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ROLE OF MISSION START-UP KARNATAKA IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF TECH START-UPS

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ABSTRACT

The research examines the marketing, operational, and financial incentives that promote tech start-up growth and development. It uses a qualitative research strategy and interviews with nine original founders of tech start-ups based in Bengaluru. The study includes a diverse range respondents due to sampling, each with a successful track record in the tech sector, company expansion, and commitment to the Karnataka start-up objective. The interview questions used to select study participants were based on three main points. Using the NVivo 14 program, the data was transcribed and analysed. Incentives in the areas of finance (with 199 references), marketing (with 144 references), and operations (249 references) have helped mission start-up Karnataka attract a diverse group of investors and entrepreneurs. The local economy has been boosted and an atmosphere of growth and innovation has been established via the provision of these incentives. As a result, Karnataka is now firmly positioned on the global start-up map as an appealing state for launching a wide range of businesses.

KEYWORDS: Mission Start-up Karnataka, Sustainable development, Tech start-up.

INTRODUCTION

Karnataka, and the capital city in particular, boasts the second-fastest growing start up environment globally and more start-ups than any other Indian state. Bangalore is home to an estimated 3,100 to 4,900 active information technology enterprises. Ranked among the world's fifteen best ecosystems for new businesses this century (**Mission Policies, 2024**) With the Start-up Karnataka project, the Karnataka state government is working to transform the other cities in the state into start up hotspots that can compete with thirty international hubs, while also ensuring that Bengaluru maintains its

position as the country's most important hub (**Mission Policies, 2024**). Beyond this, its objectives are to:

- Aim for 20,000 new IT firms and 6,000 new products to be launched by 2020.
- Six lakhs direct hires and twelve lakhs indirect hires can be made to increase the sector's employment rate.
- With the help of the state government, raise 2,000 crores of rupees to invest in new businesses through the proposed Fund of Funds.
- Propose twenty-five innovative technical solutions that have the potential to revolutionize many different fields, including but not limited to: healthcare, food security, environmental protection, and universal education.
- Assist company owners in coordinating with relevant government entities to carry out pilot initiatives.
- Information about incentives, events, and the regulatory environment, among other things, should be centrally available.
- Collaborate with schools, incubators, and trade associations that make up the Startup Ecosystem.
- Allow businesses the opportunity to attend the program's worldwide conferences, which will help them develop their network.

Figure 1
Credentials of Karnataka Startup Mission



Source- <https://www.missionstartupkarnataka.org/?en>

Karnataka, with the support of start-ups, might emerge as a major player in India's lofty goal of achieving a digital economy worth USD 1 trillion by 2025. According to the NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index, Karnataka has been named the country's innovation capital for the past three years in a row (2019, 2020, and 2021) (**Mission start-up report, 2024**). India is at the forefront of numerous industries, including information technology (IT), biotechnology, aerospace, and cutting-edge technologies such as blockchain, IoT, AI, nanotechnology, ML, cyber security, robotics, genetic engineering, and quantum technologies, among others. The Indian government is responsible for more

than 40% of software exports. Among the most developed start-up ecosystems in the country, Karnataka is home to more than 15,000 enterprises and was the first state to announce a policy specifically for start-ups in 2015. (**Mission start-up report, 2024**).

Facilities for research and development, innovation, incubators, centres of excellence, common instrumentation, NAIN, and other organisations make up the state's robust tech ecosystem, which is a source of great pride. The state's state-of-the-art incubation space spans 1.25 lakh sq. ft (**Mission start-up report, 2024**). A unique platform dubbed the Grand Challenges Program was formed by the Department of Electronics, Information Technology (IT), Biotechnology (BT), and Science & Technology (S&T) to address social impact concerns related to the ESG framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Innovative and revolutionary ideas can be showcased and presented by start-ups on this platform. Furthermore, the government has opened up market access initiatives to entrepreneurs through Global Innovation Alliances (GIA) (**Mission start-up report, 2024**). These alliances link and collaborate with innovation centres worldwide, assisting businesses in becoming globally recognised. Under GIA's aegis, more than 30 nations have formed global partnerships. The State has earned the title of Best Performance State in DPIIT's Start-up Ranking 2021, continuing a streak of two years running (2018 and 2019) of top performance, all because of its many commendable initiatives in creating laws for the future and encouraging disruptive innovation (**Mission start-up report, 2024**). From 2020–2024, Bengaluru's real GDP is expected to rise at a rate of 9.9 percent annually, reaching an estimated 110 billion USD. Bengaluru is home to 40 of India's 104 unicorns, with a combined valuation of USD 340 billion (**Mission start-up report, 2024**).

