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A Competency-Based Framework for Entrepreneurship Education in Educational Institutes under NEP 2020

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Abstract

This paper explores the integration of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) into school curricula under India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes holistic, multidisciplinary, and skill-based learning. Drawing on international best practices and policy frameworks from Europe, China, Malaysia, Nigeria, Brazil, and Finland, the study identifies key drivers and barriers influencing EE implementation across diverse contexts. The research adopts a design-and-policy synthesis approach using global literature, policy reports, and comparative case studies to develop a school-level framework tailored to NEP 2020's vision. Findings reveal that successful EE initiatives share common features—experiential pedagogies, stakeholder collaboration, and teacher capacity-building—while challenges include inadequate training, limited institutional support, and inconsistent policy implementation. The paper proposes a comprehensive framework grounded in competency-based education, featuring the Mini-Company Model, project-based learning, design thinking, and mentorship-driven teaching strategies. It further recommends robust teacher preparation, assessment rubrics, and equity-focused measures such as mobile EE labs and regional language adaptations. The study concludes that embedding EE within the NEP 2020 framework can cultivate creativity, problem-solving, and resilience among learners, aligning school education with India's broader socio-economic development goals. This conceptual model provides a scalable foundation for policy makers, educators, and researchers to strengthen entrepreneurship education in Indian schools and foster a generation equipped for innovation-driven growth.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education, NEP 2020, Mini Company Approach, Curriculum, Pedagogy.*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship Education is increasingly attracting global attention as it is seen as a driver of innovation, employability and economic inclusion. Though, this field is observed as one of the most growing areas of education, its

contribution in schools remained low (Sirelkhatim et al., 2015). Eurydice (2016) analyzed that only 23% of total students in Europe had participated in Entrepreneurship Education, whereas almost 50% of European Union members states have no direction and guidance for teachers. Although eighteen out of twenty-seven European countries had designed policies to address this shortfall. In India, the aim of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to provide multidisciplinary, holistic, and skills-based education. It encourages moving away from rote learning and concentrations on skills like creativity, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving. NEP 2020 also focuses on learning through projects, hands-on activities, and real-life experiences, which support students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset. It also brings vocational education into regular schooling, giving students opportunities to learn practical skills, take internships, and connect with local industries from middle school onward. Therefore, Entrepreneurship education (EE) finds a natural place within changes suggested in the National Education Policy. (Government of India, 2020). Thus,introducing Entrepreneurship in schools provide a stepping stone in cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets from an early stage, which contributes to both individual development and broader socio-economic progress (Nabi et al., 2017).

2. Review of Literature

Entrepreneurship education has become the topic of extensive global research. Fayolle and Gailly (2008) underscore that EE requires a shift from traditional teaching method to more experiential learning approach. Nabi et al. (2017), in a systematic review, observed that EE significantly plays a significant role in developing entrepreneurial intentions, skills, and self-efficacy among students. In the Indian scenario, Aggarwal (2021) found that implementing entrepreneurial projects at the school level enhanced students' problem-solving and financial literacy skills. Similarly, Dharmadhikari and Bhosle (2020) observed that EE programs at school-level positively influenced rural students' aspirations in Maharashtra towards self-employment. At international level, According to UNESCO (2012) and OECD (2017), contextual, and competency-based approaches should be adopted in early entrepreneurship exposure. Pukkinen et al. (2024) find that adolescents participating in JA or 4H in Finland show higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy and greater desirability of entrepreneurship, especially among those in schools with strong implementation of entrepreneurship education components. Penaluna et al. (2020), findings show that students' entrepreneurial attitudes, some competencies, and intentions improved where the curriculum was well supported, with teacher training and assessment frameworks in place. Hatt et al. (2024) finds that Framing entrepreneurship education through the lens of value creation, rather than narrow economic goals, makes it more meaningful and engaging for students across disciplines. By aligning learning with personal values and disciplinary contexts—whether in Business, Biomedical Science, or Music—students develop entrepreneurial competences, critical awareness, resilience, and stronger professional identities.Tools such as simulations, gaming, AI, MOOCs, multimedia, virtual reality, and online communities show varied but generally positive impacts, particularly in building financial literacy, teamwork, initiative, and self-efficacy. By mapping these technologies to competencies through the EntreComp framework, the research provides educators with a practical tool to design competency-based curricula and lower barriers to adopting digital methods. Ultimately, it emphasizes the need for collaboration between scholars and practitioners to develop more comprehensive, blended approaches that merge digital and traditional methods for improved entrepreneurial learning outcomes. (Hidayatulloh&Ashoumi, 2022) demonstrate that both entrepreneurship education and creativity significantly enhance students' entrepreneurial intent. Entrepreneurship education contributes more strongly by shaping knowledge and mindset, while creativity fosters innovation and problem-solving skills. Together, they account for over half of the variance in entrepreneurial intent, highlighting their combined importance in preparing vocational students to become future entrepreneurs.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopts a design-and-policy synthesis approach, drawing on the provisions of

