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#### **BOLSTERING STARTUPS AND INCUBATORS CENTERS THROUGH INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIP**

# DR. RAMESH SARDAR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES NORTH MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITY JALGAON

#### **ABSTRACT**

"Startups" have become a buzzword, thanks to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious 'Startup India' & 'Stand up India," campaign to take India to the head of the global entrepreneurship and make India Number 1 in startups. On January 16, 2016 the prime minister unveiled and announced India's new national startup policy under the 'Startup India' programme. This initiative aims to tap into India's much celebrated entrepreneurial spirit. To promote the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, startup ecosystem has to be enable in India; the start-up ecosystem is often described as young, innovative, aspirant and futuristic. A research mindset in our top educational institutes will help educate students steeped in innovation to solve India's problems in agriculture, energy, water, pollution, healthcare, education and infrastructure. Therefore, linking of academic and research with business is must to produce entrepreneurs. Our universities and premiere institutes should become inexpensive incubators and accelerators for nurturing ideas unique to India's development. The present study is an attempt to explore the initiatives undertaken by premier B-schools and Technological institutes to foster the budding entrepreneurs and the review of Startup Action plan to bolster the Industry-Academia partnership.

#### **KEYWORDS**

bolstering startup, incubators centers, industry-academia partnership.

#### INTRODUCTION

s far as the Start Up companies are considered, there is no succinct or widely accepted definition of Start Up Companies. However, as per recently announced startup policy, **Definition of Startup (only for the purpose of Government schemes)** Startup means an entity, incorporated or registered in India not prior to five years, with annual turnover not exceeding INR 25 crore in any preceding financial year, working towards innovation, development, deployment or commercialization of new products, processes or services driven by technology or intellectual property. Provided that such entity is not formed by splitting up, or reconstruction, of a business already in existence. Provided also that an entity shall cease to be a Startup if its turnover for the previous financial years has exceeded INR 25 crore or it has completed 5 years from the date of incorporation/ registration. Provided further that a Startup shall be eligible for tax benefits only after it has obtained certification from the Inter-Ministerial Board, setup for such purpose.

There are several examples in advanced countries and also in India where successful start-ups have grown into large companies and even large trans-national corporations. Several policy measures and mechanisms have been evolved over the years to promote and support the start-ups in various phases, more so in advanced countries where large number of new technologies are available in the publicly supported R&D and academic institutions for commercialization and transfer to industry. The supporting mechanisms include technology business incubators, science & technology parks, accelerators, venture capital, concessional financing grants, and fiscal incentives, etc.

In India, various types of these mechanisms have been evolved and further being evolved to promote and support startups. The technology start-up ecosystem in India has matured immensely over the last five years. Occasional startups associated with academic institutes and universities have been known since the in 1980's. Back then, the goal of such early efforts was enhancement of academia-industry interaction or translation of technology development efforts from academia into commercial products. Government R&D programs in defense, space, and atomic energy often supported these initiatives. In the 90's, the entrepreneurial culture became more pronounced especially at premier academic institutions of the country such as the IIT's though the process remained sporadic and without any structured support or direction. There was no policy to promote entrepreneurship and there were no official incubators. The pioneers amongst the faculty had converted their laboratories into some kind of incubators. The formal incubators started emerging over the next five years and by 2010, they were integral to many engineering and management institutes across the country.

Academic incubators and accelerators are largely focused on first time entrepreneurs, even though at times, experienced entrepreneurs return after exiting their earlier start-ups to leverage the facilities offered in a university system.

The unique Indian scenario, where the proportion of engineering graduates in B-schools is exceptionally high compared to Western countries, also bodes well for entrepreneurs, particularly those in the tech startup space, this refers to startups that are currently up and running, like Urban Ladder (IIM-B), Urban Clap (IIM-A), EduKart (IIM-K), Thrillophilia (ISB), Zostel (IIM-C).

