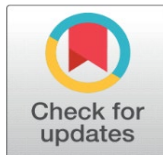
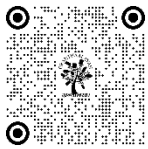


EMPOWERING RURAL YOUTH: A MEDIA STRATEGY FOR FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the vital role of media in shaping entrepreneurial awareness and proposes a comprehensive media strategy to bridge the gap between rural youth and entrepreneurship opportunities. In recent days, the term 'unemployment' has become increasingly prevalent, particularly among young graduates in the Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu. The lack of employment opportunities in their hometowns has led them to migrate to urban centers like Chennai and Coimbatore. Promoting entrepreneurship awareness and knowledge is crucial for empowering rural youth to establish their ventures. This study aims to formulate a media strategy that enhances awareness and fosters an entrepreneurial mindset. The findings reveal that while rural youth have a basic awareness of entrepreneurship, there is a lack of in-depth knowledge, particularly regarding skill development and funding schemes. The study explores the media accessing patterns of rural youth, with a focus on preferred platforms such as WhatsApp and YouTube. The media strategy developed aims to leverage these platforms to disseminate entrepreneurship-related information. The study concludes by emphasizing the potential of this strategy to improve awareness, empower rural youth, and contribute to the economic growth of their communities.

Keywords: Unemployment, Migration, Youth, Entrepreneurship, Media Strategy, Rural



1. INTRODUCTION

The promotion of entrepreneurship can have a significant impact on rural areas, as it can aid in the creation of employment opportunities, foster economic growth, and address social issues. Since rural areas often have minimal employment opportunities, the promotion of entrepreneurship can help generate new jobs and offer alternative income sources to the residents. Furthermore, entrepreneurship can aid in the economic development of rural areas by establishing new industries, drawing investment, and encouraging innovation. Rural areas may be faced with exceptional social challenges, such as poverty, health inequalities, and environmental concerns. Entrepreneurship can help in tackling these issues by developing firms that meet social and environmental demands. Rural communities frequently experience issues with limited access to goods and services, particularly in isolated areas. By starting new firms that serve the needs of nearby areas, entrepreneurship can contribute to the solution of this problem (Issa and Venkatakrishnan 2013).

Talented individuals continue to leave the village in search of employment opportunities, especially in rural areas where it might be difficult to keep young people. There is a situation where they migrate to villages in search of employment. By fostering entrepreneurial opportunities, it is feasible to attract and retain talented individuals and young people in rural areas, enabling the sustainable development of rural communities. Entrepreneurship can also address the issue of youth unemployment in rural areas through the creation of new possibilities for employment and promoting self-employment. Youth livelihoods will be improved, and the risk of migration and social anxiety will be reduced (ILO 2017). For rural youth to view entrepreneurship as a potential career or employment opportunity, it is necessary to increase their awareness of the entrepreneurship foundational principles. This is important because only with a basic understanding of entrepreneurship can rural youth be transformed into successful entrepreneurs. To achieve this, we must focus on raising awareness of entrepreneurial basics among students, especially young adults.

In recent times, the central and state governments have been proactively encouraging entrepreneurship. In particular, they motivate and guide young individuals through various financial aid initiatives, skill training programmes, counselling, and mentoring support. However, has this awareness reached the rural young population? Do they understand the concept of entrepreneurship? What are the possibilities for rural youth to become more aware of entrepreneurship through their preferred media-accessing pattern? How can it be enhanced? These are important questions to think considering. This study attempts to explore this.