NEP 2020, international best practices, and empirical literature to develop a school-level framework for entrepreneurship education (EE). Data sources comprise policy reports, peer-reviewed research, and illustrative case studies from both Indian and global contexts. This methodology is exploratory and conceptual in nature, designed to provide a basis for future empirical validation through pilot implementations across varied school environments in India.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To design a school-level EE curriculum aligned with NEP 2020 principles.
- To propose pedagogical strategies and assessment models suited to competency-based education.
- To identify teacher professional development requirements and institutional supports.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Comparative International Prospective

4.1.1 Malaysia

Entrepreneurship education (EE) in Malaysia dates back to the 1980s, when it was first introduced in higher education institutions, albeit with limited emphasis **(Othman, Hashim, & Wahid, 2012).** Its prominence grew during the mid-1990s alongside the emergence of a knowledge-based economy, where knowledge became the key driver of economic activity **(Cheng, Chan, & Mahmood, 2009).** EE is designed to equip learners with innovative business competencies, enabling them to identify opportunities and actively shape entrepreneurial ventures within a changing economy **(Mahmood & Cheng, 2005).** In pursuit of this vision, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) launched the *Entrepreneurship Development Policy for Institutes of Higher Education*, aimed at producing graduates with robust entrepreneurial skills and attributes **(Modul Pembangunan Kemahiran Insaniah, 2006).** This initiative reflects the Ministry's acknowledgment of education's pivotal role in cultivating entrepreneurial capabilities. Reinforcing this view, **Ibrahim and Soufani (2002)** argue that schools and educational systems are central to skill development in this area. Several scholars have since examined EE in Malaysia and the factors influencing its trajectory. **Cheng and Chan (2004)** studied its growth by analyzing students' entrepreneurial awareness, the determinants of their career choices, and their aspirations to establish businesses after graduation. **Nawai and Shariff (2011)** further note that micro-enterprises dominate Malaysia's SME sector, accounting for nearly 80% of SMEs and 78.7% of all business entities. Within this landscape, Malaysian universities play a critical role in nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets, thereby enabling micro-enterprises to expand and contribute more significantly to the national economy.

4.1.2 China

Research indicates that entrepreneurship education (EE) in China, though relatively recent, has expanded rapidly with substantial investment, particularly within management-related programs. Initially dominated by short-term, vocationally oriented courses **(Mason, 2011),** EE began to extend into undergraduate and postgraduate levels by the late 1990s **(Li, Zhang, &Matlay, 2003).** Three landmark developments significantly influenced this expansion: the introduction of student business plan competitions, the establishment of the National Entrepreneurship Research Centre along with the Graduate Venture Park and four venture capital funds at Tsinghua University, and policy reforms permitting students to suspend their studies for up to three years to pursue entrepreneurial ventures **(Li, Zhang, &Matlay, 2003).** The trajectory of EE in China has been shaped by broader socio-economic and political transformations, initiatives for rural and enterprise development, the need for stronger management training, and the recognition of entrepreneurship as a vital skillset for students. China's accelerated economic growth has also acted as a catalyst for entrepreneurial engagement **(Mason, 2011).** However, persistent challenges remain, including limited access to capital and resources, an uncertain business climate, policy inconsistencies, and broader political constraints **(Mason, 2011).**

4.1.3 Europe

The European Commission has consistently emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship education as a key driver of skills development and socio-economic growth. In its 2012

Communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-Economic Outcomes*, the Commission highlighted the need to foster transversal skills, particularly entrepreneurial competences, through innovative teaching and learning methods beginning at the primary level. The commission recommended that every student should have experience of performing at least one activity related to entrepreneurship before finishing compulsory education. Students should have problem-based learning and real-world enterprise links which may be integrated across disciplines **(European Commission, 2012).** On the basis of these recommendations, the ***Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan*** **(2013)** found entrepreneurship education as a top priority field for prompt action.Further, the European Parliament's 2015 Resolution on promoting youth entrepreneurship observed thatteachers do not have adequate training in entrepreneurship education **(European Parliament, 2015).**

Entrepreneurship education has long been promoted by the European Commission as a key tool to achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. It is considered essential because it shapes the mindset of future generations while equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to foster an entrepreneurial culture **(European Commission, 2013).** To support this, the European Commission has developed a strategic plan aimed at integrating entrepreneurship education into all European schools. The rationale is that such education not only strengthens the entrepreneurial outlook of young people but also prepares them with competencies required to succeed as entrepreneurs.