The total number of ventures spawned at these B-Schools — including those that failed or got sold — is much higher. TaxiFor- Sure, for example, set up by IIM-A alumni Raghunandan G and Aprameya Radhakrishna in 2011, was acquired by Ola earlier this year in a.₹ 1,240 crore cash and stock deal. "Graduates who take up entrepreneurship are likely to produce many more new jobs, relieve bottlenecks and inefficiencies and contribute more to economic growth than managers in large companies," Thus most incubatees in the academic setting are just beginning to learn the ropes of entrepreneurship.

However, a quick survey of literature indicates paucity of data and research studies related to the experiences and difficulties faced by start-ups, except that there are some studies for computer software enterprises and also some data for small enterprises in the science parks promoted by DST.

In view of growing need and importance of startups and their significant contribution to the economy, it was considered desirable to undertake a study related to the status and experience of educational institutes in Promoting startups through incubators and Accelerators.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Following are the specific objectives of the study:

- 1. To examine the role of Premier B-schools and Technology institutes to enable Startup ecosystem.
- 2. To study the Startup India Action plan proposed by the Government for fostering Industry-Academia partnership

#### **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Fresh or recent graduates, who wish to start their own ventures has to face several challenges, including societal and familial resistance against the comfort-zones of 'safe employment'. Often the founders may not realize the complexities of starting and running a business on their own.

Here comes to role of Academic institutions to nurture such aspired youth, to nurture such budding entrepreneurs most of the premier educational has already started the Academic incubators and accelerators to provide a platform for the creation, operationalization and growth of start-ups.

Incubators have to present an empathetic and mature environment for dealing with and providing support and space for startups to mature in.

Moreover, the incubators also need to be vibrant to be able to support start-ups at various stages of maturity and operating in diverse market segments (such as high technology, social, environmental, rural, etc.). In addition, the requirements of academic start-ups go beyond the traditional needs for space and infrastructure: access to business support services (legal, IP, accounting, company secretary), training and a management team who constantly interfaces with the entrepreneurs assessing their progress and requirements is crucial.

An attempt is made in the present study to understand how the Startup India Action plan launched by the Government can give impetus to the endeavour of Academics institution in incubating and spawning entrepreneurs.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The study is primarily based on qualitative literature survey method. It facilitates in depth analysis of the issues related to Startup ecosystem and the opportunities for budding entrepreneurs. Extensive review of the literature provided useful insight about the major constraints and bottlenecks that the educational institutes face during the establishment of startups and incubation centres. The study is based on secondary data, which has been collected from various Publications, research studies, and committee reports on the startups at the national level to bring out relevant viewpoints by understanding the policies and programmes as well as progress of the startups.

#### INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY IIM'S, IIT'S & OTHER PREMIER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES TO ENABLE START-UPS ECOSYSTEM

Five of the country's leading B-schools — IIM Bangalore, Indian School of Business (ISB), IIM Kozhikode, IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Calcutta — have spawned more than 400 entrepreneurs in the last five years. This is testimony to the growing clout of India's B-schools as breeding grounds of startups. Fittingly enough, it's IIM Bangalore, located in India's very own Silicon Valley that leads the pack with over 150 entrepreneurs among those who have graduated in the last five years. ISB comes in at second place with around 124 entrepreneurs from its flagship programme, while IIM Kozhikode, IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Calcutta have around 58, 50 and 20 entrepreneurs respectively in the last five years. "It's remarkable that so many graduates from marquee institutes, who had the option of highflying corporate careers, have moved into

#### > IIM Calcutta Innovation Park

The incubator at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta – IIM Calcutta Innovation Park – focuses on healthcare, education, cleantech, lifestyle, analytics, Internet of Things. There is a special focus on social enterprises. There is a big need, to promote social enterprises in India, as it impacts those at the bottom of the pyramid, and there are not many business incubators that focus on this area.

