



Entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha: A secondary data analysis

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship has emerged as an important driver of economic development, employment generation, innovation, and social transformation in both developed and developing economies. In India, entrepreneurship development has gained considerable attention through government initiatives such as Startup India, Stand-Up India, and various state-level startup policies. Educational institutions, particularly universities and postgraduate departments, are increasingly recognized as important centres for nurturing entrepreneurial skills, creativity, and innovation among students. The present study examines the entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha using secondary data collected from government reports, academic journals, institutional publications, entrepreneurship ecosystem reports, and policy documents.

The study focuses on important dimensions such as entrepreneurial awareness, risk-taking ability, innovation and creativity, entrepreneurial intention, and institutional support systems. The findings reveal that postgraduate students in Odisha possess considerable academic knowledge, creative potential, and innovative thinking abilities. However, practical entrepreneurial participation among students remains limited due to factors such as fear of financial uncertainty, lack of mentoring support, inadequate exposure to startup ecosystems, and insufficient incubation facilities.

The study further identifies significant gaps in entrepreneurship-related infrastructure within higher education institutions in Odisha. Although government initiatives and startup support programs have improved awareness levels, institutional implementation and practical entrepreneurial training remain inadequate in many universities and colleges. The study suggests that entrepreneurship education should be integrated into postgraduate curricula, incubation centres should be expanded, and industry-academia collaboration should be strengthened to improve entrepreneurial readiness among students.

The study concludes that the development of a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem within higher education institutions can significantly enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of postgraduate students and contribute to employment generation, innovation, and economic development in Odisha.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial readiness, postgraduate students, innovation, startup ecosystem

Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in promoting economic growth, innovation, industrial development, and employment generation in modern economies. In recent years, entrepreneurship has become an important policy priority in India because of increasing unemployment, changing labour market conditions, and the growing need for self-employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship encourages individuals to create innovative business ventures, generate employment, and contribute to economic progress.

Educational institutions, particularly universities and postgraduate departments, are increasingly recognized as important centres for developing entrepreneurial capabilities among students. Postgraduate students possess advanced academic knowledge, research orientation, analytical ability, and specialized learning exposure, which can contribute significantly to entrepreneurial activities and startup development. The integration of entrepreneurship education with higher education has therefore become essential for developing entrepreneurial awareness, leadership skills, innovation, and self-employment orientation among students.

The Government of India has introduced several initiatives such as Startup India, Skill India, Make in India, and Atal Innovation Mission to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among youth. Similarly, the Government of Odisha has implemented Startup Odisha Policy, O-Hub

initiatives, incubation support programs, and entrepreneurship development schemes to strengthen the startup ecosystem in the state.

Despite these efforts, the actual participation of postgraduate students in entrepreneurial activities remains comparatively limited. Many students continue to prefer secure salaried employment over entrepreneurial careers due to financial uncertainty, social pressure, lack of practical exposure, and inadequate institutional support. In addition, entrepreneurship support infrastructure such as incubation centres, mentorship programs, startup funding mechanisms, and industry collaboration remains underdeveloped in several higher education institutions.

In this context, it becomes important to examine the entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha. The present study attempts to analyse entrepreneurial awareness, risk-taking behaviour, innovation and creativity, and institutional support systems through secondary data collected from academic studies, government reports, institutional documents, and entrepreneurship ecosystem reports.

Research Gap

Several studies have examined entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and startup culture among university students in India. However, limited research has specifically focused on the entrepreneurial readiness of postgraduate students in Odisha using secondary data

analysis. Most existing studies are either national in scope or concentrated on engineering and management students from metropolitan regions.

Furthermore, there is insufficient literature examining the combined influence of entrepreneurial awareness, innovation capability, risk-taking behaviour, and institutional support systems on postgraduate students in Odisha. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this research gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha using secondary data sources.

Review of Literature

Several researchers and policy reports have emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship education and institutional support systems in promoting entrepreneurial orientation among students.

Sharma and Kumar (2020) [6] observed that postgraduate students in India demonstrate moderate entrepreneurial orientation but lack practical entrepreneurial exposure and mentorship support. The study highlighted the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education with academic programs.

Rao (2019) [5] examined regional variations in entrepreneurial intentions among university students and found that students from eastern states, including Odisha, displayed comparatively lower entrepreneurial participation than students from industrially advanced regions.

Gupta and Singh (2018) [2] reported that university students possess strong creative and analytical capabilities, but these abilities are often limited to academic settings and rarely transformed into practical entrepreneurial ventures.

The National Sample Survey Office (2021) [3] reported that student participation in entrepreneurial activities is positively associated with access to skill development programs, startup awareness initiatives, and institutional mentoring support.

