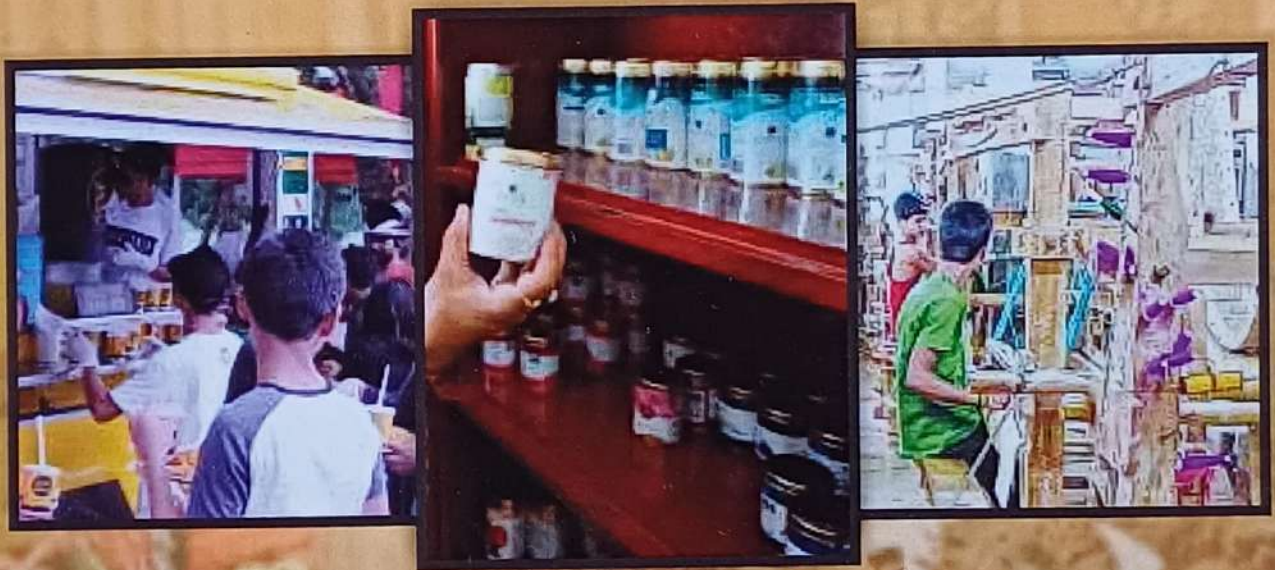


A MITTAL PUBLICATION

STARTUP BUSINESS AND NORTH-EAST INDIA ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES



Editors

Ritumani Haloi • Suchitra Das
Anup Sinha

STARTUP BUSINESS AND NORTH-EAST INDIA

ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

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PREFACE

Startups are the engines of exponential growth, demonstrating the innovation with catalytic effect of technology. Technology empowers the less empowered and paves the way for reaping out rich economic benefits to the country. India is at crossroads, where it now has to cater to the objectives of a billion people. Existing frameworks can prove to be inadequate and there is a great need to leverage a billion minds and become a global power. Startups and entrepreneurship are the best way forward in becoming a knowledge superpower. In recent years, the initiative of startup program by Indian government has really taken off and come into its own—driven by factors such as massive funding, consolidation activities, evolving technology and a home to a new breed of young startups, has clearly evolved to become the third largest base of technology startups in the world.