Using the resources and tools presented in this booster kit, start-ups will be able to grow and develop their business more effectively. The primary mission of Start-up Karnataka is to assist new companies within the state to set up and operate effectively. Thus, the Karnataka state government is a supporter of innovation and entrepreneurship development through offering multiple benefits and assistance (**Government orders, 2024**).

Sustainable Development Agenda of United Nation's 'eighth goal focus on enhancing its economic growth, employment opportunities, and decent work for all. This will comprise things like involvement of the government in enterprise (Apostolopoulos et al., 2018). This research into sustainable entrepreneurship also impacts on the other objectives of the sustainable development goals, namely SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). The Government's part in Emerging Framework for Entrepreneurship - Sustainable growth, on the economic, environmental and social levels, is feasible to enshrine into business policies in the corporate sector (Sreenivasan & Suresh, 2023).

The first part of the research provides an overview of Start-up Mission in Karnataka. The second section presents the review of literature, which is a systematic review of literature conducted in order to analyse the impact of the start-up mission in Karnataka. The research methods used in the paper are described in the third part of the paper which outlines the tools of analysis and sample selection criteria. The fourth section of the paper is devoted to the results and discussion of the research study. The last part of this paper contains the conclusion and research implication section.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A systematic literature review methodology was used in this study to assess the fulfilment of Mission Karnataka in the development of tech start-ups. The initial part of the review processes was performed by entering the databases that helped to find out the articles that have been published between 2015 and 2024 and which concerns the mission in the state of Karnataka. After the SEARCH of several articles, 30 articles were considered to be relevant and thus, included in the review.

- **Ajayi-Nifise et al., (2024).** Using case studies from the USA and a number of African countries, this Review investigates the critical role of government policies in encouraging entrepreneurship. Innovation, job creation, and economic growth are all propelled by entrepreneurialism, which in turn is shaped by government policy. Fostering a culture of innovation, offering targeted financial assistance, and building an enabling regulatory environment are a few lessons that African nations can learn from the successful policies of the USA, according to the comparative analysis.
- **Zhou and Wang, (2023).** Promoting the incubation of new businesses is crucial for stimulating creative economic growth. A growing number of nations are promoting "innovation orchards"—partnerships between government, industry, and academia—to foster the birth of new tech businesses. There is a positive correlation between government-industry, industry-academia, and government-industry-academia collaborations on business incubation, but no such correlation exists when the government and academia work together to build new research and development institutions. In order to optimize the holding mode of new R&D institutions, the research conclusions might serve as a policy reference.
- **Font-Cot et al., (2023)** Analyzing the digital transformation strategies in Barcelona's local startup ecosystem over 30 years is what makes this work unique in terms of both time frame and geographical extent. Findings from this study provide light on how digital transformation policies have affected startup ecosystems worldwide and how public policies have shaped the startup environment in Barcelona specifically.
- **Alänge et al., (2022)** The government is actively supporting the emergence of innovation ecosystems as a new, cost-effective strategy to spur economic expansion

and employment creation. Government authorities have become more supportive of corporate-startup collaboration as a phenomenon. This is because it helps startups scale while also giving incumbents opportunities to reinvent themselves. It can be difficult for any government agency to assess the efficacy of its initiatives in relation to such partnerships due to the complexity of analyzing their outcomes.

- **Amelia et al., (2021)** Using a methodology with 21 assessment components, this research examines the business model in an incubator company. In order to evaluate the success of the incubation program, it is necessary to do this examination. Startups can get extensive coaching and access to a network of related resources through the incubation program.
- **Nagar and Ahmad, (2024)** Initiated in 2016 as a flagship program, the Start-Up India scheme seeks to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in India. The goals, methods, and effects of the initiative on India's entrepreneurial scene are explored extensively in this case study. One of the most prominent programs in India's government that seeks to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship is the Start-Up India scheme, which this study intends to examine in depth. This report delves deep into the Startup India concept, illuminating its impact on the country's entrepreneurial scene and providing a roadmap for other developing nations looking to foster innovation and boost their economies.
- **Wasnik & Jain, (2023)** This study paper delves at how startup ecosystems may be fostered and improved via the use of government funds and initiatives. Examining the extensive support offered by the Indian government to foster the growth and development of startups, the study focuses on the Indian setting. A number of government agencies in India are devoted to helping new businesses get off the ground, including the Atal Innovation Mission and the DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade). Along these lines, the federal government has made it a top priority to build top-notch accelerators and incubators around the nation to encourage entrepreneurship by way of teamwork, new ideas, and the sharing of information. Findings highlight the critical importance of public funding and programs in helping companies break through funding hurdles and develop novel ideas.
- **Shah & Jokhi, (2023)** Every country's startup environment is affected to a greater or lesser extent by government policy. India is no exception. Startup India, the Atal Innovation Mission, and the Fund of Funds for Startups are just a few of the government-run programs in India that are working to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. As a result of these reforms, startups in India now face fewer regulatory hurdles, more favorable tax treatment, and easier access to capital.
- **Khandelwal and Asthana, (2023)** The purpose of this study is to examine how the Indian government has encouraged innovation and entrepreneurship through its policies toward technology startups. India has emerged as a major participant in the global startup scene due to its meteoric surge in tech startups over the last decade. Startups have a number of obstacles

