



Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Awareness among the Students of the Twin Cities of Odisha

Arpita Das

Master of Commerce, Department of Commerce, Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar.

E- mail: arpitadas9072@gmail.com.

Kajal Kumari

Master of Commerce, Department of Commerce , Ravenshaw University, Cuttack.

E- mail: kumarikajal0852@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the entrepreneurial ecosystem awareness among students in the twin cities of Odisha (Bhubaneswar & Cuttack). It seeks to identify factors influencing entrepreneurship awareness, examine the role of institutional and external support systems, and explore the gap between government start-up initiatives and student-level awareness. An empirical study was conducted using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. Students from different universities and colleges were surveyed and responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Statistical tools like averages and percentage analysis were used to check the awareness level among the students. The findings indicate a moderate to high level of awareness among students regarding the entrepreneurial ecosystem with high awareness of government and private seed funding options and comparatively low institutional support. This study highlights the need for stronger institutional engagement and improved communication of government initiatives to students. Enhancing entrepreneurial awareness at the university level can foster innovation, self-employment, and contribute to regional economic development in Odisha.



1. INTRODUCTION

Ecosystem means the surroundings around us which helps us to grow ourselves, supports us and also gives the opportunity to sustain. Likewise Entrepreneurial Ecosystem refers to the surroundings in which a business exists, the opportunities and support it gets from its surroundings to grow itself.

In this research paper we have tried to study the awareness of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem among the students. Entrepreneurship as we know is starting and running your own business, risk taking and doing innovation to sustain it in the market or the business environment. Only starting a new business is not sufficient but it also needs a good environment to sustain too.

Entrepreneurial ecosystem is the network of people, institutions and resources which are essential for starting a new venture in a specific area. The environment where a business exists plays a significant role in the growth of it. Here people refers to the person itself who started the business i.e. the entrepreneurs itself, investors who will invest , mentors to guide , advisor to show right direction and others who will help to flourish the ventures .

The environment where a business operates plays a very crucial role in its growth, it helps the business to flourish and achieve its goals. Thus, for a good business also needs a good environment to sustain. Entrepreneurial ecosystem plays a significant role in the business or the entrepreneurs to come up with their ideas and start a new venture. A lot of factors are responsible for the entrepreneurs to start a business such as policies, investors, market conditions, customer demand etc. For this a person should be aware enough to sustain in the market and flourish its business idea. Thus this paper keen to check the entrepreneurial awareness among the people especially focus on the students of prominent universities in Odisha. This paper would be very helpful for the policy makers, government and other researchers to gain knowledge and further studies. This paper is based on the primary data collected from the students of prominent universities and colleges of twin cities of Odisha. It would try to check the entrepreneurial awareness among the students as the students are the base which would be tomorrow citizen.

India's rapid ascent as the third-largest startup ecosystem globally underscores the nation's burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit and its potential to drive significant economic transformation. The success of this ecosystem hinges, in part, on nurturing a pipeline of future entrepreneurs who are not only innovative but also well-versed in the resources and support mechanisms available to them. Students, particularly those in higher education, represent a crucial segment of this future entrepreneurial talent pool. However, their awareness of the intricate web of incubators, accelerators, funding avenues, mentorship networks, and



supportive policies that constitute the entrepreneurial ecosystem remains a key question. This research endeavors to explore the extent of entrepreneurial ecosystem awareness among students, shedding light on their familiarity with the opportunities and resources within the Indian context and identifying potential gaps that need to be addressed to further strengthen the nation's entrepreneurial future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review shows the past works done in this field. Analysis of the past works help to find the research gap that the previous papers a lacking. Literature review helps to access and analyse the past works in the area of work. Following are some of the reviews from the work done on the topic "Entrepreneurship Ecosystem".

(Prajapati and Khanal, 2023) conducted a research on " perception of entrepreneurial ecosystem factors: comparison among students and entrepreneurs" explored the perception of entrepreneurial ecosystem factors among 343 students and 158 entrepreneurs in Nepal. Using a structured questionnaire and independent samples t-test, the study found that entrepreneurs rated ecosystem factors significantly lower than students, except in entrepreneurial capabilities. The results suggested that enhancing factors like family and social support, education, and training could positively influence entrepreneurial intentions, even without a highly developed ecosystem.

