**CONSTRUCTION OF INDEX TO MEASURE AGRIPRENEURSHIP BEHAVIOUR OF OPEN DISTANCE LEARNERS IN TAMIL NADU**

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**ABSTRACT**

Agriculture provides the raw materials necessary for production of secondary goods, other commodities for export and agricultural and horticultural produces to satisfy the necessities of man. While agripreneurship makes the sector more attractive and profitable. Apart from increasing the socio-economic status of the country, agripreneurship paves way to increase the living standard of the farmers, generates employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed, ensures food and nutritional security. In this connection, it is important to promote agripreneurship programmes and schemes, but which requires an understanding about the entrepreneurship behaviour of agripreneurs. In this regard, the present study constructed an entrepreneurship behaviour index based on ten dimensions, such as leadership skills, planning skills, technical skills, business management or networking skills, financial skills, personality skills, motivation skills, decision making skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills. The developed index was tested for its reliability and found it to be 0.89. This implies that this index can be used to measure the entrepreneurship behaviour index of agripreneurs.

**Keywords:** *Agripreneurship behaviour, Index, Leadership, Skills, Behavior Index, Business management, Planning skills*

**INTRODUCTION**

Being an agricultural based country, agriculture serve as the major source of livelihood (Arjun, 2013) for more than two-third of the population of India. At the time of independence, agriculture contributes more than half of the National Income whereas more than 70 per cent of the total population of India rely on agriculture for their livelihood (Pandey, 2013).In this technologically advanced and modernized world, every sector encountered transition and agriculture is not an exception. Similarly, agriculture shifted from the traditional food security to nutrition oriented sector. Agripreneurship paves way to enrich the agricultural products and its byproducts through fortification. It not only ensures nutrition security, but also increases the income of the farmer and increases employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed. In this regard, Government of India has implemented several measures to encourage establishment of startup and agrobased industries. As entrepreneurial competencies enables better use of raw materials and other necessary resources which leads to improved quality of work in the enterprises. In addition, assessing the entrepreneurial behaviour of agripreneurs helps to understand and improve entrepreneurship education and support programmes by government. This will ultimately facilitates formulating entrepreneurship related policies and schemes.

A study by Shirur *et al.,* (2015) developed a tool to measure the entrepreneurial behaviour of mushroom growers based on eleven dimension such as innovativeness, achievement motivation, economic motivation, technical competency, decision making ability, risk bearing ability, information seeking behaviour, scientific orientation, leadership ability, management orientation and marketing strategy. Madhumitha *et al.,* (2020)studied the entrepreneurial behaviour of women agripreneurs in Namakkal district and reported that nearly half of the women agripreneurs had medium level of entrepreneurial behavior. Similarly, Elakkiya and Asokhan (2021) developed a tool to measure entrepreneurial skill among agripreneurs and identified seven important indicators to measure agripreneur skill such as marketing skills, pshychological magnitude, managerial skill, behavioral skill, technical skill, communication competency and cognitive skill. While, Channal and Natikar (2021) revealed that more than one-third of the trained entrepreneurs of Northern Karnataka had medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour. Based on the previous literatures several dimensions and statements were identified to construct an index to measure the entrepreneurial behaviour of agripreneurs.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study aims to construct an index to measure the agripreneurship behavior among graduates. An index is a technique of totaling or reducing a single composite series data on a number of distinct but related variables expressed in different units and measurement (Hooda, 2001). In this connection, agripreneurship behavior index is an index designed to measure or assess the behavior of agripreneurs such as leadership skills, planning skills, technical skills, business management or networking skills, financial skills, personality skills, motivation skills, decision making skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills.

1. **Identification of Indicators**

In order to construct the agripreneurship behaviour index, relevant and possible statements that measure the agripreneurship behaviour were identified. The identified indicators were planning skills, leadership skills, communication skills, decision making skills, financial skills, personality skills, motivation skills, decision making skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills and several other dimensions were identified through previous literatures, extension experts and researchers. The identified and developed statements were editor according to the nature of the study, based on the informal criteria given by Edwards (1957) and finally 102 statements were developed.

