

Policy Gaps and the Role of Business Incubators in Entrepreneurial Promotion in Uttarakhand

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1. Introduction

Business incubators are gaining wider acceptance as a mechanism for promoting small business development and job creation globally. Increasing attention has been devoted to their role and the policy context in which they are embedded. Many countries see them as a means of increasing business formation through the provision of complementary assets and a 'safety net'. Incubators are celebrated as a 'good practice' among practitioners and policy-makers involved in small business development. In most parts of the world, business incubation is still in the early stages of development. Incubation is a relatively novel concept and approach to business development in developing countries and transition economies. Effective incubation can deliver positive results if it is supported by a conducive policy framework. With this in mind, previous studies have presented detailed case studies of successful business incubators and sketched out rules and recommendations for new and existing efforts.

Business Incubation (BI) has been interpreted as the process of supporting new and startup firms (also known as enterprises, ventures and businesses) with the intention to improve their chances for success. Business Incubators (BIs) are institutions or organizations pursuing the goal to foster business development of startup ventures through a variety of support mechanisms in a controlled environment. BIs are said to offer a suitable way to embed and initiate early stage ventures into an ecosystem of expertise, thus increasing their chances for success and survival (S & I.A, 2014). For the better or worse, the entrepreneurial ecology or ecosystem of a region is molded and shaped by explicit and implicit policies and regulations at the local, state and federal levels. Political and bureaucratic partisanship arises from conflicting priorities of the various entities and the market inefficiencies that are often created through business and budget allocation strategies.

2. Overview of Entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand, a tiny Himalayan state which came into existence in November 2000 were bifurcated from the hilly part of Uttar Pradesh (UP). Flanked by Tibet in the north and UP in the south, it covers an area of 55, 845 square kilometers. At the time of its formation, the population of Uttarakhand was 78, 58, 0000; out of which 86.91 per cent were Hindus, 9.83 percent Muslims, 2.95 percent Sikhs, and 0.56 percent Christians. All the districts of Uttarakhand are situated in the hilly terrain except for Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts, which are part of the Tarai Bee san area. Under the 2001 census, the population of Uttarakhand reflected a substantial increase compared to the 1991 census from 78, 58, 000 to 84, 28, 998. Like other hill states, Uttarakhand also reflects a different demographic

profile in terms of sex ratio, occupation structure, and Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) population.

The economy of Uttarakhand is mostly dependant on the primary sector like agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and forestry, and is known as the 'fruit bowl of North India'. Modern fruit cultivation started in Uttarakhand with the introduction of horticultural crops in the early 1970s. The fruit cultivation served with multiple benefits like improving socio-economic conditions of the hill farmers, sizeable involvement of small and marginal farmers, and development of a strong and dynamic fruit market. Fruit production plays a vital role in harnessing the unutilized natural and climatic resources of the remote hill areas. Apple, peach, pear, plum, litchi, mandarin etc., are the commercial fruits grown by the peach producing belts of Uttarakhand (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014).

The state is rich in forests covering 64.21 percent of the total area. The forest area of Uttarakhand is divided into Reserve forest 21,550 square kilometers (38.47 percent), Protected forest 33,315 square kilometers (59.77 percent), and Unclassed forest 1,894 square kilometers (1.76 percent). About 80 percent of the hill population depend on forest products for their livelihood. Most of the wood-based industry exist in the foothills of Uttarakhand. The term wood based small-scale industries include all those industries which either transform timber into various items for direct use or produce semi-finished goods for other industries.

3. Importance of Business Incubators

A business incubator is an organization whose purpose is to nurture and support the growth of new and fledgling businesses, especially start-ups. Business incubation is an economic development tool that helps with the creation and growth of small businesses and/or startups by providing startups with needed resources and services. A business incubator typically provides a facility with shared office space that houses multiple companies, but incubators can also provide other forms of services, including provision of facilities (often for a fee) but not shared office facilities. In this regard, a business incubator is a form of entrepreneurship education that focuses on advising or coaching and is more characterized as "mentorship". A business incubator differs from an accelerator, in that incubators are typically targeted at companies in the gestation stage (typically, the first 1-3 years) whereas accelerators target companies in the early revenue stage (typically, after 3 years). There is additionally some philosophical difference, in that incubators are typically run on a longer timeframe—and in some cases do not yield equity—whilst accelerator programs run over a very short time frame and take equity in return for the provision of services and facilities (Koshy, 2010).

Incubation is a process in which a new firm matures in order to become an independent operator. The incubation process provides assistance to the start-up in managing the various pressures that it faces, and at the same time institutes a program for the gradual withdrawal of this assistance. Incubator programs vary widely in duration, scope and quality, and much confusion surrounds them. The participant companies that are searching for an incubator have an equally wide range of needs and understandings and must make decisions that are often tinged with urgency. The purpose of the incubator is to assist new companies in developing and managing the requisite networks that are essential for their survival (Jamil et al., 2015). Close relationships must be cultivated with external partners, but transferring control to them is also a danger. The incubation process can be viewed as a balancing act in which pressures on young companies are mediated in a locally situated manner.

4. Current Policy Framework

Uttarakhand, a state situated in the northern part of India, has a picturesque landscape and rich cultural heritage characterized by temples, hill stations, natural flora and fauna, and many rivers. Uttarakhand

was made a separate state from Uttar Pradesh on November 9, 2000. The state is home to several natural beauty spots that attract tourists and pilgrims alike. Dehradun is the capital of Uttarakhand, the 27th state of India, situated in the northwest part of the country. The location of Uttarakhand is such that it is most likely to attract investment. With the politically stable environment, investments in industries can prove fruitful. The exemption from central excise, SGST, and state income tax is another advantage of investing in Uttarakhand. The availability of skilled labor, cheap land, cheap power, and infrastructural development has provided a big push for the industrial development of Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand state is primarily a tribal state, out of the total population of 1,01,01,557 according to the reports of the 2011 census. The economy of the state depends mainly on Agriculture and its allied activities (70 percent), Cottage & Handicraft, Manufacturing 0.5 percent, Trade, Transport and Communication 13 percent, and Other Services (Private+ Government) 15 percent. Employment in the manufacturing sector is comparatively low. 38.50 percent of the middle-income group states have an industry base in percentage terms. The industries mainly existing in the light infrastructure sector include food processing, automobiles, cutlery, lathe-machines, consumer goods, paper industry, packaging, and castings (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014). The state is blessed with a few mineral resources like limestone, dolomite, and graphite. Further, limestone, dolomite, rock-phosphate, potassium dissolved salts, off-white marble, granite, lignite, coloring soil, and slate are also available in very small pockets. Industries like agro-based and horticulture-based can provide large-scale employment to the tribal people in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand. A large quantity of medicinal and aromatic plants is available in the forest region of Uttarakhand state, which does a good business.

