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Development of entrepreneurship skills through horticulture learning experience programme

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Abstract

Experiential learning (EL) is a philosophy and methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, entrepreneurship, and inculcate values. The word 'experiential' essentially means that learning and development are achieved through personal involvement and experience, typically in group, by observation, listening, study of theory or hypothesis, rather than on received teaching or training. EL is a business curriculum related endeavor which is interactive. EL is for building skills in project development and execution, decision-making, individual and team coordination, approach to problem solving, accounting, quality control, marketing and resolving conflicts, etc. The programme has end to end approach. Carefully calibrated activities move participants to explore and discover their own potential and in process, provide analytical skills and business acumen. Both activities and facilitation play a critical role in enhancing team performance. It mainly provides the students an excellent opportunity to develop analytical and entrepreneurial skills, and knowledge through meaningful hands on experience, confidence in their ability to design and execute project work. With this Objectives University of Horticulture Sciences, Bagalkot, Karnataka implemented this programme during the seventh semester of the four year B.Sc. Horticulture degree programme. The study was conducted at UHS Bagalkot, Karnataka to analyse the Entrepreneurship activities undertaken by the students and entrepreneurial skills acquired by the students during the Horticulture Learning Experience Programme. Based on the research it was found that students were in various entrepreneurial activities like processing of fruits and vegetables for value addition, protected cultivation of high values Horticulture crops, Commercial Horticulture and Production and marketing of Biofertiliser. Based on the study it was revealed that hundred per cent of the respondents opined that they acquired production related skills effectively followed by analytical and entrepreneurial skills (85%) team coordination skills (71.67%), marketing and market segmentation skills (63.33%), accounting skills (60.00%), effective communication skills (56.67%) and conflict management skills (40.00%). It was also revealed that only 13.33 per cent of the respondents acquired Project development skills and 8.33 per cent respondents acquired project execution skills. So, these results indicated that there is need to give more emphasis on Detailed Project Report development skills and project execution skills during the process of implementation of Horticulture Learning Experience Programme.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, detailed project report and entrepreneurial skill

Introduction

The entrepreneurship concept assumes different definitions regarding its evolution. It is defined as a systematic innovation (Drucker 1985) [3], which consists of a purposeful and organized search for changes, and it is the systematic analysis of the opportunities, in which such changes might offer economic and social innovation. It is the mindset and process to create and develop economic activity by blending risk-taking, creativity, and innovation with sound management within a new or an existing organization.

Entrepreneurs are individuals who take significant risks regarding capital, time and the commitment of his/her career providing value through the products or services that may be new or exclusive, but the value somehow must be infused by the employer to locate and obtain the skills and resources (Ronstadt 1984) [6].

Experiential learning (EL) is a philosophy and methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, entrepreneurship, and inculcate values. The word 'experiential' essentially means that learning and development are achieved through personal involvement and experience, typically in group, by observation, listening, study of theory or hypothesis, rather than on received teaching or training. EL is a business curriculum related endeavor which is interactive. EL is for building skills in project development and execution, decision-making, individual and team coordination, approach to problem solving, accounting, quality

control, marketing and resolving conflicts, etc. The programme has end to end approach. Carefully calibrated activities move participants to explore and discover their own potential and in process, provide analytical skills and business acumen. Both activities and facilitation play a critical role in enhancing team performance. EL thus, provides the students an excellent opportunity to develop analytical and entrepreneurial skills, and knowledge through meaningful hands on experience, confidence in their ability to design and execute project work. The objectives of the programmes were to promote professional skills, entrepreneurship, knowledge and marketing skills through meaningful hands on experience and working in project mode. To build confidence through end to end approach in product development and to acquire enterprise management capabilities including skills for project development and execution, accountancy, national/international marketing, etc.

With this objectives University of Horticulture Sciences, Bagalkot, Karnataka implemented this programme during the seventh semester of the four year B.Sc. Horticulture degree programme. The study was conducted at UHS Bagalkot, Karnataka to analyse the Entrepreneurship activities undertaken by the students and entrepreneurial skills acquired by the students during the Horticulture Learning Experience Programme.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted at UHS Bagalkot, Karnataka to analyse the Entrepreneurship activities undertaken by the students and entrepreneurial skills acquired by the students during the Horticulture Learning Experience Programme.

Total 60 students were randomly selected from three different constituent colleges of UHS Bagalkot for the study. The data was collected by using questionnaires and conducting focused group discussion method.

Results and Discussion

Drucker (1985) [3] describes the entrepreneur as individual exploiting opportunities that are created by the changes in the environment. Being entrepreneurial and the creation of an entrepreneurial culture goes beyond the fear of risk (McMullen and Shepherd 2006) [4] and the stigma of failure that influences the entrepreneurship context decisively. Entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. The wealth is created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and /or career commitment or provide value for some product or service. The product or service may or may not be new or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by receiving and allocating the necessary skills and resources. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs have become increasingly important worldwide, considering the positive impact on employment, productivity, innovation and economic growth, by analysts, economic theoreticians and researchers (Ahmad and Hoffmann 2008) [1].

