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Government Programs For Youth Empowerment And Entrepreneurial Growth – An Analysis Of The Educational Sector In Kerala State

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Abstract

Youth empowerment is a key component in the socio economic growth and development of the country in terms of sustainable growth. The scope of youth centric development in India is enormous, considering that India hosts the highest number of youths in the world. Young people could have their social, economic, and personal well-being improved through the leveraging of entrepreneurial development activities. Empowerment of the youth aims at better equipping them with skills, resources, means of developing their own business, leadership, social political participation and participation in the economy. Due to its high literacy, progressive levels of governance and human development, Kerala is a special state of program implementation and evaluation of youth empowerment. The focus of entrepreneurship development youth empowerment involves skill development, access to funds that encourage innovation and creativity, challenges, encouraging social impact and sustainable development. In this research paper, the role and support of Entrepreneurship Development Clubs and Yong Innovators Programme (YIP) on youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development among the students community was studied. Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Kerala, developed a scheme to establish Entrepreneurship Development Clubs in schools and colleges within the State to inculcate Entrepreneurial Culture in the youth and provide them with the skills, techniques and confidence to become the torch-bearers of Enterprise in the new generation. YIP is intended to provide students with a taste of the innovation cycle process idea to final product or process to school and college students.

Key Words: Youth empowerment, entrepreneurship development, entrepreneurship development club, young innovators programme.

Introduction

Youth empowerment can be used as a potent nation building and national integrating tool. It is a process which fortifies and mobilizes the ability of the young people to meet their own needs, resolve their own issue and obtain the resources required to take charge of their lives. Empowerment of the youth is significant as it results to competence and confidence which are associated with self-esteem and self-actualization. Empowerment can be achieved by developing the youth; i.e. discovering the potential and empowering them, awakening knowledge, attitude and practices to their own advantage and as well as that of the society. The young population is passive and inactive in terms of providing the youth force in the developing economy. The youth involvement in community development and mobilization of human resources has led to a radical shift in transforming the society. The youth are the pioneers, constructors, developers and makers of tomorrow. Only when they are equipped with skills, knowledge, health, decision- making capacity and real choices in life, they can transform the future.

This is significant since trained youth acts like a catalytic agent of economic, social and cultural development. Motivation is significant in order to take action. There are numerous dynamics of motivation. There is however the strength of the training/ orientation that creates a greater territory in motivation and action in an empowerment process.

The possible economic benefits would be achieved in the form of a demographic dividend that can be realized when the number of working age people in a country exceeds the number of people. The development is possible through development in every sector of economy to achieve economic development. Economies based on efficiency are typified by industrialization and a higher dependency on economies of scale and capital intensive organizations. Business is more knowledge intensive and the service sector grows in characterizing innovation driven economies.

There are the highest number of youths in India. According to the 2011 population census, youth population in the country including teenagers is approximately 550million and 70 percent of the population in India are under the age of 35years. Young people population must be involved in mainstream development of India. This phenomenal increase in the number of youth population has transformed India into the youngest population with a demographic dividend. National Youth Policy, 2014 gives a comprehensive vision of the youth of India as the one that is to empower the youth of the country in order to reach to their full potential and through them make India discover its rightful Place among nations.

Kerala is gods own country, which has been blessed with high human resources with sufficient skills and competency. Determining these resources and applying them to the sphere of economic and social prosperity is a strange duty before the authorities. Otherwise, the unexploited resources cause numerous issues which impact the development of the country. The youth government of Kerala has made strides such as the establishment of Youth Welfare Board to execute a host of policies and programmes. Other governmental and non- government agencies also play a role in initiating efforts in youth empowerment.

Youth empowerment is an urgent plan of action to ensure the inclusive development and future prosperity. Youth empowerment involves provision of knowledge, skills and opportunities to young people so that they can make informed decisions and positively contribute towards the society. Youth empowerment is not merely desirable in the Indian context where the populace, consisting of more than 65 percent of the population, is below the age of 35. With its demographic benefits and governance base, Kerala is a state that has initiated various specific schemes based on the Kerala State Youth Welfare Board (KSYWB).

