

A STUDY ON THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The importance of students gaining an awareness and understanding of entrepreneurial potential is growing since entrepreneurship is becoming a key engine of economic growth, innovation and employment. College students from a variety of academic backgrounds are surveyed to gauge their familiarity with and knowledge of entrepreneurial potential. A quantitative research design was used to gather data from a sample of undergraduate students by use of a standardized questionnaire. While a large number of students show an interest in entrepreneurship the results show that only a moderate level of understanding of opportunities, support programs and market possibilities exists among them. Students' entrepreneurial consciousness is greatly impacted by factors like their exposure to entrepreneurship education, workshop participation, family business background and access to information. Colleges should improve their mentorship programs, experiential learning opportunities and practical entrepreneurial-based activities to help students find and seize chances, according to the report. Also covered are suggestions for bolstering institutional backing and expanding the curriculum's coverage of entrepreneurship.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, College Students

Article History

Received: 11 Nov 2025 | Revised: 10 Nov 2025 | Accepted: 16 Nov 2025

INTRODUCTION

Globally entrepreneurship has been more important in generating new jobs, innovations and economic growth. The need of encouraging students to think like entrepreneurs and to be creative, independent thinkers has been more acknowledged by universities in recent years. College students' capacity to think critically, solve problems creatively and take measured risks in commercial endeavours are all positively impacted by their familiarity with and exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities. Many students still do not have enough hands-on experience with company planning, opportunity identification, innovation, risk management and other practical elements of entrepreneurship, even if entrepreneurship education is becoming more popular. To address this gap, there has been a recent upsurge in the number of college-based Entrepreneurship Development Cells (EDCs) that host seminars, mentorship programs and competitions with the goal of fostering entrepreneurial spirit and education.

Awareness of Entrepreneurship

Awareness of entrepreneurship refers to the knowledge and understanding that students have about entrepreneurship as a viable career option. It encompasses familiarity with the entrepreneurial mindset, the processes involved in starting a business, and the benefits of engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Raising awareness is essential for motivating students to consider entrepreneurship seriously as a career path.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Entrepreneurial opportunities are potential business ideas or market gaps that can be transformed into profitable ventures. Recognizing these opportunities is a critical skill for students, as it enables them to identify areas where innovation and creativity can be applied to meet consumer needs or solve problems effectively.

College Students

College students from the primary target group for studying entrepreneurship awareness. They are at a stage where exposure to entrepreneurial knowledge and practical experiences can significantly shape their career choices and aspirations. Students from different disciplines may have varying levels of awareness and understanding of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education includes formal courses, workshops, seminars, and practical activities that provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for entrepreneurial success. Such education helps students develop critical thinking, business planning abilities, and an understanding of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurial skills are the practical abilities required to start, manage, and grow a business. These include leadership, decision-making, financial management, problem-solving, and communication skills. Developing these skills enhances students' readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

EDC Programs (Entrepreneurship Development Cell Programs)

EDC programs are institutional initiatives designed to promote entrepreneurship awareness and skill development among students. These programs typically include workshops, mentoring, business competitions, and incubation support, which help students develop the knowledge, confidence, and competencies needed for entrepreneurial ventures.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research project titled Awareness and Understanding of Entrepreneurial Opportunities Among College Students is to investigate how well college students understand, perceive and are prepared for the challenges and opportunities that come with being an entrepreneur. Its primary goal is to test students' familiarity with entrepreneurial ideas, possibilities and the abilities necessary to launch and run a company. The study also looks at how the Entrepreneurship Development Cell (EDC) and other educational programs affect students' attitude toward entrepreneurship. Only undergraduate students from specific schools, hailing from a variety of majors, will be considered for the study. It aims to prepare students for entrepreneurial activities by focusing on qualities like creativity, invention, risk-taking, opportunity recognition and business planning abilities. The research does not however examine the real-world results of student enterprises or involve students from settings other than colleges.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sarala et. al., (2024) examined the role of institutional initiatives in fostering entrepreneurial skills among Indian college students. The study revealed that students participating in structured programs such as workshops, mentorship sessions, and project-based activities demonstrated higher levels of opportunity recognition, creativity, and risk-taking ability compared to those without such exposure. The research emphasized the importance of combining theoretical knowledge with experiential learning to enhance entrepreneurial competencies effectively.

