

ONE STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP - AN EXPERIENCE IN RURAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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Abstract

Gandhiji always favoured the education system based on personal life experiences. It has been observed if some live demonstration, real experiences and worth examples are included in academic programmes of management studies; it can definitely be proved fruitful. This can develop spirit of entrepreneurship and the attributes and attitude as future entrepreneurs in students, who are going to be responsible citizens of India. Here, an attempt has been done to show the outcomes and to explain the possibilities of motivating the youth towards sustainable entrepreneurship, which can be proved as an effective step towards the sustainable rural development of India.

Keywords: Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Udyog, Nai Talim, Life Skill Development, Rural Management

Growth...Development...Progress...- These seem very attractive and rosy words, which attract us a lot. India has started progressing by leaps and bounds. With the massive change in the economic policy of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization in 1991, India has moved on the path towards modernization, urbanization, industrialization and great technical and professional advancement. Youth of India today is found crazy behind fulfilling their dreams and desires through this path. Tremendous growth of private sector enterprises is observed in our country. A number of educated youth are employed in these sectors. Physical growth, material prosperity, luxurious life style and urban habitation are considered only as a synonym of success. And hence our education system has become exam oriented and competition oriented only. Will it lead our nation towards the true 'Swaraj' dreamed by Mahatma Gandhi? Obviously not. According to Gandhi "Education should be so revolutionized as to answer the wants of the poorest villager, instead of answering those of an imperial exploiter. India's way is not Europe's, and India lives in seven hundred thousand villages."

The dilemma of rural management education is between explicit value orientation towards the betterment of the poor and the value neutral optimization approach of conventional management education. In most of the cases, the situation of the students of rural management is very strange and full of dilemma. In their education, theories of rural development are discussed but the reality is quite different. Management education is provided through the books and case studies keeping in view the management principles and theories developed in foreign countries. They are given examples of corporate world and large scale industries. Sometimes practical application of such knowledge into real rural life is not possible. Thus, the students feel gap between the knowledge they gain and their practical life. Gradually, the direction of their thinking starts changing.

This may be one of the most important but neglected causes of rural-urban migration in our country. Unfortunately rural management student is not found so much curious about the development of village as he/she does not have any experience based knowledge. Most of the rural students aim at getting a good job in any of the reputed NGOs, co-operatives or companies. But the ideal situation is that - *Our education system should make the students employment generators and not mere employment seekers.*

In such circumstances, if any economic activity and practical experience are associated with the course curriculum, entrepreneurial attributes will automatically develop in the students. They themselves start learning management theories and principles relating the same to any of the interesting Udyog activity. New dimensions of thought are open up and many students can save their traditional and inherent art by giving it a modern touch suitable to the recent era. This article is based on an experimental experience with rural management students (girls) of the Centre for Studies in Rural Management of Gujarat Vidyapith.

Gandhiji and 'Udyog'

Gandhiji always favoured the education based on personal life experiences. Gujarat Vidyapith has still continued implementing successfully the thought of Gandhi by introducing 'Udyog activities' as an integral part of the curriculum. Adopting such structured skill development activities can pave the way for development of entrepreneurship. Such programmes can train, motivate and assist the upcoming entrepreneurs in achieving their ultimate goals.

The rural youth is having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprises. They only require proper guidance, motivation and encouragement to start any enterprise. If they are given knowledge regarding production process, marketing efforts, financial planning, technological

advancement, etc. they can prove their abilities as entrepreneurs.

Udyog is not a subject to be thrust upon the students; it is related to life till death. Mahatma Gandhi observed that the so called literate class of people became idle instead of becoming industrious. This means that education makes man dead instead of living. It was found necessary to reestablish the value of Udyog in education. Hence, Gandhiji gave that new stream of education in which academic education of subjects is to be given only after accepting community living, Chhatralay and Udyog. These three thoughts are life centered. They are inevitable for living life. To live life in community befitting to it, to live self-reliant life and to become industrious are the basis of success of life. He named such a method of education as the Nai Talim. Gandhiji gave Udyog that much importance as one Jeevan Rasayan or Medium of Education. According to Mahatma Gandhi, “The principal idea is to impart the whole education of the body, mind and soul through the handicraft that is taught to the children.”