The expansion of entrepreneurship education across Europe has been steady, with expectations of further growth **(Wilson, 2008).** Nonetheless, certain areas still require improvement. **Wilson (2008)** highlights five major challenges: curriculum enhancement, increased funding, stronger research collaborations, more qualified educators, and broader outreach beyond business schools into technical and scientific faculties where innovation often originates.

Currently, entrepreneurship education is primarily concentrated within business schools, though efforts are underway to expand it across other academic disciplines, especially science and technology **(Wilson, 2008)**. Although entrepreneurship education is gaining visibility and acceptance, a shortage of qualified educators remains a significant limitation. Despite rising student demand, many European universities lack a sufficient number of dedicated entrepreneurship professors **(Wilson, 2008).** Addressing this gap requires not only increasing the academic workforce but also involving entrepreneurs themselves as educators. Their firsthand experiences can provide students with practical insights while serving as role models to inspire entrepreneurial thinking.

4.1.4 Nigeria

Entrepreneurship education (EE) was formallyannounced in Nigeria in 2006 **(Yahya, 2011; Gabadeen& Raimi, 2012)** in order to fostereconomic growth and addressing the challenge of unemployment **(Akhuemonkhan&Sofoluwe, 2013).** Nowit has become an important component of undergraduate studies among all disciplines **(Yahya, 2011).** Universities, polytechnics, and colleges in Higher educationare required not only to deliver entrepreneurial knowledge but also to implement EE through dedicated curricula and programs. Despite these initiatives, the progress in Entrepreneurship Education is very low because it was adoptedlate. It was also observed by scholars thatthe teaching practices remained weak, with an excessive dependence on business plan preparation, which reduced the overall impact of the teaching **approach (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, &Sofoluwe, 2013; Ifedili& Ofoegbu, 2011).** More experiential methods including project-based learning and hands-on workshops wereconsidered as crucial for developing practical entrepreneurial skills **(Ifedili& Ofoegbu, 2011; Gabadeen& Raimi, 2012).**

4.1.5 Bangkok

(Kitsanajan et al., 2025) observed that while entrepreneurship education has become more important in primary schools, most of teachers are not fully prepared to teach it. They need more training in creating hands-on learning activities, using technology, and understanding entrepreneurial skills. To help, researchers developed the ALLFA Model (Awaring, Learning,

Linking, Facilitating, Assessing), which supports teachers step by step through continuous learning rather than short, one-time workshops. This approach helps teachers build confidence, work with peers, try out practical classroom methods, and reflect on their progress. The study concludes that long-term, ongoing teacher training is key to making entrepreneurship education effective and to giving students valuable skills like creativity, problem-solving, and resilience.

4.1.6 Eastern Europe & Caucasus:

Countries like Georgia, Armenia, and Ukraine integrate entrepreneurship as a key skill within EU's ***EntreComp*** **framework (OECD, 2020).**

4.1.7 North Macedonia and Wales:

National curricula include compulsory entrepreneurship education. Many Research shows that these transformations increased entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes among students **(Polenakovikj, 2016; Jones & Iordanou, 2020).**

4.1.8 Finaland

Entrepreneurship is embedded in the national curriculum, supported by initiatives like Junior Achievement Finland. Studies show enhanced entrepreneurial self-efficacy and desirability among students engaged in mini-company programmes **(Pukkinen et al., 2024).**

4.1.9 Brazil

The National Curricular Base (BNCC) includes entrepreneurship in secondary education; technical and professional training also include entrepreneurship as a structuring axis. Some states have enacted laws to include entrepreneurship in basic education. **Redalyc. Marcovitch&Saes (2020)** document how states such as São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul have planned for entrepreneurship in curricula across different school levels. The evaluations are still emerging but show promise in aligning curricula with market/livelihood needs.

4.1.10 Estonia

Entrepreneurship is a core theme in the national curriculum. A programme *Edu ja Tegu* (Success and Action) gives students experiences across school levels. As of 2021, implemented in a large majority (71%) of general education schools. Empirical data show that Estonian students benefit from a widespread exposure: self-evaluation instruments, guidelines for teachers, etc., are used to help students assess entrepreneurial competence **(Education Estonia. (2021))**

4.2 Concept of Mini Company Approach as Teaching Pedagogy

The Innovation Cluster for Entrepreneurship Education (ICEE) project was initiated to explore the impact of entrepreneurship education (EE) and to analyze the drivers and barriers influencing its implementation in European schools. Its core objective is aligned with the European Commission's ambition that every young person should gain a practical entrepreneurial experience before leaving compulsory education.