**Table. 1. List of statements selected for the study**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Agripreneurship behaviour index** |
| **I** | **Leadership skills** |
| 1 | I can guide other interested people |
| 2 | I can get the works done through others |
| 3 | I will motivate my employees for their best performance |
| 4 | \*I am afraid that my employees might not listen to my suggestions |
| 5 | \*I will never ask for feedback from my employees to improve myself |
| 6 | I will ask feedback from my employees to improve myself |
| 7 | I will recognize my employees when they had done their job well  |
| 8 | I will support my employees to advance in their career |
| 9 | I will delegate the appropriate responsibilities and competence needed when assigning tasks |
| 10 | I will follow democratic style of leadership |
| 11 | Though I am a friendly leader, I won’t compromise in work quality |
| **II** | **Problem solving skills**  |
| 1 | \*I am not good enough in problem solving among employees |
| 2 | \*I am disappointed when I met any failure |
| 3 | \*I am unable to address the problems related to agripreneurship |
| 4 | I can provide creative solutions to problems |
| 5 | I can critically examine the future problems and strategize accordingly |
| 6 | Before taking any decision, I will discuss the problems with my employees |
| 7 | I will solve the problems after in-depth analysis |
| 8 | I will remove the problems from its root cause  |
| 9 | If there is a problem in my enterprise, I can’t do any other work at peace |
| 10 | \*I will neglect the problems among my employees |
| **III** | **Communication skills** |
| 1 | I like to exchange opinions and ideas with other people |
| 2 | \*I am unable to take feedback |
| 3 | I will be open and inquisitive for others suggestions |
| 4 |  I will actively listen to my employees before giving my suggestion.  |
| 5 | I will be clear and concise in my language |
| 6 | I have an ability to improve the work efficiency through common strategies |
| 7 | \*I lack communication skills |
| 8 | \*I lack skills to market my products through social media |
| 9 | I felt advertisement through social media increases my sales |
| 10 | \*I feel difficult to explain my product in an attractive way |
| **IV** | **Planning skills** |
| 1 |  I will plan the production process based on future trends |
| 2 | \* I don’t have alternate plan to manage at the time of emergency/contingency |
| 3 | I will manage the time effectively by prioritizing the activities |
| 4 | I will plan the entire functioning of my enterprise even in my absence |
| 5 | \*I feel that planning has role in effective utilization of resources |
| 6 | I will plan the entire activities that need to be carried out before a month |
| 7 | \*As I planned everything earlier, I couldn’t adapt to the changing needs |
| 8 | I can turn the practical applicability of ideas into reality |
| 9 | \*When I couldn’t carry out the planned activities, I consider myself as a incapable person |
| 10 | \*I never carried out monthly review meetings to assess company’s performance |
| **V** | **Decision making skills** |
| 1 | I will make sure that my decision will have positive effect on people |
| 2 | I will be responsible for my decisions |
| 3 | I can understand the effect of my decisions |
| 4 | I will decide based on the future trends |
| 5 | I will decide based on consumer needs |
| 6 | I will gather relevant information before taking any decision |
| 7 | I will analyse the risk involved before taking any decision |