The economic backwardness of Uttarakhand in respect of other states has increased the demand for entrepreneurial development rather rapidly. Employment generation is very low in the state from the organized sector, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Realizing the necessity of creation of new entrepreneurs, the Government is propagating the establishment of new enterprises with the assistance of various schemes. The new entrepreneurs or tycoons can be assured of excellent returns from this area. The role of the Business Incubators in the promotion of Entrepreneurship Development Schemes (EDPs) is worth mentioning in this context as they are playing a vital role in the dissemination of various schemes available with the government. Large Industrial Estates were established in Uttarakhand, which however could not attract the desired number of industries due to the financial crunch. The progressive business community, in anticipation of the development of infrastructure by the government, has established industries by transforming the largely available powers generating plants.

5. Identifying Policy Gaps

In the process of investigation, various actors in the domains of promoting entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand were contacted directly through telephonic interviews. Integration of both types of data is presented in this section under the heads as: Business Incubation and Start-up Policy of Uttarakhand, Knowledge & Technology and Incubator Policy of Uttarakhand, Self-employment and Entrepreneurship Development Policy, Industrial Investment Policy for the State of Uttarakhand, Start-up Policy of AIKNEA, and Policy on the Promotion of Electronics System Design and Manufacturing. These are organized under the broader titles of incubation support, mentoring, capital support, and policy initiatives. To systematically categorize the business incubation and start-up policies of Uttarakhand, the provisions of the higher-order template were systematically coded into a lower-order template. The systematic coding process culminated in identifying some policy themes. This exercise

was further complemented by thick description of the various support systems available which led to further themes focusing on the discovery of gaps in the identified policy systems.

Although native entrepreneurs of Uttarakhand approach the respective Single-window Clearing Agencies (SWCA) for selecting entrepreneurship and obtaining requisite clearances/licenses, the clearances acquired are only for starting the ventures, and not for running the ventures as mandated under the policies. The process of acquiring clearances was arduous and also involved lots of formalities leading to delays which was a dampening factor. Moreover, noted experts opined that the guidelines for all the schemes should be made uniform so that, small-scale entrepreneurs having no IT background did not face difficulties in availing the schemes. Further, the provisioning of incentives and disbursement stage should be made online.

In addition to the above, some points were noted which while being supplementary were pointers to additional policy dimensions needing attention. For instance, it was noted that business incubators were deprived of getting IIT subsidies for NESP. Although every incubator was eligible for availing Rs 1 crore as a one-time grant in aid, Uttarakhand-based Incubator services were unable to avail the subsidy because in the erstwhile policies of 2014, after the utility clearance was procured from the respective departments, grant-in-aid for bondage transfer was permitted. As a result, certification of usage and no dues from the USB conferences was not passed on to the respective departments by the incubators. Therefore, these incubators had not provided the benefit to any incubatees till date (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014).

5.1. Analysis of Existing Policies

With a view to analyze the existing policy ecosystem for start-ups and entrepreneurship promotion in Uttarakhand, various policies of the State as well as the Central Government were assessed. In addition to exploring various sections and subsections of the policies, a checklist (in the form of broader topics) was also developed to facilitate the analysis of the policies. The checklist broadly includes different areas like 'Definition(s) and Scope', 'Incentives and Support', 'Implementation Mechanism', 'Monitoring and Evaluation', 'Anti-Corruption Mechanism', 'Grievance Redressal', 'Resource Mobilization', 'Policy Awareness', 'Cross-Sectoral Coordination', 'Timeline', 'Consultative Process', 'Policy Review', 'Coordination with Other Government Departments', 'Consultative Process', etc. (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014).

Based on the checklist, each section and subsection was coded to assess the detail and comprehensiveness of the components discussed therein. Subsequent to that, the detail and comprehensiveness score for each policy was computed and then averaged out to analyse various aspects across the comparable documents. The final ratings for the policies are expressed in the tabular form below. Four major themes emerged during the analysis of various policy as well as program documents; them being 'Defining the Dimensions of Entrepreneurship Promotion', 'Supporting Entrepreneurship Development', 'Implementing and Monitoring Policies', and 'Awareness Creation and Anti-Corruption'. A preliminary conceptual framework for entrepreneurship promotion reflecting the interplay between key dimensions of entrepreneurship development as evinced from the analysis of the policy and program documents is provided below. In consonance with this framework, each of the themes and their specific components are explained now.

5.2. Stakeholder Perspectives

This section provides insights from stakeholders on the applicability, effectiveness, and gaps in the realisation and execution of the policy to enhance its role in promoting entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand state. Five stakeholders were interviewed for this study. The stakeholders included government

officials, university representatives, and incubator managers. Open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews were used to listen to the voices of stakeholders. A machine was used for the transcription of interviews that were conducted in the native Hindi language, and the transcripts were then changed to English to conduct a thematic analysis. Several themes were identified from the data obtained from the stakeholders. These themes were created after multiple readings and by referring to the notes made by the researcher after each interview. The interviewees spoke at length about the applicability, effectiveness, and gaps in terms of process, funding, infrastructure, skill development, and monitoring, and the role of the incubators in promoting entrepreneurship in the state.

Gaps and processes in policy applicability and effectiveness. The respondents' initial comments were summarised in Table 2. The stakeholder's perspective on the gaps in the policy's applicability and effectiveness is as follows:

The policy for promoting entrepreneurship in the state seems to have not been effectively implemented. The stakeholders believed that proper and effective checks and balances are needed to realise the policy. Out of the three important factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the policy, only funding seems to have been done up to the mark, says one of the respondents, who has worked in the department of MSME for about 40 years. A further elaboration on funding is provided later.