that make it hard for them to expand and stay in business. These include things like limited infrastructure, complicated regulations, and difficulty obtaining funding. This study delves into the particular policies and measures put in place by the Indian government to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the tech startup sector by doing a thorough literature review and empirical analysis. It takes a look at how initiatives like Startup India, Make in India, and Digital India have helped create a favorable climate for companies to flourish.

- **Singh (2022)** To encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, the government of India has launched several programs and initiatives. Among these are the Atal Innovation Mission, the Fund of Funds for Startups, and the Startup India program. By standardizing regulatory processes, providing tax incentives, and increasing access to financial resources, these regulations have made it easier for startups in India to get their businesses up and running.
- **Dwivedi, (2022)** The purpose of this study is to investigate and comprehend the "concentration of investment in the Indian startup ecosystem" in detail. It also examines the steps taken by the government to foster an entrepreneurial spirit and establish business incubators. This research contributes to the limited amount of literature on investment trends and the efficacy of government programs aimed at assisting Indian businesses. Also included is an assessment of how well the government's programs meant to encourage the development of new businesses have fared. Unicorns are all the rage right now, and this essay delves into the concept of them.
- **Pandey, (2023)** In this study, researchers conduct the first-ever impact assessment of start-up village entrepreneurship program strategy in a Madhya Pradesh implementation block. The case narratives and cross-case analysis reveal how the scheme was perceived by the beneficiaries and how SVEP has inspired women to take an entrepreneurial spirit. In addition to analyzing the scheme's shortcomings, the research aims to provide programmatic recommendations for establishing a startup environment in rural areas.
- **Azeez and Kanagavalli, (2022)** The importance of entrepreneurship as a force for national economic growth and prosperity is universally recognized. This acknowledgement has taken the form of the Kerala Startup Mission's (KSM) Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centers (IEDCs) in a number of Kerala educational institutions.
- **Nambiar and Balasubramanian, (2020)** Through its Startup India initiative, the Indian government has made fostering a startup environment a top priority. Many state governments have also implemented startup policies, in addition to the federal government. A state with its own startup policy is Kerala. Efforts have been made to transform educational institutions into businesses. University research that promotes tech transfer through industry involvement should be more heavily funded.

RESEARCH GAP

Literature on the initiatives taken by the government for the development and growth of entrepreneurs

is ample; the Indian government has been a focus of considerable research. However, there is dearth of literature about Role of Mission Start-up Karnataka in Growth and Development of Tech Start-ups in Less Researched This empirical gap provides a remarkable opportunity to further examine the effect of Mission Start-up Karnataka to the success of embraced tech start-ups.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To assess the financial incentives provided to Tech start-ups under the Mission start-up Karnataka
- To evaluate the marketing incentives which enable development and growth of Tech start-ups
- To examine the Operational benefits which enhance the sustainable development of Tech start-ups

RESEARCH METHODS

The current research also uses qualitative research approach **Vindrola et al., (2020). Allan (2020)**, which collects data through interview method. The Research Participants are Entrepreneurs of Tech Startups. The participants of the study were interviewed on basis of 3 important questions

1. Financial incentives under Mission startup Karnataka
2. Marketing incentives under Mission startup Karnataka
3. Operational incentives under Mission startup Karnataka

The data obtained was transcribed and analysed using the NVivo 14 software. **Jackson et al., (2019)**. In the 9 interviews, the respondents included founding entrepreneurs of the tech start-ups in Bengaluru under the Karnataka mission. The sampling procedure ensured that study comprised a good number of respondents with different view. The 9 contenders were chosen based on this gauge; their experience in the tech industry, the growth of their company, and their inclusion in the Karnataka start-up mission.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE TECH START-UP ENTREPRENEURS

