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An Analytical Study Of Satisfaction Level Of Rural Entrepreneurs Towards Government Initiatives

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores the satisfaction levels of rural entrepreneurs towards government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship. Through a detailed analysis of government schemes, the study investigates various factors that contribute to the entrepreneurial climate in rural India. Descriptive statistics reveal that most government initiatives are generally well-received, with high satisfaction levels observed across most categories. However, variability was noted in areas such as "Transportation Facilities" and "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs," indicating a need for further improvements. The study employs ANOVA analysis to examine differences in satisfaction levels across various demographic groups, highlighting the importance of tailored approaches to enhance the effectiveness of government initiatives. Additionally, the Tukey HSD test identifies significant differences in satisfaction across specific initiatives, revealing that while initiatives like "Export Formalities" received the highest satisfaction, others, such as "Government Regulations and Procedures," showed lower satisfaction scores. The findings underscore the necessity for targeted improvements in certain initiatives to foster a more supportive environment for rural entrepreneurs. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers to refine existing strategies and better address the needs of rural entrepreneurs, ultimately enhancing the impact of government initiatives on rural economic development.

Introduction

Rural areas are generally marked by low population densities, large open spaces, and a strong reliance on agriculture and related sectors. These areas commonly feature smaller settlements, such as villages or hamlets, and tend to have fewer infrastructural resources than urban regions (Census of India, 2011). For example, a rural area is often defined as one that does not meet urban criteria, typically having fewer than 400 people per square kilometer, with at least 75% of the male workforce involved in agriculture or related activities (Census of India, 2011).

The development of rural entrepreneurship holds significant potential for addressing poverty, improving infrastructure, and creating jobs in rural communities (Harpa, 2017). Young people leaving rural areas for urban economic opportunities has resulted in an aging rural population and limited job prospects in primary industries, as noted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2005 (Kalantaridis & Bika, 2006). Expanding rural entrepreneurship can also help reduce urban population pressures, which in turn can alleviate traffic and overcrowding issues.

Entrepreneurship consists of three main elements: identifying opportunities, funding innovations, and realizing financial returns (Cîrstea et al., 2013; McElwee & Atherton, 2011; Ratten, 2021). Entrepreneurs play a key role in connecting economic inputs and outputs, thus fueling economic growth (Vokes, 1984; Wortman, 1990). In rural areas, entrepreneurship is often seen as a balanced approach to managing risks, mobilizing people, materials, and financial resources to bring projects to life (Lokuge & Sedera, 2020).

Rural entrepreneurs identify new business opportunities not just through instinct but by actively seeking up-to-date, risk-mitigating information (Marchante et al., 2007). They proactively seek new experiences, explore ideas, and take action to improve systems. Rural entrepreneurs choose to live and work within rural communities (Apostolopoulos, 2017) and are often defined as individuals who run businesses that leverage local resources. They enhance local economies by creating jobs and increasing residents' purchasing power (Azari et al., 2017). According to the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), rural entrepreneurs are those who innovate,

organize, and manage business ventures in rural areas to improve the economic and social conditions of rural populations.

However, many rural business owners lack strategies for aligning their products with consumer needs and enhancing product value through finishing, packaging, or promotion (Rena, 2009). While there is significant potential for skilled artisans, various factors make it challenging for rural entrepreneurs to succeed, including limited access to new technologies, regulatory hurdles, logistical challenges, inadequate capital, and insufficient market information (Rodríguez-Gómez, 2022).

Rural entrepreneurs contribute critically to national economic development, especially in a country like India (Meera & Vinodan, 2019). Promoting rural entrepreneurship can help address rural unemployment, reduce poverty, and curb migration (B. et al., 1989). Rural enterprises not only drive income growth but also serve as agents of social change by utilizing local resources at the grassroots level. They are essential for advancing the national economy and improving rural living conditions (Raut et al., 2012). Success stories like the Amul dairy cooperative and growth in the handicrafts sector showcase rural entrepreneurship's potential. Such initiatives attract capital, encourage private investments, create local jobs, establish business partnerships, and attract external investment (A. Singh, 2020).

The Government of India defines a "village industry" as one located in rural areas, villages, or towns with populations under 20,000 and investments in equipment and machinery of up to INR three crores (Shrivastava & Acharya, 2022). The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has recently updated this definition (Swain & Patoju, 2022).