India now ranks third globally in driven startups with the U.S. and the U.K. occupying the top two positions. In both the tech and non-tech startups, India holds its position among the five largest hosts in the world, along with China (10,000 each). The IT hub of India (Bengaluru) hosts 26 per cent of domestic tech-startups, followed by Delhi NCR (23 per cent) and Mumbai (17 per cent). In the 'catching up' category Hyderabad holds 8 per cent of domestic startups among the total while Chennai and Pune accounts 6 per cent each. Startups in India are expected to produce a good number of billionaires and many more millionaires in the next five years, with e-commerce, financial services and technology driven fields generating maximum interest. The new age India today is ready to break away from the typical career paths, to take a chance, to follow their hearts and this is clearly ostensible from the hiring trends that the country is experiencing. Startup evolution with Digital revolution is an instrumental in

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STARTUP BUSINESS: Government and Private Initiatives in Nagaland

AMAR RANJAN DEY

Introduction

Startups are nothing but an innovative idea that manifests into a commercial undertaking. A startup can be defined as a business in the initial stage of operation, beginning to grow and is typically financed by an individual or small group of individuals. India is one of the youngest Start-up nations in the world. Based on demography, 72% of Start-up founders are less than 35 years old (*Source: Zinnov Product/Digital Start-up Database*). Among them 91% male entrepreneurs in Start-up landscape, whereas only 9% are women entrepreneurs. The Government of India launched Startup India on 16th January 2016. Under this initiative, the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) was entrusted to recognize the entities as startups as per eligibility conditions prescribed under G.S.R. notification 127 (E) dated 19th February 2019. As a matter of fact, the trend of startup wave in the country is relatively a new phenomenon. With a fundamental shift with entrepreneurship and innovation in this decade, more job opportunities are being created along with solving everyday problems. A decade ago, there were very few or handful of startups in the country. But, now with the

success of entities like Zomato, Flipkart etc., the Indian startup eco-system has indeed come a long way.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the various issues and challenges of startups in Nagaland.
- To examine the various government and private initiatives for the development of startups in Nagaland.

Review of Literature

Modi (2016) stated that the startup India is a revolutionary scheme that has been stated to help the people who wish to start their own business. These people have ideas and capability, so the government will give them support to make sure they can implement their ideas and grow. Success of this scheme will eventually make India, a better economy and a strong nation.

Kamaldeep (2017) highlights some challenges and opportunities faced by the Startups in India. According to him, there are immense opportunities for startup business, but so are the challenges also.

Sarangi (2015) in his study stated reasons of why do most Indian Start-ups fail? As per him, our country falls short on ideas, fundings and talent, and thus our hi-tech ventures do not work.

Chatterjee (2020) in her paper concluded that it is always possible for India's Young generation to do something innovative for the growth of economy backed by our government support and proper assistance through Start-ups programme.

Ravi (2015) pointed that a combination of growing population, growing internet usage and mobile penetration, growing economy, and growing online retailing set the platform for India to be one of the biggest Start-ups destinations.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on the secondary data which has been collected through journals, books, newspapers, research articles and websites, etc. The accessible data from the said sources is intensively used for the research study.

Nagaland Startup Ecosystem

According to 2011 census, the total population of Nagaland was 19.79 lakh, out of which 10,24,649 are male and 9,53,853 are female. Majority of population (i.e., more than 60%) is in the age

group of 15-59. This really give a good opportunity for the state to develop an innovative and entrepreneurial culture. Start-up is a flagship initiative of the Government of India with a motive to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country. With the same motive, the Nagaland Chief Secretary Mr. Temjen Toy, on 16th August, launched the Startup Nagaland website, which among others, aims to establish the state as a model startup leader in the region (*The Morung Express*, 19th August, 2019). The objectives of this initiative are:

- To facilitate the growth of "at least 500 start-ups in the next five years" with a focus on establishing innovative 'Made in Nagaland' products and services.
- Creation of direct and indirect employment in the private sector.
- Stimulate a culture of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship by creating requisite environment for learning and experimentation during all stages of education.
- Mobilizing funding for investment in Startups through interventions, including fund of funds.
- To establish a world-class state incubator, in partnership with global leaders on a PPP mode, to nurture, guide and support existing and aspiring startups to become successful business ventures.
- 25% of fund to be dedicated to promote startups by women entrepreneurs in the state.
- The Department of Industries & Commerce, Nagaland has been appointed as the Nodal department to implement the Startup Policy for the state with an aim to promote local entrepreneurs and creating an enabling environment for startups to accelerate, by ensuring knowledge, capacity building, policy interventions, access to funding and contribute towards a healthy and sustainable economy.