The IIMCIP conducts seminars, roundtables and a business plan contest to promote social entrepreneurship. This is done in partnership with the Tata group under the Tata Social Enterprise Challenge. IIMCIP is spread over 10,000 sq ft and it is a not-for-profit company established in 2014, run by an independent board and has on its governing body a good mix of faculty and alumni, who are also either serial entrepreneurs or involved with the venture capital ecosystem.

IIMCIP takes a small percentage of equity, typically up to 5 per cent, as a consideration for the incubation support. IIMCIP sells its stake when the venture raises the next level of funding. Formal incubation through IIMCIP as a separate Entity started in September 2014. Prior to this, IIMC offer incubation support through its Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. One of the success stories of four students from IIMC who started Zostel in 2014. Zostel is a backpacker hostel and affordable hotel chain that is present in 35 cities. It has just announced opening a hostel in Vietnam. Zostel recently raised another round of funding and had previously raised \$1 million.

On the start-up scene, the success stories of internet businesses have created a buzz. Now more and more students and young professionals are opting out of jobs and starting their own ventures.

#### > National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad

The National Design Business Incubator (NDBI) at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, is meant to encourage entrepreneurs focused on design. It aims to foster a culture of entrepreneurship in young designers so that they come up with products and services that will find a good response in the market.

The objective is to create a new class of entrepreneurs – Designpreneurs – something that India needs in plenty. Spread over 4,000 sq ft at the NID, the premier institute for design in the country, the NDBI was established in 2004 and is run as an independent legal entity.

At NDBI, about 10 ventures are at the incubator at any given time and it admits about six new ventures every year. Though it admits any venture that is focused on design, the NDBI concentrates on those in the health, sanitation and renewable energy sectors. The incubator is open to any venture and need not have any NID connection, as long as it into designing products. Innovation, market potential and business plan are the criteria that the ventures need to satisfy for gaining admission to the incubator. The ventures are allowed to be in the incubator for three years. The NDBI picks up about a 5 per cent stake in the ventures, from the grants available to it, the incubator provides air-conditioned work space with computers, IPR registration, help in forming the company, legal and accounting services, seed capital, facilitating angel/ VC funding, networking with other incubators, product development and marketing.

According to information available on NDBI's website, various funding options are available, including a Technopreneur Promotion Programme, run by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, through grants. Besides, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion has set up a ₹10-crore Venture Ready Fund (VRF) at NDBI to support young designers aspiring to become entrepreneurs. This money will be disbursed over four years through loan, equity or a mix of both. Some of the start-ups incubated at NDBI and that have made it big are Sangaru Design Objects Pvt Ltd, Robots Alive Pvt Ltd, Yuga Design Pvt Ltd and Dhama Innovations Pvt Ltd.

#### > Indian institute of Information Technology (IIT-Hyderabad campus): T-Hub Incubator of Incubators

T-Hub is a Public Private partnership (PPP) model between the Government of Telangana, IIIT-H, Indian school of Business, and NALSAR (National academy of research and legal studies), they are expected to be catalysts for promoting innovation similar to the roles played by the Stanford University and University of California in the success of Silicon Valley. T-Hub is not just about 800 people to work on innovative technology driven products and solutions, but an integral part of a larger ecosystem the state government is keen on is keen on creating.

Initially 50 start-ups will occupy the space and thereafter 50 more will get in, compared to private incubators, T-hub is an Industry-government partnership that seeks to provide entrepreneurship an edge in tune with the state's industrial Policy-Innovate, Incubate and Incorporate.

The government may have spent Rs 40 crore on the T-Hub building, but the best part of T-Hub will be minimal interference from the government. The government has said that government will not be involved in the day to day affairs in areas like which start-up to select, how long an enterprise should continue there and who will get funding. All he professional decision would be taken by people involved in the management and guided by 10-member empowered board in which the lone government representative will be the IT secretary.