Majority 80% tech entrepreneurs in the study identified as male and only 20% of the entrepreneurs were female. Most of them where aged between 25 – 35 years old while a few of them where within the ages of 40 – 50. With regard to educational background of the entrepreneurs, the assessment revealed that most of the entrepreneurs possessed at least a university degree, although some of the them had post graduate degrees in fields such as technology and business entrepreneurship. The educational qualification of the entrepreneurs showed that most had at least a bachelor's degree, with a few holding postgraduate degrees in fields related to technology and business. In conclusion, the selection made from Bangalore entrepreneurs comprised a highly educated and experienced pool with an inclination in technology and new product development. The tech entrepreneurs had experience

ranging from 5 to 15 years in the industry their varied experience and backgrounds provided multiple viewpoints, and together were able to produce a thorough analysis of entrepreneurship in the region.

THEMES AND REFERENCES IDENTIFIED FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Table 1
Files and References for Financial Incentives

		Files	References
	Financial support	9	199
1	Reimbursement - Startups can receive reimbursements for marketing and patent expenses. They can also receive a 30% reimbursement for international marketing costs, up to a maximum of Rs. 5 lakhs per year.	9	29
2	GST incentive Startups with an annual turnover of up to Rs. 50 lakhs can receive a GST reimbursement for the first three years of being incubated.	9	28
3	Preferential Market access - Startups can participate in a limited tender procurement model for technology products and solutions.	9	28
4	Self-certifications for statutory permissions	9	26
5	VAT/CST/ST exemptions	9	18
6	Subsidized seats in government-supported incubators	9	19
7	Access to IDEA2PoC Funding	9	10
8	Participation in government-sponsored exposure visits	9	23
9	Funding under GoK Fund of Funds	9	18

Details of some of the schemes being offered by the Karnataka government to the start-ups are drawn in the below table. Ref 9 Also, it reveals that most incubation centers provide a GST reimbursement for the first three years of operation thus cutting on the total expenses of the startups. According to the reference number 28, limited tender procurement is available for the startups to create the preferential market access and, therefore, provide them the competitive advantage in the market. The self-certification for statutory permissions is another aspect which reduces the regulatory burden on startups and helps them stay less distracted from their business models (Reference 26).

Also, exemptions from VAT/CST/ST (Reference 18) act as financial assistance to new business organizations with a view to employing more capital in other operations. Government sponsored incubation centers will provide other activities a startup may need at subsidized rates including quality

infrastructure and advice in the regions. Funding from IDEA2PoC (Reference 10) and funding under GoK Fund of Funds (Reference 18) give the Startup the required capital to incubate and grow the ideas.

Startups get to meet new markets, potential investors, and networking opportunities through government sponsored exposure visits (Reference 23). On balance these guarantees confirm the authorities' concern with the promotion of successful start-up environments in Karnataka, as well as the genesis of innovations, employment opportunities and robust growth in the state.

Table 2
Files and References for Marketing Incentives

		Files	References
	Marketing support	9	144
1	International marketing incentive: The government reimburses up to 30% of the actual costs of international marketing, including travel, for trade show participation. The maximum reimbursement is Rs. 5 Lakhs per year per company.	9	29
2	Preferential market access: Startups receive preference in public procurement of goods and services. They also receive a 50% discount on non-refundable royalty.	9	21
3	Startup Karnataka Booster Kit: This kit offers software tools and services at a special price.	9	36
4	Reimbursement of service tax: Startups incubated in GoK supported incubators and CIFs receive reimbursement of service tax paid by them.	9	18
5	Annual reimbursement of VAT/CST: Startups receive annual reimbursement of VAT/CST paid in Karnataka.	9	19
6	AWS Activate: Startups registered with Karnataka Startup receive \$5,000 in AWS Activate Credits valid for 2 years, 1 year of AWS Business Support, and 80 Credits for Self-paced labs.	9	21
7	Other benefits of Mission Startup Karnataka include: Better deals for women entrepreneurs in incubators, Access to IDEA2PoC funding, Participation in government-sponsored exposure visits, Making a	9	28

difference through "Grand Challenges, and Funding under GoK Fund of Funds.

