

Fostering Entrepreneurship Skills and Mindset: Problems and Prospects in Higher Education Institutions across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal

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Abstract—This comparative theoretical study explores fostering entrepreneurship skills and mindset among youth in higher education institutions across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, leveraging frameworks like the Entrepreneurial Event Model and Theory of Planned Behavior. It analyzes regional initiatives from 2015-2025, highlighting Kerala's innovation hubs for sustainable ventures, Tamil Nadu's scaled financial programs yielding high startup volumes, and West Bengal's social entrepreneurship networks amid infrastructural challenges. Despite progress, gaps persist in blended formal-informal education, longitudinal outcome tracking, and equitable access, warranting hybrid policy models for India's demographic dividend.

Index Terms—Entrepreneurship education, youth mindset, Entrepreneurial skills, regional comparison, Viksit Bharat

I. INTRODUCTION

India's youth population exceeds 600 million, positioning entrepreneurship education as vital for economic growth amid high unemployment rates averaging 23% for ages 15-29. Regional disparities in higher education ecosystems shaped by policy, culture, and infrastructure demand comparative analysis of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, states representing diverse developmental trajectories. This theoretical essay employs Curran and Stanworth's typology (entrepreneurial awareness, small business education, continuing support) alongside Shapero's

Entrepreneurial Event Model to dissect institutional initiatives, mindset cultivation, and gaps, informing scalable interventions aligned with Startup India and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

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II. LITERATURE SUPPORT

The entrepreneurship education (EE) literature in India highlights its role in transforming youth from job seekers to creators, yet it reveals a fragmented adoption across higher education [Basu, 2014; Zahari, 2023]. Early works like Basu (2014) critique EE for overemphasizing small business training over innovative mindsets, proposing frameworks integrating experiential learning with cultural contexts [Basu, 2014]. Curran and Stanworth's typology awareness (sensitizing scenarios), education (skills), support (incubation) dominates, showing Indian programs strong in awareness but weak in sustained support, particularly in non-metro regions [Quest Journals, 2022].

III. THEORETICAL MODELS

Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model posits desirability, feasibility, and propensity as intent

drivers, varying regionally: high-literacy Kerala boosts desirability via mentorship, Tamil Nadu's funding enhances feasibility, West Bengal's networks foster propensity amid necessity pressures [SDGS Review, 2025]. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) extends this, linking attitudes, norms, and control to outcomes; studies confirm EE raises intent by 30-40%, with Gujarat youth showing higher persistence than others, suggesting cultural modulation [Emerald Insight, 2021; Srivastava, 2025]. Rao's disposition model integrates motives, resources, and socio-political systems, explaining Kerala's public infrastructure edge over West Bengal's resource gaps [College Hive, 2012]. Integrated frameworks like those in NITI Aayog reports advocate blended formal-informal EE, leveraging digital tools for rural access [IJSAT Research Team, 2025a].

IV. IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAPS

Gaps dominate: limited mixed-methods on causal links, ignoring informal channels' dominance (family, peers) and tech's potential [Zahari, 2023; F1000Research Team, 2024]. No standardized mindset scales track evolution across demographics; policy evaluations overlook cultural nuances Kerala's harmony vs. Bengal's adaptability [Srivastava, 2025; IJHSSM Authors, 2025]. Gender/rural inclusions skew urban-male; NEP 2020 opportunities for mandatory modules are unexamined regionally [IJHSSM Authors, 2025]. Future scholarship demands empirical, longitudinal designs quantifying blends' impact [Wibowo et al., 2023].

V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In Kerala, Kerala Startup Mission's IEDCs in 100+ colleges yield sustainable ventures through workshops and incubation, outperforming Tamil Nadu's volume-focused EDII hubs in growth metrics (2015-2024 data) [Kerala Startup Mission, 2020; IJAES Authors, 2025]. Tamil Nadu's 1700+ EDII programs, via Bharathidasan University, integrate PMMY funding, boosting micro-enterprises but facing trainer quality issues [EDII-TN (Ambalavanan), 2024a]. West Bengal lags with select EDCs at St. Xavier's and KNU, emphasizing social entrepreneurship; persistent credit

flow aids MSMEs, yet infrastructure hampers scale [St. Xavier's Kolkata EDC Team, 2023; KNU, 2024]. Comparative analyses (Kerala-Tamil Nadu) reveal policy divergences: Kerala's mentorship sustains ventures, and Tamil Nadu's incentives spike startups [IJAES Authors, 2025]. Tri-state inclusions remain rare, excluding West Bengal from southern narratives [Zahari, 2023]. These initiatives have enabled HEIs to design innovative curricula, hands-on training, and workshops.