(Gupta, 2022) carried out a study on "does university entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurship education affect the students entrepreneurial intention" investigated the impact of University entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurship education on students entrepreneurial intention/startup intention. It is an empirical study that has used causal relation between independent and dependent variables. Data has been collected from 186 respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. Correlation and Regression analysis were performed and it has been found out that the independent variables (university entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurship education) positively and significantly affecting the dependent variables (students' entrepreneurial/startup intention).

(Astuty and Yustian, 2022) carried out a study on " Building student entrepreneurship activities through the synergy of the university entrepreneurship ecosystem" emphasized that student entrepreneurship is driven by a synergistic university ecosystem combining internal support and external influences. Previous studies indicated that entrepreneurial orientation, institutional environment, and student intentions play key roles in fostering entrepreneurial behavior. Educational innovations, such as Entrepreneurship



Eclectic Education, are shown to enhance student readiness and engagement. This integrated approach is found to be effective, reliable, and adaptable within university settings to boost entrepreneurial outcomes.

(Longva, 2021) conducted a study on "student venture creation: developing social networks within entrepreneurial ecosystem in the transition from student to entrepreneur" used a qualitative methodology with 15 in-depth interviews of student entrepreneurs, educators, and ecosystem actors to explore how students engage with entrepreneurial ecosystems. It aimed to understand how social networks influence student venture creation and how these ecosystems support identity, access to resources, and idea development. The study found out that institutional and peer networks play a key role in facilitating entrepreneurship, but had limitations due to the research being conducted in only one country. The paper contributed valuable insights into an underexplored area of student entrepreneurship in higher education.

(Elnadi and Gheith, 2021) conducted a research on "Entrepreneurial ecosystem, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention in higher education: Evidence from Saudi Arabia" investigated the influence of students' perceptions of entrepreneurial ecosystem factors on their entrepreneurial intentions, both directly and indirectly through entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Data were collected via an online questionnaire from 259 undergraduate business students and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The study found that perceptions of the entrepreneurial ecosystem significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions, with gender playing a moderating role. These findings suggested that supportive ecosystems and policies sensitive to gender differences can enhance students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions.

(Clark et al., 2021) Conducted a study on "Entrepreneurial education: an entrepreneurial ecosystem approach" investigated how entrepreneurial education can be enhanced through an ecosystem-based approach that combines academic learning with venture creation. Using The Entrepreneurial Garden (TEG) at Burgundy School of Business as a case study, it illustrated how institutions can foster entrepreneurship by integrating education, research, and partnerships. The study highlighted the importance of aligning educational programs with local expertise, economic policies, and external networks. This approach demonstrated a holistic model for cultivating entrepreneurial competencies and job creation.

(Cao and Zhou, 2018) conducted a study on "Research on the innovation and entrepreneurship education mode in colleges and universities based on entrepreneurial ecosystem theory" to examine innovation and entrepreneurship education modes in Chinese colleges and universities. It highlighted the growing need for such education as a national strategy for economic development. The authors drew on



previous research regarding institutional support, student engagement, and industry collaboration. They emphasized the role of innovation institutes and government-backed programs in fostering entrepreneurial initiatives. The study also reflected on models where students gain practical experience through enterprise collaboration, bridging education and real-world entrepreneurship.

(Ferrandiz and Fidel 2018) performed a study on "promoting entrepreneurial intention through a higher education program integrated in an entrepreneurship ecosystem" examined how higher education programs integrated into entrepreneurial ecosystems influence students' entrepreneurial intentions. It builds on prior work by incorporating group dynamics, mentoring, and skill development into program evaluation. The paper found out that entrepreneurial intention is positively shaped, especially in the medium term, by structured mentoring and skill-building activities. It addressed gaps in previous research by focusing on postgraduate education, which is less frequently studied than undergraduate programs.

(Morris and Shirokova, 2017) conducted a study on "The role of modern university in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem: A multi-country empirical exploration" examined how university ecosystems impact student entrepreneurship across 25 countries using the data from GUESSS survey. They found out that students' involvement in entrepreneurship-related programs positively influences start-up activity, while financial support from universities may have a negative effect. Prior business experience enhances the effectiveness of university initiatives, highlighting the importance of practical exposure alongside academic support.