Incentives under the Nagaland Startup Policy 2019

The Chief Minister of Nagaland Mr. Neiphiu Rio, on 26th February 2019, tabled the Nagaland Startup Policy in the State Assembly. After several discussions and deliberations, the Department of Industries & Commerce was entrusted as a nodal department to implement the Nagaland Startups Policy 2019. The

various incentives brought under the Nagaland Startup Policy are highlighted below:

- **GST Reimbursement:** Under this policy, the selected startups shall be eligible for annual reimbursement of state GST paid in sales of goods for a period of 3 years up to a maximum of Rs. 5 lakh per startup per year.
- **Stamp Duty Reimbursement:** All the selected startups shall be eligible for 100% reimbursement of stamp duty/ registration fee/conversion fee on sale/lease deeds for first transaction.
- **Digital Upgradation Subsidy:** Under this policy, startups shall be eligible for digital upgradation subsidy of 50% of capital expenditure for purchase of computers, smart phones, related hardware and software subjected to a ceiling of Rs. 5 lakh per startup.
- **Broadband connectivity reimbursement:** Startups selected under this policy shall be eligible for 50% rental reimbursement for a maximum period of two years subject to a ceiling of Rs. 2 lakhs. It may include any rent being paid to an incubator/co-working space.
- **Power Subsidy:** All selected startups shall be eligible for power subsidy at 50% subject to a limit of Rs. 10 lakhs per annum for a period of five years.
- **Reimbursement of patent filing cost:** Up to 100% reimbursement on the actual cost (including filing fees, attorney, search fees, maintenance fees) for patent filing with a maximum limit of Rs. 2 Lakh for filing domestic patent and up to Rs. 5 lakhs for filing international patent. This reimbursement shall be payable 50% after the patent is filed and the balance 50% after the patent has been granted.
- **Marketing and promotion assistance:** Reimbursement of 50% of the actual marketing and promotion costs (including travel costs) incurred by a startup in listing fees for online and offline advertisements, in store promotions, publishing or digital marketing, market research, etc subject to a maximum of Rs. 5 lakh per startup.
- **Encourage public procurement:** The state government will encourage participation of startups in public procurement by waiving off prior experience or turnover requirements so

long as the product meets the desired specifications and encourage consortium of eligible companies with startups in bidding for state government projects which will bring in the elements of innovation and new ideas.

However, it is to be noted that the incentive for the same component cannot be claimed from more than one scheme.

Issues & Challenges of Startups in Nagaland

1. **Lack of awareness:** The majority are unaware of various government schemes and other facilities for the startups. Lack of information on various schemes and benefits earmarked for the potential startups as one of the major impediments.
2. **Financial resources:** Finance is the life blood for any business enterprises. It is needed right from starting a business when coming up with a business idea. Also, scaling of business requires timely infusion of capital. Therefore, non-availability of finance and lack of proper cash management is one of the hurdles for startup in Nagaland.
3. **Lack of mentorship:** A number of potential entrepreneurs seem to have brilliant ideas and/or products, but have little or no business and market experience to market the products. So, brilliant idea also proves worthless if it is not executed promptly. Hence, lack of proper guidance and mentorship is the biggest challenges for a startup.
4. **Supporting infrastructure:** A number of support mechanism like incubators, science and technology parks, business development centers etc play a major role in the lifecycle of startups. Lack of access to such support mechanism increases the risk of failure.
5. **Founder's tenacity:** More than start-up capital, brilliant idea, products or services or even the identification of ideal market, tenacity can mean the difference between success and surrender. The journey of startup may be fraught with delays, setbacks and problems without adequate solutions. Many of startup founders are seen lacking in the tenacious mindset and they give up before he/she achieves desired results.
6. **Revenue generation:** As the business grows, expenses grow with reduced revenues forcing startups to concentrate

on the funding aspect, thus, diluting the mind of startup founder to focus on the fundamentals of business. The failure to generate enough capital to expand, poor revenue generation and sustain the growth compel a startup to wind up the business.

