

Role of Educational Institutions in Imparting Knowledge to Dalits for Establishing their own venture



Sarjoo Patel

Assistant Professor,
Deptt. of Family and
Community Resource
Management,
The Maharaja Sayajirao
University of Baroda,
Vadodara, India



Mona Mehta

Assistant Professor,
Deptt. of Family and Community
Resource Management,
The Maharaja Sayajirao
University of Baroda,
Vadodara, India

Abstract

Entrepreneurial development and management has come to be recognised globally as the key to rapid and sustainable economic development as well as the welfare and progress of mankind. For this the issue of human resource development is very important in small scale industries. Human resource development is the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills and the capacities of all the people in society. For this the educational institutions can play an important role by providing training, education, information and enhancing knowledge through extension activities to the weaker sections of the society termed as "dalits". Small entrepreneurial development programme can be planned to help dalits in strengthening their entrepreneurial role effectively. The educational institutions can also use folk media for enhancing knowledge of dalits regarding the policies and incentives framed for them by the government. Folk media is thought to be appropriate as folk media constitute integral part of the culture, and the audience is able to identify itself with the experience provided by folk media. Moreover, repetition of ideas by repeating dialogues or lines of songs ensure understanding of the message. Much can be done by the educational institutions to speed up the process of economic growth, dispersal of economic activities, development of backward and tribal areas, creation of employment opportunities, improvement in the standard of living of the weaker sections of the society and involvement of all sections of the society in the progress of economic growth. All these efforts will certainly make a difference in upgrading the knowledge of dalits and helping them to set up their venture to boost up their economic standing in the society. The present paper will discuss in detail the role of educational institutions.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Dalits, Educational institution

Introduction

The dalits (also known as untouchables, Harijans or Scheduled Castes) have historically been poor, deprived of basic human rights, and treated as social inferiors in India. They still face economic social, cultural and political discrimination in the name of caste "Centuries of this hidden apartheid that has perpetuated discrimination and denial of their human rights, has resulted not only in Dalits representing a disproportionate amount of the poor in India, but also in the creation of numerous other obstacles that hinder Dalits ability to change their situation" (Artis, Doobay and Lyons, 2003).

Although the concept of untouchability was made illegal after India gained independence in 1947, the persecution and alienation of the Dalits has not stopped. The villages in many Indian states has a designated area which is the only place Dalits were allowed to live. Today also the dalits are not allowed to fetch water from the same wells used by higher castes and also cannot visit the same temples as the higher class people.

As the economic condition of the dalits is not good an awareness needs to be created among dalits about entrepreneurship development initially on small scale to cope up with financial crisis which they experience. In this regard the educational institutions like colleges and universities can help by providing education to the dalits through nonformal education by means of extension activities. The extension activities are important part of college and university education system.

The dalits can be imparted knowledge about the central role of entrepreneurship in their economic growth.

Entrepreneurship is innovative, creative and risk prone activity where the dalits have to venture in, which requires capital, decision making

ability and leadership traits. Since dalits are considered to be the untouchables or lower social group, the right attitude is winning a combination of taking initiative, taking right decisions at right time, being passionate about one's work, being analytical, focused, professional, intelligent with impeccable behavior, a positive thinker and hardworking. A mixture of knowledge, skill and personality are key elements that are required to be enhanced among the dalits. On the other hand, the dalits may have talent in abundance, but the right mental attitude with awareness for economic betterment and social upliftment motivates them to achieve their goals. Various competencies required by the dalits namely commitment to work, efficiency, self-confidence, quality consciousness, assertiveness, ability to identify and grab the opportunity to convert it into a business venture should be developed through training, experience and guidance. The dalits have to be made aware of the imperative needs of updated technologies, modern tools and equipments, processes and system and skills. Skills development, in turn, improves output, quality, diversity and occupational safety and improves health thereby, increasing incomes and raising their social status and self-esteem too. Educational institutions can provide tools kits, machineries for demonstration and hands-on learning, local transport and mobile training units to ensure success in learning to establish their own ventures. The system of training them for development of skills, whether professional or of daily life should incorporate basic skills such as reading, writing, and the ability to count for the diversification of entrepreneurial activities.

Dalits continue to be disadvantaged, because of their low caste, no schooling and illiteracy. There is greater awareness that educational institutes need to specifically address the issues which concerns the above group by conducting training programmes which include personal development and life skills training modules and design targeted intervention to address vulnerable groups to increase their economic empowerment through promoting entrepreneurship. Concentrated efforts of the educational institutions to impart relevant and adequate package of information would lead to achieve a better quality of life and fill the gap caused by the years of neglect.

Media can play an important role to impart knowledge to dalits for establishing their own venture through folk media. The folk media as means of development and educational communication have been discovered about 45 years ago in India. In the recent years educationists, media experts and development practitioners have realized the tremendous potential of folk art forms as means of

communication with people. Folk media are primarily concerned with appealing to emotions, and include strong dimension of communication of message. They provide the audience with emotional, intellectual and subconscious level of experience through music, melody, fantasy, humor and intelligible information. Moreover, repetition of ideas by repeating dialogues or lines of songs ensure appropriate for bringing about changes in attitude or for popularizing new practices in traditional society like India. Thus, they could play role in training, structuring and patterning our national ethos. Our messages can be conveyed effectively through Bhavai or Nautanki or Street Play (Joshi, 1999).

New entrepreneurs who do not belong to traditional business communities can be trained and encouraged, using folk media. Entrepreneurship has grown rapidly, visibly so, creating health and generating employment, especially in the past twenty years. This has to be developed in dalits by making them aware about finance and other institutional support by government to improve the climate for entrepreneurship among dalits. The educational package in the form of folk media in a local language can definitely help and enhance their knowledge about setting up their own venture. The process of imparting knowledge should thus follow one of the oldest maxims of education which say I hear and I take notice, I see and I remember and I do and I understand.

Conclusion

The need for a broad-based entrepreneurial class in India arises from the need to speed up the process of activating the factors of production, leading to a higher rate of economic growth, dispersal of economic activities, development of backward and tribal areas, creation of employment opportunities, improvement in the standard of living of the weaker sections of the society and involvement of all sections of the society in the process of economic growth (Desai, 2009). The well being of people is unquestionably the ultimate object of all development efforts and the basic quest of human endeavor is always to seek a better quality of life. The quality of life of the citizens of a nation can be effectively improved only by raising the standards of living of the people on the street and in backward areas specifically the 'dalits'. For this the efforts of educational institution can definitely help dalits through extension programmes since dalits today need aggressive preparation and effective practical strategies to secure their share from the wider society here now social learning is as important for them as is an unlearning of whatever has socially kept them divided and weak (Khare, 2012).

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