

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64672/IJIFR/26.03.13.07.019> PUBLISHED ON: MARCH 21, 2026

ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN IMPARTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN ASSAM

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Assam University Diphu Campus, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam -India**ABSTRACT**

Aim: *The aim of this paper is to examine the opinion of the students studying in the universities of Assam in imparting entrepreneurship education. This will help students to cope up with the real world of entrepreneurship by transforming them through learning by doing. It includes exposing them to real life problems, allowing them to interact with entrepreneurs and trainings, and may also include integration of enterprise activities in education strategies.*

Background: *Entrepreneurial universities encourage students and staff to develop skills, behaviours and a mindset that are entrepreneurial at an individual level. Hence, it is the role of the university to provide platforms upon which students and staff experience entrepreneurship by understanding the importance of entrepreneurship and develop an entrepreneurial mindset. It may include provision of exposure to both students and staff and will expose them to different challenges that encourage them to develop entrepreneurial skills.*

Methodology: *The present study has used descriptive statistics like simple tabulation, cross tabulations, simple percentage to analyse data. Amongst the 24 universities, keeping in mind the objectives of the present study, three universities viz. Assam University, Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University are considered; because, these three universities are collegiate universities. Snow ball and purposive methods are applied in selection of student respondents. The descriptive research design has been applied and both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in this study. Questionnaires, consisting of both open and close ended questions, have been used to collect data from students of select universities of Assam to get information on the current entrepreneurship education.*

Analytical Outcomes: *Majority of the respondents (60.4%) agree that entrepreneurship teaching method has provided a new and different experience or an opportunity to learn by doing. It is also seen that majority of the respondents (59.4%) agree that Entrepreneurial or business related examples are included in the classroom teaching. Majority of the respondents (51%) agreed that Students are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurship courses in the university college. 48.20% of the total respondents agree that they will always recommend others to join their institution to learn entrepreneurship.*

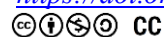
Conclusive result: *This study has presented the detail information on entrepreneurship education in Assam, various academic activities of universities of Assam and respondents' opinion on course/syllabus contents on entrepreneurship as well as the role of universities in entrepreneurship education in Assam*

KEYWORDS: *Entrepreneurship Education, Assam Universities, Collegiate Universities, Students Opinion.*

PAPER CITATION:

Lavanya, T. "Role of Universities in imparting entrepreneurship education in Assam", *International Journal of Informative & Futuristic Research (IJIFR)*, Vol. (13) (7), March 2026, pp. 932-938

<https://doi.org/10.64672/IJIFR/26.03.13.07.019>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship as a paper has included in under-graduate and post- graduate courses in Commerce and Management studies of most of the higher educational institutions in Assam. It is a matter of debate that whether the universities and academic institutions are able to foster entrepreneurship and their relation with other stakeholders like government, industry and also academic institutions in fostering innovation and enterprise creation. In existing literature it is also evident that universities encourage entrepreneurial behaviours among students. Therefore, Universities give stretch in developing new ideas and opportunities, followed by encouraging the students to take up these opportunities.

Entrepreneurial universities encourage students and staff to develop skills, behaviours, and a mindset that are entrepreneurial at an individual level. Hence, it is the role of the university to provide platforms upon which students and staff experience entrepreneurship by understanding the importance of entrepreneurship and develop an entrepreneurial mindset. It may include provision of exposure to both students and staff and will expose them to different challenges that encourage them to develop entrepreneurial skills. It includes exposing them to real life problems, allowing them to interact with entrepreneurs and trainings, and may also include integration of enterprise activities in education strategies. This will help students to cope up with the real world of entrepreneurship by transforming them through learning by doing. Entrepreneurial oriented universities help in promoting the students and staff to develop entrepreneurial ideas and taken into action (Byrnes, Paez, Blacker, Jackson, & Dwyer, 2010).

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTING INSTITUTIONS IN ASSAM

Since 1991, economic reforms have transformed India into one of the fastest growing economies and the nation has been moving towards a market-based system which is entrepreneurial in nature. It is worthy to mention that entrepreneurship is the result of three dimensions working together: conducive framework conditions, well-designed government programmes and supportive cultural attitudes. Hence, proper education is necessary to bring changes in these three dimensions.

The Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) was established in 1993 in Guwahati, Assam and started its functioning from April 1994. It was established by the erstwhile Ministry of Industry, now, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises as an Autonomous National Institute to promote entrepreneurship and to undertake training, research and consultancy activities in small and micro enterprises focusing on entrepreneurship development. In 2017 a Memorandum of Undertaking was signed between Rajib Gandhi University, Itanagar and IIE Gauhati to work in the area of Entrepreneurship Education, capacity building, conducting seminars, workshops etc. Considering the importance of creating environment for entrepreneurship development, the institute organizes programmes for unemployed youth and organization faculty development programmes on entrepreneurship for students and college and university teachers. The institute has also been involved in setting up of Information & Career Guidance (ICGC) in number of colleges through its Teachers Training Programmes. Apart from these, there are number of institutions like DICC's, KVIB, MSME-DI, financial institutions, NGOs as well as higher educational institutions which involve in promoting entrepreneurship in Assam.

3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES OF ASSAM

The universities of Assam are conducting a number of activities for the promotion and development of entrepreneurship skills among the students. These activities include inclusion of entrepreneurship as a paper in various courses like MBA, BBA, M.com, B.Com and Research Activities. There are reports of conducting various conferences and seminars at regional, national, and international level for the promotion of entrepreneurship and provide cognitive knowledge of the

current issues on entrepreneurship to keep on update and upgrade the students by the universities of Assam.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rathore (2001) in his study Entrepreneurship in Education and economic development has undertaken descriptive study and this study have been conducted in India. The author opined that institutionalizing entrepreneurship in different streams of education would accelerate the growth of Indian economy.

Paltasingh (2005) has explained how better policy can be implemented to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit among the students. The author has used descriptive analysis.

Basu (2014) has conducted a study on 10 reputed business schools across India and has considered sample and Qualitative case-based methodology for the study. According to him a development and promotion of effective and indigenous entrepreneurship education system needs to be implemented in India for economic growth.

Gautam and Singh (2015) in their study revealed that for the new role of entrepreneurial teacher, the teacher should take regular training on skill development. The study is descriptive in nature; it is conducted in India and based on secondary data.

Halvadia (2017) has identified seven motivational factors of Financial and Monetary Reforms research: greater business achievement, goal setting, problem solving, economic condition, social approval and support, independence and risk taking are the important factors that motivate the students to become an entrepreneur. The study is based on both Exploratory and descriptive research method. A self administer questionnaire has been used to collect data from 203 final year students of Surat city, India. Statistical tool like factor analysis has been applied and calculated with the help of SPSS.

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to examine the opinion of the students studying in the universities of Assam in imparting entrepreneurship education.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design has been applied and both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in this study. Questionnaires, consisting of both open and close ended questions, have been used to collect data from students of select universities of Assam to get information on the current entrepreneurship education. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Primary data have been collected through questionnaire and personal interview. The secondary data have been obtained through the use of literature search involving review of related books, reports, text books, journal articles, government gazettes, official publications, published and unpublished research, newspapers, and electronic literatures.

The present study has used descriptive statistics like simple tabulation, cross tabulations, simple percentage to analyse data. Amongst the 24 universities, keeping in mind the objectives of the present study, three universities viz. Assam University, Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University are considered; because, these three universities are collegiate universities. Snow ball and purposive methods are applied in selection of student respondents.

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Respondents' opinion on contents of syllabus of entrepreneurship of universities of Assam

Sl. No.	Particulars		Frequency	Percentage (%)
(i)	Theory or Practical oriented paper	Theory	374	97.4
		Theory & Practice	10	2.6
		Total	384	100
(ii)	Rating for the Entrepreneurship paper	Average	61	15.9
		Excellent	95	24.7

		Good	228	59.4
		Total	384	100
(iii)	Need for any additional course on Entrepreneurship	Yes	21	5.50
		No	363	94.5
		Total	384	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 clearly shows the respondents opinion on content of syllabus of Entrepreneurship. With regard to the theory and practical contents in entrepreneurship syllabus, according to the 97.4% student respondents, entrepreneurship syllabus is theory oriented paper. On rating for their Entrepreneurship paper and syllabus contents which are being taught in the institutions, majority (59.4%) of the respondents have rated it “good”, whereas 24.7% have rated it excellent. There are 15.9% respondents who rated the Entrepreneurship paper as “average”. For 95% of the total respondents, there is no need for any additional course on Entrepreneurship.