| 8 | I will consider the decision based on its potential outcome |
| 9 | \*I will try to solve the problem rather than considering its impact |
| 10 | \*If I didn’t like the decision taken by sub-ordinates, I will involve and change |
| **VI** | **Motivation skills** |
| 1 | My family supports my entrepreneurial development |
| 2 | I am motivated by my inner self than external rewards |
| 3 | Though I fail, I won’t quit |
| 4 | \* I am not bold enough to face the difficulties that arise in managing my enterprise |
| 5 | \* I will never plan any target and work in the flow |
| 6 | I will set difficult goals to motivate myself |
| 7 | If I decide to do something, I will do it and nothing can stop me |
| 8 | I will motivate my employees by providing monthly rewards for completing tasks |
| 9 | I will support my employees by organizing events or parties |
| 10 | \*I will never motivate my employees to complete the task, as it was their job |
| **VII** | **Personality skills** |
| 1 | I have strong will power |
| 2 | I can evaluate the outcome of my decision |
| 3 | \* I couldn’t understand the business environment |
| 4 | I am ready to risk to expand my business |
| 5 | \* I lack communications skills |
| 6 | Even if I fail, I will learn from my mistakes |
| 7 | I can balance my work and family |
| 8 | I will try to fulfill the commitment that I had taken |
| 9 | \* I cannot tolerate failure |
| 10 | Always I try to think differently, while trying to solve a problem |
| 11 | Entrepreneurship cannot be taught |
| **VIII** | **Financial skills** |
| 1 | I can initiate new business activities |
| 2 | I know when to invest |
| 3 | I can manage the financial aspects of my business |
| 4 | I will prepare a budget and decide based on it |
| 5 | I prefer to invest than saving money |
| 6 | \* I have confusions while deciding about investments |
| 7 | \* I am afraid to try new ideas as I could lose my investments |
| 8 | \*I am afraid to avail loan because of the long procedures |
| 9 | \*I lack competencies to attract investment |
| 10 | \*I will invest the returns in my enterprise, even if it couldn’t provide salary for my employees |
| **IX** | **Business management or Networking skills** |
| 1 | I identify new opportunities where others do not see them |
| 2 | I believethat successful agripreneur has social recognition |
| 3 | I will dedicate time to maintain relationship with my employees |
| 4 | I will follow up my customers and maintain relationship with them |
| 5 | \*I felt difficult to satisfy my clients |
| 6 | I will build more contact whenever I have the opportunity |
| 7 | I can understand the consumer needs |
| 8 | I know to manage the production process during the time of pandemic  |
| 9 | \*I am not confident in attending enterprise related events or meetings |
| 10 | \*I couldn’t adapt to the changing needs, as management of enterprise is highly complicated |
| **X** | **Technical skills** |
| 1 | I can generate new ideas |
| 2 | I know new methods of production  |
| 3 | I know new methods of marketing to attract customers |
| 4 | I know various ways and means to reduce the cost |
| 5 | I know my business objectives |
| 6 | \* I felt difficult in analyzing the credibility of the market information  |
| 7 | I can develop my skills and capabilities to improve the performance of my enterprise |
| 8 | I felt quality is important than innovative packaging |
| 9 | I know alternative ways to produce the product, when the raw material is unavailable or inadequate |
| 10 | **\***I lack technical expertise in production process |