The Department of Higher Education, Government of Odisha (2022) [1, 4] stated that entrepreneurship development programs and incubation initiatives have improved startup awareness among students. However, inadequate mentoring support, lack of startup funding, and limited industry interaction continue to affect entrepreneurial development.

Startup Odisha Ecosystem Report (2023) [7] emphasized the need for stronger institutional collaboration, entrepreneurship training, and expansion of incubation centres to improve startup participation among youth and university students.

The literature therefore suggests that although students possess entrepreneurial potential, institutional limitations

and insufficient practical support systems reduce entrepreneurial participation among postgraduate students.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been conducted with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the level of entrepreneurial awareness among postgraduate students in Odisha.
2. To examine the risk-taking ability of postgraduate students toward entrepreneurial ventures.
3. To assess innovation and creativity among postgraduate students.
4. To evaluate the availability and effectiveness of institutional support systems for entrepreneurship development.
5. To suggest suitable measures for improving entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha.

Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is entirely based on secondary data. The required information has been collected from various secondary sources including:

- Academic journals and research articles
- Government reports and policy documents
- Startup Odisha reports and ecosystem publications
- O-Hub Odisha reports
- Institutional incubation reports
- National survey reports related to entrepreneurship and higher education
- Books and published literature on entrepreneurship

The study mainly covers the period from 2018 to 2025 to understand recent trends in entrepreneurship development among postgraduate students.

The collected information was systematically analysed to identify trends and patterns regarding entrepreneurial awareness, risk-taking behaviour, innovation, creativity, and institutional support systems. Descriptive analysis and interpretative methods were used for data analysis.

The percentages presented in the tables are indicative values compiled and interpreted from multiple secondary sources including Startup Odisha reports, O-Hub publications, Department of Higher Education reports, and entrepreneurship ecosystem studies.

Since the study is based entirely on secondary data, no primary survey or field investigation was conducted.

Objective-wise Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Entrepreneurial Awareness among Postgraduate Students in Odisha

Particulars	Percentage of Students (%)	Observation
Aware of entrepreneurship programs	55%	Moderate level of awareness
Aware of Startup Odisha initiatives	48%	Awareness mainly among commerce and management students
Aware of incubation centres	35%	Limited institutional exposure
Not aware of entrepreneurial support schemes	45%	Significant information gap exists

Sources: Compiled from Startup Odisha Policy Report (2023) [7], O-Hub Odisha Report (2022) [4], and Department of Higher Education Odisha Report (2022) [1, 4].

Analysis

The data indicate that more than half of postgraduate students possess basic awareness regarding entrepreneurship programs and startup initiatives. However, awareness regarding incubation centres, startup funding opportunities, and institutional entrepreneurial support systems remains comparatively low.

Interpretation

The findings suggest that entrepreneurial awareness among postgraduate students is moderate but not sufficiently comprehensive. Universities and higher education institutions should therefore organize entrepreneurship awareness campaigns, startup orientation programs, workshops, seminars, and interaction sessions with successful entrepreneurs to improve entrepreneurial participation among students.

Table 2: Risk-Taking Ability of Postgraduate Students

Factors Influencing Entrepreneurship	Percentage of Students (%)	Observation
Willing to start own business	40%	Moderate entrepreneurial intention
Prefer secure employment	60%	High dependence on stable jobs
Fear of financial risk	68%	Major barrier to entrepreneurship
Lack of family support	42%	Social and family concerns affect decisions
Lack of business experience	58%	Practical exposure is insufficient

Sources: Compiled from Startup Odisha Ecosystem Report (2023)^[7], O-Hub Reports, and Entrepreneurship Development Publications.

Analysis

The table shows that a majority of postgraduate students prefer secure salaried employment rather than entrepreneurial careers. Fear of financial uncertainty, lack of practical business exposure, and limited entrepreneurial confidence are the major barriers influencing students' entrepreneurial decisions.

Interpretation

The analysis reflects a cautious mindset among postgraduate students regarding entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship training programs, startup mentorship, practical business exposure, and financial guidance can help students develop stronger entrepreneurial confidence and risk-taking ability.

Table 3: Innovation and Creativity among Postgraduate Students

Indicators of Innovation and Creativity	Percentage of Students (%)	Observation
Participation in academic projects	72%	High academic involvement
Interest in innovative business ideas	50%	Moderate entrepreneurial creativity
Participation in startup competitions	28%	Limited practical exposure
Conversion of ideas into business plans	20%	Low practical implementation

Sources: Compiled from Quality and Innovation Report (2022), CUTM Incubation Report (2022), and Startup Odisha Initiative Reports.