The Entrepreneurship Development Club (EDC), which is a government of Kerala initiative, is meant to inculcate an entrepreneurial culture in students. It will equip them with necessary skills and confidence to either initiate their own businesses or be part of the establishment of new businesses. This is a strategic step to empower young people with entrepreneurial skills and spur the economic development. There will be financial aid to the ED Clubs to hold programmes to impart the quality of entrepreneurship, in creating awareness of industrial scenario of the state, in developing the simmer talent of entrepreneurship scenery within its members of the spirit, attitudes, and skills of successful entrepreneur everywhere in the world etc.

Young Innovators Programme is a specially developed programme of Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC). The programme will help to equip future innovators in order to create new products, services or models to address new requirements, unarticulated needs or the current market needs of the society in a better way by means of an innovative challenge. The programme has a motto of Democratisation of Innovation.

Literature

A literature survey of the previously conducted research on youth empowerment showed how youth empowerment has been treated as the path to intergenerational equity, civic engagement, and democracy building. Government agencies and non-profit, community based organisations, with local, state, provincial, regional, national and international jurisdictions offer programmes focused on youth empowerment. One of the researches done in Kenya indicated that young people constitute and would continue to constitute a sizeable portion of population in the foreseeable future. The government has to prioritize developing and implementing appropriate strategies, policies and programmes to alleviate the risks and challenges that they encounter. Any neglect in offering the right and proper opportunities to this huge population group may have monumental economic, political, cultural and social impacts. Involving youth population is therefore not an option but rather a necessity in the process of development. Youth empowerment statements supported by all major political parties in the United States as well as some of the major European, African, South American and Australian political parties.

The use of organized policy interventions to promote youth engagement and competence has been highlighted in extensive research studies. Feighery and Altman (2004) focus on the aspect of empowerment as one of the strategies to help the youth to build resilience, especially in health promotion. Brown (2009) developed the HEY model, that defines empowerment as peer leadership, autonomy, and systemic support. Psychological aspects considered by Gundlach et al. (2003) include emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy in the empowerment process. Luke Pittaway and Others (2011) emphasize the ability of entrepreneurship education to replicate the entrepreneurial learning process by providing examples of the importance of entrepreneurship clubs and societies and the reasons why students participate in them. The National Youth Policy (2014) in India offers an outline of the engagement between youth in the areas of employment, entrepreneurship, education, and social justice. Sougata Goswami (2023), The sustainability of entrepreneurship and its future perspectives is intricate and depend on factors such as access to resources and funds, stability of the economy, and readiness of people to risk certain actions and venture into entrepreneurship. There are certain challenges and risks, but there are also numerous positive trends and developments that indicate a promising future of entrepreneurship and its place in society. Young Innovators Programme (YIP) Young Innovators Programme (2022- 23) Annual Report on K-DISC Programs, wants to help the society meet new requirements, unarticulated needs or existing market and social needs more effectively through specially designed challenges. Nonetheless, very minimal research has examined state implementation (in Kerala, in particular). The present research is filling this gap, as it combines both empirical knowledge and structural Equation Model.

Statement of the Problem

YIP has devised the concept of entrepreneurship Development Clubs in schools and colleges to instill entrepreneurial culture among young people and provide them with skills, techniques and confidence to become torch-bearers of entrepreneurship of the new generation, by attaching them to research institutions/partner institutions with funding of one to three years and assisting them to build a career around the innovations, researching, re-discovering, incubating and accelerating the innovation. Through proper policies and investment in human capital, nations can enable young people to lead economic and social growth and increase their per- capita income. Kerala is a well-educated state that possesses competitive youth with enthusiasm and creativity. The young generation can only be empowered to the development of the nation with the assistance of a formal authority, in the form of a structured entity with specific goals. Therefore, this study entitled as “Government Programs For Youth Empowerment And Entrepreneurial Growth -An Analysis of the Educational Sector in Kerala State”.