#### > The IIT-Madras startup incubator

In early 2013, two IIT-Madras batch mates, Tarun Mehta and Swap nil Jain, quit their jobs and went back to their alma mater. Their intention was not further studies. They wanted to make a battery -one that could be used in electric two wheelers, and which would be far superior in performance than the available ones. The IIT-Madras startup incubator welcomed them and even provided Rs 5 lakh in funds. That was the start of Ather Energy, which expects to commercialize a high-performance electric scooter in the coming months at a little less than Rs 1 lakh, a price which they say is no more than for an equivalent petrol scooter. For the two friends, the objective was simple. They wanted to make an electric scooter that feels like a petrol one -much like what Tesla Motors in the US did with cars. The idea has attracted many, and Ather's funders now include the Central government, Tiger Global, Flipkart founders Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal, and Silicon Valley-based big data firm Aerospike's co-founder V Srinivasan. The scooters will have a top-speed of 72 km per hour and a remarkable 90% battery charge in an hour. The vehicle produces 7 bhp power, only marginally less than the current petrol-based scooters. It will come with a smart dashboard that will enable users to create personalized profiles and choose riding modes, and it will have onboard diagnostics capabilities.

#### STARTUP INDIA ACTION PLAN FOR INDUSTRY ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIP AND INCUBATION

Recently Government of India has launched Start-up India action plan, unveiled by the Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, on 16th January, The Action Plan could not have come at a more opportune time. The country's manufacturing sector faced a slump, while the prospective young entrepreneurs looked towards the Government for ease of doing business. The Action plan consist of 19-point agenda, an analysis of the Start-up Action Plan shows that it has more than met the expectations of the Start-up sector. While some features like tax rebates will be effective with the next Budget, the Action Plan should bring cheer on the issue of finance and credit also. India may already hold the third position globally in Start-ups, but the Action Plan has brought more confidence in the sector.

The action plan proposed for Industry Academia Partnership includes:

#### Harnessing Private sector expertise for Incubator set up Showcasing Innovation

To ensure professional management of Government sponsored / funded incubators, Government will create a policy and framework for setting-up of incubators across the country in public private partnership.

India currently lacks availability of incubation facilities across various parts of the country. Incubation facilities typically include physical infrastructure, provision of mentorship support, access to networks, access to market, etc. Of all these features, physical infrastructure entails large capital investments which can generally be facilitated by the Government. However, requisite skills for operating an incubator are pivotal as well, for which expertise of the private sector needs to be leveraged. Considering this, Government shall encourage setting up of;

- 35 new incubators in existing institutions. Funding support of 40% (subject to a maximum of INR 10 crore) shall be provided by Central Government for establishment of new incubators for which 40% funding by the respective State Government and 20% funding by the private sector has been committed. The incubator shall be managed and operated by the private sector
- 35 new private sector incubators. A grant of 50% (subject to a maximum of INR 10 crore) shall be provided by Central Government for incubators established by private sector in existing institutions. The incubator shall be managed and operated by the private sector.

The funding for setting up of the incubators shall be provided by NITI Aayog as part of Atal Innovation Mission. Participating departments and agencies for setting up of new incubators shall be Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Department of Higher Education, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion and NITI Aayog.

Each of the above mentioned departments/agencies would enter into a standard MoU with identified private sector players for creation of academia-industry tie-ups for nurturing innovations in academic institutions.

#### **Building Innovation centers at National Institutes**

In order to augment the incubation and R&D efforts in the country, the Government will set up/ scale up 31 centers (to provide facilities for over 1,200 new Startups) of innovation and entrepreneurship at national institutes, including

- Setting-up 13 Startup centers: Annual funding support of INR 50 lakh (shared 50:50 by DST and MHRD) shall be provided for three years for encouraging student driven Startups from the host institute.
- Setting-up/ Scaling-up 18 Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) at NITs/IITs/IIMs etc. as per funding model of DST with MHRD providing smooth approvals
  for TBI to have separate society and built up space.