Udyog is ଓଢ଼ + ଯୋଗ – Higher Yoga. Yog-sadhana is very necessary for stability, health, peace and power of mind, body and soul. Udyog should not be considered as mere hard physical labour. Udyog should be integrated and introduced in education as an inevitable aid or medium of education-process. It is very true in all the disciplines of life. Being free from mere bookish knowledge, a student should resort to manual work and practical experience. Gandhiji put emphasis on vocational and functional education. “Earning while learning” was the motto of this education. This will increase the creativity in a student. As Gandhi wanted to make Indian village’s self-sufficient units, he emphasised that vocational education should increase the efficiency within the students who will make the village as self-sufficient units. In other words, Gandhi’s educational philosophy was born out of his intense need to better the condition of rural India. As Kumarappa puts it, “Gandhiji saw that the only way of saving the nation at that juncture was to revive village economic life and to relate education to it. Education ... was to be based on village occupations. The child was to be trained to be a producer” (“Editor’s Note” to *Basic Education*: iii).

Entrepreneurship Development in Rural Management Students

Gujarat Vidyapith is based on the principles of Basic Education (Buniyadi Shikshan or Nai Talim). Hence, Udyog is considered as a foundation of education. According to Gandhiji, education brings out the talents hidden in the body, heart and soul of the students. Education teaches the true art of living. It includes acquiring entrepreneurial skills, maturity of thoughts and

treasure of virtues. Udyog make the students capable to understand the value of labour and to be economically free. Udyog can help the students in developing confident and self-reliant personality.

At Randheja campus of Gujarat Vidyapith, the task of life skill development in students is being done very effectively through various Udyog activities. Each and every student as well as teacher takes part in such activities with great enthusiasm, spirit, concentration and devotion. The period of one hour is appropriated to such Udyog daily. All the students of different faculties are assigned various Udyog activities such as agriculture, sewing and knitting, spinning, soap making, file making, handicraft, etc.

I have become inspired to write something about my experience of Udyog activities with the students of Masters of Rural Management (M.R.M.). The experience was quite inspiring and unique. In the Centre for Studies in Rural Management, the experience of coordinating the practical experience with the curriculum is felt quite successful. The group of 14 girls was divided into three sub groups according to their interest, skills and talents. After the discussion with each group, they were assigned the following Udyog activities. (Table:1)

Table 1 – Description of Udyog Activities

Team No.	No. Of Students	Udyog	Description
1	4	Hand bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand bags with lining inside were made of pure Khadi. There were varieties in pattern and designs such as belt size, pockets, colour and print of material, etc. Bags were decorated with mirror, beads, lace, hand embroidery, Kodies, Tikies, etc.
2	5	Ornaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly bracelets and ear-rings were produced. To take the advantage of Rakhi-day and Friendship day, some Rakhi and Friendship Bands were also produced and sold Bracelets were made of paper beads and plastic beads Earrings were made using waste plastic bags.
3	5	Paper Flowers With Vase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole product was 100% eco friendly and made of paper only. Vase were made of waste news papers and painted artistically. Flowers were made of florescent coloured papers by using various cutting and folding techniques. Origami (A Japanese art of folding paper) was also used to make some flowers.



Udyog is not merely a physical exercise done regularly but is a birth place of new thoughts, self confidence and concentration. The students planned the designs and targets to be accomplished in three months and after the completion of the period decided the target was almost achieved. From August to mid of October 2012, they worked for at least one hour on every working day. They had a very good experience of designing the product, production, marketing & selling, basic accounting and working in a team as if they were running a micro enterprise. On eighteenth of October at the convocation ceremony of Gujarat Vidyapith, these teams were given opportunity to exhibit and sell their products and to earn profit from the same. It was really a challenging opportunity and thrilling experience for them to plan and prepare themselves for such selling ground.

For fixing the prices of these products, cost plus pricing method and penetration pricing policy was adopted, as they were new players in the market. However, on-going price prevailing in the current market was also kept in mind while deciding prices for ornaments. The price tags were attached with all the products. And special discount was offered to the customers depending on the quantity purchased.

The students were given chance to have a real market experience to study the behavior, attitude, expectation and demands of the customers and consumers. On the occasion of the convocation ceremony, one stall was provided to the students to exhibit their products. Here, they realize the importance of personal selling, communication, demonstration, etc.

Before having this experience of exhibition, they carried on a 'Test Marketing' effort to know the taste and trend of the market. For that, samples of products were made and they were shown and sold in the hostel of the college and their own villages. They received the views and suggestions from them and finalized the designs, quality, targets, etc. The whole process, starting prior to production and continuing after the sale, gave them the overall idea about marketing.

Outcomes and Observations

Generally, management students are taught subjects such as marketing management, production management, finance management, human resource development, NGO management, project management, computer management, research methodology and statistics, etc. During my research study, it is observed that the following topics can be well correlated with the Udyog activities as such Principles of Management; Production Planning and Targeting; Lay Out of Unit, Managing Mass Production; Standardization and Quality Control;

Division of Labour, Time Study, Motion Study, etc.; Test Marketing Experience; New Product Development Process; Pricing Methods and Policies; Selling Strategies, Personal Selling Experience and Salesman Ship; Branding, Labeling, Marking, Packaging and Packing; Advertising & Publicity Methods and Effectiveness; Applying Sales Promotion Tools such as Offering Discount, etc.; Consumer Behavior and Purchase Decisions; Communication and Human Psychology; Maintaining Stock Register and Calculation of Stock; Methods of Price Determination; and Basic Accounting and Record Keeping, etc.

