



VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE

College with Potential for Excellence | Residential & Autonomous — A Gurukula Institute of Life Training
Re-accredited (4th Cycle) With 'A+' Grade (3.33 out of 4.00) By NAAC
DBT Star College Scheme Funded | Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University
Managed by Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam, Tirupparaiturai, Trichy

Tiruvedakam West, Madurai District, Tamil Nadu - 625 234.

National Conference on **DIGITAL INDIA AND THE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM**

28th January 2026



Organised by
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
(Computer Applications)

Editors

Dr. S. Chandrasekaran

Sri R. Karthikeyan | Dr. M. Premanantham | Dr. R. Mohan Raj | Sri M. Narayanan

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Department of Commerce (CA)

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DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EVALUATING START-UP GROWTH IN THE FRAME OF DIGITAL INDIA INITIATIVE

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Abstract

The Digital India initiative, launched in 2015, has been pivotal in reshaping India's entrepreneurial ecosystem. By strengthening digital infrastructure, promoting financial inclusion, and enabling innovation, it has positioned India as the world's third-largest startup hub. This paper investigates the impact of Digital India on startups, analyzing policy frameworks, demographic trends, and sectoral opportunities. Using mixed-method research, including surveys of startup founders and secondary data from DPIIT and NASSCOM, the study highlights how digital transformation has accelerated startup growth. Statistical analysis (descriptive, correlation, regression) reveals strong linkages between digital infrastructure adoption and startup success. The paper concludes with policy suggestions to bridge rural digital divides, simplify regulations, and enhance skill development.

Keywords: Digital India, Startup Ecosystem, Entrepreneurship, Digital Transformation, Innovation, Financial Inclusion, India Stack, UPI, BharatNet, Policy Support

1. Introduction

India's startup ecosystem has expanded rapidly, with 90,000+ DPIIT-recognized startups and 107 unicorns by 2024. The Digital India program was designed to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Its three core objectives are:

- Providing universal digital infrastructure.
- Delivering governance and services on demand.
- Empowering citizens through digital literacy.

Startups have leveraged these initiatives to scale operations, access funding, and innovate across sectors such as fintech, edtech, healthtech, and agritech. This paper explores how Digital India has directly contributed to entrepreneurial success.

2. Review of Literature

- Agarwal (2021): Found that Digital India lowered entry barriers for fintech and e-commerce startups.
- Gupta & Raghuvanshi (2022): Highlighted how Startup India and Digital India together created a favorable policy environment.
- NASSCOM (2023): Reported India as the third-largest startup ecosystem globally, driven by digital adoption.
- World Bank (2020): Emphasized digital infrastructure as a critical enabler for entrepreneurship in emerging economies.

Gap Identified: While studies highlight growth, few comprehensively analyze the direct contribution of Digital India to startup success, especially in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

3. Objectives

1. To examine the role of Digital India in fostering startup growth.
2. To analyze demographic trends among startup founders.
3. To assess the relationship between digital infrastructure and startup success.
4. To identify challenges and propose policy suggestions.

4. Methodology

- **Approach:** Mixed-method (qualitative + quantitative).
- **Data Sources:**
 - Secondary: DPIIT reports, NASSCOM, World Bank, Startup India portal.
 - Primary: Survey of 150 startup founders across Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities.
- **Tools:** Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis.
- **Hypothesis:** Digital India has significantly accelerated startup growth by improving infrastructure, access, and innovation.

5. Analysis

Demographic Profile of Respondents

- **Sample Size:** 150 startup founders.
- **Age Distribution:** 25–35 years (55%), 36–45 years (35%), >45 years (10%).
- **Gender:** Male (68%), Female (32%).
- **Location:** Tier-1 cities (Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai – 60%), Tier-2 cities (Indore, Jaipur, Kochi – 40%).
- **Sector:** Fintech (25%), EdTech (20%), HealthTech (15%), Agritech (10%), Others (30%).

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Years in Operation	4.2	2.1	1	10
Employees	35	20	5	120
Annual Revenue (₹ Cr)	12.5	8.3	1	50

Digital Infrastructure Use	4.6	0.5	3		5
Funding Rounds	2.3	1.1	1		6

5.3 Correlation Analysis

- Strong positive correlation between **Digital Infrastructure Use** and **Annual Revenue** ($r = 0.72$).
- Moderate correlation between **Funding Rounds** and **Employees** ($r = 0.58$).
- Weak correlation between **Years in Operation** and **Revenue** ($r = 0.21$).

Interpretation: Startups leveraging digital infrastructure (UPI, IndiaStack, BharatNet) show higher revenue growth.

5.4 Regression Analysis

- **Model:** Annual Revenue = $\beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Digital Infrastructure Use}) + \beta_2(\text{Funding Rounds}) + \beta_3(\text{Years in Operation})$
- **Digital Infrastructure Use:** $\beta_1 = 3.8$ ($p < 0.01$) → Highly significant.
- **Funding Rounds:** $\beta_2 = 2.1$ ($p < 0.05$) → Significant.
- **Years in Operation:** $\beta_3 = 0.5$ ($p > 0.1$) → Not significant.

Interpretation: Digital infrastructure is the strongest predictor of startup revenue growth, followed by funding access.

6. Suggestions

- **Expand Rural Connectivity:** Accelerate BharatNet rollout to Tier-3 cities and villages.
- **Simplify Regulations:** Reduce compliance burden for small startups.
- **Skill Development:** Strengthen digital literacy and advanced tech training.
- **Funding Support:** Encourage angel investors and venture capital in emerging sectors.
- **Sectoral Focus:** Promote AI, blockchain, and green tech startups under Digital India 2.0.

7. Conclusion

The *Digital India* initiative has been a cornerstone in India's startup revolution, enabling innovation, financial inclusion, and global competitiveness. Statistical evidence confirms that digital infrastructure is the most significant driver of startup success. However, bridging the rural digital divide and simplifying regulatory frameworks remain critical for sustaining growth. Future research should explore emerging technologies within the Digital India framework.

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