

## **POLICY CHALLENGES FACING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

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### **Abstract**

Entrepreneurship is politically a democratic liberal idea. Modeling independent India on the Soviet Union and China, Jawaharlal Nehru established the Indian state on the ideology of democratic socialism. The socialist ideology influenced the principles of economic and educational policies of the Indian government to establish a welfare state. By 1980s, the Soviet Union and China, due to internal contradictions of vast state-run command economies imploded their fragility. In India's case economic development has led to the creation of a very large and largely inefficient bureaucracy. Widespread corruption, a lax work ethic, especially in public sector enterprises (both economic and education), an overemphasis on a discourse of rights and entitlements at the expense of an equally necessary discourse of duties, all contributed to the growing malaise of public indebtedness.

This paper attempts to explore the impact of socialist ideology of the Indian state on entrepreneurship education in higher education. Formal higher education is positively correlated with entrepreneurship. Education inculcating the culture of competitiveness is the most important factor in determining the entrepreneurial orientation of the citizens. While liberalism encourages competitiveness, socialism totally discourages it. Unfortunately, the present entrepreneurship education in India is tightly controlled by the government and based on socialism. Hence, if India has to succeed in entrepreneurship and develop a national culture of competitiveness within higher education and its citizens, it needs to first begin by making amendment to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship education, higher education, political challenge, political economy challenge, operational challenge

## 1. Introduction

Socialism in India emerged during the last century as part of the independence movement inspired by the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. It gained stronghold on the Indian government under the most powerful influence of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister. The Preamble and the Directive Principle of State Policy state that our utopian goal is to establish a Welfare and Socialist State albeit through democratic political process. Education therefore was the sole responsibility of the state and education will be at the service of the socialist state.

After the colossal failure of this system, by 1991 the Indian state was forced to water down its socialist ideology and give the country's economic policies a neoliberal direction. In this context presently, there is a rising interest in the part that Higher Education can perform in entrepreneurship education (EE) to realize socioeconomic development objectives, including progress, improvement, occupations, and parity. A growing expanse of attention in this arena is how governments can boost entrepreneurs' achievement and advancement on wide-ranging socioeconomic objectives. This cannot be undertaken by a government that is entrenched in a socialist ideological mindset. As Valerio, Paton & Robb (2014) warns: "For programs targeting high-growth potential entrepreneurs, despite an interest in economic spillovers such as employment and innovation, the government's role is better reserved for creating the space for the financing, providing private entities to train, and fostering a business environment that enables entrepreneurial activity. Given the practical and political limitations of having government "pick winners," selecting and training participants is a role better filled by the market and the private entities." Hence, the government can be a facilitator and not provider.

This study is envisioned to contribute to the national discourse on ideological impact on EE. The foreseen audience is comprehensive, with a key focus on policymakers, practitioners, and educational leaders. This exploration is intended to enlarge understanding of prevailing role government is playing in EE, identify directions for improvement, and inform dialogue around including ideology in education strategies. The secondary audience for this paper is the public at large. This study highlights the negative role socialist ideology is playing in education at all levels in developing entrepreneurial culture among Indian citizens. It presents an overview of challenges to EE to enable policymakers and public to formulate, monitor and evaluate national policies to inspire and make necessary changes to the Constitution that hamper the Indian state and nation.

• **Ideological Concepts: Definitions**

<b>Political Ideology</b>	
<b>democracy</b>	A political system in which governance is accomplished by leaders whose authority is based on a limited mandate and who are elected by a universal electorate. Such an “electoral” democracy becomes a “liberal” democracy when the population selects among genuine alternatives and also has significant rights to political participation, expression, and opposition.
<b>socialism</b>	One of the major Western political ideologies in which the most important goal is to provide a high-quality, relatively equal standard of living for all. Each individual is encouraged to enhance the collective good of all in an environment that encourages cooperation and sharing. Government plays a crucial role as it attempts to use its allocation of values and control of resources to increase the material, social, and political equality of all citizens. Two major variations are Marxist-Leninist socialism and democratic socialism.
<b>democratic socialism</b>	A variation of socialist ideology that treats greater egalitarianism as its primary goal but also assumes that its goals can and should be implemented by a government that comes to power and rules by democratic means, not by violence and repression. Under democratic socialism, the government might own some of the major economic resources and regulate much of the economy, but it does not attempt to plan and control all aspects of the economic system.
<b>Political Economy Ideology</b>	
mixed economy	A political economy that attempts to combine the strengths of both the market and command economies while also minimizing their shortcomings. Control of the means of production is shared between the state and private actors. The state’s rules, actions, and direct involvement in the economic system guide some production, distribution, and pricing decisions and also moderate and limit the market behavior of private households and firms.
social market economy	A political - economic system in which the state encourages the operation of an extensive free-market economy but is also committed to social welfare distribution and some income redistribution, within the context of a democratic political process. Contemporary examples: Germany; Sweden.

