



A REVIEW OF ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (EDPS) IN INDIA

DR. ALI ASGAR JOON ¹ | LAKSHYA MANDLIYA ²

¹ ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PACIFIC ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH UNIVERSITY, UDAIPUR (RAJASTHAN).

² SCHOLAR, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, PACIFIC ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH UNIVERSITY, UDAIPUR, (RAJASTHAN).

ABSTRACT:

Entrepreneurship in India has never been a straightforward story—it's more like a messy but fascinating patchwork quilt stitched together by tradition, necessity, and a surge of policy-driven programs. Entrepreneurial Development Programs (EDPs), which became particularly visible after the 1970s, were designed with the idea that entrepreneurs could be “created” through systematic training and support rather than being born with innate traits. Over the years, these programs have taken different forms: from village-level training initiatives to large-scale government-backed incubation schemes. The intention was to foster small and medium enterprises (SMEs), create employment, and accelerate balanced regional development.

The literature, however, paints a somewhat complicated picture. While some studies highlight the success of EDPs in nurturing first-generation entrepreneurs and promoting inclusivity—especially for women and rural participants—others point to gaps in follow-up, funding linkages, and measurable long-term impact. For example, research by Dr. Mohammed Abid and Meghwal (2025) emphasizes how entrepreneurship has evolved with technology and globalization, but traditional EDPs often lag in incorporating these modern demands. Similarly, studies on organizational management and consumer behavior (Chaplot, 2018; Ahmed & Mehta, 2023) indirectly remind us that the entrepreneurial ecosystem cannot function in isolation; it is deeply embedded in how consumers respond to innovation, how businesses adapt to change, and even how economies react during recessions (Choudhary & Madhwani, 2013).

This review draws on both classic EDP studies and adjacent fields of research—management, consumer behavior, financial resilience, and human capital accounting—to offer a more nuanced understanding of where EDPs in India stand today. The paper suggests that while the programs have had undeniable contributions, especially in generating employment and encouraging self-reliance, their effectiveness could be substantially improved with better measurement systems, stronger integration with capital markets, and adaptive training that reflects digital realities. In short, India has laid down a foundation, but the scaffolding still needs serious work.

KEYWORDS:

ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (EDPS), INDIA, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SMALL ENTERPRISES, HUMAN CAPITAL ACCOUNTING, TRAINING, INNOVATION, POLICY IMPACT.

PAPER ACCEPTED DATE:

16th September 2025

PAPER PUBLISHED DATE:

17th September 2025

PAPER DOI NO:

10.5281/zenodo.17144864

PAPER DOI LINK:

<https://zenodo.org/records/17144864>

INTRODUCTION

Whenever we talk about entrepreneurship in India, it's tempting to think only about unicorn start-ups in Bangalore or Gurugram. But the deeper story lies in the less glamorous yet critical EDPs run by state agencies, industrial boards, and NGOs across the country. The idea has always been fairly idealistic: can you actually train someone to be an entrepreneur, almost like teaching them to ride a bicycle?

EDPs were meant to answer this question. They focus on skill-building, motivation training, business management techniques, and creating networks with financial institutions. The philosophy is similar to what Chaplot

(2017) pointed out in his work on job satisfaction—success is not purely about innate ability but

about creating environments where individuals can thrive. And just like satisfaction at work requires organizational support, entrepreneurship too needs a nurturing ecosystem.

That said, EDPs in India have evolved in uneven waves. In some states, they became powerful engines of local business development. In others, they were reduced to check-box exercises where trainees received certificates without follow-up. The big debate remains: are we building genuine entrepreneurs or just training participants?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CORE EDP STUDIES

Abid and Meghwal (2025) provide a broad review of entrepreneurship's evolution, noting that while EDPs created the groundwork, they often missed integrating digital competencies—an area that is now unavoidable.

Sharma, Dadhich, and Chauhan (2022) indirectly highlight resilience, showing how Indian companies adapted during the pandemic. Their findings point to a skill EDPs rarely emphasize: crisis-readiness.

Chaplot (2018) connects strategic management with performance outcomes, and though not directly about EDPs, the lesson is obvious: entrepreneurs need strategy training, not just motivation lectures.

Dave and Paliwal (2016) explored consumer perceptions of health drinks in Udaipur. On the surface, it seems unrelated, but it reveals a central entrepreneurial truth—consumer perception makes or breaks ventures. EDPs must teach market sensitivity, not just bookkeeping.

Ahmed and Mehta (2023) studied the role of reviews in online purchases, underscoring the growing relevance of digital reputation systems. For EDPs, this means updating curricula to include e-commerce literacy.

Choudhary and Madhwani (2013) analyzed the impact of recession on tourism and hospitality. Their findings reinforce the importance of sector-specific training within EDPs. Entrepreneurs in hospitality, for instance, need tailored crisis-response strategies.

Mehta and Hiran (2023) highlighted methods of managing change in medium-sized businesses in small cities. EDPs should be borrowing from such frameworks, because most participants operate in precisely such contexts.

Chaplot (2017) emphasized that job satisfaction is linked with long-term success. For EDPs, the analogy is clear: programs should not merely spark entrepreneurial intent but sustain it with continuous mentorship.

Abid and Yadav (2025) reviewed AI's role in consumer interactions. Again, the hint is unmistakable—modern EDPs must shift toward digital entrepreneurship modules.

Mehta (n.d.) assessed tax revenue composition, indirectly nudging EDPs toward including taxation and compliance as integral parts of their training.

BROADER REVIEWS

Classic studies in EDP effectiveness often conclude that these programs succeed in generating awareness but falter in ensuring long-term enterprise survival (Desai, 2009; Singh, 2012). Some argue that despite thousands of participants trained annually, the actual conversion to sustainable businesses remains low. Others, however, celebrate EDPs for their inclusivity, particularly for rural women entrepreneurs (Kumar, 2016).

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this review are multi-layered. First, EDPs in India cannot remain frozen in their 1970s structure; they must absorb lessons from broader fields like consumer psychology, crisis management, and AI-driven business. Second, policymakers need better tracking systems—borrowing from human capital accounting frameworks—to assess not just how many people were trained but how many sustainable jobs were created. Third, the narrative around EDPs should expand. It's not only about self-employment but also about resilience, innovation, and positioning Indian entrepreneurs in a global digital economy.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Integrate digital modules—AI, e-commerce, and digital marketing should become central.
2. Adopt sector-specific models—training should be different for agro-based entrepreneurs versus fintech entrepreneurs.
3. Strengthen follow-up mechanisms—mentorship and credit linkages are as important as the training itself.
4. Use human capital accounting metrics—shift from “how many trained” to “how many sustained enterprises after five years.”
5. Blend policy with local realities—avoid one-size-fits-all programs; draw on state-specific needs and cultural contexts.

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