7. **Team members:** Assembling a good team preferably having each member specialized or skill set in a specified area of operations is the major requirement for a startup, failure to have one sometimes could break the startup.
8. **Meet customer expectations:** In the current scenario, innovation plays an important role to gauge the market need for the product, existing trends, etc. The startup has to fine-tune the product offerings to suit the market demands. On the other hand, several startups fail to adopt the new technologies that are emerging in the market.
9. **Regulatory hurdles:** The landscape of India's regulatory is very complex, with a variety of laws and regulations governing various sectors and industries. Despite the government's efforts to simplify regulations and make doing business easier, startups still face obstacles like compliance requirements and licencing issues.
10. **Lack of skilled talents:** The current education system does not always provide startups with the necessary skill and training. Due to this, there is a shortage of skilled professionals in certain fields. Startups also struggle to attract and hire talented employees due to established competitors and the lure of high-paying job abroad.
11. **Insurgency problems:** Six-decade-long insurgency problems also affected the business activities in the state. Many potential entrepreneurs are reluctant to invest in a new business venture.

Analysis and Discussion

When the 'Startup India in Nagaland' portal was launched on August 16, 2019, late. Temjen Toy, the then Chief Secretary stated that the objective of the initiative was to facilitate the growth of "at least 500 start-ups in the next five years" with a focus on establishing innovative 'Made in Nagaland (MIN)' products and services. After more than three years, the portal informed that only 59 startups are registered, a far behind from the 500 initially

targeted, with just one and half years to go. Going through the activities section of the portal, the activities shown are "Boot Camps conducted at various colleges" during 2019. However, there is no update between September 2019 and May 2022. This show that there has been lack of activities thereafter.

To bring the target into reality, those at the helms of affairs should go back to incorporate the policy intervention, capacity development, digital infrastructure and holding support measures recommended for the state. Despite of this, the startup initiative in Nagaland would remain only a paper tiger: ineffectual, rudderless and stunted.

The tables below represent the status of Startup Nagaland among North Eastern States:

Table 5.1: Year-wise No. of Startups recognised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in the North Eastern States (As on 30th June 2022)

States	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Share (in %)
Arunachal Pradesh	2	2	-	4	2	10	1.31
Assam	68	67	119	188	116	558	73.32
Manipur	7	6	12	37	13	75	9.86
Meghalaya	2	5	-	9	7	23	3.02
Mizoram	2	1	1	2	1	7	0.92
Nagaland	2	2	5	7	3	19	2.50
Tripura	2	7	23	12	18	62	8.15
Sikkim	-	2	1	3	1	7	0.92
Total (N-E States)	85	92	161	262	161	761	100.00

Source: pib.gov.in

Interpretation

From the above table, it is observed that Assam is leading in developing startups with almost three-fourth of total startups in the N-E region, followed by Manipur (9.86%) and Tripura (8.15%). Only 2.5% Nagaland startups was recognised by DPIIT till June 30, 2022. On the other hand, North Eastern States together produces only 1.12% of total startups in the country.

Table 5.2: Total number of employments generated, as self-reported by the startups recognised by the DPIIT for the last five years (As on 30th June 2022)

States	No. of employees generated	Share (in %)
Arunachal Pradesh	69	0.55
Assam	10,156	80.87
Manipur	806	6.42
Meghalaya	179	1.43
Mizoram	87	0.69
Nagaland	198	1.58
Sikkim	58	0.46
Tripura	1,005	8.00
Total (North East States)	12,558	100.00

Source: pib.gov.in

Interpretation

From the above table, it is observed that Assam is leading in generating more than 80% employment through startups in North Eastern region. It is followed by Tripura (8%) and Manipur (6.42%). Nagaland generates only 1.58% employment through startups in the state. This is really a gloomy picture for the state of Nagaland.