**(\* -** Negative statements**)**

1. **Relevancy rating of indicators**

The edited statements were brought under ten different dimension to measure the agripreneurship behaviour index and sent to 30 judges to obtain their opinion in a five point continuum from 5 to 1 based on their relative degree of importance as highly important to not at all important for favorable statements and scoring is reversed for negative statements. Among the 30 judges, 15 judges provided their response. With atleast 10 statements under each dimension, the maximum total score was 505 and the minimum total score was 101.

Under each dimension, the magnitude of index was assessed based on the following formula,

$$Relevancy weightage=\frac{Score secured by the individual on respective skills}{Total possible score obtained by the individual on the respective skills } $$

**Table .2. List of indicators with their relevancy weightage**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Agripreneurship behaviour index** | **Relevancy Weightage** |
| **I** | **Leadership skills** | **0.87** |
| 1 | I can guide other interested people | 0.92 |
| 2 | I can get the works done through others | 0.90 |
| 3 | I will motivate my employees for their best performance | 0.98 |
| 4 | \*I am afraid that my employees might not listen to my suggestions | 0.62 |
| 5 | \*I will never ask for feedback from my employees to improve myself | 0.58 |
| 6 | I will ask feedback from my employees to improve myself | 0.96 |
| 7 | I will recognize my employees when they had done their job well  | 0.94 |
| 8 | I will support my employees to advance in their career | 0.86 |
| 9 | I will delegate the appropriate responsibilities and competence needed when assigning tasks | 0.94 |
| 10 | I will follow democratic style of leadership | 0.94 |
| 11 | Though I am a friendly leader, I won’t compromise in work quality | 0.94 |
| **II** | **Problem solving skills**  | **0.84** |
| 1 | \*I am not good enough in problem solving among employees | 0.66 |
| 2 | \*I am disappointed when I met any failure | 0.75 |
| 3 | \*I am unable to address the problems related to agripreneurship | 0.66 |
| 4 | I can provide creative solutions to problems | 1.02 |
| 5 | I can critically examine the future problems and strategize accordingly | 0.94 |
| 6 | Before taking any decision, I will discuss the problems with my employees | 0.98 |
| 7 | I will solve the problems after in-depth analysis | 0.92 |
| 8 | I will remove the problems from its root cause  | 0.92 |
| 9 | If there is a problem in my enterprise, I can’t do any other work at peace | 0.76 |
| 10 | \*I will neglect the problems among my employees | 0.78 |
| **III** | **Communication skills** | **0.83** |
| 1 | I like to exchange opinions and ideas with other people | 0.98 |
| 2 | \*I am unable to take feedback | 0.74 |
| 3 | I will be open and inquisitive for others suggestions | 0.86 |
| 4 |  I will actively listen to my employees before giving my suggestion.  | 0.94 |
| 5 | I will be clear and concise in my language | 0.90 |
| 6 | I have an ability to improve the work efficiency through common strategies | 0.90 |
| 7 | \*I lack communication skills | 0.62 |
| 8 | \*I lack skills to market my products through social media | 0.64 |
| 9 | I felt advertisement through social media increases my sales | 0.94 |
| 10 | \*I feel difficult to explain my product in an attractive way | 0.76 |
| **IV** | **Planning skills** | **0.88** |
| 1 |  I will plan the production process based on future trends | 0.96 |
| 2 | \* I don’t have alternate plan to manage at the time of emergency/contingency | 0.88 |
| 3 | I will manage the time effectively by prioritizing the activities | 0.98 |
| 4 | I will plan the entire functioning of my enterprise even in my absence | 0.98 |
| 5 | \*I feel that planning has role in effective utilization of resources | 0.94 |
| 6 | I will plan the entire activities that need to be carried out before a month | 0.84 |
| 7 | \*As I planned everything earlier, I couldn’t adapt to the changing needs | 0.78 |
| 8 | I can turn the practical applicability of ideas into reality | 0.88 |
| 9 | \*When I couldn’t carry out the planned activities, I consider myself as a incapable person | 0.80 |
| 10 | \*I never carried out monthly review meetings to assess company’s performance | 0.76 |
| **V** | **Decision making skills** | **0.88** |
| 1 | I will make sure that my decision will have positive effect on people | 0.88 |
