

Empowering Uttarkashi through Entrepreneurial Education: A Pathway to Sustainable Employment and Regional Prosperity

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Abstract

Uttarakhand's heavy reliance on agriculture and tourism has contributed to significant youth unemployment, as these sectors offer only seasonal and limited job opportunities. This study explores entrepreneurial education as a strategic solution to equip the youth of Uttarkashi, particularly in the district of Uttarkashi, with the necessary skills to establish their own ventures. By fostering entrepreneurship, the research aims to stimulate local economies and promote sustainable socio-economic development.

Focusing on higher education institutions and vocational training programs, this study evaluates the current landscape of entrepreneurial education and its impact on students' career prospects and business aspirations. Employing a quantitative research design, data was gathered from students through structured questionnaires. A random sampling method was utilized across Uttarkashi to capture diverse perspectives from both industrially active and resource-abundant regions. The study's hypothesis investigates the correlation between entrepreneurial education and key outcomes such as unemployment reduction and skill enhancement, employing various statistical tests for analysis.

The findings indicate that entrepreneurial education has a significant positive effect in mitigating unemployment, strengthening entrepreneurial competencies, and diversifying the local economy. The research further underscores the need for a robust support system, including curriculum integration, vocational training, and collaborative efforts between public and private sectors. Ultimately, this study seeks to offer policy recommendations to enhance Uttarakhand's entrepreneurial education framework, fostering self-employment, economic resilience, and a cultural shift towards entrepreneurship among the youth.

Keywords- Uttarkashi, entrepreneurial education, rural development, unemployment, entrepreneurial intentions.

Introduction

Uttarakhand, located in northern India and revered as "Dev Bhoomi" for its spiritual heritage, is renowned for its scenic beauty and the Himalayas. The state's economy is primarily driven by tourism, agriculture, handicrafts and adventure activities. Despite its rich resources, Uttarakhand faces significant challenges-youth unemployment.

Entrepreneurial education emerges as a powerful solution to this issue. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, equipping young people with essential skills, and creating a supportive environment for business development, the state can generate long term employment opportunities and drive sustainable economic growth. Empowering youth to become job creators rather than job seekers can transform Uttarakhand's employment landscape and unlock its full social economy potential.

Understanding Unemployment In Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand's unemployment crisis is rooted in its overdependence on seasonal sectors such as tourism and agriculture, both highly vulnerable to economic and environmental fluctuations. In districts like Uttarkashi, limited industrial development, lack of quality education, and mass migration of youth to urban areas for jobs and education further exacerbate the problem. Many agricultural lands lie unused, and farmers often lack the knowledge and support to market their produce effectively.

To overcome these challenges, a paradigm shift is essential- one that moves beyond traditional job- seeking and equips the youth to become job creators. Entrepreneurial education offers a powerful solution. It not only imparts business knowledge but also cultivates creativity, adaptability, leadership and problem-solving skills that are essential across all industries. When tailored to Uttarakhand's unique context, this form of education can empower youth, diversify the economy and reduce migration.

Key benefits of entrepreneurial education in Uttarakhand:

- 1) **Fostering Entrepreneurial Ambition:** Inspires youth to view self-employment as a viable career, leading to job creation.
- 2) **Enhancing Employability Skills:** Builds transferable skills that improve job prospects even outside entrepreneurship.
- 3) **Promoting Economic Resilience:** Reduces reliance on traditional sectors by encouraging our diverse business ecosystem.
- 4) **Raising Awareness for Development:** Shifts societal mindsets. Encouraging innovation, literacy and local growth.

In regions like Uttarkashi, integrating entrepreneurial education with mentorship, vocational training and support systems can transform the employment landscape. It can help retain local talent, the strengthen the economy and pave the way for sustainable socio-economic development.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

To understand the theoretical foundation and identify existing gaps in the field of entrepreneurial education and intention, a comprehensive review of the existing literature is essential. The following section presents a review of relevant studies that highlight various dimensions of entrepreneurship education, its impact on students, and related factors.

Junhua Sun, Jingyi Shi, and Junfeng Zhang (China): This study found that entrepreneurial education (EE) positively influences student's entrepreneurial mindset, which mediates the relationship between EE and entrepreneurial intention. Intrinsic motivation enhances this effect, while extrinsic motivation weakens it. Prior entrepreneurial exposure also strengthens entrepreneurial intent, highlighting the importance of physiological and environmental factors in EE. **Unyime Alphonsus Iwok and Victoria Ikoobong Umoren (Nigeria):** The authors emphasised EE as a key driver for self-reliance and innovation, especially in achieving sustainable development goals (SDG's) 8. EE eclipse learners' better skill and motivation needed for entrepreneurship while helping overcome social economic and gender-based barriers in emerging economies. **Zheng Li and A.Y.M. Atiquil Islam (China - HVE context):**

using the theory of regional action, this study showed that perceived EE and government policy significantly influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy an intention among vocational students. Gender showed no moderating effect. The study emphasized aligning EE N policy with practical needs to foster entrepreneurship. **Xianyue Liu, Chunpei Lin, Guanxi Zhao, and Dali Zhao:**