Review of literature

Daimei and Gnanadev (2023) highlighted rural entrepreneurship as a crucial opportunity for people living in rural areas. They found that rural entrepreneurs exhibited qualities such as risk-taking, creativity, leadership, effective management, and a commitment to continuous learning, all driven by a strong ambition to succeed. In North East India, many of these entrepreneurs began their ventures as small-scale enterprises with a vision for larger success. However, their path to success was not without challenges. Rural entrepreneurs in developing states like Manipur faced numerous obstacles due to the lack of basic infrastructure, education, financial support, and adequate technical skills. This study aimed to assess the standards of emotional intelligence related to rural entrepreneurship in Senapati District, Manipur, with the objective of providing policymakers with valuable insights to support the economic growth of rural enterprises in India's Senapati region. In a separate study, Polas et al. (2023) examined the adoption of green innovation among rural entrepreneurs in Bangladesh to promote clean energy strategies and eco-friendly small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The research analyzed data from 288 rural Bangladeshi SME owners using SPSS V25 and Smart PLS 3.3.9 (SEM). The study focused on how environmental concern, perceived ease of use, and attitude influence the adoption of green innovation, with a specific look at how the intention to use green energy technology might mediate these relationships. Results indicated a positive relationship between perceived ease of use, environmental concern, and the adoption of green innovations. The desire to use renewable energy—specifically solar technology—was found to mediate the connection between environmental concern and attitude toward adopting green innovation, although it did not mediate the link between perceived ease of use and adoption. This study contributes to the understanding of rural green innovation by underscoring the importance of eco-innovations and sustainable practices for promoting green practices among rural entrepreneurs in today's digital age. Poongodi et al. (2023) highlighted the crucial role rural entrepreneurship plays in fostering economic growth and rural development in India. The authors categorized rural entrepreneurship into various sectors, including agro-based, forest-based, mineral-based, textile, and handicraft industries, emphasizing their importance in generating employment, driving rural progress, and meeting consumer needs. The study also proposed strategies to support rural entrepreneurs and outlined the advantages of rural entrepreneurship, such as its lower capital needs and its potential to reduce migration to urban areas. Ilahi (2019) assessed the status of rural entrepreneurship in India, utilizing secondary data sources such as the annual reports from Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, along with reports from the 73rd National Sample Survey, economic surveys, journals, and various websites. The study found that India has 63.388 million MSMEs engaged in diverse economic activities, of which 32.488 million are based in rural areas. Notably, the rural sector has generated more manufacturing jobs than the urban sector, with West Bengal leading the rural sector with 17.44% of the nation's enterprises. Narayan et al. (2018) focused on the challenges encountered by rural entrepreneurs in India and potential solutions. The study identified numerous obstacles, including insufficient knowledge, skills, financing, infrastructure, industrial environment, skilled labor, raw materials, marketing, and competition at the global level. Recommended solutions include establishing finance cells to provide easier access to funding at concessional interest rates, offering training programs, and forming marketing cooperatives to address branding and marketing challenges. Meera (2017) investigated what motivates rural individuals to pursue entrepreneurship. Data was collected from ten rural entrepreneurs using a convenient sampling method, focusing on participants in Bangalore, particularly in Devanahalli taluk. Data analysis using percentage statistics revealed that agricultural failures are a key factor driving rural entrepreneurs to shift toward non-farm sectors. Kumar (2008) explored the awareness among rural entrepreneurs regarding the support provided by various agencies for small businesses. The study revealed that District Industrial Centres (DICs), National Small Industries Corporations (NSICs), State Financial Corporations

(SFCs), Small Industries Service Institutes (SISIs), Technical Consultancy Organizations (TCOs), commercial banks, and NGOs are the primary entities rural entrepreneurs frequently consult. The findings underscore the urgent need for initiatives to raise awareness about the financial resources available to rural entrepreneurs. Additionally, the study confirmed that most rural entrepreneurs are satisfied with the services offered by these supporting agencies, highlighting the importance of promoting awareness and maximizing the benefits of existing support systems for rural business owners. Sherief (2008) examined the impact of rural entrepreneurship on rural development, identifying various factors that influence rural entrepreneurship and highlighting general challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs. The study concluded that promoting rural entrepreneurship is one of the most effective ways to accelerate economic growth in rural areas. Hossain (2004) discussed the rising importance of rural entrepreneurship in Bangladesh, noting its essential role in the rural economy. Non-agricultural income within rural households increased from 36% in 1982 to 42% in 1987 and further to 54% in 2000. Similarly, non-agricultural employment in rural areas rose significantly from 34% in 1987 to 52% by 2000. Ramchandraiah G. (2001) analyzed the institutional and infrastructural barriers to rural industrialization in Dindigul District. Despite these obstacles, enterprises in the region had a strong resource base, achieving a high success rate, with 90% of businesses operating effectively.