| 2 | I will be responsible for my decisions | 0.94 |
| 3 | I can understand the effect of my decisions | 0.94 |
| 4 | I will decide based on the future trends | 0.88 |
| 5 | I will decide based on consumer needs | 0.88 |
| 6 | I will gather relevant information before taking any decision | 1.02 |
| 7 | I will analyse the risk involved before taking any decision | 0.82 |
| 8 | I will consider the decision based on its potential outcome | 0.82 |
| 9 | \*I will try to solve the problem rather than considering its impact | 0.82 |
| 10 | \*If I didn’t like the decision taken by sub-ordinates, I will involve and change | 0.80 |
| **VI** | **Motivation skills** | **0.90** |
| 1 | My family supports my entrepreneurial development | 0.92 |
| 2 | I am motivated by my inner self than external rewards | 0.98 |
| 3 | Though I fail, I won’t quit | 0.98 |
| 4 | \* I am not bold enough to face the difficulties that arise in managing my enterprise | 0.86 |
| 5 | \* I will never plan any target and work in the flow | 0.80 |
| 6 | I will set difficult goals to motivate myself | 0.96 |
| 7 | If I decide to do something, I will do it and nothing can stop me | 0.94 |
| 8 | I will motivate my employees by providing monthly rewards for completing tasks | 0.84 |
| 9 | I will support my employees by organizing events or parties | 0.84 |
| 10 | \*I will never motivate my employees to complete the task, as it was their job | 0.84 |
| **VII** | **Personality skills** | **0.87** |
| 1 | I have strong will power | 0.96 |
| 2 | I can evaluate the outcome of my decision | 0.90 |
| 3 | \* I couldn’t understand the business environment | 0.84 |
| 4 | I am ready to risk to expand my business | 0.88 |
| 5 | \* I lack communications skills | 0.88 |
| 6 | Even if I fail, I will learn from my mistakes | 0.88 |
| 7 | I can balance my work and family | 0.86 |
| 8 | I will try to fulfill the commitment that I had taken | 0.82 |
| 9 | \* I cannot tolerate failure | 0.82 |
| 10 | Always I try to think differently, while trying to solve a problem | 0.88 |
| 11 | Entrepreneurship cannot be taught | 0.80 |
| **VIII** | **Financial skills** | **0.86** |
| 1 | I can initiate new business activities | 0.94 |
| 2 | I know when to invest | 0.84 |
| 3 | I can manage the financial aspects of my business | 0.84 |
| 4 | I will prepare a budget and decide based on it | 0.94 |
| 5 | I prefer to invest than saving money | 0.94 |
| 6 | \* I have confusions while deciding about investments | 0.92 |
| 7 | \* I am afraid to try new ideas as I could lose my investments | 0.76 |
| 8 | \*I am afraid to avail loan because of the long procedures | 0.78 |
| 9 | \*I lack competencies to attract investment | 0.84 |
| 10 | \*I will invest the returns in my enterprise, even if it couldn’t provide salary for my employees | 0.80 |
| **IX** | **Business management or Networking skills** | **0.87** |
| 1 | I identify new opportunities where others do not see them | 0.96 |
| 2 | I believethat successful agripreneur has social recognition | 0.92 |
| 3 | I will dedicate time to maintain relationship with my employees | 0.90 |
| 4 | I will follow up my customers and maintain relationship with them | 0.96 |
| 5 | \*I felt difficult to satisfy my clients | 0.78 |
| 6 | I will build more contact whenever I have the opportunity | 0.88 |
| 7 | I can understand the consumer needs | 0.88 |
| 8 | I know to manage the production process during the time of pandemic  | 0.84 |
| 9 | \*I am not confident in attending enterprise related events or meetings | 0.82 |
| 10 | \*I couldn’t adapt to the changing needs, as management of enterprise is highly complicated | 0.78 |
| **X** | **Technical skills** | **0.89** |
| 1 | I can generate new ideas | 0.94 |
| 2 | I know new methods of production  | 0.90 |
| 3 | I know new methods of marketing to attract customers | 0.88 |
| 4 | I know various ways and means to reduce the cost | 0.86 |
| 5 | I know my business objectives | 0.90 |
| 6 | \* I felt difficult in analyzing the credibility of the market information  | 0.84 |
| 7 | I can develop my skills and capabilities to improve the performance of my enterprise | 0.90 |
| 8 | I felt quality is important than innovative packaging | 1.00 |
| 9 | I know alternative ways to produce the product, when the raw material is unavailable or inadequate | 0.88 |
| 10 | **\***I lack technical expertise in production process | 0.80 |