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today, unemployment is a major issue among rural youth, and they are only willing to migrate from rural areas to urban areas for better employment. Migration to urban areas leads to some negative effects, such as population pressures, congestion and an increase in crime rates. In this context, entrepreneurship development is the right method for rural youth, not only providing the best job opportunities in rural areas but also limiting the problems of migrants. Many rural youths have some ideas and innovations but they don't know how to develop the ideas and innovation into business. This study will develop a media strategy to increase the awareness and mindset of entrepreneurship. Rural Entrepreneurship caters to rural needs such as employment generation, income generation, rural development, building up village republics and curbing rural-urban migration. As a solution to these problems, the Government of India and the State Governments have launched several schemes to encourage rural entrepreneurship with the support of active public bodies.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is critical to the establishment and expansion of enterprises, as well as the growth and prosperity of regions and nations. These large-scale implications can have simple beginnings; entrepreneurial acts begin at the intersection of a profitable opportunity and an innovative individual. Entrepreneurial opportunities are defined as situations in which new goods, services, raw materials, and organising methods can be introduced and sold at a price greater than their cost of production (Hisrich, Peters, and Shepherd 2018). Entrepreneurship is the process of recognising a business opportunity and launching a new firm to capitalise on it. Entrepreneurs are those who are prepared to take risks in order to develop new products, services, or processes that meet market demand or solve a specific issue. According to Shane and Venkataraman (2000), entrepreneurship is "the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited." Entrepreneurship is the process of establishing a new business or commercial venture, typically in an industry or sector of the economy with substantial potential for growth. An entrepreneur is someone who starts a business. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new. It is a series of steps that an entrepreneur takes to start his business. The entrepreneur, who establishes and manages a new business venture, is the catalyst beyond entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are typically self-employed, ambitious, and risk-takers who aren't afraid to take calculated risks in order to achieve their goals. (Encyclopedia 2021).

According to UNICEF (Alam 2019), entrepreneurship is "the empirical literature equates entrepreneurship with measures such as self-employment or new business activity. In contrast, the theoretical literature defines entrepreneurship based on personality traits, skills, and behaviours. The art expresses that entrepreneurship is regarding creativity, risk-taking, confidence, and determination. The science of entrepreneurship is an advancement of planning, management, accounting, and marketing."

Entrepreneurial awareness is the knowledge and comprehension of the idea of entrepreneurship, including the competencies, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to launch and run a successful company enterprise. It entails a person's awareness of the process of observing possibilities, setting up resources, and producing profit through inventiveness and taking risks. Entrepreneurship awareness is a key element in encouraging entrepreneurial activity and is crucial in influencing people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship. It entails empowering people with the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes they need to identify business opportunities and establish new enterprises. The desire for economic growth and development is one of the key reasons for encouraging entrepreneurial awareness. According to Audretsch et al. (2019), entrepreneurship has a strong positive impact on economic growth. The survey also emphasised the importance of entrepreneurial awareness in boosting the number of new entrepreneurs, creating jobs, and promoting innovation. In order to enhance the rate of entrepreneurship among marginalised communities, it is also important to spread awareness about entrepreneurship. According to a study by Reynolds et al. (2005), entrepreneurship education programmes had a favourable influence on people from low-income communities' inclinations to start their businesses. The study results emphasise the need to encourage entrepreneurship awareness among people from underprivileged backgrounds as a means of facilitating social and economic mobility.

2.2. RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

A rural development agency is an organization that is responsible for promoting the economic and social development of rural areas. The primary goal of such agencies is to improve the standard of living of rural communities by providing them with access to essential services and resources. Rural development agencies may be government-run or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They often work in collaboration with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of rural areas and develop strategies to address them (DRD 2020). Rural development agencies offer loans, grants, or subsidies to passionate entrepreneurs in rural areas. The funding will assist entrepreneurs in setting up or expanding their enterprises. Additionally, it provides business development services including mentoring, networking opportunities, and training to aid entrepreneurs in acquiring both the skills and knowledge necessary for success. Rural development organisations also assist entrepreneurs in reaching local, regional, and global markets by giving them access to market data, trade shows, and other venues for showcasing their products and services. The government, charitable organisations, and private organisations all offer different types of these services. Where the programmes are easily accessible to youth from remote areas, either directly or through membership (MRD 2020).

2.3. RURAL YOUTH

There is no universally recognised description of rural. Many rural areas are characterised by primary activities such as agriculture or tourism, which can be described by an entity as simply rural, not urban, or complicatedly rural. Residents of rural places may be identified by their proximity to small and large towns, as well as large cities, as well as the prominence of agricultural or forestry. (FAO 2018). According to national statistics methods and activities, a geographic territory that is not part of the urban agglomeration might be referred to as a rural area. (UNESCO 2020). According to Hart et al. (2005), "Rural" is defined as having "pastoral landscapes, distinctive demographic structures and patterns of settlement, a state of isolation a small population density, intensive economic activities, and unique socio-cultural milieus." Youth is best described as the period between childhood dependence and adult independence. So, compared to other age groups, young people are more fluid. However, ageing is the simplest way to describe this group, especially in terms of education and employment, as young people are typically referred to as generations of those who had to attend mandatory school and who were first looking for a job (UNDESA 2008). The young age group is defined differently by many nations and organizations, as well as by the same organization in various contexts. "Youth was defined as being between the ages of 15 and 29 years old, according to the India National Youth Policy-2014 (MYAS 2014)." Considering the numerous problems that youth face, the Tamil Nadu State Government Youth Policy 2018 identified eleven target groups (YWSDD 2018). For this study, the 'Rural Youth' group was chosen.