**Source: Danziger (2012)**

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This research design is based on Thematic Analysis (TA). Most important feature of TA is that it is a useful method for examining different scholarly perspectives, emphasizing comparisons and dissimilarities, and producing unforeseen understandings. It is also useful for summarizing main features of a large data set, as it forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to treating data, assisting to yield a flawless and structured concluding report (Braun & Clarke 2006; King 2004 quoted in Nowell, Morris and Moules 2017:2).

### **2.2 Objective of the Study**

This paper aims to highlight the various ideological components that constitute policy challenges creating obstacles for entrepreneurial education in Indian higher education and how it is impeding the development of the culture of competitiveness so important for business success.

### **2.3 Research Questions**

This TA is organized in three main parts as to address three major questions:

- RQ1.** Which are the most serious policy challenges faced by entrepreneurial education in Indian higher education?
- RQ2.** And how it is preventing the cultivation of competitiveness culture so crucial for entrepreneurship to succeed?
- RQ3.** And what fundamental amendments are needed to the Indian Constitution to transform the existing culture?

### **2.4 Data Collection**

TA investigation is an extremely adaptable research technique and employs any and all techniques of data and statistics gathering in more or less opportunistic ways. The data collection tools primarily centered on document analysis. This specifically included the report of British Council India (2014) on Indian Higher Education by Lynne Heslop and World Bank (2014) study on Entrepreneurship Education by Valerio, A., Parton, B & Robb, A. (2014).

## 2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Ibrahim 2012) Thematic Analysis (TA) model of data analysis. This involved the three link-stages or streams:

**First Stage – Data Reduction:** It comprises the process of choosing, streamlining and converting the data. The procedure of data reduction is accomplished in such a way that inferences are drawn and corroborations are finalized.

**Intermediate Stage – Themes Reliability and Validity:** From the investigator's capability, authentication is helpful for the data, especially at the level of themes as it provides precise and consistent ones for the subsequent level. Further, it makes the data at the following level of themes less disposed to inaccuracies and errors.

**Second Stage – Data Display:** Exhibiting the data serves a number of purposes such as:

- The capability to view and enhance the data more clearly for the research.
- To avoid data excess during the course of analysis.
- Making sense of the data that has been composed by exhibiting correlated conceptions from different accounts.

**Third Stage – Data Drawing and Conclusions:** The final stage comprises of the following:

- The scheme of any arrangements or themes and the significance of any statement especially if comparable or divergent.
- Combination or forming groupings of 'data that can go organized.'
- Categorizing interrelations among issues and variables
- Constructing theoretical consistency and reliability which at the end it should use to discover the cogency of the results so that they fit the conjectural framework of the study.

TA offers the flexibility for starting data inquiry at any time during the venture, where there is no relationship between the data gathered and the outcome of the process itself. More significantly, it provides the elasticity for forthcoming exploration arrangements in two ways, i.e. deductive and inductive.

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 Entrepreneurship Education (EE): Definition and Measuring

- **Entrepreneurship Defined**

Entrepreneurship is a universally recognized phenomenon lacking a distinctive clear-cut definition. Schumpeter in 1934 argued the role of entrepreneurship in stimulating innovation and effecting transformation in an economy by presenting new merchandises or methods. In 1973, Kirzner defined “entrepreneurship as a process of discovery; the acting upon previously unnoticed— and often marginal—profit opportunities.” Schoof in 2006 tied entrepreneurship broadly only to particular economic undertakings, describing a process of prospect recognition to generate value and act upon that opportunity. Klapper et al. in 2010 described entrepreneurship from a practitioner standpoint, as a process of creating new wealth.

Entrepreneurship is tied to a number of pressing local, domestic and global economic imperatives from employment to poverty reduction to innovation (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014). For example, Birch (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014) cites entrepreneurship as a serious driver of job formation (see also Khan & Mohsinuddin 2018) and advocates that entrepreneurship is the largest single source of new job growth in both industrialized and emerging economies. Additionally, development scholars have identified entrepreneurship as a mechanism for achieving stable income flows and increased earnings for vulnerable populaces. Furthermore, extensive research literature draws indisputable connections between entrepreneurial activity, innovation, and hi-tech transformation (cited in Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014).