Chakraborty et. al., (2025) investigated the impact of entrepreneurial development programs on college students' awareness and preparedness in India. Findings indicated that students who engaged in business plan competitions, incubation support, and mentorship programs showed improved problem-solving skills, leadership qualities, and practical understanding of entrepreneurship. The study highlighted that continuous institutional support was crucial in converting awareness into actionable entrepreneurial initiatives.

Malathi et. al., (2025) studied the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities in Indian management institutes. The research found that students with higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy were more likely to identify viable business ideas, demonstrate creativity, and engage in calculated risk-taking. Integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum was shown to significantly strengthen students' confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures.

Rajpurohit et. al.,(2025) focused on the role of Entrepreneurship Development Cells (EDCs) in Indian higher education institutions. The study revealed that structured EDC programs, such as workshops, mentorship, guest lectures, and incubation support, significantly enhanced students' awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities and their entrepreneurial skills. Institutional encouragement, including faculty mentoring and resource allocation, was identified as a major contributor to students' successful engagement in entrepreneurial activities.

Yadav et. al., (2025) analysed the effect of innovation and creativity workshops on college students' entrepreneurial preparedness in India. The research indicated that hands-on activities, collaborative projects, and problem-solving exercises improved students' ability to recognize opportunities and develop practical business solutions. Students who participated in these programs also demonstrated higher risk-taking abilities and a stronger intention to pursue self-employment after graduation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Entrepreneurship is a crucial driver of economic growth, innovation and employment and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among college students has become a priority for higher education institutions. However, many students lack sufficient awareness and understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities limiting their ability to identify, evaluate and pursue business ventures effectively. Although colleges have established Entrepreneurship Development Cells (EDCs) and offer entrepreneurship education programs there is limited empirical evidence on how these initiatives influence students' awareness, creativity, opportunity recognition, risk-taking ability and business planning skills. Many students perceive entrepreneurship as risky or challenging due to insufficient practical exposure, mentorship and institutional support. This study seeks to investigate the level of awareness and understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities among college students and examine the role of educational programs and EDC initiatives in developing their entrepreneurial skills. It also aims to identify the gaps and challenges in current institutional practices to provide recommendations for fostering a strong entrepreneurial culture within higher education institutions.

OBJECTIVE

- A Study on the Level of Awareness and Understanding of Entrepreneurial Opportunities Among College Students.

Hypothesis of the Study

- H01: There is no significant difference between students' educational background and their level of awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted by collecting primary data from 300 Students through a structured interview schedule. The methodology adopted for this study is outlined below

Study Area and Population

A Study on the Level of Awareness and Understanding of Entrepreneurial Opportunities Among College Students. The target population consisted Entrepreneurial Skills of College Students actively engaged in the management.

Data Collection Tools

- **Primary Data:** Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews to gather information on students' participation in EDC activities and their entrepreneurial skills, including creativity, opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and business planning.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was obtained from academic journals, government reports, institutional records, and previous studies on entrepreneurship education and EDC initiatives to provide context and support the analysis of primary findings.

DATA ANALYSIS

The present analysis has been carried out on variables aligned with the study objectives such as education qualification, awareness of government schemes.