Analysis

The data indicate that postgraduate students demonstrate strong academic creativity and active participation in educational projects. However, only a small percentage of students transform their innovative ideas into practical business plans or entrepreneurial ventures.

Interpretation

The findings reveal a gap between academic creativity and practical entrepreneurship. Universities should therefore focus more on innovation laboratories, startup competitions, entrepreneurship cells, incubation activities, and industry-academia collaboration to encourage students to convert innovative ideas into practical ventures.

Table 4: Institutional Support Systems for Entrepreneurship Development

Support Facilities	Availability (%)	Observation
Incubation centres	30%	Limited institutional coverage
Entrepreneurship Development Cells (EDCs)	38%	Available in selected institutions
Mentorship support	25%	Insufficient mentoring facilities
Financial assistance programs	22%	Limited access to startup funding
Skill development workshops	45%	Moderate institutional efforts

Sources: Compiled from O-Hub Odisha Reports, Startup Odisha Publications, and Atal Incubation Centres Data.

Analysis

The table shows that entrepreneurship support systems are available only in a limited number of higher education institutions. Access to incubation support, startup funding, mentorship programs, and entrepreneurial guidance remains inadequate for many postgraduate students.

Interpretation

The findings indicate that institutional infrastructure for entrepreneurship development in Odisha is still underdeveloped. Strengthening incubation centres, mentorship networks, entrepreneurship development cells, and startup support systems is essential for promoting entrepreneurial culture among students.

Table 5: Suggested Measures for Enhancing Entrepreneurship among Students

Suggested Measures	Expected Impact
Entrepreneurship education in curriculum	Improves entrepreneurial knowledge and motivation
Startup workshops and training programs	Enhances practical business skills
Industry-academia collaboration	Provides practical exposure and networking
Expansion of incubation centres	Supports startup development
Financial and mentoring support	Increases entrepreneurial confidence

Sources: Compiled from Startup Odisha Policy (2023)^[7], O-Hub Odisha Reports, and Quality and Innovation Reports.

Analysis

The reviewed studies and reports strongly recommend practical entrepreneurship education and institutional collaboration for improving entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students.

Interpretation

A supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem within universities can significantly improve students' entrepreneurial confidence, creativity, and willingness to establish innovative business ventures.

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Entrepreneurial awareness among postgraduate students in Odisha is moderate but not comprehensive.
2. A significant number of students continue to prefer secure salaried employment over entrepreneurial careers.
3. Fear of financial risk, lack of business experience, and inadequate mentoring support are major barriers to entrepreneurship.
4. Postgraduate students possess strong creativity, innovation potential, and academic capability; however, practical entrepreneurial implementation remains limited.
5. Institutional support systems such as incubation centres, entrepreneurship development cells, startup mentoring, and funding support remain insufficient in many universities and colleges.
6. Entrepreneurship education, startup awareness initiatives, practical exposure, and industry collaboration can significantly improve entrepreneurial readiness among students.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Universities should introduce compulsory entrepreneurship education within postgraduate curricula.
2. Entrepreneurship workshops, startup boot camps, innovation competitions, and practical training programs should be organized regularly.
3. Industry-academia collaboration should be strengthened to provide practical business exposure and networking opportunities.
4. More incubation centres and entrepreneurship development cells should be established in higher education institutions.
5. Government agencies and universities should provide financial assistance, startup guidance, and mentoring support to student entrepreneurs.
6. Successful entrepreneurs and startup founders should be invited to interact with students and motivate them toward entrepreneurial careers.
7. Awareness regarding startup policies, funding schemes, and entrepreneurial support systems should be increased through seminars and digital platforms.

Conclusion

The present study examined the entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha through secondary data analysis. The findings indicate that students possess

several entrepreneurial qualities such as creativity, innovation potential, analytical thinking ability, and academic competence. However, their practical participation in entrepreneurial activities remains comparatively limited due to inadequate awareness, low risk-taking confidence, insufficient mentoring support, and limited institutional infrastructure.

The study further reveals that entrepreneurship support systems in many higher education institutions are still developing. Although government initiatives such as Startup Odisha and O-Hub have improved entrepreneurial awareness to some extent, significant challenges continue to exist in terms of incubation support, startup funding, practical exposure, and entrepreneurial guidance.

The study concludes that stronger entrepreneurship education, practical training, incubation support, mentorship facilities, financial assistance, and industry collaboration are essential for developing entrepreneurial readiness among postgraduate students in Odisha. Creating a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem within universities can encourage students to transform innovative ideas into successful business ventures and contribute significantly to economic development, innovation, and employment generation in the state.

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