Despite assuming a place in dialogue around job creation, poverty reduction, and innovation, the relationship between entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs, and these various economic objectives is complex. With regard to employment, it is suggested that the bulk of job creation is within microenterprises that experience high failure rates, which can compromise net job creation. In addition, while entrepreneurship may contribute to income generation for the at risk people, Gindling and Newhouse (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014) point out that as countries progress, many of these individuals are immersed into remuneration and waged employment— jobs that remain the noticeable driver of development. On the modernization front as per World Bank Report 2012 (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014), big, conventional corporations are typically more innovative, spending more in research and development and in initiation new merchandises and services. This

work proposes a meaning that is comprehensive of both informal as well as formal economic activities, including self-employment for the purposes of creating fortune.

### **3.2 Entrepreneurship Enabling by Government**

Presently, there is extensive research findings related with understanding the restraints to entrepreneurial attainment. Klapper, Lewin, and Delgado describe how rules connected to the ease of starting a business can affect entrepreneurial activity. Welter outlines the circumstantial dimensions that can shape entrepreneurship, including social contexts (e.g., cultural traditions, gender roles) and spatial contexts (e.g., geography). Levie and Autio propose finance access is among the most widely recognized factors influencing the success of entrepreneurs. Alongside this backdrop, whether driven by youth population bulges in South Asia and Africa or by the imperative for innovation in Europe, governments have taken an interest in easing constraints and encouraging entrepreneurship. Audretsch sees the government's action grounded in four types of market failures: network externalities (geographic proximity to complementary firms), knowledge externalities (knowledge spillover), failure externalities (value created for other firms and individuals even if firms fail), and learning externalities (motivation and learning from the demonstration of entrepreneurial activities by others) (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014).

To address the constraints to entrepreneurship, governments can employ a number of policy tools. Policymakers can support entrepreneurship endeavors with policies or programs aimed at modifying regulations, easing business environs constraints, increasing access to credit, promoting value chain assimilation, strengthening capacity to improve business practices, and establishing incubators to support business start-ups and innovation. To summarize, Stevenson and Lundström offer a framework for the variety of areas that these policies aim to impact—the promotion of entrepreneurship, the reduction of entry-exit barriers, entrepreneurship education (EE), start-up support, start-up financing, and target group measures (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014).

### **3.3. Entrepreneurship Education (EE) Supported by Governments**

A government's justification for playing a role in EE is tied to its interest in addressing knowledge-based skills, mindsets and cultural constraints to entrepreneurship. The World Bank's World Development Report 2012 (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014) specifies that a government's role in EE is shaped by the potential knowledge spillovers of entrepreneurial-related knowledge and skills

(across potential or practicing entrepreneurs in a certain area) as well as by evident market failures when individuals recognize the value of management expertise to their entrepreneurial outcomes. Governments can be uniquely situated to support EE. For example, at a strategic level, governments can serve as champions for EE through the establishment of national plans and agendas. Governments can set policy frameworks that shape the context of EE delivery within education systems and institutions (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014).

It is proposed that governments can directly fund EE interventions, develop EE curricula, and train instructors to implement curricula in education systems. Conversely, Cho and Honorati demonstrate that involving the private sector in the delivery of EE is more closely linked to better effects on the participants. This would suggest that governments' role should also include public-private partnerships to provide EE more effectively. Finally, Pittaway, and Cope suggest that research on the government and policy role in EE remains underdeveloped, particularly in understanding the role of regional, national, and supranational policies in shaping EE interventions (Valerio, Parton & Robb 2014).

We argue that ideological considerations play a prominent role in shaping potential entrepreneurs mindsets. This contrasts with the existing literature we explored above that remain deeply skeptical or totally ignores the ideological dimensions of policies designed to deliver EE. In socialist India, EE is at base a political than social and finally an economic process.

#### **4. Findings**

The review of relevant literature rears a number of significant issues and offers an indication of the enduring policy questions. There is substantiation that governments foresee EE in Indian Higher Education (EE-IHE) advancement as a policy response to address a number of persistent social and economic issues to perpetuate its dominant ideology. As is the case with any democracy, civic policy considerations need to be deliberated when framing interventions. Emerging from the analysis of data were a number of common themes that are central to this study. The findings are presented as follows:



#### **4.1 EE-IHE: Political Challenge**

The first challenge facing EE in Indian higher education is political. In India, education is exceedingly politicized and multifaceted. All the way through the political system to the uppermost levels, the education sector is forcefully represented; restructurings in education are controlled by political practices and interests at both central and province stages. Various education reorganizations, policies and goals are highly disputed. In the Indian education landscape, there is a multifarious relationship beneath the prescribed edifices affecting the dispersal of control and assets; causal stresses, interests, enticements and establishments can stimulate or exasperate upcoming educational alteration. This is predominantly multifarious in the higher education arena.