based on the theory of planned behaviour, the study found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the influence of EE on entrepreneurial intention. While EE didn't directly affect entrepreneurial attitudes, boosting students' confidence through EE is crucial for fostering intent. **Mohsin Shaikh (India):** a review of Indian university students revealed that higher education correlates with reduced entrepreneurial intention due to perceived job security. Physiological traits like autonomy and self-efficacy were stronger predictors than demographic factors, suggesting that EE should focus on personal and physiological development. **Oliver Thomas (Switzerland):**

conducting research across Germany and Switzerland, Thomas identified that inspiration, social networks and acquired knowledge mediate the impact of EE on entrepreneurial intentions. Alertness had no significant effect. The study advocates for EE programme that incorporate networking and motivational elements alongside theoretical knowledge. **Jingwen Tian, Huan Yunxia, and Xiao (China):** The study found that EE enhances entrepreneurial intention through improved attitudes, norms and perceived behavioural control with male students Showing a stronger ambition. It recommends gender sensitive EE programmes that support diverse student needs

and promote female entrepreneurship. **Muhammad Zaheer Asghar, Fariha Gul, Pirita Seitamaa Hakkarainen, and M. Zeki Taşdemir (Pakistan):** By comparing students with and without EE, the authors found that EE significantly increases entrepreneurial intention, attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The findings confirm EE's effectiveness in encouraging entrepreneurial aspirations among university students. **Zheng Li and A.Y.M. Atiquil Islam (Second Study - China):**

This follow-up study reaffirmed the positive influence of perceived EE and policy support on self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention in vocational education. Gender remained a non-significant factor. The authors emphasised the role of practical and policy aligned EE programmes in fostering entrepreneurship.

These comprehensive summaries focus the global significance of entrepreneurial education (EE) in fostering entrepreneurial intentions and illustrate the diverse impacts of psychological, motivational, and contextual factors on student entrepreneurship. Collectively, the studies underscore the need for EE programs that extend beyond conventional instruction to integrate elements such as self-efficacy, social networks, and inspiration—key components for cultivating a new generation of aspiring entrepreneurs.

RESEARCH GAP

However, many important antecedents of entrepreneurial education, behavior and intentions have been investigated in previous research studies. Most of the studies typically identified pre-existing entrepreneurs and established business, while neglecting a large section of potential entrepreneurs, i.e., students, who can be considered as the primary resource of potential entrepreneurs, and it will be an advantage for them to make entrepreneurship as a full-time career after graduation or post graduation. In this regard, the assessment of entrepreneurial intention among them is a necessity.

Based on above reviews, it can be confirmed that the magnitude and the extent of previous studies are differ. There are so many studies conducted to investigate about entrepreneurial education and empowerment, unemployment individually on international level but on national level there are fewer studies have done in this field. ***This study however is completely focused to analyze the present state of entrepreneurial education in Uttarakhand, with a particular focus on the Uttarkashi District. This research will also examine the contribution of entrepreneurial education in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi. It attempts to assess the region's entrepreneurial education ecosystem's strengths, shortcomings, opportunities, and dangers.***

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The chief objective of the study is to find out how entrepreneurship education may help Uttarkashi's unemployment problem. The following objectives must be met to accomplish this goal:

1. To examine the contribution of entrepreneurial education in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi.
2. To investigate the correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Objective: 1- To examine the contribution of entrepreneurial education in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi.

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** Entrepreneurial education has no significant contribution in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** Entrepreneurial education has a significant contribution in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi.

Objective: 2- To investigate the correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀₁):** There is no significant correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁₁):** There is a significant correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.

This study employs a quantitative research design to systematically gather and analyse data. The target population includes students from government and private colleges in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand, who are receiving entrepreneurial education through both theoretical and practical approaches.

To collect data, the study utilizes structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The survey method was adopted, and a total of 87 respondents participated in the study. Data analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

A Likert scale was used to design the questionnaire. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including mean, median, standard deviation, simple t-test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient to interpret the findings effectively and testing of hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Entrepreneurial education is an effective tool to reduce unemployment in Uttarakhand.	24.620	86	.000	1.839	1.69	1.99
Entrepreneurial education can change the thought "getting employment" with "giving employment".	23.463	86	.000	2.011	1.84	2.18
Entrepreneurial education can give a boom to start ups and new ventures.	24.971	86	.000	1.954	1.80	2.11
Entrepreneurial education can change the living standards of people.	26.615	86	.000	2.057	1.90	2.21
Entrepreneurial education can equalize regional growth & development.	24.175	86	.000	2.184	2.00	2.36
Entrepreneurial education equips people with the tools needed to start and grow their business.	22.190	86	.000	2.034	1.85	2.22
Entrepreneurial education drives socio- economic growth by developing industries.	22.654	86	.000	2.011	1.83	2.19
Entrepreneurial education gives self-sufficiency to the people.	26.295	86	.000	1.851	1.71	1.99
Entrepreneurial education motivates individual to pursue business opportunities and make them financially steady.	24.970	86	.000	2.000	1.84	2.16

Interpretation and hypothesis Testing:

- All P-Values are 0.000, which means highly statistically significant results ($P < 0.001$). this indicates that the average response to each statement is significantly greater than 0.
- Mean Differences range from 1.839 to 2.184, meaning respondents lean heavily toward agreement with all positive statements about the role and impact of entrepreneurial education.

