

Entrepreneurship courses got a boost from Start-up India: IIMA's Amit Karna

IIM Ahmedabad professor Amit Karna on the demand for entrepreneurship courses, the difference in the training approach and who should ideally take them



Photo: Mint

Start-ups have mushroomed throughout the country, and so have short-term entrepreneurship courses that promise to hone people's entrepreneurial skills.

Professor Amit Karna, chairperson of Centre for Innovation Incubation and Entrepreneurship at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, comments on the demand for these courses, the difference in the training approach and who should ideally take them.

Excerpts from an interview:

How do you spot an entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurial training can help individuals think out-of-the-box and develop innovative skills that can enable the individual to connect the dots. Good entrepreneurship education is one that imparts innovation skills in a holistic manner. An entrepreneur who has undergone good entrepreneurship education is likely to follow an entrepreneurial "method". A methodical approach involves experimentation and

iterative building of a business model until attaining success.

How does entrepreneurship training differ from the regular MBA degrees?

Entrepreneurship education is indeed different as compared to MBA training where techniques are taught. In entrepreneurship education, the students are equipped with tools that enable creative problem solving, need identification and developing a sustainable business model.

Such courses require a lot more immersion into real life and on-the-ground learning.

Entrepreneurship education, therefore, has a large component of action-oriented learning and application of concepts in real-life projects.

What are the three key skills entrepreneurs should have to overcome leadership challenges?

People management, innovation skills and skills to continuously leverage learning in new situations are key. An entrepreneurial organization, especially during the growth stage, needs a lot of people and innovation management in order to sustain the fine balance between the scale of a large firm and the culture of a small one.

Who should ideally go for such training?

Entrepreneurship education is likely to be most helpful for individuals with management education and some real-life work experience.

Will the Start-up India initiative lead to a demand for certificate courses in entrepreneurship?

Start-up India has surely increased the supply of entrepreneurship education. Due to increased supply, there is a demand for such courses. However, the long-term success of these offerings is likely to depend on the effectiveness of the courses. A classroom-based approach to teaching entrepreneurship is less likely to succeed, but if there are more institutes that come forward with more applied and action-oriented entrepreneurship courses, these are likely to be more effective and will further increase the demand for such courses.