The above practical knowledge is very much essential to be developed in management students, as they are going to be future entrepreneurs of our nation. Besides, the following life skills have also be developed in students as such Team Management and Cohesiveness; Work Involvement and Sense of Cooperation; Creative & Logical Thinking and Practicability; Thrift, Honesty and Devotion towards Work and Life; Time Management and Value of Time; Self Confidence and Decision Making Power; Ability of Taking Initiatives and Bearing Risk; Communication Skill and Art Of Expressing Self; Enthusiasm and Discipline; Concentration and Will Power; and Quality Consciousness

Thus, Indian education policy must be reviewed and Rural Management courses must be designed in such a way to inspire students not to leave the village but to contribute for the development of the same. The youth is misguided and get confused between two choices: i) Whether to live in village or ii) to leave the village!!! Today the fact is that rural management students study their curriculum with a view to getting a good job in some of the NGOs or some corporate bodies. They feel proud to leave the native place or own village. Why is it so? And who forces them to feel so? It is a debatable issue. Sometimes leaving the village is considered as a Certificate of Success. This perception must be changed as early as possible. The Rural management courses must be designed in such a way that they can be able to awake the spirit of responsibility and critical thinking among the student to reshape the newer India comprising of wealthy villages and prosperous cultural heritage. This can be partially done possible to relate the practical experiences of life with the course structure so that rural youth can have entrepreneurial attributes and power to initiate own enterprise.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this case study is to observe the applicability and relevance of principles of education

shown by Mahatma Gandhi in today's education system by correlating Udyog activities with academic curriculum of rural management students. The study is based on a case study, where questionnaire, feedback, observation and personal interviews are used to come to the conclusion. The data has been collected from the 14 respondents (girls), students of MRM from CSRM, Gujarat Vidyapith to fulfill the purpose of the paper. The primary as well as secondary data sources have been used for the fulfillment of the purpose. The respondents shared their experience and findings related with the Udyog activities done from Aug to October 2012. Here, the data were analyzed by manual methods as the experimental research approach has been utilized to know the results of the Udyog activities carried out for the period of three months along with their formal study schedule. Though all the students of each semester used to do some type of Udyog activity, this study has been done keeping in consideration only one team consisting of 14 girls.

Conclusion

As we all understand that the real identity of India resides in the prosperity of human talents, rural resources and Indian heritage. But the scenario is quite surprising. Educated youth of rural India is very eager to leave the village. Even the rural management students don't seem to be much concerned with rural development. The rural youth struggle to grab an employment opportunity in well-developed city, which causes burden on urban India and this situation is responsible for rural-urban imbalance and unemployment situation in India. With the expansion of educational opportunities rural-urban migration rate is also observed high. Students are degree/career oriented having dreams and desires of luxurious urbanized lifestyle. They are lacking long term sight and rushing blindly towards illusionary so called development. Indian rural women are naturally blessed with traditional art, mental courage, physical and mental strength and cultured attitude. Yet they are deprived of economical and social benefits due to lack of proper knowledge about utilizing such talents in a productive manner. If such attitude and flow of migration continues, the prosperity of Indian traditional rural art and skill will perish and disappear. If such strengths are appreciated, nurtured and taken care of seriously, they can do wonders. It is in the hand of youth to revive and reshape the dying Indian originality. They need proper guidance and direction only.

One of the very strong root causes behind such situation is the absence of correlation of academic curriculum

with practical life experiences. If some live demonstration, real experiences and worth examples are included in academic programmes, it will definitely be proved fruitful. This can develop spirit of entrepreneurship and the attributes and attitude as future entrepreneurs in students, who are going to be responsible citizens of India.

Instead of using the talents to make rich richer (working for the benefit of big industrialists of corporate houses) our youth must utilize their time, efforts, skill and knowledge to become a master of their own independent enterprises, which can provide employment to many needy. This grass root level efforts are required to be done for the development of our country. Keeping in view the level of adaption, applicability, requirements and urge of students, various 'Udyog' activities can be designed, adopted and included in the main stream of formal education. By sharing my personal experience as a case study, here I want to show the outcomes and to explain the possibilities of motivating the youth towards sustainable entrepreneurship, which can be proved as an effective step toward the sustainable rural development of India.

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