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Promoting Entrepreneurship and Start-ups in Higher Education Institutions

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Promoting entrepreneurship in higher education is critical for realising India's goal of an Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat through innovation. This paper examines the context, strategies, and outcomes of fostering start-ups within universities, focusing on policy frameworks (e.g., AICTE and UGC startup policies, NISP 2019) and institutional practices. We conduct a literature review and analyse case studies, notably JNTUA's entrepreneurship initiatives (EDP cell, incubation centre, and state innovation hub partnership). The findings indicate that dedicated funding, mentorship, and industry linkages significantly enhance start-up creation from campuses. We compare incubation models, funding sources, and performance metrics, identifying barriers such as limited seed capital and regulatory inertia. Based on these insights, we recommend measures including mandatory innovation funds ($\geq 1\%$ budget), integration of entrepreneurship in academic programs, and strengthening of industry-academia partnerships. A phased implementation roadmap is provided to guide HEIs. By systematically integrating support for student and faculty start-ups, universities can become engines of innovation and economic growth in India. (Abstract)

India's Higher Education system is extensive, comprising over 1.4 million schools, approximately 10,500 engineering institutes, and about 39,000 colleges[4]. With a large youth cohort entering the workforce, policymakers emphasise converting students into innovators. As Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan noted, the nation's 'talented *YuvaShakti*' (youth power) must drive technology and entrepreneurship to build a *samridh* and self-reliant Bharat[2]. The National Education Policy 2020 likewise stresses skill development and entrepreneurship, aiming to produce job-creators rather than job-seekers[5][1]. Reflecting this vision, the central government launched Startup India and institutional initiatives (e.g. AICTE's 2016 Student Startup Policy) to catalyse campus start-ups. The latter targets creating 100,000 student-led tech start-ups and one million jobs over ten years[6]. These measures have spurred activity: by October 2025, DPIIT had recognised nearly 198,000 start-ups under Startup India[7], indicating a robust entrepreneurial surge. However, realising the *Atmanirbhar* goals requires further strengthening of university innovation ecosystems. This paper

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