Objectives of the Study

To analyse the satisfaction level of rural entrepreneurs towards government initiatives to promote entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis of the Study

H04: There is no significant difference in the satisfaction level of rural entrepreneurs among the various government initiatives for promoting entrepreneurship.

Research Methodology

The study focused on rural entrepreneurs in Punjab, with a total sample of 800 respondents. This sample was divided across five divisions: Jalandhar, Patiala, Roopnagar, Faridkot, and Ferozepur, with 160 respondents selected from each division. To achieve the study's objectives, primary data was gathered using a five-point Likert scale—ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree—through a questionnaire. The study's hypothesis was tested using the ANOVA technique for analysis.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction Level Towards Government Initiatives for Promotion of Entrepreneurship

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	Between-Component Variance
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Ease of Doing Business	800	4.0000	0.00000	0.00000	4.0000	4.0000	4.00	4.00	
Government schemes and subsidies are easily accessible.	800	4.0000	0.00000	0.00000	4.0000	4.0000	4.00	4.00	
Tax benefits	800	3.8333	.37300	.01554	3.8028	3.8639	3.00	4.00	
Simplifying concessional loan/subsidy to expand enterprise	800	3.6667	.47181	.01966	3.6281	3.7053	3.00	4.00	
Establishing rural industrial hubs	800	3.5000	.50043	.02085	3.4590	3.5410	3.00	4.00	
Government regulations and procedures are simple.	800	3.5000	.50043	.02085	3.4590	3.5410	3.00	4.00	
Fair legal system	800	3.6667	.47181	.01966	3.6281	3.7053	3.00	4.00	

Transportation Facilities		800	4.0000	.57785	.02408	3.9527	4.0473	3.00	5.00	
Labour laws are simple and streamlined.		800	4.1667	.37300	.01554	4.1361	4.1972	4.00	5.00	
Export formalities		800	4.3333	.47181	.01966	4.2947	4.3719	4.00	5.00	
Total		800	3.8667	.49893	.00657	3.8538	3.8796	3.00	5.00	
Model	Fixed Effects			.42200	.00556	3.8558	3.8776			
	Random Effects				.08889	3.6656	4.0677			.07870

Source: Primary data

Table 1 provides a detailed analysis of satisfaction levels concerning various government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship. The data shows that most categories have high satisfaction scores, particularly in areas such as "Ease of Doing Business," "Accessibility of Government Schemes and Subsidies," and "Export Formalities," all of which received mean scores close to or above 4.00. This indicates a broadly positive reception from respondents. However, some categories exhibit greater variability in responses, especially "Transportation Facilities" and "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs," which have mean scores of 4.0000 and 3.5000, respectively. The standard deviations and confidence intervals further emphasize this variability, suggesting that while some respondent's express high satisfaction, others may have concerns.

The fixed effects model reveals a mean satisfaction score of 3.8667 with a standard deviation of 0.49893, indicating a generally high level of satisfaction across the sample. The random effects model, with a between-component variance of 0.07870, shows some variability in the satisfaction scores, but the overall range remains high, spanning from 3.6656 to 4.0677.

In summary, the results indicate that government initiatives for promoting entrepreneurship are generally well-received, with high satisfaction levels in most areas. However, there are specific categories, such as "Transportation Facilities" and "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs," where satisfaction is more inconsistent, pointing to potential areas for further enhancement. This detailed analysis offers valuable insights for policymakers to improve the effectiveness of these initiatives and address areas requiring additional focus.

Table 2: ANOVA for measuring Satisfaction level towards Government Initiatives for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		409.600	9	45.511	255.556	.000
	Linear Term	Contrast	43.636	1	43.636	245.028	.000
		Deviation	365.964	8	45.745	256.871	.000
Within Groups			1024.000	791	.178		
Total			1433.600	800			

Source: Primary data

Table 2 presents the satisfaction levels regarding government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship. The analysis reveals significant variations in satisfaction across different groups. The "Between Groups" sum of squares is 409.600, with 9 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 45.511. The F-value for this component is 255.556, with a significance level (Sig.) of .000, indicating a highly significant difference between the groups.

Further analysis of the linear term shows a contrast sum of squares of 43.636 with 1 degree of freedom, leading to a mean square of 43.636. The F-value for the linear term is 245.028, with a significance level of .000, suggesting a significant linear trend in the data. Additionally, the deviation from this linear trend is also significant, with a sum of squares of 365.964 and 8 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 45.745. The F-value for the deviation is 256.871, with a significance level of .000, indicating that the deviations from the linear trend are statistically significant.