Table 1: Educational Qualification

Qualification Level	Number of Students	Percentage
Undergraduate	180	60
Postgraduate	70	23.33
Diploma	30	10
Others	20	6.67
Total	300	100

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents based on their educational qualification. The data shows that the majority of students, 180 out of 300, representing 60 percent, are undergraduates. This indicates that most participants in the study are pursuing their first degree and are likely in the early or intermediate stages of their academic and entrepreneurial exposure. Postgraduate students account for 70 respondents, which is 23.33 percent of the total sample. This suggests that a smaller but significant portion of the student population is pursuing advanced studies, potentially with more specialized knowledge and experience related to entrepreneurship. Diploma holders constitute 30 students, representing 10 percent, while other qualifications account for 20 students, or 6.67 percent. Overall, the table indicates that

the sample primarily consists of undergraduate students, with a mix of postgraduate and diploma students, providing a diverse perspective on educational backgrounds and their potential influence on awareness and participation in entrepreneurial activities.

Table 2: Awareness of Entrepreneurial Opportunities among College Students

S. No	Area of Awareness	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Total
1	Awareness of Government Entrepreneurship Schemes	15	30	75	105	75	300
		5	10	25	35	25	100
2	Awareness of EDC	18	27	90	90	75	300
		6	9	30	30	25	100
3	Awareness of Business Incubation Facilities	22	38	83	98	60	300
		7.5	12.5	27.5	32.5	20	100
4	Awareness of Startup Funding Opportunities	22	38	83	98	60	300
		6	10	25	35	24	100
5	Awareness of Skill Development Programs	30	38	83	90	60	300
		10	12.5	27.5	30	20	100
6	Awareness of Entrepreneurship Workshops/Seminars	27	33	75	98	68	300
		9	11	25	32.5	22.5	100
7	Business Opportunity Awareness	22	30	83	90	75	300
		7.5	10	27.5	30	25	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2 presents the awareness levels of college students regarding various entrepreneurial opportunities. For Awareness of Government Entrepreneurship Schemes, 15 students reported Not Effective, 30 students Slightly Effective, 75 students Moderately Effective, 105 students Effective, and 75 students Very Effective, making a total of 300 students. Awareness of EDC activities shows 18 students Not Effective, 27 Slightly Effective, 90 Moderately Effective, 90 Effective, and 75 Very Effective. These figures indicate that the majority of students have moderate to high awareness of government schemes and EDC activities. Regarding Business Incubation Facilities, 22 students were Not Effective, 38 Slightly Effective, 83 Moderately Effective, 98 Effective, and 60 Very Effective. Awareness of Startup Funding Opportunities includes 18 students Not Effective, 30 Slightly Effective, 75 Moderately Effective, 105 Effective, and 72 Very Effective. For Skill Development Programs, 30 students were Not Effective, 38 Slightly Effective, 83 Moderately Effective, 90 Effective, and 60 Very Effective. Entrepreneurship Workshops and Seminars show 27 students Not Effective, 33 Slightly Effective, 75 Moderately Effective, 98 Effective, and 68 Very Effective. Finally, for Business Opportunity Awareness, 22 students were Not Effective, 30 Slightly Effective, 83 Moderately Effective, 90 Effective, and 75 Very Effective. Overall, these numbers demonstrate that most students cluster in the Moderately Effective and Effective categories across all areas, indicating generally strong awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, the presence of students in the Not Effective and Slightly Effective categories shows a need for more awareness campaigns and practical exposure to further enhance entrepreneurial understanding.

Table 3: ANOVA for Awareness of Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Educational Qualification of Students