TABLE NO. 1. STARTOF CENTERS & TECHNOLOGY BOSINESS INCOBATORS								
Startup	centers	Technology Business Incubators						
RGIIM Shillong	NIT Goa	MANIT Bhopal	IISER Bhopal	NIT Warangal				
NIT Delhi	NIT Agartala	NIT Rourkela	IIM Rohtak	MNITJaipur				
MNIT Allahabad	NIT Silchar	NIT Jalandhar	IIT Mandi	NIT Tiruchirappalli				
VNIT Nagpur	IIT Bhubaneswar	IIM Udaipur	IISER Mohali	IIT Patna				
IIITDM Kancheepuram	NIT Patna	NIT Calicut	IIT Roorkee					
PDPM-IIITDM Jabalpur	NIT Arunachal Pradesh	IIT Ropar	IIM Kozhikode					

TABLE NO. 1: STARTUP CENTERS & TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS INCUBATORS

Source: Dipp.nic.in

IISER Thiruvananthapuram IIM Raipur

#### Setting up of 7 New research parks Modeled on the research park setup at IIT Madras

To propel successful innovation through incubation and joint R&D efforts between academia and industry.

The Government shall set up 7 new Research Parks in institutes indicated below with an initial investment of INR 100 crore each. The Research Parks shall be modeled based on the Research Park setup at IIT Madras.

The IIT Madras Research Park endeavors to enable companies with a research focus to set up a base in the Park and leverage the expertise of IIT Madras. The Research Park breaks down the traditional, artificial barriers of innovation through its connectivity and collaborative interaction. This helps industry to create, integrate and apply advancements in knowledge. It leverages best practices from successful Research Parks such as those at Stanford, MIT and Cambridge.

#### The guiding principles behind the park include:

**ABVIIITM Gwalior** 

- · Creating a collaborative environment between industry and academia through joint research projects and consulting assignments.
- Creating a self-sustaining and technologically fertile environment.
- Encouraging and enabling R&D activities and Startups that are aligned to potential needs of the industry.
- Providing world class infrastructure for R&D activities and incubation.
- Enabling development of high quality personnel and motivating professional growth for researchers in companies through part time Masters and PhD Programs.

#### **Annual Incubator Grand Challenges**

For a new idea to become a successful commercial venture, adequate support and mentoring at various stages of the business lifecycle is required. Incubators play an important role in identifying early stage Startups and supporting them across various phases of their lifecycle. In order to build an effective Startup ecosystem, it is imperative that world class incubators, adopting leading industry practices, are setup in the country.

The Government is proposing to make forward looking investments towards building world class incubators. In its first phase, the aim is to establish 10 such incubators. To enable this, GoI shall identify and select 10 incubators who have the potential to become world class. These incubators would be given INR 10 crore each as financial assistance which may be used for ramping up the quality of service offerings. The incubators shall also become reference models for other incubators aspiring to offer best-in-class services. Video interviews of these incubators would be showcased on the Startup India portal.

An "Incubator Grand Challenge" exercise shall be carried out for identification of these incubators. The exercise shall entail:

- Open invitation of applications from incubators
- Screening and evaluation based on pre-defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- The Incubator Grand Challenge shall be an annual exercise.

#### CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that startups play an important role in boosting innovation, entrepreneurship and creating new jobs. The country's premier engineering and Management like IIT'S and IIM'S have taken significant steps in enabling startup ecosystem by establishing Incubators, Accelerators and research park and even the placement are seeing a fresh surge in hiring from startups.

The culture and practices of IIM' and IIT'S related to startups should also be percolated to other B-schools and engineering institutes located in TIER-II and Tier-III cities, where majority of the student's study. To begin with the ministry of HRD should provide the funds to set up incubators, Accelerators and research parks in Universities having the status of potential of excellence and thereafter to other universities and affiliated colleges looking into the success of the Programme. Even the corporates can be invited for funding startups through their corporate social responsibility activities.

There are lots of issues relating to provide venture capital to these startups. "We need innovations that solve Indian consumers' problems, with a grassroots level movement. Foreign venture capital firms tend to have a bias towards replicating business models proven in developed countries.

Let's hope that new policy would address the problems of startups in General and educational institutes particular to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

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