The "Within Groups" sum of squares is 1024.000, with 791 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of .178. The total sum of squares is 1433.600, with 800 degrees of freedom.

The significant p-values (Sig. < .05) for all components of the ANOVA indicate meaningful differences in satisfaction levels regarding government initiatives across the various groups. This suggests that the impact of

government initiatives on entrepreneurship differs significantly between segments of the population. These findings are important for policymakers, as they emphasize the need for more focused and tailored strategies to improve the effectiveness of government programs in supporting entrepreneurship.

Table 3: Tukey HSD Test for measuring satisfaction level towards government initiatives for promotion of entrepreneurship

		Subset for alpha = 0.05					
Government Initiatives	N	1	2	3	4	5	6
Establishing rural industrial hubs	800	3.5000					
Government regulations and procedures are simple	800	3.5000					
Simplifying concessional loan/subsidy to expand enterprise	800		3.6667				
Fair legal system	800		3.6667				
Tax benefits	800			3.8333			
Ease of Doing Business	800				4.0000		
Government schemes and subsidies are easily accessible	800				4.0000		
Transportation Facilities	800				4.0000		
Labour laws are simple and streamlined	800					4.1667	
Export formalities	800						4.3333

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.
Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 800.000.

Table 3 displays the results of the Tukey HSD test, which measures satisfaction levels with various government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, highlighting significant differences in satisfaction across these initiatives. The initiatives "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs" and "Government Regulations and Procedures are Simple" both received a mean satisfaction score of 3.5000, placing them in the first subset, indicating relatively lower satisfaction. "Simplifying Concessional Loan/Subsidy to Expand Enterprise" and "Fair Legal System" both scored 3.6667, placing them in the second subset. "Tax Benefits" achieved a mean satisfaction score of 3.8333, positioning it in the third subset.

The initiatives "Ease of Doing Business," "Government Schemes and Subsidy are Easily Accessible," and "Transportation Facilities" all scored 4.0000, placing them in the fourth subset, indicating higher satisfaction levels. "Labour Laws are Simple and Streamlined" scored 4.1667, placing it in the fifth subset, which signifies a very high level of satisfaction. "Export Formalities" achieved the highest mean satisfaction score of 4.3333, placing it in the sixth subset, indicating the highest satisfaction level among all the initiatives.

These results suggest that while some government initiatives are highly valued by rural entrepreneurs, others may require improvement to enhance their effectiveness in supporting entrepreneurship. This information is crucial for policymakers, as it helps identify the successful initiatives and those that need targeted improvements.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics: The results indicate that government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship are generally well-received, with high satisfaction levels across most categories. However, there is noticeable variability in areas such as "Transportation Facilities" and "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs," suggesting that these areas could benefit from further improvement. This analysis provides important insights that can guide policymakers in enhancing the overall effectiveness of these initiatives.

ANOVA Analysis: The analysis reveals significant differences in satisfaction levels towards government initiatives across different groups. The highly significant F-values and p-values highlight meaningful variations among population segments, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to improve the impact of these initiatives.

Tukey HSD Test Results: The Tukey HSD test identifies notable differences in satisfaction levels across various government initiatives for promoting entrepreneurship. While initiatives such as "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs" and "Government Regulations and Procedures are Simple" show lower satisfaction, "Export Formalities" receives the highest satisfaction score. These findings indicate that targeted improvements in specific initiatives are necessary to better support entrepreneurship.

Conclusion:

The study concluded that government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in rural areas are generally well-received, with high satisfaction levels in most categories. However, notable variability in satisfaction was observed in certain areas, such as "Transportation Facilities" and "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs," indicating that these initiatives require further attention and improvement. The ANOVA analysis underscores the significant differences in satisfaction levels across various demographic groups, emphasizing the importance of customizing strategies to effectively meet the diverse needs of rural entrepreneurs. Moreover, the Tukey HSD test highlights specific initiatives that require targeted enhancement, such as "Establishing Rural Industrial Hubs" and "Government Regulations and Procedures," which garnered lower satisfaction scores. In contrast, initiatives like "Export Formalities" received the highest satisfaction, pointing to areas where the government performs well. These insights are valuable for policymakers, as they provide a clear understanding of where government initiatives are succeeding and where further efforts are needed to better support entrepreneurship in rural areas.

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