The respondents believed that the other important factors, such as process and infrastructure, were still lacking. The applicants face many hurdles when applying for the schemes mentioned in the policy. The skill-development programmes also do not match the state's need. Most of the courses on hardware and development mentioned in the policy do not exist. Business incubators in the state have also not been able to make a big impact. The government has to improve the policies and regulations to speed up the process of approval. Typical price quotas, excuses, and delays are misused by the departments while responding to a request for approval. There is a need to put in place a proper mechanism to check the timelines and enforce accountability. This mechanism should be made transparent and public, so that the respective departments are pressured to deal with the requests in a time-bound manner.

All the incubators mentioned in the policy are expected to develop required entrepreneurial skills using effective skill development programmes. No incubator has even a reasonably effective programme so far. The mentoring support available was either lost with change in incubator management or continues in a limited capacity. Most of the mentoring is provided personally for informal mentoring, but only 20% of incubators are providing formal mentoring. The government has taken big steps for policy formulation, funding mechanisms, appointing PMAs, and approval of incubators. However, capacity building at various levels for all those has not yet been addressed. These gaps have severely restricted the roll-out of the incubation programme in the state. Many of the gaps were either left undealt with, or blamed on lack of funding. Current schemes on capacity building in all departments for PAT, with the PMAs conducting the training and a bigger drip model approach, may yield desired outcomes (Lose et al., 2016).

6. Role of Business Incubators

Business incubation is globally emerging as one of the most successful instruments for promoting entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation. Business incubators are organizations that are formed to nurture small businesses and help them grow into sustainable firms (Jamil et al., 2015). Business incubators are created to help technology-based entrepreneurs create and build successful companies. Almost all business incubators play a positive role in developing entrepreneurship in a society that has its own challenges. The incubation infrastructure depends on various factors in a region, such as government policies and socio-cultural norms to promote a supportive entrepreneurial culture (Koshy, 2010). The focus is on the role of business incubators established at a university/college level in

promoting entrepreneurship specifically in Uttarakhand. The special challenges that the state faces in becoming a business incubator hub are highlighted. This case study ends with recommendations for government authorities to promote university-level incubation in Uttarakhand.

Incubators are critical players in an entrepreneurial society. They focus on nurturing knowledge-intensive innovative firms during the early stages of firm formation by offering them access to specific services and an entrepreneur-friendly environment. With this approach, incubators seek to improve the survival odds of start-ups in order to increase the returns of their private investors and foster regional development. Several variations in the characteristics and operation of incubators are found, which are also echoed by the diversity in the environments that incubators operate in. While incubators should in principle serve the same purpose, local environments shape their form and/or function. However, the different settings in which incubators operate also point to tensions, trade-offs, and contradictions between their roles and the policies that are set to understand them.

6.1. Support Services Offered

Business incubators aim to nurture nascent enterprises founded by entrepreneurs with innovative ideas. To develop these entrepreneurs, incubators offer a variety of support services tailored to the businesses that are carefully selected, as per the local economic development policies they address.

(Azri Mahmud, 2015) categorizes the types of services offered by incubators. Examples of infrastructure and resources are office space, laboratories, telecommunication, tools and equipment, secretarial, information-technology services, prototyping capabilities, and access to production facilities, dissemination of information sources, and mailing services. Training programs cover seminars, workshop sessions, and specialized courses on subjects such as marketing, accountancy, law, foreign trade, finance, production, patenting, and management information systems.

Consultancy and management services refer to business analysis, preparation of projects and research studies, feasibility studies, consulting on capital and loan applications, preparation of reports, obtaining funds from scientific establishments, assistance for application for grants, contact with banks and research agencies, information and advice on legislative aspects, management by professionals, and business management support for start-ups. Networking mediation services include access to venture capital networks and capital market companies, access to aid bodies, and to tax paid companies, access to business angels, access to training networks, and to university and laboratory ties.

An evaluation of the business support services and needs of a university-based incubator was recently conducted by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods under a mixed-method research design. A higher level of satisfaction with the offered support services was reported by better-performing firms. Overall, both the availability of support services and the firms' performance were found to be different based on the firms' characteristics. The educational level of the entrepreneur had an impact on the challenge met on the availability of appropriate support services.

6.2. Networking Opportunities

Most incubators had a referral network that offered various services to their clients, including consultancy services, proposal development and allocation of fund processes, student placements, seminar and workshops, human resources information, and organizing visits (Azri Mahmud, 2015). Business incubators should have stronger engagement with universities, central departments as well as in-house mentoring and workshops focused on developing, editing, and refining business plans and proposals for government funding. Business incubators should also expand their marketing by highlighting their distinctiveness and advertising both at the state and national levels in order to attract

new clients. Business incubators should actively support and foster their graduated companies in post-incubation periods, as many fledgling firms end up closing after graduation, limiting their growth. Knowledge sharing and learning were not high in the current incubation ecosystem and were reliant on personal bonding. This hampers the incubation ecosystem's development and growth as referred to by findings on it being a crucial external service with wider knowledge and skill networks that the incubator cannot provide in-house (Akçomak, 2009). Thus, business incubators should assist newly established firms in forming a prominent and globally networked association, while frequent workshops, training, and seminars should also be organized at the ecosystem level with the involvement and promotion of clients on incubator development. Overall, efforts towards these coming years should be more rooted in the formalization of this issue as semi-formal gatherings will not be adequate for mutual knowledge sharing.

6.3. Access to Funding

Tumultuous, unprecedented changes are seen in the economic and political landscape of the region. Countries and states around the world are embracing initiatives that usher in governance paradigms aimed towards ensuring a smarter planet. These profound and game-changing shifts are already revolutionising the way citizens interact with governments and governments interface with each other, thus allowing citizens and businesses to live smarter.

Entrepreneurs are key players in the processes that connect economies into networks. They are wildly diverse in backgrounds and ideas but share three attributes: a craving for change, an ability to see these new ideas become a reality, and a desire to contribute to the common good. Historically, unsuccessful economies depended on state-owned enterprises. Successful economies were fueled by a few lonely pioneers who dared to try something new. Now, vibrant and successful economies are increasingly shifting from the few lone pioneers to the many passionate citizens. They can be seen in cars with ideas on tap, grasping opportunities and taking calculated risks. They are needed to innovate new solutions and make existing ones affordable and available.