VI. INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES THEME

Kerala's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centres (IEDCs) in over 100 colleges deliver workshops, mentorship, and incubation, nurturing traits like problem-solving via Kerala Startup Mission. Tamil Nadu's EDII-TN spans 1700 institutions with hubs at Bharathidasan and Madurai Kamaraj Universities, offering EDP training and innovation challenges for broad skill infusion. West Bengal's EDCs at St. Xavier's, KNU, and Brainware University focus on social ventures through mentorship networks, though scaled smaller than southern counterparts.

VII. POLICY AND ECOSYSTEM SUPPORT THEME

Kerala's public-private infrastructure, including the 2025 Skill Development University, supports sustainable ecosystems via community-driven programs. Tamil Nadu excels in funding integration under PMMY, boosting startup volumes through state-level EDPs and industry ties. West Bengal's networks like WBEN emphasize resource access amid urban-rural divides, with Jesuit institutions promoting ethical entrepreneurship.

VIII. OUTCOMES AND MINDSET DEVELOPMENT THEME

Kerala yields passion-driven, growth-oriented ventures; Tamil Nadu, high-volume micro-enterprises; West Bengal fosters persistence amid challenges. Surveys indicate education boosts intent by 30-40%, with traits like goal orientation higher in funded regions.

Regional Comparative Analysis: Outcomes & Regional Variations

Dimension	Kerala	Tamil Nadu	West Bengal
Program Scale	100+ IEDCs, mentorship-focused	1700+ EDII hubs, funding-heavy	Select EDCs, network-driven
Mindset Emphasis	Sustainable innovation	Volume and formal skills	Social impact, resilience
Ecosystem Strength	Literacy, PPP universities	Industry funding, PMMY integration	Urban networks, ethical focus
Key Challenges	Scaling rural access	Trainer quality	Infrastructure lags

Outcomes literature shows EE enhances traits innovativeness, persistence, self-efficacy with gender/regional variances: Tamil Nadu women access formal loans better, West Bengal youth exhibit resilience via social models [Paramasivan, 2025; Srivastava, 2025]. GEM surveys note every third Indian youth harbors intent, amplified by EE, yet only 46% employability signals skill gaps [Fair Observer Team, 2025]. Longitudinal voids persist; short-term programs boost attitudes sans action sustainability [Koul et al., 2025]. Social entrepreneurship rises, addressing SDGs, but rural-urban divides exacerbate inequities [IOSR Journals Team, 2023].

India's entrepreneurial renaissance hinges on youth in higher education, yet regional silos fragment efforts. Kerala's IEDC model exemplifies desirability triggers, embedding skills through hands on incubation that aligns with high-literacy contexts, producing ventures in green tech. Tamil Nadu counters with feasibility via EDPs, where 1700 hubs democratize access, evidenced by PMMY loan uptakes fostering micro-enterprises despite skill gaps. West Bengal, constrained by infrastructure, leverages social networks St. Xavier's EDC mentors' necessity-driven youth toward ethical startups, mirroring regional resilience.

Theoretically, Theory of Planned Behavior elucidates mindset: attitudes (passion) thrive in Kerala's nurturing norms, subjective norms (peer support) in West Bengal's communities, perceived control (funding) in Tamil Nadu. Challenges persist informal channels dominate but lack quality, formal programs overlook behavioral change, yielding intent without action. Blended approaches, tech-leveraged (e.g., digital EDPs), could bridge gaps, tailoring to cultural variances: Kerala's harmony, Tamil Nadu's structure, Bengal's adaptability.

IX. CONCLUSION

Hybrid models merging regional strengths Kerala's mentorship infrastructure, Tamil Nadu's funding scale, and West Bengal's ethical social networks offer a blueprint to address identified gaps, transforming youth into engines of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Coordinated national-state policies, integrating NEP 2020's experiential mandates with digital platforms, ensure equitable skill and mindset infusion across demographics, maximising India's 600-million youth dividend for sustainable GDP growth.

Empirical validation through longitudinal studies will quantify impacts, while Jesuit-inspired ethical frameworks in West Bengal-like contexts promote inclusive ventures aligning with SDGs 4, 8, and 9. Policymakers must prioritize trainer upskilling, rural hubs, and gender metrics to convert intent into action, fostering a nationwide entrepreneurial culture that rivals global benchmarks like Israel's startup ecosystem. Ultimately, this tri-state synthesis not only bridges research voids but catalyzes self-reliant innovation, positioning Indian higher education as a global model for youth empowerment.

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