs addressing obstacles, make use of technology, and create a welcoming atmosphere for entrepreneurship education among Indian youths and young adults.

, explored the developments of entrepreneurship in education and discussed the important points made by Seelig (2005) in her paper on entrepreneurial education in Asia, Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Questions such as "Is entrepreneurship teachable?" "Who should teach entrepreneurship?" and "How do you evaluate a program's success?" Her conclusions about the teaching of entrepreneurship were based on these questions. Additionally, she established a connection concerning the entrepreneurship education and

- (1) There are differences in entrepreneurship education across economic, historical political, , and cultural contexts;
- (2) Entrepreneurship education is generally viewed as a way to boost economic growth in most areas;
- (3) Acquiring credibility, hiring experienced teachers, and gathering essential resources are more challenging for colleges in locations with a shorter history of entrepreneurship;
- (4) entrepreneurship education is still relatively new in many places and necessitates a great deal of experimentation, including incubation; and
- (5) It is vital to establish a worldwide network of entrepreneurship educators in order to share effective strategies and raise the bar for entrepreneurship education.

The Potential Impact and Benefits of Entrepreneurship

The competitiveness and expansion of an economy are primarily fueled by innovation and entrepreneurship. Programs in innovation management and entrepreneurship have begun to be offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide in an effort to address the increasing demand for a skilled and innovative workforce. The spirit of entrepreneurship is one that is not frightened of hard work; it calls for tenacity and defiance . To be an entrepreneur, you need to have a mindset that is not scared to put in the work; you also need to be able to push through obstacles. Therefore, it is okay to fall down; you will just have to get back up. You should not be scared of failing. In order to pursue innovation and take chances, entrepreneurs must overcome their fear of failure. Largely, entrepreneurs shape their own destinies . Enhancing students' inventive capabilities, cultivating an entrepreneurial attitude, and improving their overall employment prospects are all possible outcomes of engaging in entrepreneurial activities . Additionally, it has the potential to contribute to the growth of the nation's economy by resulting in the establishment of new businesses and the provision of employment opportunities .

Steps for Effective Implementation

Effective integration of entrepreneurship education into vocational programs requires a strategic approach . The educational level system should strategically connect with industry more, especially the expanding small company sector. Academic research needs to be more closely integrated with industry, curricula need to be established and revised on a regular basis, and educational institutions need to be more flexible and open to ensure that courses keep up with the pace of change in the workplace . Modern Indian education promotes a follower mindset in which the authority imparts predefined knowledge for passive



acquiescence. An test may emphasize memorization of previously taught material to assess this. Higher education should promote entrepreneurship rather than conformity. It's important to enable students to own their education and assess, apply, value, and expand information. Education must be experience-based and learner-centered. Students must be convinced that everyone has an entrepreneur inside them; it only requires work and a good mindset. The integration of vocational training with general education is emphasized in NEP 2020 to prepare students for industrial demands. An entrepreneurship program should emphasize trade skill application. Entrepreneurship has traditionally been linked to economics and profit. It was considered a family business or intrinsic skill. However, incorporating entrepreneurship into the curriculum makes it part of service learning—learning by helping the most people. Adding entrepreneurial themes to the teaching-learning process is crucial. Additionally, it is crucial to create an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and provides students with practical opportunities to apply their learnings.

Conclusion

Given the dynamic nature of today's business landscape, it is imperative that professional programmes incorporate entrepreneurial education. Organisations need to be nimble to respond to shifting consumer needs, which are driven by the need for ongoing innovation caused by shorter product lifecycles and technology improvements.

In today's globally integrated economy, creativity, employment, and productivity are all greatly enhanced by an entrepreneurial mindset. This is where entrepreneurship education is crucial. It teaches people to spot possibilities, innovate, and generate value across industries. Entrepreneurial courses at top universities and colleges have grown in popularity to

foster entrepreneurial skills like risk-taking, problem-solving, and adaptability. For students to be competitive in today's job market, career-focused education is a must in India. There is a significant lack of preparation for entrepreneurship in India's current educational system, even though students there have a natural talent for starting their own businesses (Hill et al., 2024). Although the Indian government has taken steps to increase access to entrepreneurship education, several obstacles still need to be addressed, such as the use of ineffective teaching methods and a dearth of opportunities for hands-on, real-world experience.

Entrepreneurship education in Indian vocational programmes can solve these issues. Vocational programmes can better prepare students for the labour market and support entrepreneurial careers by promoting an entrepreneurial mentality. This integration demands intentional curriculum development, industry engagement, and innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Research has indicated that entrepreneurship education has a slight but beneficial impact on entrepreneurial ambitions. This emphasises the value of customised strategies that take into account contextual variables and individual variances. Vocational programmes need to prioritise experiential and project-based learning, cultivate an innovative culture, and give students real-world opportunity to put their entrepreneurial abilities to use if they are to be implemented successfully.

When implemented effectively, this integration has the potential to transform vocational education, stimulate economic expansion, and position India as an innovative and entrepreneurial nation. Entrepreneurship education in vocational programmes can boost students' creativity, employability, and economic growth by fostering new ventures and job creation. By encouraging new businesses and employment creation, entrepreneurship education in



vocational programs can improve students' creativity, employability, and economic growth. Vocational programs can produce a new generation of entrepreneurs who can propel sustainable development by connecting theoretical knowledge with real-world application.

In conclusion, in order to stimulate creativity and prepare students for the changing workforce, career

programs must incorporate entrepreneurship education. We can equip students with the abilities and mindset necessary to prosper in a changing environment and make significant contributions to social advancement by embracing entrepreneurial principles and cultivating supportive educational ecosystems.

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