Government and private initiatives to promote Startup in Nagaland

1. NIELIT Kohima, which is one of the incubation centres under the Nagaland startup policy conducted a startup competition "TECHNOVATE" on December 16, 2022. All the selected were provided incubation facilities at NIELIT Kohima. It was also decided to provide financial assistance to the incubates on the basis of their progress along with capacity building and skilling training.
2. Department of Industries and Commerce, Nagaland conducted startup Nagaland boot camps at various districts in Nagaland with a motive to encourage and help the youth of Nagaland turns idea, passions and side hustles into functioning business.
3. To support the growth of startup in Nagaland, YouthNet has launched the centre for "Made in Nagaland" with an

aim to provide exposure and a centralized platform for local entrepreneurs/startups to promote their products and service within and outside of Nagaland. The Made in Nagaland Centre is located in Kohima, near Nagaland Civil Secretariat.

4. The Nagaland Tool Room and Training Centre, Dimapur, under the skill training programme provided various employable skills and job placement assistance to more than thousands of youths of the state of Nagaland. The Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India sponsored all the training fees including food and boarding.
5. EduCentre School of Business (ESB) in collaboration with startup Nagaland under the Department of Industries and Commerce has been conducting Studentpreneurship awareness programme in various colleges to encourage and boost the morale of the youth of the state to look for self-employment.

Interpretation

In spite of number of initiatives, the state is facing a variety of obstacles, including regulatory obstacles, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of market knowledge. These can be overcome through in-depth research by the government agencies.

Findings from the study

1. A very few companies have their own ideas or concepts, they usually copy the ideas or concepts of Startups of other successful Indian or foreign startups. This is one of the major drawbacks for startups to survive for long.
2. The 'Startup India in Nagaland' portal was launched in 2019 with an objective to facilitate the growth of "at least 500 startups in the next five years. After more than three and half years, the portal informed that only 59 startups are registered, a far behind from the 500 initially targeted, with just one and half years to go.
3. The current education system in the state of Nagaland lack to provide training among the student community to build-up their necessary skills.
4. A number of potential entrepreneurs seem to have brilliant ideas and/or products, but have little or no business and

market experience to market the products. So, brilliant ideas prove worthless if it is not executed promptly.

5. Six-decade-long insurgency problems and lack of proper infrastructure for business mainly affected business activities.

Suggestions and recommendations

Based on careful observation and various data analysis the following points are suggested and recommended for the benefit of the startup ecosystem in Nagaland:

- Startups should be taught in every school, college, and university as a full-fledged course. Teaching faculties should be properly trained in the startup arena to nurture the students for better understanding.
- In order to provide students with real-world experience and exposure to the startup ecosystem, an intensive workshop can be organised by collaborating with universities and other educational institutions.
- Government should conduct more and more workshops comprises of sensitization and awareness sessions.
- Successful startups/entrepreneurs of the state can help in educating the students on a better understanding of startup/entrepreneurship and they can be an inspiration to the younger generation.

Conclusion

The need of introducing startup education in Nagaland would be good way to promote startup in the state. With growing unemployment in the state, startup/entrepreneurship can be an ideal solution to overcome the crisis. Educational institutions of the state need to come up with practical oriented courses on startup/entrepreneurship which can help the upcoming generation to focus on career not only on seeking government jobs but will help the youths to look beyond. Educational institutions also can organise different workshops and seminars by inviting successful entrepreneurs who can also be role model in educating the students. In this competitive modern era not, every individual is vocational to get the government job. Hence, with the emergence of new startups will not only create job opportunities but will also boost the economic development in the state.

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