(Diaconu and Duțu, 2015) conducted a study on "The role of modern university in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem" explored the university's role in fostering entrepreneurship through integration into the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Their review highlighted how universities must transit from purely academic institutions to active economic contributors. By promoting innovation and collaboration and by aligning with global entrepreneurial trends, universities can improve their relevance and impact. The authors advocated for an integrative approach and propose a framework to help universities meet the demands of a changing economic landscape.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Although several studies have examined Entrepreneurial awareness at national and international levels but very few research has been done in context of Odisha, Particularly focusing on students in higher educational institutions.



This paper focuses on checking the current state of awareness of students of the twin cities of Odisha (Cuttack and Bhubaneswar). It focuses on checking the awareness level of the students about the entrepreneurial ecosystem, factors influencing their awareness level and how far they are getting the benefits of government and institutional support in shaping the entrepreneurial awareness.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

After analysing the various literatures and research gap of the past papers the paper would be focusing on the following objectives:

- To access the level of awareness about the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem among the students of twin cities of Odisha.
- To identify the key factors influencing the Entrepreneurial awareness among the students.
- To examine the role of institutional and external support system in shaping the Entrepreneurial awareness.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design

Descriptive research design has been followed in this study. As descriptive research helps to describe the characteristics of a process, charter or phenomenon, this research design help to understand the awareness level of the students of twin cities of Odisha.

5.2. Population and Sample

The research targets mainly the students who have enrolled in higher education in the universities and various colleges of twin cities of Odisha. Here convenience sampling method has been used to get the data of the population. Data has been collected from 184 students across different universities and colleges of twin cities of Odisha.

5.3. Data Collection Method

Primary data has been used for the research. A structured questionnaire based on a 5-point likert scale was used for primary data collection. The questionnaire consists of well prepared questions of demographic profile, awareness level, institutional and external support, factors influencing entrepreneurial awareness and social implications. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using

Cronbach's Alpha, which was found to be 0.85. Since the value is above 0.7, it confirms that the scale used in the study is reliable for further statistical analysis.

5.4. Data analysis techniques

Elements of Ecosytem	Mean Value	Interpretation
Start-up India/ Start up Odisha schemes	3.41	Moderate to high level of awareness
University based entrepreneurship cell	3.30	Moderate level of awareness
Entrepreneurship courses and curriculum	3.43	Moderate to high level of awareness
Government/Private seed funding options	3.55	High level of awareness

Data has been analysed through percentage and mean values. The data analysed has been shown with the help of tables, charts and graphs for better understanding.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 6.1

Awareness level of students

Interpretation: Table 6.1 shows that students have an overall moderate to high level of awareness about the various elements of entrepreneurial ecosystem. Awareness is highest for the Government and Private Seed Funding options (3.55) followed by Entrepreneurship Courses and Curriculums (3.43) and start-up India and start-up Odisha Schemes. However university based entrepreneurship cell received lowest mean score, indicating only moderate level of awareness, which means greater efforts are required to strengthen institutional-level initiatives.

Table 6.2

Factors influencing entrepreneurial awareness

Factors	Percentage
Family Background	9.38
Academic Environment	13.14
Social-Media / Internet	20.64

