



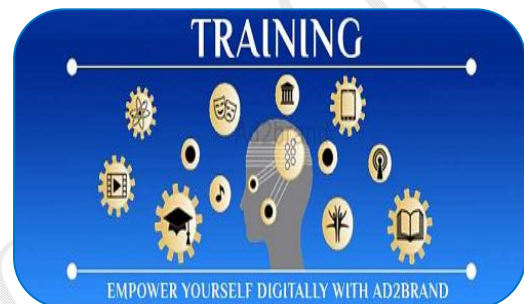
AN EVALUATIVE STUDY ON THE PRE-TRAINING PHASE OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT :

The concept of Entrepreneurship is gaining momentum in the country in the face of severe unemployment and in the context of unutilized human and material resources. The governments both at the central and state level are investing heavily on entrepreneurship development. The effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) depends not only on the quality and spirit of the trainees, but also significantly on the entrepreneurial zeal and commitment of the training institutions and the trainer coordinators. The starting point of any such programme is the training institution and their preparations for the same. Today many institutions are engaged in entrepreneurship development activities and entrepreneurial training viz., Central government institutions, State government institutions and NGOs. Many religious institutions are also engaged in such activities as part of their social commitment. The involvement of these institutions varies depending on the nature of the organisation. Generally the government led institutions carry out these activities along with many other engagements whereas the non-government institutions exhibit more commitment towards these activities. However, the NGOs and religious institutions do not follow the typical pattern of an EDP. Their programmes are purely skill based training programmes and can be well called Entrepreneurship Training Programmes rather than Entrepreneurship Development Programmes.



KEYWORDS : Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) , concept of Entrepreneurship , entrepreneurial training.

INTRODUCTION:

The present study analyses the activities of the trainers during the pre-training phase. The success and efficiency of this initial phase goes a long way in deciding the success of the subsequent phases viz., the training and the post training phase. The poor start-up rate of the EDPs, in most cases, is the result of less focused pre-training phase.

The data were collected from 35 trainer coordinators representing central government, state government and NGOs using random sampling technique. The population list was not readily available but it has been framed by visiting the various training institutions from their training schedules as well as discussions with officials. The list so framed included 70 trainers and 50 percent of them have been selected as the sample for the study giving due representation to different category of trainers on the basis of their proportion in the population.

1.1. Profile

The activities undertaken by the trainer coordinators depend on the nature of the organisation to which they belong, the extent of involvement of the organisation, its source of funds etc. In the present study, as exhibited in Table 1.1 below, 48.57 per cent of the trainees belong to state government institutions, 34.29 per cent to central government and 17.14 per cent work for the NGOs.

However all these institutions take up entrepreneurship development only as one of their many activities and only 31.43 per cent have said that they have a separate department or cell for EDP. Central government institutions are better off in this regard as 50 percent of the respondents from these institutions have stated that they have separate EDP cells but state level institutions lag behind as only 17.65 percent of respondents acknowledge a separate department or EDP cell. 33.33 percent of the NGO activists have also responded that they have separate EDP cell.

Table 1.1
Institutional Profile

		Central	State	NGO	Total
Nature of the Organisation		12 (34.29)	17 (48.57)	6 (17.14)	35 (100)
Extent of involvement	Main Activity	-	-	-	-
	One of the many activities	12 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	35 (100.00)
Separate Dept. or Cell for EDP	Yes	6 (50.00)	3 (17.65)	2 (33.33)	11 (31.43)
	No	6 (50.00)	14 (82.35)	4 (66.67)	24 (68.57)
Source of Funds	Government	12 (100.00)	10 (58.82)	0 (0.00)	22 (62.86)
	Sponsoring Agencies	2 (16.67)	17 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	25 (71.42)
	Fee from Trainees	4 (33.33)	-	1 (16.67)	5 (14.29)

Source: Primary Data; Figures in Parenthesis indicates percentage

With regard to the source of funds for the institutions 62.86 percent receive government support and 71.42 per cent also receive funds from the sponsoring agencies. However, fees from the trainees do not become a major source of finance for the institutions for the conduct of EDPs as only 14.29 percent have commented of collecting fee from trainees. For the central government institutions a major source of fund appears to be the government funds and for state level institutions and NGOs, assistance from sponsoring agencies is a major source of assistance. Fees from trainees are mostly collected by the central government institution. However all the programmes of these institutions are not fee-based and the fee collected for some of their programmes are only nominal.

1.2. Pre-Training

1.2.1. Time taken for Pre-training Activities

The pre-training activities undertaken by the institutions determine the effectiveness of the EDPs. These activities include identification of training location, advertising in the media and promotional activities, selection of prospective participants, arrangement of faculty, identification of feasible project ideas etc. The pre-training activities must begin well ahead of the training phase.

However, the time taken by different institutions differs as exhibited in the Table 1.2. For the completion of pre-training activities, 48.57 percent of the trainer coordinators take one week, 17.14 per cent does it in a period of two weeks and 20 per cent takes only 4 days for the completion of pre-

training activities. Notably, 14.29 per cent does not devote separate time for pre-training activities. The institutional wise split up shows that majority of the respondents in all the different types of institutions (50 percent in central govt. institutions, 41.18 percent in state level and 66.67 percent in NGOs) carry out the pre-training activities within a maximum duration of one week.