Table 2: Respondents’ level of agreement on entrepreneurship syllabus of universities of Assam

Sl. No	Statement		S	A	N	D	SD	Total
(i).	Entrepreneurship is the most important paper of your course / syllabus	F	56	280	13	26	9	384
		%	14.6	72.91	3.4	6.8	2.34	100
(ii).	Entrepreneurship's syllabus / course content help in enhancing an individual' stability to develop what to do or what one needs to know	F	73	253	18	33	8	384
		%	19.0	65.6	4.7	8.6	2.1	100
(iii).	Entrepreneurship course / syllabus contents are relevant and sufficient for the Students to become an entrepreneur	F	36	213	15	112	8	384
		%	9.4	55.5	3.9	29.2	2.1	100
(iv).	Entrepreneurship teaching method has provided a new and different experience or an opportunity to learn by doing	F	29	232	56	42	25	384
		%	7.6	60.4	14.6	10.9	6.5	100
(v).	Entrepreneurial or business related examples are included in the classroom teaching	F	38	228	16	78	24	384
		%	9.9	59.4	4.2	20.3	6.4	100
(vi).	Students are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurship courses in the University/college	F	37	196	38	87	26	384
		%	9.6	51.0	9.9	22.7	6.8	100
(vii).	I always recommend others to join our institution to learn Entrepreneurship	F	25	185	106	40	28	384
		%	6.5	48.2	27.6	10.4	7.3	100
(viii).	Entrepreneurship classes give the chance to meet and interact with new peoples for unique ideas for new Enterprise	F	45	173	41	94	31	384
		%	11.7	45.1	10.7	24.5	8.1	100
(ix).	Students are actively encouraged to pursue their own business ideas through the entrepreneurship Class	F	68	235	48	27	6	384
		%	17.7	61.2	12.5	7.0	1.6	100
(x).	The entrepreneurship class prepares students well for entrepreneurial Careers	F	23	201	46	90	24	384
		%	6.0	52.3	12.0	23.4	6.2	100

Source: Field Survey

NB.SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Disagree, F= Frequency

To measure students’ agreement on entrepreneurship syllabus which is being taught in universities of Assam, 10 statements are asked the respondents to share their opinion by choosing 5 point scale from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. The result of each statement is shown in table 2 which clearly reveals that majority of the respondents (73.2%) agree with the statement that entrepreneurship is the most important paper within a syllabus. Further, majority of the respondents (65.5%) agree with the statement that the syllabus / course of entrepreneurship helps in enhancing an individual stability to develop what to do or what one needs to know. Majority of

the respondents (55.5%) agree that entrepreneurship course / syllabus contents are relevant and sufficient for the students to become an entrepreneur. Majority of the respondents (60.4%) agree that entrepreneurship teaching method has provided a new and different experience or an opportunity to learn by doing. It is also seen that majority of the respondents (59.4%) agree that Entrepreneurial or business related examples are included in the classroom teaching. Majority of the respondents (51%) agreed that Students are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurship courses in the university college. 48.20% of the total respondents agree that they will always recommend others to join their institution to learn entrepreneurship. 45.1% agree and 11.7% respondents strongly agree that in entrepreneurship classes, they get to meet and interact with new peoples for unique ideas for new enterprise. Majority of the respondents (61.2%) agree that students are actively encouraged to pursue their own business ideas. It is also observed that majority of the respondents (52.3%) agree that University course prepares students well for entrepreneurial careers.

Table 3: Students Participation in the activities related to academic programme on entrepreneurship

SL No.	Activities		Frequency	Percentage (%)
(i)	Industry Visit related to Entrepreneurship Programme	Yes	33	8.6
		No	351	91.4
		Total	384	100
(ii)	Programmes like Seminars on Entrepreneurship organized by University	Yes	126	32.8
		No	258	67.2
		Total	384	100
(iii)	Participated in those Programmes like Seminars organized by University	Yes	87	22.70
		No	297	77.30
		Total	384	100
(iv)	Completed Dissertation on Entrepreneurship	Yes	4	1.00
		No	380	99
		Total	384	100

Source: Field survey.