There is a disproportionate deal of centralism in policymaking in higher education, driven principally through the five-year plan system and now through NITI Aayog, which sets-out primacies and central financial provisions to the provinces. Conversely, there has been cumulative thwarting from the provinces that the central government is sluggish and “interfering” and has detained involvement in higher education. Stakeholders expressed “discontent with the way central and provinces universities are currently funded. As a side effect of the central government’s drive to establish centers of excellence through ‘top tier’ institutions and institutes of National Importance, provinces universities were regarded as having been neglected and underfunded, despite these institutions enrolling the vast majority of students” (Heslop 2014: 21). Further, Education bills can waste away for years in Indian Assembly without being put to the ballot. It is anticipated that in the future Educational Reforms will be ‘slower and messier.’

Heslop paints a very grim picture of the political challenge facing Indian higher education. She elaborates: “Many interviewees expressed their reservations over the ability and will of provinces and central governments to push through reforms in higher education, particularly of key institutional posts, including the recruitment of vice chancellors, entrenched bureaucracy, lack of funding for higher education and the ban in some provinces on recurring academics for full-faculty positions” (2014: 21). In the present political climate, most Educationists are cautioning contrary to taking a more than usual hopeful view of the future of Indian EE-IHE.

#### **4.2 EE-IHE: Political Economy Challenge**

In India, the ideology of the welfare State informed the deliberation of the Constituent Assembly (1947-49) as it drew up the blueprint of the Indian republic. By incorporating a fairly elaborate

section on the 'Directive Principles of State Policy,' the Constitution framers were calling upon governments at both the center and the provinces to begin the task of building, in stages, a viable welfare State. The noted Academician Professor Cheriyan Alexander reminds us: "Politics in the early days of the republic revolved around the ideology of economic development along socialist lines, with the 'commanding heights of the economy' (Nehru's phrase) under public ownership and 'reservations' in educational institutions and in government sector jobs for the scheduled castes and the downtrodden. Ahmad, W. K, (2018) mentioned that it was hoped that this model of development given enough time to work, would lift millions out of poverty and create security and wellbeing for the disadvantaged masses" (2013: 293-4). By 1980s, the ideal of the Indian welfare State was already under siege.

Meanwhile the USSR and China, role models for Indian socialist politicians and ideologues – by 1980s, due to internal contradictions of vast state-run command economies imploded exposing their fragility. In India's case, the attempt to deliver on the constitutional promise of comprehensive welfare for all through economic development had led to the creation of a very large and largely inefficient bureaucracy. Widespread corruption, a lax work ethic, especially in public sector enterprises, an overemphasis on a discourse of rights and entitlements at the expense of an equally necessary discourse of duties, all contributed to the growing malaise of public indebtedness (Alexander 2013: 294-6). By 1992, the Indian government radically changed course economically, albeit not politically, by adopting the model of the free market.

The Socialist utopian model continues to be most influential in spite of the global push for neoliberal state. Heslop explains: "University education is, by law *not-for-profit* in both public and private sectors. The reality is a little more complicated. The majority of private institutions operate a widely prevalent means of making money through *illegal* 'capitation fees,' in the form of one-off fees paid by the student, off-the-books. The private sector argues that caps on the low, but legitimate student fees, make it impossible for private institutions to operate without charging capitation fees. There are indications that the government increasingly recognizes that the low levels of funding support and student fees in both private and state funded institutions are *unsustainable* and are therefore likely to rise in the future" (2014: 15-16, italics mine).

### 4.3 EE-IHE: Operational Challenge

It was discovered by Heslop (2014), not a solitary academic establishment visited seemed to be offering EE, either as separate modules or inserted across the course, and defined this as an acute breach. Heslop further laments: “Although it seems that many Indian Institutions have not yet incorporated enterprise education or entrepreneurship in their programmes, there are small signs that the employment market is driving a more entrepreneurial mindset in students. ... This shift may also be a consequence ...of the greater stability, and therefore more appetite for risk-taking, of the upper middle classes. The same trend may not be seen in the emerging lower middle classes” (2014: 35). This reflects the failure of the socialist ideology’s march to egalitarian society.

The majority of higher education stakeholders sensed that numerous Indian colleges and universities were accomplishing below par in preparing students for occupations, let alone for entrepreneurship. Colleges of Engineering were predominantly affected by low graduate employment and an over-saturated market place. Heslop (2014) found that, “only 10% of the 300,000 annual engineering graduates from Tamil Nadu’s colleges are employable, and reported that 1000 people with engineering degrees recently applied for a vacancy as a rail track cleaner for Indian Railways, which only required a Grade 8 education.” This clearly depicts the sad scenario of the current Indian higher education and does not bode well for the future of EE-IHE.