Entrepreneurial Activities Undertaken

The Entrepreneurial activities undertaken by different Horticulture Colleges at University of Horticultural Sciences Bagalkot during the implementation of Horticulture Learning Experience Programme were listed in the Table No. 01

Table 1: Entrepreneurial activities undertaken during the programme

SI No.	Entrepreneurial activities	Activities
1	Protected cultivation of High value Horticulture Crops	Production and Marketing of Grafts & seedlings of Mango, guava, Drumsticks, Chrysanthemum and Marigold Seedlings
2	Processing of fruits and Vegetables for value addition	Production and Marketing of Cocum Juice, Mango Juice, Muskmelon Juice, Water Melon Juice, Guava Juice and Pomo Juice
3	Mass production of Bio-fertilizers	Mass production and Marketing of Pseudomonas and Trichoderma
4	Commercial cultivation of vegetable and Flower crops	Commercial Cultivation and Marketing of Tomato, Cucumber, Chilli, Ladyfinger, Radish, Pallak Menthe, Marigold Gaillardia Chrysanthemum and Chain Aster

From the Table No. 01 it was revealed that under different ELH modules different activities were under taken with an objective of promoting professional skills, entrepreneurship, knowledge and marketing skills through meaningful hands on experience and working in project mode. To build confidence through end to end approach in product development and to acquire enterprise management capabilities including skills for project development and execution, accountancy and marketing of the produce.

Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired

In the 80s, the concept of skills started to have significant importance due to technological, organizational, and

economic factors. Considered as a resource—of individual and organizational nature—which would allow competitiveness and productivity advantages to companies (Vasconcelos *et al.* 2016) [7]. Historically, the word skills have been used to refer to individual characteristics. However, in the concept of Prochno (2001) [5], although the skills always apply to the individual, all of them have two dimensions, the individual and the collective. In this way, the concept of skills assumes a rather broad scope which makes it complicated and makes its comprehension/understanding and concept delimitation difficult. Entrepreneurial Skills acquired by the students during Horticulture Learning Experience Programme were depicted in the table No. 02

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according Entrepreneurial skills acquired during the HEL Programmes (N=60)

SI No.	Particular	Number	Percentage
1	Production related technical skills	60	100.00
2	Analytical and entrepreneurial skills	51	85.00
3	Team coordination skills	43	71.67
4	Marketing and market segmentation skills	38	63.33
5	Accounting skills	36	60.00
6	Effective communication skills	34	56.67
7	Conflict Management Skills	24	40.00

8	Managerial skills	22	36.67
9	Risk bearing skills	18	30.00
10	Team building skills	12	20.00
11	Project development skills	08	13.33
12	Project execution skills	05	08.33

From the table No. 02 it was revealed that hundred per cent of the respondents opined that they production related skills effectively followed by analytical and entrepreneurial skills (85%) team coordination skills (71.67%), marketing and market segmentation skills (63.33%), accounting skills (60.00%), effective communication skills (56.67%) and Conflict Management Skills (40.00%). It was also revealed that only 13.33 per cent of the respondents leaned about Project development skills and 08.33 per cent respondents acquired Project execution skills. So, there is need to give more emphasis on Project development skills and project execution skills during the process of implementation of Horticulture Learning Experience Programme

Concerning the soft skills that are inherent to managing entrepreneurial projects, Davis (1993)^[2] suggested that there are skills and practices of successful managers. He stated that “the emphasis of the future has to be in leadership skills and interpersonal management practices that ensure project success”

Suggestions for effective Implementation of HEL Programmes

Suggestions for effective implementation of Horticulture Learning Experience Programme were taken from the respondents by conducting focus group discussions and suggestions were depicted in the Table No. 03

Table 3: Suggestions of respondents for effective implementation of HEL Programmes (N=60)

Sl No.	Particulars	Rank
1	More emphasis should be given to Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation and its execution	I
2	Providing high-tech facilities for propagation units (Mist and fogger units)	II
3	Creation of post-harvest management facilities (Transportation, Cold storage, and Cold chain management)	III
4	Market linkage for the sale of produce	IV
5	Establishment of marketing and branding of the produce Unit at campus	V
6	Providing scientific knowledge about modern horticulture practices in commercial crops	VI
7	Use of novel varieties/recently released varieties of horticulture crops based on the market demand	VII

Based on the Table No. 03 it was revealed more emphasis should be given to Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation and its execution followed by providing high-tech facilities for propagation units (Mist and fogger units) creation of post harvest management facilities (Transportation, Cold storage and Cold chain management), Market linkage for the sale of produce, Establishment of marketing and branding of the produce Unit at campus, Providing scientific knowledge about modern horticulture practices in commercial crops and Use of novel varieties/recently released varieties of horticulture crops based on the market demand.

Conclusion

Horticulture Learning Experience Programme is for building skills in project development and execution, decision-making, individual and team coordination, approach to problem solving, accounting, quality control, marketing and resolving conflicts, etc. The programme has end to end approach. Carefully calibrated activities move participants to explore and discover their own potential and in process, provide analytical skills and business acumen. The study was conducted at UHS Bagalkot, Karnataka to analyse the Entrepreneurship activities undertaken by the students and entrepreneurial skills acquired by the students during the Horticulture Learning Experience Programme. Based on the research it was found that students were involved in various entrepreneurial activities like processing of fruits and vegetables for value addition, protected cultivation of high values Horticulture crops, Commercial Horticulture and Production and marketing of Biofertiliser. Also it was found that majority of the students learnt technical, marketing and risk management skills. Further, there is need to inculcated the skills of preparation detailed project report and effective market segmentation skills among the students.

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