Incubators are key players in addressing this need. They provide space for the untested to play with ideas and receive the guidance needed to rework them into commercial products and services. They help connect isolated changemakers so they can learn from each other and become more effective and successful. They support the present while helping to forge the future. With their unique strengths and networks of relationships, phalanxes of recruits, and technologists both shy and brash, entrepreneurs are deploying new solutions targeted at pressing problems. Each delivers a 'triple win'—generating economic returns while delivering positive social and environmental impacts (Koshy, 2010).

7. Case Studies of Successful Incubators

Business mentoring in incubators aim to provide startup firms with the business knowledge management tools encountered in every assistance program plan to promote competition amongst clients. Previous studies examined the situation of business mentoring in business incubators: business incubator managers were found to implement a combination of top-down and bottom-up practices based on their inclination for individual adaptation and workplace dimensions (S & I.A, 2014). These findings deepen the understanding of business mentoring in incubators by indicating the sequential micro and substantive processes through which managers construct their practice orientations in that particular workplace and, thus, contribute to the growing body of research of business incubators and their activities. It may be valuable to build on these introductory and empirical findings by investigating how managers' practice orientations and workplace dimensions evolve over time. As it

was shown that incubators are increasingly being used for a variety of purposes, understanding how these various changes in work, type of incubator, and clients at the incubator level affect practice orientations and workplace dimensions may add to the extensive research on business incubator type and client firm type.

At the level of entrepreneurial eco-systems, it may be relevant to study the parallels of work instruments and workplace dimensions in counseling firms or RTOs in order to explore how different eco-systems favor or hinder the development of particular practices orientations. Policy debates on entrepreneurship, vetting, and support projects tend to make generalizations about these work characteristics from an individual basis. Studies that examine these divisions at a more aggregated level may contribute to the often-implicit typologies used in such policy debates. With the rapid growth of enterprise incubators in the Asia-Pacific region, the case extension serves to provide a detailed description of incubator services in China generated from unabridged, longitudinal data. While much research has focused on the performance measures of an incubator, little examination has looked into the conditions performed by incubators. Given the distinction made between inputs and outputs in production performance measurements, the case studies provide a framework for assessing incubator performance from either perspective. That is, services are treated as inputs affecting the outputs. It is expected that as incubators, specifically software incubators, become more established, off-budget sources of income can increase their financial autonomy and the availability of incentives for success. The role of business incubators in creating new growth firms and the related understanding of the incubator incubation process is developing. An understanding of the need for continued evaluation of a successful incubator, however, remains an essential component in developing an infrastructure to support high-growth companies.

7.1. Incubator A in Uttarakhand

The study utilized a qualitative research design. It aims to explore the incumbent policy gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the role of business incubators as stakeholders in addressing the gaps. A semi-structured interview schedule was designed. In-depth interviews were conducted with officials of the two business incubators located in the Uttarakhand state of India. The data collected were analyzed by organizing into themes or categories.

The Business Incubator located in the Uttarakhand government owned venue for incubation and entrepreneurial promotion. Uttarakhand is a not-for-profit A-16 structure business incubator funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. It was established in the year 2008. The Business Incubator has established a full-fledged business incubation facility to support the new and emerging startups for sheltering, supporting, and nurturing the start-ups till they graduate into fully grown, self-sustainable and profitable ventures. The incubation facility is well equipped with world class infrastructure such as Plug and play Office Space, Conference Rooms, Round Table Discussion Rooms, Executive Counselling rooms, Library, Innovation Lab, Wireless Network Connectivity, Recreation Room, 24 hours Power Backup, etc. It also has a patent facilitation center for intellectual property rights (IPR) protection and management.

The primary objective of the incubator is to promote knowledge based and technology driven new ventures in a variety of sectors such as Information Technology (IT), Electronics, Robotics, Agro, Food Processing, Nutrition, Health Care & Medical Devices, Biotechnology, Environmental Monitoring, and Clean Tech. The incubator is presently incubating & nurturing a wide array of technology based startups in these sectors, ensuring that they harness their potential for GSDP & employment creation in the leading sectors of the state.

Research and development (R & D) and technology support services are also an important need of business incubators in Uttarakhand. Entrepreneurs need facilities for early development of their ideas into prototypes, finding out whether the technology works or not. They need patenting facilities, and assistance in preparing projects that stand a chance of being funded. Often they need beta sites for testing products or trials for new ideas, including clinical trials.

Technology transfer, transfer of technology (TTO) or technology commercialization, (or technology recycling, for secondary technologies) is another requisite for business incubators, constantly be abreast of technological developments at both the national and international level and able to access them. This requires establishment of a strong network with public and private research institutions, universities, national labs, TTOs, and technology information centers, as also direct access to databases and technology monitoring services. (Akçomak, 2009)

7.2. Incubator B in Uttarakhand

Incubator B is located in a Small Scale Industrial Area deep into the industrial territory, away from facilities for entrepreneurs. This incubator is well-known as an SC/ST (Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe) and women-led incubator and is one of the premier incubators of not only the Uttarakhand region but also of northern India. Although the introduction of the incubator in this region was meant to fill the existing gaps, the primary aim was the upliftment of SC/ST and women entrepreneurs (Koshy, 2010). Various programs were devised and specialised staff was recruited to meet these targeted groups. In 2002, the incubator was registered as a society but was fully operational only after the change of management in 2004. Thereafter, a series of training programs were introduced from a resource centre. This incubator has a formal monitoring mechanism with reporting, with a standard performance index on which it is rated at various levels.

It invests in a few incubatees, apart from providing different facilities for stall displays in exhibitions, etc. Most importantly, it proactively assists youth in self-employment through its numerous resources and services. This incubator is one of the few practical instances showcasing a significant impact on the success of entrepreneurs, generating employment for many (Akçomak, 2009). Bureaucratic policy gaps result in various hurdles, affecting this incubator's performance. One of the major problems faced is the limited effort to uplift SC/ST and women entrepreneurs. Incubatees also complain about facilities, service quality, and other procedures being either complicated or unsatisfactory. As with any other incubator, an information gap also exists among the aspiring young entrepreneurial populace about the services on offer. This incubator does have a written policy on sustainability but does not address location overhead. Moreover, no clear policy exists on targeting services for SC/ST and women aspects.