Null Hypothesis (H0₁): Entrepreneurial education has no significant contribution in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1₁): Entrepreneurial education has a significant contribution in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi.

Based on above table Null hypotheses has been rejected and alternate hypothesis i.e. *Entrepreneurial education has a significant contribution in mitigating unemployment in Uttarkashi* has been accepted. The result strongly supports first alternate hypothesis that entrepreneurial education contributes significantly to mitigating unemployment and promoting socio-economic development in Uttarakhand.

Test Statistics

	Entrepreneurial education can change your intension toward starting a business.	Entrepreneurial education can help in overcoming the fear of starting a business.	As a result of studying entrepreneurship education, I decided to start a business.	I'm determined to create a firm in the future.	I will make every effort to start and run my own firm.	I've got the strong intention to start a firm someday.	I'm ready to make anything to be an entrepreneur.	I would rather be an employer than an employee of any company.
Chi-Square	74.241 ^a	62.103 ^a	48.678 ^a	82.609 ^a	91.103 ^b	100.299 ^b	73.287 ^b	72.943 ^b
Df	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Interpretation and hypothesis Testing:

- All significance P-Values are 0.000, which means highly statistically significant results ($P < 0.001$). This indicates that the average response to each statement is significantly greater than 0.

Null Hypothesis (H0₁): There is no significant correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1₁): There is a significant correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.

Based on the table above, the null hypothesis has been rejected, and the alternative hypothesis — that there is a significant correlation between entrepreneurial education and individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship — has been accepted. This outcome provides strong statistical evidence supporting the existence of a meaningful relationship between entrepreneurial education and the intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities. In other words, individuals who receive entrepreneurial education are more likely to develop intentions to start their own ventures, highlighting the crucial role of education in fostering entrepreneurial mindset and aspirations. There is a statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial Intentions.

Other Findings

- Students or participants show a strong inclination toward starting businesses, being self-employed, and making serious efforts to pursue entrepreneurship.

- Entrepreneurship education is effective in shaping positive entrepreneurial mindsets and reducing barriers like fear.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the transformative potential of entrepreneurial education in tackling youth unemployment and fostering sustainable development in the rural district of Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. The empirical findings underscore that entrepreneurship education positively influences students' entrepreneurial intentions and enhance their confidence, knowledge and skills to initiate self-employment ventures. The significant correlation between entrepreneurial education and the reduction of employment reflects the need to reform traditional educational models that prioritize job-seeking over job-creation.

Moreover, the study reveals that most students not only value entrepreneurial education but also consider it a practical solution to the limited employment opportunities available in their region. As a result, educational institutions, policymakers and community leaders must collaborate to integrate comprehensive entrepreneurship modules into the curriculum, provide mentorship and support systems, and create conducive environments for students-led innovation and startups.

By aligning education with local economic realities, Uttarkashi can nurture a generation of job creators rather than job seekers, thereby contributing to regional prosperity and the national vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this research provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged.

Geographical Scope: The study is limited to the Uttarkashi district, which may affect the generalization of findings to other regions of Uttarakhand or India with different socio-economic and educational conditions.

Sample Size: With a sample size of 87 respondents, the study provides a snapshot rather than a comprehensive picture. A larger and more diverse sample could yield more robust and generalizable results.

Limited Stakeholder Perspective: the study focuses solely on students' perception and does not include insights from faculty members, institutional administrators, or local entrepreneurs who play critical roles in shaping entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Quantitative Focus: The study adopts a quantitative using structured questionnaires. While this allows for statistical analysis, it limits the depth of understanding regarding individual motivations, challenges, and contextual factors. Qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could enrich the findings.

Cross-Sectional: The data was collected at one point in time, which restricts the ability to measure the long-term impact of entrepreneurial education on employment outcomes or business creation.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROPOSED STUDY FOR POLICY MAKING AND SOCIETY

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that regulatory bodies in Uttarakhand, alongside higher education institutions and financial agencies that promote entrepreneurship and new startups, make entrepreneurship education a mandatory core course across all faculties and departments, rather than an elective. Additionally, it is crucial for the government to ensure that tertiary institutions are adequately equipped with comprehensive educational infrastructure and resources to effectively facilitate entrepreneurship education in the future. By doing so, the benefits of entrepreneurship education may extend beyond economic gains, potentially reducing unemployment and poverty while elevating the overall standard of living. The research aims to determine whether entrepreneurship education can influence entrepreneurial behavior, expand knowledge of entrepreneurship, foster intentions to pursue entrepreneurial careers, and enhance the intellectual development of students across Uttarakhand

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