Further, specialized programmes, mainly MBAs were sensed to be losing importance in the market for jobs, due to over-capacity and poor levels of job-ready abilities in graduates. Three main challenges to providing these skills as per Heslop (2014) are:

- “Teaching: there is very little awareness of the importance of EE skills and little capacity to teach them. There are virtually no opportunities for collaborative working, creativity or real-life problem-solving.
- Assessment is based on rote learning and regurgitation of information. Teachers therefore teach to the exam and students learning is often narrow and theoretical.
- Lack of employer/entrepreneur engagement or consultation by institutions has resulted in out-of-date curricula and a lack of awareness of the skills needed by industry.”

## 5. Conclusion

The triple challenges facing EE-IHE became clear through this thematic analysis. All the challenges unearthed in this preliminary investigations were pertaining to socialist ideology of the

Indian state in the context of EE. The greatest challenge to EE effectiveness is that all the ambitious plans and planning at the government level is proposed and implemented based on obsolete socialist ideology while the 21st century EE is solely based on liberal ideology. This ideological mismatch is not in tune with the domestic as well as global reality and hence not able to respond effectively to the enormous challenges that young students face in developing a competitive mindset so crucial to become entrepreneurs.

The political-cum-political economy challenges are the most daunting. In a democratic socialist country like ours, it has always been regarded that economic rights are as important as political rights. In fact, political and economic rights are complementary and supplementary to each other, as they form the basic structure of the same organic constitutional system. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as state enterprises and welfare ideology of *“not-for-profit”* have worked at the beginning of the establishment of the socialist welfare Indian state. But their fullest implementation failed as the state lost its way with the end of the Cold War in 1991, as the entire global strategic and economic ecosystem witnessed drastic change to neo-liberalism. This national and global ideological dissymmetry is proving to be a great hindrance in the non-implementation of welfare obligation especially in the EE-IHE sector. The challenge to the present Indian policy makers is – there ought to be ways to open up EE-IHE space to private enterprises and *“for-profit”* without giving up what works. The socialist Indian state can still preserve its hegemony on the EE-IHE sector – by welcoming rather than suppressing private enterprises by easing restrictions on delivery mechanism of private institutions, or by making substantive improvements to the country’s EE-IHE as a whole. Striking such a balance will be India’s central and provinces governments’ main challenges in the years to come.

Another serious challenge that confronts EE-IHE is the innumerable operational issues that has risen due to decades of socialist ideology permeating the institutional culture across both public and private sectors. This has led to no accountability, transparency and transformation in the EE-IHE sector. To address these serious challenges, the former UGC Chairman Sukhdeo Thorat (2016) proposes: “First, public and private aided institution must be strengthened and expanded and the expansion of self-financing private institutions restricted to a reasonable level. However, given the political economy of private institutions, the chances of this happening are slim. For quality institutions, autonomy as far as academic and administrative aspects are involved is a must.

This would also involve the appointment of heads of institutional and executive bodies. It must be remembered that a UGC committee had once suggested the independence of institutions from the government as the bottom line for autonomy.”

Khan W. A & D'Chuna. N (2019) stated that another issue relates to the review of the state of higher education on a continuous basis. Once again Thorat (2016) laments: “The framing of successful policies requires reliable data, and on multiple aspects. We are faced with a situation where we not only do not have reliable data, but also have had no review of higher education for the last 54 years, the last one have been the D.S. Kothari Commission in 1965. Far-reaching changes have taken place in higher education in the last 54 years. We desperately need a review.” Hence, to overcome operational challenge, Autonomy and Review are the two most potent instruments to make EE-IHE relevant for our times.

The triple challenges facing EE-IHE are both intertwined and affect each other. This has created graduates with truncated employability and entrepreneurship skills. This requires a political system that fosters competitiveness both at the institutional as well as individual levels. It is sad to note that India presently holds 58 position out of 140 countries on the global competitiveness index (Schwab 2018). Deeper investigation reveal that most competitive countries have a liberal model of governance and those languishing at the both still continue with the socialist ideology. India is been badly damaged due to the continuation of socialist ideology that informs the entire EE-IHE domain. This requires that all stakeholders beginning with the government agents, academic leaders as well as the students to be sensitized to the grave damage been done to the nation as we carry obsolete and irrelevant ideology even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Finally, we conclude that this study results have significant implications for those interested in the ideological implication for EE-IHE. The contribution of this research is to initiate a constructive debate and dialogue within the government and wider civil society to change the Preamble term from ‘socialist’ to ‘liberal.’

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