8. Challenges Faced by Business Incubators

Despite considerable improvement in various fields due to investors and business incubators, there remains a challenge to find readily available entrepreneurs. This requires concerted efforts in all societies. It also requires societies and incubators to take initiative in networking with respective institutions. It is likely to take some time before investors will be able to approach ready for investment entrepreneurs once the practices have had an effect. Continuous monitoring of the network is vital to ensure that it is working effectively in reaching out to prospective entrepreneurs. Similar efforts will need to be undertaken to look for new institutions that have not yet made any attempts to reach to incubators. There are strong issues for higher education institutions and incubators in developing networks especially on the side of technology transfer, marketing their support services to increase demand, and awareness and professionalization of incubating services in these fields.

The business incubators in Uttarakhand are facing challenges including declining operational funds, concerns over capabilities to convert creative ideas into successful ventures, and an overall belief in their need for assistance by other actors. Most industry respondents believe the current funding is quickly drying up with little or no unemployment. Many project reports are not being converted into profitable ventures with local production. At the same time, there is a belief that their role in an economy is crucial and demands attention and supervision by policy makers after they are created (S & I.A, 2014) (Mubarak AL-Mubarak et al., 2013). The government had a strong stake in their creation and help in finding a strategy to sustain them.

8.1. Funding Limitations

Limited funding is the greatest constraint to business incubators in Uttarakhand, as it is to all organizations. In order for business incubators to be considered viable organizations in their own right, they must obtain sufficient funding to support their operations and long-term sustainability. Although some funding is made available from the public sector, including grants from institutions, most incubators still depend on funding from their parent institutions. When the parent institutions are unable to continue providing funding, business incubators are often forced to downsize operations, with adverse effects on incubatee firms' growth prospects.

Business incubators must implement a multi-pronged approach to identify and pursue funding opportunities from a variety of sources, including national and international funding agencies, government grants, donations, sponsorships, service fees, and venture capital investments. Given the popularity of business incubators in Uttarakhand, it is especially important for all business incubators to accumulate professional management, financial skills, and capabilities needed to pursue funding from a variety of sources. Growth and greater national prominence will lead to increasing competition for scarce resources and funding opportunities in a highly dynamic context (Koshy, 2010), reinforcing the need to develop these skills and capabilities.

Strengthening the conceptual frameworks and taxonomic schemes used in the evaluation of business incubators would provide an important reference point for evaluating strengths, weaknesses, and other characteristics; building marketing and branding strategies; and applying for funding from a variety of sources. Business incubators must implement the best practices for data collection, including conducting one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions with incubator managers, staff, and incubatee firms using multiple evaluation schemes. Tracking the pre-incubation characteristics and growth performance of incubatee firms over time would fill a major gap in the evaluation of business incubators, as the vast majority of such efforts focus solely on the outcomes of the incubation process (Lose et al., 2016). As the majority of practice in Uttarakhand is unmediated start-up incubation, this gap is all the more critical to fill.

8.2. Regulatory Hurdles

The survey participants were questioned about the regulatory hurdles faced in starting and operating a business. In order to measure the perception of entrepreneurs, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 indication not at all, and 5 indicating very high), the responses were grouped into two categories. A rating of less than 3 was classified as a low rating, and 3 and above was considered as a high rating. The data analysis revealed two limiting factors in the environment affecting entrepreneurs. These factors were the regulatory hurdles tied to the state of Uttarakhand and the nation as a whole.

The majority of respondents indicated that the regulatory hurdles are minimal within the region of Uttarakhand and minimal at the national level. While only half of the respondents reported that the

regulation of businesses has remained as a limiting factor, a majority agreed that obstacles remain tied to governmental procedures. The study's findings seem to contradict regarding a need for better governmental policy for entrepreneurs in sustained MSE growth. It appears that the respondents are for the most part satisfied by the current governmental policies.

However, the respondents did indicate a need for expanding governmental assistance in recognizing and approving the starting of new businesses more quickly and efficiently. One entrepreneur reporting a problem with getting government assistance regarding the correct questions to ask noted that "very few people can help," and therefore there is a need for trained professionals in this regard (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014).

9. Recommendations for Policy Improvement

To achieve the proposed scheme, various policy units should be created within the Government of Uttarakhand. They should work with the and modify the various parameters, provide more financial assistance, and ease the enrollment process of the incubators under it. The initial government contribution and incentives should be increased to promote competition among existing incubators regarding quality, monitoring, and awareness of the incubators in the syllabus of interested fields of studies in educational institutions. A mechanism awarding prizes for the utilization of financial assistance provided should also be adopted. New incubators should be present without tilting the need towards profit, with a margin consideration of how long free service would last. The enrolling process clarity and simplicity should be provided while providing waiting time if needed, like the other services. When the district bank was applied for, one single window project was running. A new policy for a tenure-of-tenancy renew should also be present to avoid cases of dropping out.

It is realistic that although incubation in Universal Global is costly, they fulfil the policy goals. The two issues an incubator should meet are the market formulation and the service level at the time of supply. The service level cannot be predefined but should be conjoined with an ongoing business model. As a result, duty on major elements, including approval, should be forgone. The high incubation cost due to supporting industries must be resolved and plugged into the available competitive studies. Participation of the authorities, state governments, and funding agencies should also be made mandatory for sound deliberations and long-term benefits. This would provide pro-active accreditation of institutions globally, where the funding would be on merit, and meet uniformly defined curability standards. These would help foster entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand and India in general. (Akçomak, 2009) (Jamil et al., 2015)

9.1. Enhancing Support for Incubators

The different states of India have established many policies regarding entrepreneurship development and support for incubators. Although it is a policy maybe unique to every state, for some time, the already existing policy has to be reviewed and appropriate changes have to be made to enhance the support for incubators with respect to new technologies and delivery mechanism. If the policy regarding incubators is seen in isolation, the proper role of other stakeholders will not be identified.