The following table explains some of the advantages and government facility such as rebate and incentive that can be enjoyed by startups who are registered with Karnataka Startup. These are; AWS Activate Credits worth \$5000, AWS Business Support for one year, and 80 Self-paced laboratory credits. Also featured are women entrepreneurs in incubators as well as access to IDEA2PoC funding, exposure to government funded exposure visits, participation in Grand Challenges, and Gok Fund of Funds funding as well.

Even from the table it is understood that the Karnataka government is encouraging and providing support to entrepreneurship in startups in Karnataka by giving them funding. Procedures aimed at improving females' circumstances and engaging them as clients also show that the partnership is more gender-balanced and inclusive than most of the startups out there. With exposure visits and chances to address Grand Challenges incorporated, such practices propose a concept of a much more thorough strategy for supporting startup businesses and fostering innovation. Altogether, the table show complete ecosystem for startup in Karnataka that should help to grow and successful in the startup.

Table 3
Files and References for Operational Incentives

		Files	References
	Operation support	9	236
1	Startup Kit: A kit that provides startups with software tools and services at a special price	9	39
2	Startup Cell: A one-stop shop for startups that provides information and assistance, and connects startups with government departments	9	27
3	AWS Activate: Offers startups registered with Karnataka Startup benefits such as AWS Activate Credits, AWS Business Support, and Self-paced labs	9	19
4	Exposure visits: Startups can participate in government-sponsored exposure visits	9	27

5	Grand Challenges: Startups can make a difference through "Grand Challenges"	9	18
6	GoK Fund of Funds: Startups can avail funding under GoK Fund of Funds	9	19
7	Service tax reimbursement: Reimbursement of service tax paid by startups incubated in GoK supported incubators and CIFs	9	22
8	VAT/CST reimbursement: Annual reimbursement of VAT/CST paid in Karnataka	9	25
9	Trainings and webinars: Startups can attend trainings and webinars by experts	9	21
10	Network: Startups can access international partnerships and global access	9	19

Based on the Table below, several incentives and openings to the Startups from Government of Karnataka Fund of Funds program are highlighted. It can be availed for funding by the startups and also for service tax and VAT/CST paid while the startup is incubated in GoK supported incubators and CIFs. Further, the startups are able to participate in trainings and different webinars of the experts to learn something new and expand their competence. They also can receive international partners and global networks, which create for them powerful opportunities and prospects. In sum, these incentives to some extents were found to be designed to provide and encourage the startup ecosystem in Karnataka, with references to funding (9, 18, 19), tax reimbursement (9, 22, 25), training opportunities (9, 21) and networking possibilities (9, 19).

The financial incentives with 199 references, marketing incentives with 144 references, and operational incentives with 249 references has been valuable in contributing to the variety of investors and entrepreneurs by mission startup Karnataka. By providing these incentives not only the local economy has been stimulated and has created an environment for growth and innovation. Thus, Karnataka has now emerged as an attractive state for starting up various types of businesses that are providing it a strong place in the international startup map.

CONCLUSION

The interviews with the tech startup entrepreneurs evidenced that the mission startup Karnataka has given several incentives that has enable them for sustainable development and growth of their startups. Such inducements may comprise of; monetary investments, sponsorship for mentorship, B2B contacts and most importantly the latest technologies. Moreover, the mission has contributed to the development of the other business relationships with other firms and organizations that augment the

effectiveness of the specified startups. In general, there is appreciation by the entrepreneurs of the support they received from the mission and attributed it to have contributed positively both to their performance. For instance, one of the start-ups in Karnataka expressed much satisfaction with the financial support the mission provided which enabled the firm to grow in its operations and produce additional value in the market. Likewise, well-managed and well-implemented programmers by this mission has helped another start up to overcome difficult times, and make right decisions, which led to better revenues and grow as an organization. These success stories demonstrate how the support which has been provided from the mission can affect a real change in startup development and its sustainability. The mission gives a helping hand to the entrepreneurs in a way of offering a financial support, experience and education to overcome all the challenges and achieve all the opportunities which help expand a business and become successful.

The present study is qualitative research, so future researchers can continue the study using mixed quantitative and qualitative method to determining the role of Mission Startup Karnataka in sustainable Development of Startups in Karnataka. This combination of methods enables researchers to amass a broader perspective of how Mission Startup Karnataka is impacting the sustainable start-ups development in the area. This mixed research methodology would enable a clearer understanding of the different factors that play out and comes out with a balanced view of the overall effect of the drive. Further, it could assist in the seek-out of particular segments in which conditions that require enhancement or change to boost the development of startups in Karnataka may exist.

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