Significance of the study

To transform the youth into economically productive individuals and socially responsible citizens these resources are properly exploited, offering them a chance to develop their personality and ability to act effectively. Government and the well-known agencies are needed to support and mentor the youth in order to use this demographic dividend and to harness the power of the youth and their creative capacities to the nation building cause. Youth Welfare Board offers avenues to the holistic development of youth to their full

potential, inculcate leadership skills and to harness their energy in Socioeconomic development and growth of the country. To encourage the young generation to assume a centre of attention in the nation building process especially the economically and socially marginalized backward regions of the society. The emphasis is ensuring that the youth are empowered to live healthy lives, gain access to employment and training opportunities and become active players in government policy and decision making processes. Any young person of the present is the future of tomorrow. Young people are to unite and shape the country towards a brighter future. Young people are not entirely blameless towards the country. The general development and growth of the youths should have been brought to rise to the challenges of rising globalization, technology and ICT revolution and the rise of India as the global economic superpower. The current situation of the country is indicative of those issues related to the youth that contribute to law-breaking. Reasons of these kinds of activities are numerous. Thus special concern should be to address the issue of youth and leverage the unexploited youth resources positively through the established body in its inception. Therefore, in the context of the current situation, the appropriate place is their educational time. Therefore, Government Programs For Youth Empowerment And Entrepreneurial Growth -An Analysis of the Educational Sector in Kerala State is relevant.

Scope of the study

The primary focus of the study work is to examine the initiatives of youth empowerment by the government in Kerala. Government has different programmes and schemes of promotion of youth which are established by education sector with that intention. The empowerment programme is also initiated by local government and other various agencies. This will be done by evaluating and analysing the role and performance of these agencies that will be done to analyse whether the Kerala state has enough government supports to be able to empower the youth.

Objectives

1. To know how much the government supports the youth to get empowered to start up an enterprise in the education sector of Kerala.
2. To examine the role of Entrepreneurship Development Club in entrepreneurship development through education sector
3. to examine the role of Young Innovators Programme in entrepreneurship development through education sector
4. To evaluate the contribution of the development of Entrepreneurship to the economic and social empowerment.
5. To analyse the outreach and the results of focused programs.

Research Methodology

The research adopts a mixed-method approach involving qualitative and quantitative data. A sample of 210 response of respondents between the ages of 15 to 35 were selected from various regions in Kerala. Out of the respondents 108 male students and 102 were female students. Majority of the students (65%) are studying for graduation and 20% are high school and 15% are higher secondary students. Sample data were collected from all the fourteen districts of Kerala through structured questionnaires and personal interviews in order to avoid regional disparities. Secondary data were obtained from government publications, websites, and previous research studies. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS to derive descriptive insights and validate the proposed SEM model. The study explores these initiatives and assesses their effectiveness based on theoretical models and empirical evidence.

Constructs Developed for the study

Table 1

Skill Development	Entrepreneurship education and training programmes assists in creating knowledge, skill and mindset of successful business ventures.
Resources	Funding, mentor ship and networking opportunities in support of young entrepreneurs.
Fostering innovation and creativity	Entrepreneurship also challenges youth to go beyond the box and think of new ideas and add to the economy and innovation.
Addressing Challenges	Market access and cultural perceptions are all capital access to successfully implement it.
Promoting Social Impact	Young people can be empowered at the entrepreneurship level to solve social problems, alleviate poverty and help improve the community.
Longterm Impact	Making a long-term investment in youth entrepreneurship may result in sustainable economic development, the generation of employment and a more dynamic and inclusive society.
Entrepreneurship Education Programmes	Offer youth with the basic understanding and expertise to establish and operate a business.

Financial Literacy Training	Young business people learn how to use money and get finances and improved financial choices.
Mentoring and networking opportunities	It is possible to link young entrepreneurs with established mentors and to provide them with networking opportunities and hence overcome challenges of initiating and developing a business.
Support for Specific Industries	It is possible to link young entrepreneurs with established mentors and to provide them with networking opportunities and hence overcome challenges of initiating and developing a business.