Though government initiatives have a major role in promoting entrepreneurship development and incubator establishment, other stakeholders also play a prominent role in contributing to the innovation ecosystem. A startup also needs capital and support, and it is not possible for an incubator to provide all that; they need to connect with other institutional/startup networks. The stakeholder role for various stakeholders in supporting incubation and entrepreneurship development is outlined in the table below. The support to incubators has to be through these stakeholders. Therefore, the interoperability has to be

strengthened to provide better support to incubators. A properly defined system needs to be developed to enhance the support for incubators in Uttarakhand. The responsibility of all stakeholders is mentioned below. It would be more effective if scalabilities were added.

The above-given stakeholder roles have a particular amount of activities. These activities differ from stakeholder to stakeholder as one cannot involve in every line of support. Therefore to enhance the support to incubators not every activity has to be carried out uniformly across states. The activities to be carried out also depend on the type of incubator (universities, organizations by trade bodies, and science tech based foundries). Only selected activities based on their capabilities will be their responsibility to support incubators (Jamil et al., 2015)

9.2. Creating a Collaborative Ecosystem

North India is poised for major transformation as a hub for corporate giants like Adani, ITC, PepsiCo, Dupont, and more, setting up institutions in Uttarakhand. The influx of knowledge industry and corporate management in the SME sector urges the government to step into proactive action to upgrade the State Policy on Incubation/Accelerator. Business Incubators will need to evolve into a comprehensive ecosystem to match the new reality. Business Incubators in Uttarakhand may need to undergo a mindset shift as institutions and as well as on how the State policies that govern them. It is crucial to design Policies that will align with the new direction being taken by Corporate institutions, ensuring that the state is prepared to leverage opportunities to drive wealth and job creation.

For example, the UP Government has opened up 900 Prawn culture start-ups and launched robust policies for Drone manufacturing. Uttarakhand also has to be prepared for foreseeable radical changes in all sectors as big multi-national companies are coming up with major investments. The rapid urbanization initiatives from IRSDC and the upcoming Nash class 8 Agro to Stadium Super Walmarts in all major towns will increase the Private Sector's participation in the otherwise G2C driven economy. Most of such industries do not have a precedent in Uttarakhand. The programs of DBT can open up massive opportunities using the knowledge capabilities of Universities in Uttarakhand. Policy for Business Development Centers may be required to encourage private institutions in the space. Similarly, Universities will need to invest in generating equity in technical entrepreneurship development programs for industrial estate management and energy-intensive industries like Cement, paper, textiles, and screen printing.

Business Incubators not only serve to incubate technology-based ventures but those which require new market approaches. Adventure tourism, adventure electric vehicles, and last-mile transportation that use Steam have many hitherto untried business models. Thus the earlier procedures of application, experiments, and elaborated policy are required to be revamped for a more simplified format and a fast track-based process. Incubators may require altering their curriculum to accommodate the sudden change in the entrepreneurial landscape of the State, Over the last one year advent of Direct Flight Services, massive real estate investments, deep-sea ports at Tethri and Mana, etc. are signs of Uttarakhand's breakthrough into mainstream economy. The states' business incubators will need to be made financially sustainable to serve the next twenty years of proactive economic development (Jamil et al., 2015).

10. Future Outlook for Entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand should proactively develop infrastructure and a human ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship. Focusing on the needs of national and international companies will entice them to invest. Additionally, the state government should create policies, attract angel investors, and improve start-up facilities to nurture local entrepreneurs. High-tech industries can employ a large workforce.

Talent through educational programs in institutions, especially in rural areas, can convert job seekers into Job Makers.

Business educators should exhibit faith and business aptitude. Private investor promotions in collaboration with banking and entrepreneurial organizations can provide capital requirements. Service information and communication should be provided before seeking financial assistance. All government departments are advised to create awareness of the thriving administration. Such motivation will help entrepreneurs believe in their competence (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014). The private business setup group must step forward in creating obstacles and to enhance utility services.

A state-level small business forum should be constituted for annual discussions. In the present context, it is essential to transform the analyst system into a proactive role. A small investor service will fulfil capital regulation requirements. A single agency in the Directorate of Industries should sanction all action plans. All concerned should sit together to decide credit limit allocation.

With the ongoing slump in the global economy, it is difficult to plan and setup the basis for new industry. The inherent ability of the area should be exploited in a timely manner and good proposals should not be frozen. Delay in sanctioning one proposal causes distress to others and hampers the economy of the area. If proposals are commercially unviable, they should be refused for a specified time. Such action would eliminate entrepreneurial frustration. The banks should not wait for things to happen, rather they should create responsible a circumstance where government actions will be worth waiting. Coordination among financial institutions must be reiterated and honed.

11. Role of Technology in Business Incubation

Technology incubators are dedicated to hastening the growth of fledgling businesses through engineered assistance, for instance, architecture finance, industry analysis, grants, mentorship, working facilities, and business liaisons. The distinctive characteristic of tech incubators is that they assist developers to rightfully hold the intellectual property set apart with their ideas which is vital to business success and security against competitors. The involvement of high-tech ventures in economic growth is steadily increasing since the last couple of decades. Understanding the business model of these ventures is essential for better management of venture creation and growth. New ventures exhibiting business-model innovation show superior management strategies in the different phases of venture management. Start-ups searching for financial gain or intellectual property would benefit more from an incubator offering an extensive network and market intelligence mesh, while those seeking liquidity by IPO's should aim for incubators supporting scientific patents and a strong strategy on default. (Chornenka, 2025)

A technology incubator can be a business incubator intended to improve the chances of business success for the firms which employ significant technological innovations. It provides a controlled and nurturing environment to violent small entrepreneurial firms or start-ups by facilitating various services, resources, and infrastructure elements, in order to increase the chances of their survival, growth, and success, (S & I.A, 2014). It can be defined as an organized, formalized program of support services, administered over a defined time period, specifically directed to nurture companies using and producing technology. A technology incubator provides either physical facilities or a common work environment for young firms engaged in technology-intensive businesses and establishes a systematic, managerial process of nurturing the intended firms through offered support services and business coaching programs specifically designed to improve their management skills. The incubation process is differentiated into two or three stages (Jamil et al., 2015).