Table 3 reveals participation of students in the activities related to academic programme on entrepreneurship. Amongst the respondents, 91% have not gone for any Industrial visit related to Entrepreneurship where as the remaining 9% of the respondents mentioned that they went for industrial visit related to Entrepreneurship. According to the majority of the respondents (67%), the Institution where they have pursued their degree did not organize any Seminar/Conference on entrepreneurship whereas 33% of the respondents have mentioned that their institution had organized Seminar/Conference on entrepreneurship. Majority of the respondents (70%) reported that they never attended any Seminar/Conference on entrepreneurship organized by University, whereas remaining (30%) reported that they attended such type of programmes. 1 percent of the total respondents had submitted dissertation on entrepreneurship related topic. It clearly shows that the participation of entrepreneurship promotion related activities by the students in the universities of Assam is very less.

Table 4: Students' opinion on the role of universities to promote entrepreneurship

Sl. No	Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
(i).	There should be entrepreneurial clubs inside campus to promotes Entrepreneurship	F	46	219	58	43	18	384
		%	12.0	57.0	15.1	11.2	4.7	100
(ii).	Institution should provide financial support through	F	56	160	21	116	31	384

	Micro Finance Institutions to facilitate their needy students to start new business/ ventures	%	14.6	41.7	5.5	30.2	8.1	100
(iii).	University campus should be promoted as an ideal place to learn about starting an Enterprise	F	50	290	12	18	14	384
		%	13.0	75.5	3.1	4.7	3.6	100

Source: Field Survey

NB. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Disagree, F= Frequency

Apart from the teaching and research activities, a university can perform a number of activities to promote entrepreneurship. Establishment of entrepreneurship clubs, facilitation of financial services, creating the institution itself ideal place for promoting entrepreneurship are some of the activities which may be taken up by the university / higher educational institutions. In this regard, opinions of the respondents on three statements have been collected through questionnaire. The findings reveal that majority of the respondents (57.0%) agree that there should be entrepreneurial clubs inside campus to promote entrepreneurship. It is also observed that 42% of the respondents agree and 15% respondents strongly agree that University / college should provide financial support through Micro Finance Institutions to facilitate their needy students to start new business / ventures. Majority of the respondents (75.5%) agree with the statement that University should be promoted as an ideal place to learn about starting an enterprise. From the findings, it is clearly inferred that there is need to develop entrepreneurship clubs, facilitation of financial needs and creation of entrepreneurship ecosystem by the universities.

Table 5: Summary of All Academic and Research Activities related to entrepreneurship education

Sl. No.	Types of Activity	Results	Remarks
1	Revision of syllabus	Yes	In Every University
2	If yes, Frequency of Revision	----	(a) When ever needed (in two universities) (b) After every three Years (in one university)
3	Discussion with academicians and corporate to develop syllabus	Yes	Whenever needed
4	Collaborative work with educational Institution and industry to promote entrepreneurship education	No	-
5	Entrepreneurship Cells	Yes	-
6	Field study, Industrial Visits	Yes	Only in M.Com and MBA Level
7	Internship program in specialize entrepreneurship promoting institutions like EDII, IIE, NABARD.	No	-
8	Certificate and diploma programmes in Entrepreneurship	Yes	-
9	Special financial package for entrepreneurship education.	None	-
10	Seminars/workshops etc. to develop academic programme on entrepreneurship	Yes	Sometimes
11	Research activities	Yes	-

Source: field survey

This study has presented the detail information on entrepreneurship education in Assam, various academic activities of universities of Assam and respondents' opinion on course/syllabus contents on entrepreneurship as well as the role of universities in entrepreneurship education in Assam. The summary of all academic activities and research related to entrepreneurship education in universities of Assam is presented in table 5.

8. CONCLUSION

The findings clearly suggest that for developing academic programmes on entrepreneurship, a number of activities may be done by the Universities. Some of them are: Regular revision of syllabus, Discussion with academicians and corporate to develop syllabus, collaborative work with industry and institution, industrial visit, etc.

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