The project was piloted across 20 academic and vocational schools in five countries—Belgium, Finland, Italy, Estonia, and Latvia—testing the effects of EE when reaching 50% student participation. A robust mixed-methods approach was applied, including control groups, quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups, and interviews. The research team, led by the Eastern Norway Research Institute (ENRI), investigated:

- Student learning outcomes,
- The societal impacts of EE,
- The role of teachers and schools, and
- System-level effects within the education sector.

A significant component of ICEE was the mini-company programme which allowed students of aged between 14 to19 to establish and manage a mini-company over the school years. It was done under the guidance of teachers and business volunteers. Students gained hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, developing skills in teamwork, initiative, responsibility, financial literacy, innovation, and problem-solving. The students participated in competitions and trade fairs, where they showcased their projects. It worked as bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application.

- Finland: Entrepreneurship is rooted in the national curriculum, supported by initiatives like Junior Achievement Finland. Studies observed that this Mini Company

approach enhanced entrepreneurial self-efficacy and desirability among students (Pukkinen et al., 2024).

- Estonia: Entrepreneurship is treated as a transversal competence and implemented through the *Edu ja Tegu*program. By 2021, 71% of Estonian general schools had adopted entrepreneurship education (Education Estonia, 2021).
- Belgium, Italy, and Latvia: According to the ICEE study (2017), mini-company experiences improved students' teamwork, creativity, and financial literacy. Belgium and Italy relied on regional and voluntary initiatives, while Latvia showed strong national-level support but uneven implementation.
- Brazil: Entrepreneurship is part of the National Curricular Base (BNCC) in secondary schools, with laws in some states mandating inclusion in basic education (Marcovitch& Sales, 2020). Country-wise Drivers, Hindrances, and Impacts of Entrepreneurship Education Initiatives in Europe.

Country	Drivers	Hindrances	Impact
Belgium (Flanders)	- Collaboration between ministries and EE actors (Vlajo, intermediaries)- Government action plans, tools, and teacher resources	- EE seen mainly as economics- Teacher burden- School autonomy limits integration	- Hard to measure directly, but builds entrepreneurial culture in schools and communities if long-term
Estonia	- Strong policy via Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020- Collaboration between ministries, universities, JA Estonia- Ministry funding	- Lack of EE experts- Challenges in integrating EE into curricula	- Improves student knowledge, skills, attitudes- Scaling up strengthens school–community ties and youth retention
Finland	- EE in national curriculum- YES centers for teacher training/resources- Strong school–business–government collaboration	- Rigid education and cultural attitudes- Limited teacher training- Lack of parent and company involvement	- Nationwide institutionalization- Changes in student/teacher attitudes- Regional EE strategies and evaluation tools established
Italy	- Law mandating school–work exchange- Ministry of Education support- Business association and JA Italy involvement	- SMEs hard to engage- Lack of teacher preparation- Weak parental involvement- Incomplete curriculum integration	- Students gain workplace skills and awareness- Stronger school–business links- Encourages local entrepreneurship
Latvia	- Ministry of Education and JA Latvia- Municipal/community-level initiatives- EU-funded competence-based reforms	- No unified EE strategy- Dependence on short-term projects- Limited teacher support- Slow reform process	- Boosts financial literacy, creativity, problem-solving- Improves motivation and self-efficacy- Scaling up spread's awareness to families and communities

5. Key Insights from ICEE (2017):

- **Learning outcomes:** Students gained entrepreneurial competences, career readiness, and transversal skills such as communication and digital literacy.

- **Drivers:** Teacher engagement, school culture supportive of innovation, and external partnerships with businesses and parents.
- **Challenges:** Limited time in curricula, insufficient teacher training, unequal resources, and lack of standardized assessment frameworks.

These international cases provide valuable lessons for India. Strong teacher training, stakeholder engagement, and integration into national curricula have proven critical for success, and similar approaches can inform implementation under NEP 2020.

Fig-1: Framework for Entrepreneurship Education under NEP 2020

5. Conclusion

The integration of EE under NEP 2020 provides a systemic opportunity to embed entrepreneurial mindsets in school curricula. Empirical evidence from both Indian and international contexts suggests that early entrepreneurial exposure fosters resilience, creativity, and socio-economic participation **(Fayolle &Gailly, 2008; Nabi et al., 2017).** However, challenges such as teacher readiness, assessment frameworks, and resource disparities persist. **Dharmadhikari and Bhosle (2020)** highlight the difficulty of sustaining EE programs in rural schools without adequate policy and financial support. The ICEE (2017) findings further emphasize that success depends on stakeholder collaboration and adequate teacher preparation. The discussion underscores the need for public–private partnerships, community engagement, and state-level incubator networks to ensure effective scaling.

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