1. **Selection of indicators**

Accordingly, indicator with a relevancy weightage of more than 0.85 were selected for study.

**Table. 3. List of statements selected for the study**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Agripreneurship behaviour index** |
| **I** | **Leadership skills** |
| 1 | If I am an agripreneur, I can get the works done through others |
| 2 | If I am an agripreneur, I will recognize my employees when they had done their job well  |
| 3 | Though I am a friendly leader, I won’t compromise in work quality |
| **II** | **Problem solving skills**  |
| 1 | \* If I am an agripreneur, I might not be good enough in problem solving among my employees |
| 2 | If I am an agripreneur, I will critically examine the future problems and strategize accordingly |
| 3 | If I am an agripreneur, I will remove the problems from its root cause  |
| **III** | **Communication skills** |
| 1 | If I am an agripreneur, I will actively listen to my employees before giving my suggestion.  |
| 2 | If I am an agripreneur, I will use advertisement through social media to increases my sales |
| 3 | \* If I am an agripreneur, I might feel difficult to explain my product in an attractive way |
| **IV** | **Planning skills** |
| 1 | \* Even if I become an agripreneur, I don’t have alternate plan to manage at the time of emergency/contingency |
| 2 | If I am an agripreneur, I will plan the entire functioning of my enterprise even in my absence |
| 3 | \* If I become an agripreneur, I know that planning has role in effective utilization of resources |
| **V** | **Decision making skills** |
| 1 | If I become an agripreneur, I will make sure that my decision will have positive effect on people |
| 2 | \* If I become an agripreneur, I will try to solve the problem rather than considering its impact |
| 3 | \*If I didn’t like the decision taken by sub-ordinates, I will involve and change |
| **VI** | **Motivation skills** |
| 1 | Though I fail, I won’t quit |
| 2 | If I am an agripreneur, I will set difficult goals to motivate myself |
| 3 | If I decide to do something, I will do it and nothing can stop me |
| **VII** | **Personality skills** |
| 1 | If I become an agripreneur, I can evaluate the outcome of my decision |
| 2 | Even if I fail, I will learn from my mistakes |
| 3 | If I become an agripreneur, I will try to fulfill the commitment that I had taken |
| **VIII** | **Financial skills** |
| 1 | If I become an agripreneur, I will prepare a budget and decide based on it |
| 2 | \* If I become an agripreneur, I won’t try new ideas as I could lose my investments |
| 3 | \* If I become an agripreneur, I won’t avail loan because of the long procedures |
| **IX** | **Business management or Networking skills** |
| 1 | If I become an agripreneur, I will identify new opportunities where others do not see them |
| 2 | If I become an agripreneur, I will follow up my customers and maintain relationship with them |
| 3 | \* If I become an agripreneur, I might feel difficult to satisfy my clients |
| **X** | **Technical skills** |
| 1 | If I become an agripreneur, I can generate new ideas |
| 2 | If I become an agripreneur, I know various ways and means to reduce the cost |
| 3 | \* If I become an agripreneur, I feel difficult in analyzing the credibility of the market information  |

**(\* -** Negative statements**)**

**Reliability and validity**

**Reliability: Test-retest method**

 The final 30 statements which aims to assess the agripreneurship behaviour among graduates was administered on a five point continuum scale to 30 degree holders of different discipline. Later on, after a period of 15 days, again the test was administered to the same 30 degree holders, which resulted in two sets of scores. The ‘r’ (correlation coefficient) value was found to be 0.89 which represents significant at 1 per cent level. Hence, the constructed agripreneurship behaviour index would achieve its purpose.

**Validity: Content validity**

The content of the developed index intends to assess the agripreneurship behaviour of graduates. Thus, the constructed scale was found to have reliability and validity; thus, it can serve as a standard tool to assess the agripreneurship behavior index among graduates.

**CONCLUSION**

The developed entrepreneurship behaviour index has a reliability score of 0.89 and intends to measure its content. Hence, the developed entrepreneurship behaviour index has the ability to measure the entrepreneurship behaviour of agripreneurs which helps to understand and formulate entrepreneurial programmes, policies, schemes to improve the environment for entrepreneurship. Further, the developed index helps the policy makers, researchers, scientists to measure the entrepreneurship behaviour of agripreneurs. The entrepreneurship behavior index developed in this study is a pioneering tool that offers a reliable and valid means to assess and enhance the agripreneurial capabilities of open distance learners. By leveraging this index, stakeholders can effectively promote agripreneurship, contributing to sustainable agricultural development and improved socio-economic conditions for farmers in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

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