11.1. Digital Tools for Startups

With the fast growth of the e-business and technology sectors, there have been radical changes in the economic, social and political aspects which ultimately transform the life style of the individuals. As a result of these changes and developments, people are prompted to follow better, quick and more efficient ways to carry on their business. The basic idea behind e-business is to have a business approach that can save time and labor. With the result of these defining parameters, e-business planning is gaining a huge importance as it delves deep into the logical, commercial, operational, managerial, organizational, advertising, brand building and technical aspects of e-business. The incorporation of a startup into this new virtual horizon of business requires an executive fire prevention plan, which offers guidance about critical decisions and actions (Akçomak, 2009).

The base line of this fire prevention plan is actually defining the Vision, Mission Statement, Value Proposition and determining the goals and the strategy to accomplish it. The basic questions of a business are why, what, who, how, when and where. The e-business planning system is intended to answer the business security and using the initial efforts in a systematic, effective and productive manner. The principal components of the e-business planning are: executive summary; business description; operational plan; marketing plan; financial plan; organizational plan systems and processes; and e-business web site details. Before going into the operational aspects of the business plan preparation, key points, tips and guidelines that must be taken into account, especially in preparing text, charts, graphs and other illustrations. (Kamariotou et al., 2021)

Increasingly, investors are insisting on receiving an executive summary of your business plan view before they will delve into the more detailed plan. This is especially true for the more sophisticated venture capitalists since they often have to screen literally hundreds of plans to find a minuscule number worth further consideration. Investors do not want lengthy documents to wade through to find answers to the basic questions of business.

11.2. E-commerce and Market Access

There are a number of businesses which can be conducted through e-commerce platform. This sector is still with huge prospective as many people still don't have the knowledge regarding the same. Here is an example about two ladies from Almora district who approached the study team about one year ago. These ladies were making beautiful handmade "kath-kuni" items. These women were not aware about how to sell their product in the market. In this regard, support under CP-3, Category "c" was given to them for creating their own e-commerce website and now they are running their business from their home itself. Earlier, they had to visit big shops in bigger city to display their products, incurring a huge cost of travel which is not only effort consuming but also time consuming. Now they can set up an online display on their website and customers send their requirement and place their order accordingly (Koshy, 2010). They have received orders from Pune, Delhi and Ludhiana. Earlier they were completely dependent on local market. After developing their website, their business has increased by more than 400 percent.

They received the necessary guidance regarding the same from a key resource person for their local area. Further, the study team is helping them in their product labeling based on legal guidelines as well as providing supportive issues like packing and lab results. This is just one example which describes about the potential of market access through the e-commerce web platform to the entrepreneurs who have brilliant ideas but not having market access due to geographical and other constraints. Adding to this agriculture is another important aspect where various products have the potential to be sold in faraway markets through e-commerce marketing. One good example of this is making "Gud." This

sector was almost unknown to the people in tarai region and only a few organic gur makers were there in hilly region. After training and financial assistance, farmers are producing Gud with high quality and value addition. The entrepreneurs are receiving the raw sugar cane from their own crop production as well as by purchasing from surrounding farmers and selling it at a price of 60 -100 per kg depending on the place. (Kansiime et al.2021)

12. Impact of Global Trends on Local Incubation

It is well understood that business incubators were first introduced in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the United States. This idea was later passed to Western Europe, Australia, Africa, Latin America and Asia. France established the first European incubator in 1986 followed by Finland. By means of globalization and growing political awareness about economic connectivity between countries, the Indian Government invited foreign investment and technology in 1991, which translated into establishment of various incubators, primarily for IT based projects in the Chennai-Madurai belt (Jamil et al., 2015). In line with the fast re-orientation of the business environment, the Indian government adopted a pro-business policy in 1996-1997 with massive de-regulation, de-licensing, and opening up of the banking sector for private participation. As a result, business incubators had mushroomed all over the country, especially in the urban outskirts adjacent to the cities in the southern and western parts of India. This attracted the attention of several State governments that felt the need for maintaining the bovine growth rate of the States; thus, incubators were established even in the rural areas to ego build the polity.

Business incubators situated in different regions around the world often had similar functionalities. There was a uniqueness in their application of scheme that would primarily depend upon local conditions, which often depended upon a diverse sociological ground. Local culture or tradition, including entrepreneurial motivation, attitudes towards innovative ideas and technologies, etc. had governed the scenario of incubation business suitably. Therefore, a country-based assessment for promoting entrepreneurship through incubation schemes assumed global interest. With overwhelming support from the States, it would be valuable to understand if there are any fresh or additional considerations which remained uncovered in previous recommendations. The literature review of business incubators in Uttarakhand focused on both the inclusionary and exclusionary issues. Insight gained from appropriate stakeholders regarding suitability of the present incubation policies in fostering entrepreneurial creativity would be significant. The region is markedly different from other parts of the country with its rich developmental potential hampered by hilly, yet beautiful topographical peculiarities. (Cabasag et al.2022)

Inducements offered had initially attracted innovative ideas for R&D. The possibilities for their sustainable development through business were hampered by the absence of requisite support mechanisms or working relations in the proximity. It was realized that it would be worthwhile for the State Incubators to unleash the present potential from the same Niche. Therefore, the present Government investment in incubation schemes impressed with a sense of urgency & seriousness towards sustaining entrepreneurship efforts. Such enhanced sensitivity would be useful to operationalize requirements from entrepreneurs for business development through research or innovative ideas for earning wealth through employment generation, on a long-term and sustainable basis. (Ravichandran and Dixit2024)

12.1. Sustainability and Green Entrepreneurship

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a vision to transform the world into a better place through inclusive, equitable, and sustainable growth, were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. Entrepreneurship, employment generation, poverty alleviation, and bridging the gap between the haves and have-nots are the four pillars of economic growth (Koshy, 2010). The idea of entrepreneurship development as a process of establishment of enterprises and its promotion is as old as human civilization. However, the organized attempt to promote entrepreneurship development in India is relatively a recent phenomenon (Koshy, 2010). There have been a large number of discussions, deliberations, and measures by various groups, forums, and institutions to find ways and means to promote entrepreneurship development in India. Nevertheless, it is very unfortunate that a majority of blueprints, guiding principles, policy recommendations, and measures remained on paper without translating into action by way of setting up an effective entrepreneurship development system. Uttarakhand is no exception to this.