This evidently points towards the inadequacy of the pre-training activities of the training institutions in the light of different activities to be undertaken during the pre-training phase.

Table 1.2
Pre-Training Activities

		Central - 12	State - 17	NGO - 6	Total - 35
Time taken for Pre-training Activities	4 days	4 (33.33)	3 (17.65)	-	7 (20.00)
	1 week	6 (50.00)	7 (41.18)	4 (66.67)	17 (48.57)
	2 weeks	1 (8.33)	3 (17.65)	2 (33.33)	6 (17.14)
	No separate time	1 (8.33)	4 (23.53)	-	5 (14.29)
Pre-Training Activities	Advertisement in the local media	12 (100.00)	14 (82.35)	2 (33.33)	28 (80.00)
	Direct promotion by the field staff	2 (16.66)	8 (47.06)	2 (33.33)	12 (34.29)
	Arrangement of guest faculty	12 (100.00)	15 (88.24)	4 (66.67)	31 (88.57)
	Assessment of Locational feasibility	5 (41.67)	5 (29.41)	2 (33.33)	12 (34.29)
	Identification of business opportunities	2 (16.67)	6 (35.29)	2 (33.33)	10 (28.57)
	Selection of prospective candidates	5 (41.67)	7 (41.18)	1 (16.67)	13 (37.14)
Persons in charge of Pre-training Activities	Trainer coordinators	8 (66.67)	8 (47.05)	2 (33.33)	18 (51.43)
	Outside Consultants	7 (58.33)	1 (5.88)	5 (83.33)	13 (37.14)
	Others	5 (41.67)	10 (58.82)	1 (16.67)	16 (45.71)

Source: Primary Data; Figures in Parenthesis indicates percentage.

1.2.2. Pre-Training Activities

With regard to the advertisement in the local media, 80 per cent of the trainer coordinators publish the details of the EDPs in the local media to attract prospective candidates whereas only 34.29 percent of them initiate direct promotional activities through field staff as revealed in Table 1.2. Advertisement is used as a major tool of promotion by the central government training institutions but it does not find much place in NGOs as only 33.33 percent of the trainer coordinators depend on the same. Similarly, direct promotion by the field staff is more effectively done by the state level training institutions as 47.06 percent of the state level respondents have commented on the same.

Many of the training institutions do not have their own faculty to handle different sessions of EDPs. As exhibited in the Table 1.2, 88.57 per cent of the trainer coordinators go for arrangement of guest faculty with the central level training institution showing a lead with 100 percent followed by state level institutions (88.24) and the NGOs (66.67 percent).

This indicates the inadequacy of trained staff in the training institutions. And also this is one of the factors which affect the poor post-EDP follow-up actions.

With regard to the assessment of locational feasibility of the centre only 34.29 per cent of the trainer coordinators do the same before selection of a training centre. This is in fact an important activity which includes the surveying of the entrepreneurial culture of a particular locality, resource availability, business potential of the particular locality etc. However, as it is evident from the figures in Table 1.2, majority of the trainer coordinators do away with this activity and the state level training institutions shows a comparatively poor approach with only 29.41 per cent of the trainer coordinators finding time for the same.

Similarly, identification of feasible business opportunities is also done by only a negligible percentage of trainer coordinators of 28.57 per cent. The state level training institutions and NGOs are better in this regard with 35.29 percent and 33.33 percent respectively compared to 16.67 percent of the trainer coordinators in the central government training institutions. Identification of feasible business opportunities prior to the training phase increases the chances of start-up.

Selection of prospective entrepreneurs is the most important activity of the pre-training phase. The efficiency or inefficiency of this activity to a great extent affects the effectiveness of EDPs since the quality of trainees influences the start-up rate and the entrepreneurial zeal. However, the figures in Table 1.2 show that only 37.14 percent of the trainer coordinators undertake selection procedures or screening formalities. Also this percentage includes those coordinators who do the screening of participants only when there are over-applications, which rarely happen. However the trainers in NGOs are far behind in initiating selection procedures with only 16.67 per cent engaging in the same. However the proportion of trainers initiating selection procedures in the central level and state level institutions do not exhibit significant variation with 41.67 percent and 41.18 percent respectively.

Poor selection procedures is one of the factors which result in poor start-up rate but on the other hand it also indicates the lack of prospective applicants which at times compels the training institutions to do away this formality and admit all those who apply.

1.2.3 Persons in Charge of Pre-Training Activities

Pre training activities are mostly done by the trainer coordinators of the training institutions. But at certain times, especially when the training institutions undertake sponsored EDPs, pre-training activities are also done by outside consultants or persons belonging to the sponsoring institutions. As per the Table 1.2, 51.4 per cent of the trainer coordinators themselves involve in pre-training activities and this is more in central government training institutions with 66.67 percent respondents carrying out the activities themselves. Also, 37.14 and 45.71 per cent of the trainers get the assistance from outside consultants and other sources like sponsoring agencies. However, when the trainer coordinators seek assistance from other sources it is wise to keep a close supervision on the pre-training activities undertaken by such external sources.