2.4. MEDIA ACCESSING PATTERN

In today's world, our connection to the media is more personal than ever. We receive the latest information, entertainment, and news from the media from the moment we wake up in the morning until we go to sleep at night (Shirley Biagi 2017). In general, media refers to different forms of communication channels that are used to deliver information to a large audience. These channels can include print media like newspapers and magazines, as well as

broadcast media like radio and television, and digital media platforms (Baran 2014). The media serves several important functions in society, including informing, educating, entertaining, socializing, and monitoring (Malachi Adams 2017). In today's technology age, media consumption is quite significant. Everyone uses media differently. The use of media is novel and widespread, particularly among young people. The media plays a major role in raising public awareness of entrepreneurship. Particularly, the media aids in the promotion of entrepreneurship-related activities including conferences, seminars, competitions, and trainings. It raises awareness among entrepreneurs and offers them chances to gain new knowledge and support. Additionally, the media offers entrepreneurship education through articles, videos, and webinars that explain how to launch and operate an enterprise. These tools support budding entrepreneurs in acquiring the information and abilities necessary to launch and expand their enterprises. This study aims to explore rural youth media accessing patterns related to entrepreneurship.

2.5. MEDIA STRATEGY

According to the National Council of Rural Institutes (MGNCRE 2019), The Communication Strategy is divided into three phases; first, mass media messages can set an agenda for and increase the frequency, depth, or both, of interpersonal discussion about entrepreneurship and skill. Second, since mass media messages reach large audiences, changes in behaviour that become norms within an individual's social network might influence that person's decisions without them having been directly exposed to or initially persuaded by the campaign. Finally, mass media campaigns can prompt public discussion of entrepreneurship and skill and lead to changes in public policy, resulting in constraints on individuals' behaviour and thereby change. Each phase with specific communication objectives; it clearly defines,

- 1) The audience receiving the information (the who)
- 2) The content of the information (the what)
- 3) The methods to be used to convey the information (the how); and
- 4) The approaches to promote action for change (the action).

This is achieved through advocacy, interpersonal communication and community mobilisation with overall multi-media support including mass media, digital media and social media.

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This study aims to formulate an all-encompassing media strategy that fosters awareness and cultivates a positive mindset toward entrepreneurship. The primary focus is to tackle the core problem of youth unemployment in rural regions and the subsequent migration by promoting entrepreneurial opportunities and attitudes.

The research setting is the area where data collection takes place in a study. The research project was carried out in selected villages in the districts of Thoothukudi, Tenkasi, and Tirunelveli. The current research project focuses on young people in rural areas. The district of southern Tamilnadu has 427 panchayat villages. A qualitative in-depth interview was conducted among 40 youths from select panchayat villages.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARENESS

This study classified two main categories to assess the entrepreneurial awareness of rural youth.

- 1) Awareness of Entrepreneurship Fundamentals
- 2) Awareness of Entrepreneurship Skill development & Funding Schemes

The results suggested that most of the rural youth have somewhat awareness regarding the entrepreneurship fundamentals, and have a slight awareness of various entrepreneurship skill development & funding schemes in the study area. The results indicate that rural youth have a basic awareness of entrepreneurship that is moderate but may not be in-depth. Although entrepreneurship may be familiar to some individuals in rural areas, more youths may not possess knowledge of it. Additionally, some may place greater importance on alternative forms of employment, demonstrating a hesitation towards entrepreneurship. This suggests that there is a necessity for enhancing education, training, and entrepreneurial awareness in rural areas.

Youth in rural areas know relatively little about entrepreneurship skill development & funding schemes. Various initiatives are being implemented by the central and state governments to support entrepreneurship. However, the findings indicate that young people in rural areas are not aware of this. Therefore, the government and those who set policy should take necessary steps while keeping the rural youth in mind. Plans should be created in particular for

improved outreach and communication initiatives. In this digital age, it is important to make information about entrepreneurship skill development & funding schemes available through media channels preferred by the youth.