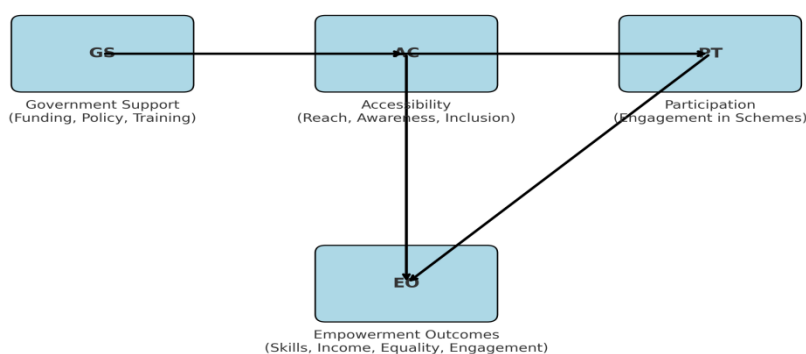
Structural Equation Model (SEM)

A conceptual model was developed to understand the relationship between key constructs:

1. Government Support (GS)
2. Accessibility (AC)
3. Participation (PT)
4. Empowerment Outcomes (EO)

The model hypothesizes the following relationships:

- GS → AC
- GS → PT
- AC → PT
- PT → EO
- AC → EO



Analysis and Interpretation

The descriptive statistics indicated that three quarters of the youth respondents had a positive attitude towards the government schemes in terms of skill development and personal growth. The SEM model also found that the direct impacts of government support on participation ($b = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$) and indirect impacts on the outcomes of empowerment via accessibility and participation ($R^2 = 0.68$) were significant. Important moderators were gender and region.

Depending on the study objectives, the following hypotheses were developed and tested statistically, i.e. using Chi-square tests and regression analysis embedded into the SEM model.

H01: The developmental programs have failed to achieve economic and social empowerment and development of the entrepreneurial and interpersonal skills.

The comparison of perceived program effectiveness between the different youth groups showed a significant difference, which was significant ($\chi^2 = 15.67$, $p < 0.01$) and therefore rejected the null hypothesis. This means that there is a statistically significant influence of programs on the dimensions of youth empowerment.

H 02: To examine the role of Entrepreneurship Development Club and Young Innovators Programme in the development of entrepreneurship and empowerment of youth.

No substantial difference is observed in the role of the Entrepreneurship Development Club and Young Innovators Programme in the development of entrepreneurship and youth empowerment.

Two way ANOVA revealed that there was a significant variation according to area and gender ($F = 4.23$, $p < 0.05$), which implies that the effect of agencies among genders and locality is different. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

H03: Entrepreneurship development club and Young Innovators Programme do not have any significant difference in entrepreneurship improvement in terms of economic and social empowerment.

The independent sample t-tests revealed that there was a significant difference between the scores of empowerment between the Entrepreneurship development club and Young Innovators Programme in improving economic and social empowerment ($t = 2.89$, $p < 0.01$), rejecting the null hypothesis, and supporting the fact that there was a regional difference.

H04: The activities of Entrepreneurship Development Club and Young Innovators Programme for Youth empowerment are not significantly different,

The SEM model regression analysis with the use of dummy variable resulted in non-significant outcomes ($b = 0.08$, $p > 0.05$), which indicates that activities are evenly distributed. Therefore, there is no rejection of this null hypothesis.

Findings

- Institutional outreach is increased and youth awareness and participation are improved.
- Skill development schemes are popular but not followed up by employment placement.
- Using mediating variables, SEM confirmed the high impact of government support on the results of empowerment.

Suggestions

- Step up community and online awareness campaigns.
- Enhance access to programs in rural and tribal communities during the last mile.
- Make sure that the planning and training modules are gender-sensitive.
- Provide career support and incubation after training.
- Develop an online system of real-time monitoring of scheme beneficiaries and impact.

Conclusion

The development of entrepreneurship as a method of youth empowerment in Kerala is an effective measure to enhance economic growth, curbing unemployment and shaping a more equal and prosperous future of young people and their communities. The attempts of the state government in the form of the Youth Welfare Board and other bodies are well-organized. But such systemic obstacles as regional inequality, absence of inclusiveness, and absence of long-term support must be addressed in the nearest future. The results of the SEM support the importance of the integrated and comprehensive model that will maximize the demographic dividend.

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