Development, promotion, and management of Startups/Entrepreneurship both social and business are of utmost importance for the local state government in Uttarakhand. Although the government of Uttarakhand has initiated several measures and formulated policy frameworks for promoting entrepreneurship development and Start-up creation in the state, lack of co-ordination and convergence among various departments, departments' initiatives for promoting entrepreneurship development being unorganised, unstructured, and disintegrated, limited and restricted reach of entrepreneurship development initiatives, limitedness of entrepreneurship support programs in scope, form, and coverage, lack of awareness and knowledge about respective roles of various departments, their measures, initiatives, and programs among the target segments are some of the policy gaps which need to be addressed to ensure that the entrepreneurship development measures are designed, implemented, managed, and evaluated effectively, efficiently, equitably, and sustainably. This paper examines the role relevance of Business Incubators in policy gap filling in entrepreneurship development in Uttarakhand by highlighting the state government's entrepreneurship and Start-up promotion policy gaps affecting youth entrepreneurship development in the state. (Panwar, 2024)

12.2. Social Entrepreneurship Models

The need to recognize different social entrepreneurship models that exist in a social context of the Indian economy: Such models generally range from micro finance/small grants for the micro entrepreneurs to rural incubators, rural enterprise development model for the rural employment scheme, and the linkages with urban based institutions for local and social enterprises. Some of the noted examples in this connection are the DWCRA Self Help Groups in Andhra Pradesh, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation's model of Self-Help Groups/Producers Company, Sakshi-Community Feeder of the India Pipeline Franchise Model, Sarai-Local SMEs and Producers Cooperatives, Anamika-Enterprise Development for SHG Producer Cooperatives including Export Promotion, etc. The need to document and disseminate the small and micro entrepreneurship based social entrepreneurship models for the benefit of other entrepreneurship development institutions and policy makers. (Koshy, 2010)

The need for the documenting the efforts made in India and in the state of Uttarakhand in creating an entrepreneurship promoting eco-system through the concerted efforts of all stakeholders of the eco-system. If the discussions in the stakeholder's workshop conducted under this study as well as the group presentations of other studies are analyzed, they strongly indicate towards the urgent need in analysis and documentation of the socio-political, socio-cultural, and eco-sustainability dimensions of the successful growth centres/start-ups. The growing interest in the Indian entrepreneurship growth

story, both in academic world as well as among the policy makers at the national and state levels and the need to popularize these as models at the global level justifies such an undertaking.

The need for preparing an analytical/descriptive series of hand-books on varied entry level population/geographical categories/entrepreneurships to promote consumption in the popular domain learning of successful entrepreneur/companies of varied scale from flexi-automation, used-product processing recycling, remanufacturing, micro RIP, Seed-spice Agro-processing, upstream/slow-movings histories, retail, wall & floor Art, entertainment, etc. It is a way of popularizing entrepreneurship both as a desirable for the education and as a promising profession of living gratifying lives for the large cross-section population.

13. Conclusion

Current entrepreneurs and the youth, who are future entrepreneurs, are still lacking in opportunities due to the absence of well-written policies regarding entrepreneurship development. This lack of clarity on the provision of opportunities for entrepreneurs results in a sense of frustration and ever-expanding dissatisfaction with bureaucratic wrongdoings. In 2006, Uttarakhand eventually introduced the "Uttarakhand Entrepreneurship and Startup Policy" after a long hiatus, but it does not address the need for developing policy interventions for the acceleration of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, nor does it touch on the issues of 'incubation centres' for enhancing the competencies of budding entrepreneurs for start-ups that are industries of the future. The present study highlights the various dimensions faced by UTDB and the role of business incubators in the overall contextualisation of existing policy. Uttarakhand, carved out of Uttar Pradesh, was born as the 27th state of the Indian union on 9th November 2000. The archaeology and architectural diversity of the state is fascinating, from the modern city of Dehradun to Hill Stations like Mussoorie, from ancient temples like Badrinath to pilgrimage cities like Haridwar, from the land of the Gorkhas to the land of the Marwardis. However, despite being gifted with natural beauty and plentiful opportunities, the state inherited a drugged economy with a downward Iranian curve.

The investors and entrepreneurs were unwelcome in this virgin state. The state, ruled by bureaucrats of the old school, could not generate proactive policies for the new state in view of capital-intensive industry. Even the widely accepted and recognised pro-business regimes like single-window clearance, no-holiday policies, etc., were deemed fit only for the "Uttarakhand Urban Development Authority" and not for new entrepreneurs. The various baby policies were handicapped by implementation and were appropriately termed as "Do nothing Policies". "Land scam" became the smuggling industry for land grabbing amidst political patronage. As a byproduct of political upheaval, most entrepreneurs became uncertain and dislodged. The industrial land was allotted on paper without many exceptions. Exiguous allotments were of land even of pathetic quality. Most of the rich were richer, and the poor remained as they were with land and factory closures (A Bhat & A Khan, 2014). The second political party eked out business fear as an "Anti-Uttarakhand party." The mysterious desperation of the first political-party was staged out of vengeance and envy. A meticulous exposé through a chronicled policy is, thus, undertaken in this study.

Despite many demographic and resourceful advantages, Uttarakhand has failed to capture the potential market aspirations due to earlier lack of proactive agricultural policies, hence a long-awaited non-creation of an agrobased food processing industry. The sustained lack of awareness and other infrastructure policies has been issues regarding abode and external entrepreneurship. There is a lack of proper educational policies as well as policies on clusters, export promotion industrial parks, and biotechnology for enhancing the growth trajectory of the nascent IT and semiconductor industries.

Existing incubators lack proper infrastructure and have failed to provide techno-political, bureaucratic, and capital networks for present incubatees and start-up support. The acceptable provision of appropriate policies and incubating centres is worth consideration (Lose et al., 2016). The systemic and green-field affirmative policies providing an ecosystem of incubators, as well as techno-bureaucratic and financial networking, need urgent and proactive consideration.

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