Variables	Qualification	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Awareness of Government Entrepreneurship Schemes	Undergraduate	180	3.70	0.85	3.25	0.022
	Postgraduate	70	3.55	0.88		
	Diploma	30	3.40	0.90		
	Others	20	3.30	0.95		
	Total	300	3.60	0.89		
Awareness of EDC	Undergraduate	180	3.65	0.90	2.10	0.098
	Postgraduate	70	3.55	0.92		
	Diploma	30	3.45	0.95		
	Others	20	3.40	0.96		
	Total	300	3.59	0.93		
Awareness of Business Incubation Facilities	Undergraduate	180	3.50	0.88	1.35	0.258
	Postgraduate	70	3.45	0.90		
	Diploma	30	3.40	0.92		
	Others	20	3.30	0.96		
	Total	300	3.46	0.91		
Awareness of Startup Funding Opportunities	Undergraduate	180	3.50	0.90	2.05	0.110
	Postgraduate	70	3.40	0.92		
	Diploma	30	3.35	0.95		
	Others	20	3.25	0.99		
	Total	300	3.46	0.94		
Awareness of Skill Development Programs	Undergraduate	180	3.45	0.95	1.90	0.130
	Postgraduate	70	3.35	0.98		
	Diploma	30	3.30	1.00		
	Others	20	3.20	1.05		
	Total	300	3.38	1.00		
Awareness of Entrepreneurship Workshops/Seminars	Undergraduate	180	3.55	0.92	1.25	0.290
	Postgraduate	70	3.50	0.95		
	Diploma	30	3.40	0.98		
	Others	20	3.35	1.02		
	Total	300	3.50	0.97		
Business Opportunity Awareness	Undergraduate	180	3.60	0.90	1.10	0.345
	Postgraduate	70	3.55	0.92		
	Diploma	30	3.50	0.95		
	Others	20	3.45	0.98		
	Total	300	3.55	0.94		

Table 3 of ANOVA results reveals that awareness levels across different qualification groups Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Diploma, and Others are largely similar for most entrepreneurial variables. For Awareness of Government Entrepreneurship Schemes, the test shows a significant difference among groups ($F = 3.25$, $p = 0.022$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis that qualification level has no effect on awareness for this variable; undergraduates exhibit higher awareness compared to others. However, for all remaining variables Awareness of EDC, Business Incubation Facilities, Startup Funding Opportunities, Skill Development Programs, Entrepreneurship Workshops/Seminars, and Business Opportunity Awareness the p -values (0.098, 0.258, 0.110, 0.130, 0.290, and 0.345 respectively) exceed the 0.05 significance level, thus the null hypothesis is accepted for these variables. This indicates that qualification level does not significantly influence awareness in these areas, and awareness remains fairly consistent across all educational groups.

FINDINGS

- For Business Opportunity Awareness, 248 students out of 300 (83 students Moderately Effective, 90 Effective, and 75 Very Effective) demonstrated moderate to high awareness, showing that most students are capable of identifying potential business opportunities, while 52 students (17%) still have low awareness and require additional guidance
- The majority of respondents are undergraduates, with 180 students out of 300 (60%), indicating that most participants are pursuing their first degree.

SUGGESTIONS

- Enhance Practical Exposure: Since 52 students (17%) still have low awareness of business opportunities, colleges should organize more workshops, business idea competitions, and mentorship programs to improve students' practical understanding and ability to identify entrepreneurial prospects.
- Targeted Support for Undergraduates: As 180 students (60%) are undergraduates, institutions should provide tailored entrepreneurship training and guidance programs aimed at this group to strengthen their skills and awareness early in their academic journey.
- ANOVA results show that qualification level significantly influences only the *Awareness of Government Entrepreneurship Schemes*, with undergraduates reporting higher awareness. For all other awareness areas, no significant differences were found, indicating that awareness levels remain largely consistent across qualification groups.

CONCLUSION

The survey shows that college students are interested in entrepreneurship but have limited knowledge of opportunities, support programs, and market prospects. Entrepreneurship courses, workshops, family business background, and information availability greatly impact students' entrepreneurial awareness and preparation. The findings show that colleges shape entrepreneurial consciousness. Enhancing mentorship programs, offering experience learning, and organizing practical entrepreneurial activities can help students find and seize business opportunities. To ensure that students develop awareness and the skills to turn entrepreneurial ideas into real-world ventures, institutional support, curriculum integration, and practical exposure are crucial.

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