Friends / Peer group	19.57
Government Promotion	14.21
Personal Interest	23.06

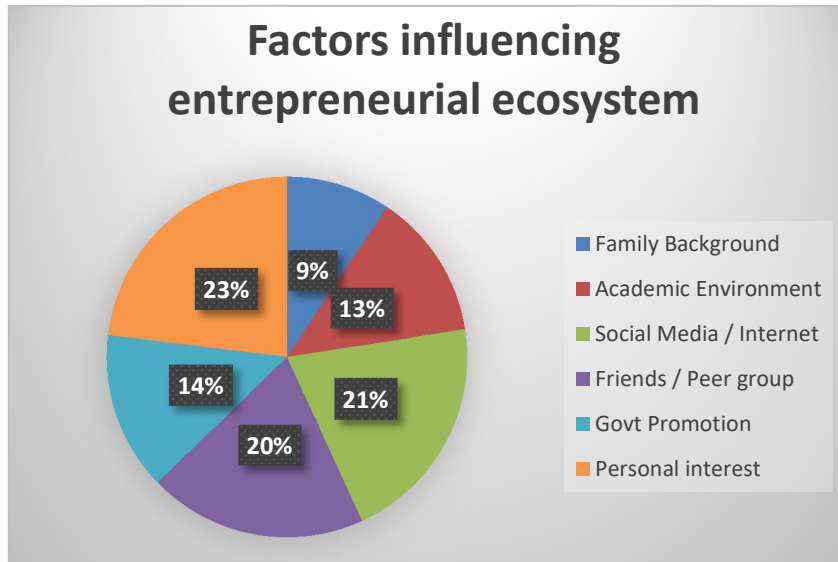


Figure 6.2

Interpretation: Table 6.2 and figure 6.2 shows that 9.38 % of students get influenced by their family background, 13.14% of them due to their academic environment, 20.64% of students get aware from social media or internet, 19.57% of them from peer group, 14.21% of students due to government promotion and remaining 23.06 percent of students get influenced due to their own personal interest in entrepreneurship.

Table 6.3

Role of institutional and external support system in shaping the entrepreneurial awareness

Factors		Mean Score
Internal factors	University support through events and workshops	3.60
	Awareness of University Entrepreneurship cell	3.46
External factors	Awareness about government schemes	3.58



	Knowledge about how to apply government and private schemes	3.47
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Interpretation: Table 6.3 shows that both internal and external support systems contribute to shaping entrepreneurial awareness among the students. University support through events and workshops (3.60) received the highest score, suggesting that students find such initiatives effective in enhancing awareness. Other factors also show high or moderate to high level of support to the students in increasing their awareness level.

7. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The findings shows that most of the students have high level of awareness regarding start up India or Start up Odisha schemes (mean value =3.41), or startup hubs and government or private seed funding options (mean value =3.55).

Most of the students (23.06%) are influenced for pursuing entrepreneurship due to their own personal interest and near about (20.98%) of students face lack of mentoring support due to which they prevent themselves from pursuing entrepreneurship.

Most of the students agree that they are getting maximum support from their institution (58%) as well as from external sources (59%) to carry out entrepreneurial activities.

Social media (20.64%) emerges as a major influencing factor in spreading entrepreneurial awareness, whereas the lack of mentoring support (18.41%) is identified as a significant barrier preventing students from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. Encouragingly, a majority (80%) of students acknowledge receiving both institutional and external support, indicating that the entrepreneurial ecosystem is gradually strengthening in the region, though targeted mentoring initiatives could further enhance its effectiveness.

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APPENDIX

1. Name of University

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Others

3. Age Group

- Below 18
- 18-25
- Above 25

4. Level of Study

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Above graduate

5. Stream of Study

- Arts
- Science
- Commerce
- Other

6. Do you have any family background in business/ entrepreneurship

- Yes
- No

7. I am interested in starting or being part of a startup in the future

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree



- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. I regularly share or discuss business ideas with others (friends, teachers or mentors)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very Often

9. Rate your awareness regarding the following:

(1-not aware, 5-fully aware)

1 2 3 4 5

- Start-up India or Start-up Odisha Schemes
- Your institution's entrepreneurship/innovation cell
- Incubation/Mentoring centres or start-up hub
- Government or Private Seed Funding Options

10. My University encourages and supports student entrepreneurship through events, workshops and resources

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

11. I know how to apply for government or private startup support schemes

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral



- Agree
- Strongly Agree

12. Have you attended any start-up event, webinar or competition in your university or outside?

- Yes
- No

If yes, name one:

13. Can you name any entrepreneurship scheme or initiative you are aware of :

14. What influences your awareness or interest in entrepreneurship?

- Family Background
- Academic Environment
- Social Media/ Internet
- Friends/Peer Group
- Government Promotion
- Personal Interest

15. What are the key barriers preventing students from pursuing entrepreneurship?

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of funds
- No mentoring support
- Academic pressure
- Risk of failure
- Family pressure

16. Student-led entrepreneurship can help reduce youth unemployment and create positive social change

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral



- Agree
- Strongly Agree

17. How important is it for universities in Odisha to actively promote entrepreneurship among students?

- Not important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Important
- Very important