4.2. RURAL YOUTH MEDIA ACCESSING THE PATTERN

The results pointed out that more than half of the participants didn't read the newspaper, although one-third of the participants did read the newspaper. The reason is that some people may be uninterested in reading newspapers or following current affairs. They may prefer working on other activities or spending their time differently. With the rise of digital media, many young people may have increased their reading of news on online platforms rather than conventional newspapers.

The majority of participants are watching television, while a few of them are ignoring it. A large proportion of the participants prefer to watch television in the comfort of their homes, whereas a small percentage opt to watch it on their mobile phones. This demonstrates that television viewing habits among rural youth are not dropping. Digital media is the top choice for young people living in rural areas, with WhatsApp (instant messaging app) and YouTube (social media platform for sharing videos) being the most preferred platforms.

The study results reveal interesting insights into the media consumption habits of rural youth. Digital media, particularly WhatsApp and YouTube, are the preferred choices for most young people living in rural areas. This highlights the importance of mobile phones in providing access to information and media in rural areas. WhatsApp, in particular, is a widely used app for communication and information exchange among rural youth. It has emerged as a popular medium for disseminating news, information, and learning resources, which shows its potential as a tool for social and educational development. The app is also being used by rural youth to connect with their peers, share ideas, and discuss common interests. The study results suggest that WhatsApp could be used as a platform to promote awareness of social and health-related issues in rural areas. YouTube, on the other hand, provides users with access to a wide range of instructional and entertaining content. This content may not be easily accessible in other ways, and the platform allows rural youth to learn about new topics, gain new skills, and pursue their interests. YouTube also provides opportunities for rural youth to create and participate in online communities, based on their interests, academic goals, or cultural identity. These online communities can foster a sense of belonging and social connection among rural youth, who may feel isolated due to their geographical location.

4.3. MEDIA STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP INFORMATION AMONG RURAL YOUTH

To successfully convey a message to a target audience and achieve desired results, creating a media strategy involves several steps. These steps include defining the target audience, choosing the best media channels, coming up with messaging and content, assigning budgets and resources, and evaluating results.

In the case of the rural youth in the study area, the media strategy was developed based on their media accessing pattern. The target audience was the rural youth samples in Southern Tamilnadu. The chosen media platforms were WhatsApp and YouTube, and the media content focused on entrepreneurship-related information based on central and state government initiatives. The content format included videos, images, and text, while the media program format included songs, music, interviews, and short stories. The total duration of the media campaign was three months.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the media access pattern and entrepreneurial awareness of rural youth in southern Tamil Nadu. The findings highlight the pressing need for attention to the deficiency of resources and opportunities in rural regions to foster sustainable economic progress. The study also reveals that rural youth have some level of awareness regarding entrepreneurship fundamentals but little awareness regarding entrepreneurship skill development and funding schemes. There is a serious lack of awareness among young people in rural areas regarding rural development organizations and the training programs they provide, which can be crucial for fostering rural communities' social and economic empowerment.

The investigation also highlights the strong preference for WhatsApp and YouTube as primary media channels among rural youth, with a significant impact on their lives. It is essential to understand the media-accessing patterns of rural youth to promote digital incorporation and ensure access to pertinent and captivating media content that can enrich their social and economic prospects. Finally, the study concludes that providing entrepreneurial-focused content to rural youth via their preferred media platforms can significantly improve their awareness of entrepreneurship. Rural youth

can be better prepared to seek entrepreneurial possibilities and support the economic growth of their communities by raising their level of awareness.

5.1. IMPLICATION FOR ACTION

- 1) To empower rural youth and contribute to local economic growth, it's important to raise awareness about the resources available to them and the benefits of staying in their hometown. This can be achieved by promoting entrepreneurship and providing access to financial services.
- 2) Rural development organizations must enhance their outreach initiatives to ensure that rural youth are aware of their services and programs. This includes creating targeted communication plans, working with local partners, and utilizing technology to reach a wider audience.
- 3) By increasing access to education and vocational training in rural areas, young people can gain the skills, knowledge, and opportunities they need. Mentoring programs can be developed in collaboration with subject matter experts, and youth can be encouraged to adopt e-commerce tools and platforms to improve their marketing initiatives and expand their reach.
- 4) To create a supportive environment for rural entrepreneurship and promote inclusive economic growth and development, the government, commercial sector, and civil society must work together and adopt a comprehensive strategy. This may include providing access to mentorship and training programs, as well as offering financial support and incentives for aspiring entrepreneurs.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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