1.2.4 Selection of Training Centre

Selection of training centre is an important pre-training activity and which needs considerable thought. The receptivity for EDPs of particular region, feasibility of the location in terms of resources, scope for business development and availability of participants, government policies etc become a matter of thought in this regard. As exhibited in the Table 1.3, 91.4 per cent of the trainer coordinators consider different centres depending on the requirements of that particular location, 37.1 per cent take into account the feasibility of the location in terms of resource availability, transportation facilities etc, 74.3 per cent take into account the preference of the sponsoring agencies and 54.3 per cent also takes into consideration the government policies in this regard. Apart from this the trainer's convenience,

accessibility of the training location and support of the local machinery also affects the selection of training location.

Table 1.3
Selection of Training Location

Criterion	Central - 12	State - 17	NGO - 6	Total - 35
Within the premises of the institution	6 (50.00)	10 (58.82)	-	16 (45.71)
Different centres depending on the requirements	12 (100.00)	14 (82.35)	6 (100.00)	32 (91.43)
Feasibility of the location	9 (75.00)	3 (17.65)	1 (16.67)	13 (37.14)
Preference of the sponsoring agencies	6 (50.00)	10 (58.82)	5 (83.33)	21 (60.00)
Government Policies	10 (83.33)	9 (52.94)	-	19 (54.29)

Source: Primary Data; Figures in Parenthesis indicates percentage.

The institutional analysis shows that the central government training institutions set preference on the basis of the requirements of the different centres (100 percent) and government policies (83.33 percent) whereas state government training institutions and NGOs decide on the training location considering the requirements of the different centres (82.35 and 100 percent respectively) and preference of the sponsoring agencies (58.82 and 83.33 respectively). On the whole, the requirements of different centres and the preference of the sponsoring agencies are the main consideration for the selection of training centre.

1.2.5 Selection of Candidates

Selection of prospective candidates is an important pre-training activity. However, now-a-days due to the lack of prospective applicants the training institutions mostly exclude this phase. Even those trainer coordinators who undertake selection procedures do the same only when there are over-applications. There are many kinds of selection techniques viz., interview, test (practical or written), behavioural tests etc.

As exhibited in the Table 1.4, only less than half of the trainer coordinators undertake the selection procedure during the pre-training phase, 60 percent of the coordinators have admitted that they do not undertake any kind of selection formalities. Of the trainer coordinators who initiate screening of applicants 20 percent does it through interviews, 8.57 percent go for tests (written / practical) and 11.43 percent use both tests and interviews for selection of prospective applicants. Institutional wise analysis does not exhibit much variation since majority of the trainer coordinators in all the three categories employ interviews as the screening procedure.

Table 1.4
Selection of Candidates

		Central - 12	State - 17	NGO - 6	Total - 35
Selection procedure	Interview	3 (25.00)	3 (17.65)	1 (16.67)	7 (20.00)
	Test	1 (8.33)	2 (11.76)	-	3 (8.57)
	Both of the above	1 (8.33)	2 (11.76)	1 (16.67)	4 (11.43)
	None of the above	7 (58.33)	10 (58.82)	4 (66.67)	21 (60.00)
Basis of selection	Performance in selection procedure	13 (92.86)			
	Gender	2 (14.29)			
	Educational background	5 (35.71)			
	Family background	3 (21.43)			
	Religion / Caste	-			
	Having business idea	2 (14.29)			
	Financial capacity	2 (14.29)			

Source: Primary Data; Figures in Parenthesis indicates percentage.

Regarding the yardsticks in the selection of candidates 92.86 percent of the trainer coordinators do it on the basis of the candidates' performance in the selection procedure, 14.29 per cent of the coordinators takes into consideration gender difference, 35.71 per cent takes into account the educational background of the applicants, 21.43 per cent considers the family background, 14.29 per cent of the trainer coordinators checks whether the applicants have any business idea and 14.29 per cent also considers the financial capacity of the candidates. However, caste and religion does not become a ground for differentiation. Apart from this the age of the candidates, interests of the sponsoring agencies, experience of the applicants in the relevant field etc. become the basis for selection.

It could therefore be concluded that the selection process is not satisfactory in none of the different kinds of institutions since more than half of the respondents (60 percent) do not initiate any kind of screening procedures. Also those who initiate selection process do it through interviews and the question of how scientific it is remains to be known.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the training institutions though devote much time and efforts to the development of entrepreneurs, they need to focus much more on the pre-training phase. It is a fact that EDPs can train and mould entrepreneurs to develop and shape or nation but it is impossible to create anything from vacuum. The quality, spirit, motivation and interests of the trainees indeed go a long way in moulding the future entrepreneurs. Hence the preparatory phase of the EDPs, ranging from promotional strategies to the selection of trainees seeks more care and dedication.

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