

# 1 **Catalyzing Vikshit Odisha through Entrepreneurial Innovation:**

## 2 **A Roadmap to 2036**

### 5 **Abstract**

6 Odisha, one of India's most resource-rich but developmentally challenged states,  
7 stands at a critical juncture as it prepares to celebrate its centenary in 2036. Aligned with the  
8 national vision of a Developed India (Vikshit Bharat) by 2047, Odisha's roadmap to 2036  
9 envisions inclusive, sustainable, and innovation-driven growth. In this context,  
10 entrepreneurial innovation emerges as a powerful lever to address systemic challenges such  
11 as unemployment, regional disparities, low industrial diversification, and underutilization of  
12 local resources.

13 This study explores the transformative potential of innovation-led entrepreneurship in  
14 catalyzing Odisha's economic and social progress. By analyzing secondary data, policy  
15 frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and case studies from diverse sectors including  
16 MSMEs, agritech, tribal enterprises, women-led startups, and digital innovation the paper  
17 critically assesses Odisha's entrepreneurial landscape. It identifies persistent gaps in access to  
18 finance, mentorship, market linkages, and R&D infrastructure that hinder the growth of  
19 grassroots innovation.

20 The study reveals that despite initiatives such as Startup Odisha, O-Hub, and the  
21 state's MSME and Innovation policies, the ecosystem remains fragmented and unevenly  
22 distributed across regions. Challenges such as skill mismatch, regulatory barriers, and low  
23 technology adoption particularly affect rural and marginalized entrepreneurs. However,  
24 emerging trends in agritech, green energy, and tribal branding show encouraging signs of  
25 scalable innovation.

26 The paper proposes a comprehensive roadmap anchored in four pillars: ecosystem  
27 strengthening, education and capacity building, policy and financial reforms, and market-  
28 technological integration. It calls for decentralized innovation hubs, stronger academia-  
29 industry linkages, youth-centered skill development, and targeted support for inclusive  
30 entrepreneurship.

31           The findings underscore the urgency of coordinated policy action and multi-  
32 stakeholder collaboration to harness Odisha's entrepreneurial potential. If effectively  
33 mobilized, innovation-driven entrepreneurship can serve as a key driver of Odisha's  
34 transformation into a resilient, equitable, and developed state by 2036.

35 **Keywords:** Vikshit Odisha, entrepreneurship, innovation, roadmap 2036, Inclusive  
36 development.

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UNDER PEER REVIEW IN IJAR

# Catalyzing Vikshit Odisha through Entrepreneurial Innovation: A Roadmap to 2036

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial innovation has emerged as a powerful engine for economic development, social inclusion, and regional competitiveness in the 21st century (Acs et al., 2019; Isenberg, 2010). In developing economies, innovation-led entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in addressing unemployment, reducing regional disparities, and fostering a culture of creativity and self-reliance (Sharma & Goyal, 2020). India's evolving startup ecosystem, supported by flagship schemes like Startup India and the Atal Innovation Mission, demonstrates how enabling environments can stimulate grassroots innovation and industrial transformation (Startup India, 2023; NITI Aayog, 2022).

Odisha, a mineral-rich eastern Indian state with a strong cultural heritage and growing industrial base, holds immense potential for leveraging entrepreneurship to drive inclusive development. Despite its resource endowment and demographic advantage, Odisha's economy continues to grapple with structural challenges such as high regional inequality, limited industrial diversification, and youth unemployment (Economic Survey of Odisha, 2023). In this context, innovation-driven entrepreneurship has the capacity to act as a catalyst in accelerating the state's transformation agenda as envisioned in "**Vision Odisha@2036**", which aligns with the national aspiration of building a *Vikshit Bharat* (Planning and Convergence Department, 2023).

While urban centers like Bhubaneswar and Rourkela are slowly emerging as innovation hubs, vast areas of tribal and rural Odisha remain underrepresented in the entrepreneurial discourse. Yet, the state has witnessed the emergence of promising startups in agritech, renewable energy, digital services, and tribal products that highlight the potential of inclusive innovation (Mishra, 2022; Das & Pattnaik, 2023). However, access to finance, digital infrastructure, and institutional support continue to be major constraints.

This paper investigates the evolving landscape of entrepreneurial innovation in Odisha and proposes a strategic roadmap to harness its full potential by 2036. It aims to assess the current ecosystem, identify challenges and opportunities, and offer actionable policy recommendations to build an innovation-led economy that is sustainable, inclusive, and globally competitive.

## 69 2. Background of the Study

70 Innovation and entrepreneurship are globally acknowledged as critical drivers of  
71 economic progress, competitiveness, and inclusive development (Schumpeter, 1934; OECD,  
72 2023). In recent decades, developing countries have increasingly focused on fostering  
73 innovation-led enterprises as a means to overcome unemployment, poverty, and regional  
74 imbalances. India, through its national programs such as *Startup India*, *Digital India*, and  
75 *Atal Innovation Mission*, has laid the foundation for an emerging innovation ecosystem that  
76 reaches beyond metropolitan hubs (Startup India, 2023; NITI Aayog, 2022).

77 Odisha, with its unique socio-economic landscape, is poised at a critical juncture. The  
78 state is endowed with a young population, rich natural resources, and a strong base of  
79 traditional skills in agriculture, tribal crafts, and forest-based livelihoods. Yet, it remains  
80 challenged by structural underdevelopment in interior districts, youth outmigration, and slow  
81 industrial diversification (Economic Survey of Odisha, 2023; Planning and Convergence  
82 Department, 2023). While the coastal cities are witnessing the emergence of digital startups  
83 and service-oriented enterprises, rural and tribal regions still lack access to markets,  
84 infrastructure, and entrepreneurial training.

85 The Government of Odisha has undertaken multiple policy initiatives to promote  
86 entrepreneurship, such as the *Startup Odisha Policy*, the *MSME Development Policy*, and the  
87 establishment of *O-Hub* in Bhubaneswar as a centralized innovation hub (Startup Odisha,  
88 2023). However, the scale, inclusiveness, and sustainability of these efforts remain uneven.  
89 Studies point to the limited penetration of financial services, inadequate incubation support,  
90 and weak linkages between academic institutions and local entrepreneurs (Ghosh & Ghosh,  
91 2021; Kumar & Sahoo, 2021).

92 Moreover, Odisha's diverse tribal communities offer a wealth of indigenous  
93 knowledge and traditional innovation that often goes unrecognized in mainstream policy  
94 frameworks (UNDP India, 2022; National Innovation Foundation, 2021). The integration of  
95 such knowledge systems with modern entrepreneurship models can serve as a key pillar for  
96 building an inclusive and culturally rooted innovation ecosystem.

97 This backdrop forms the basis for examining how Odisha can strategically harness  
98 entrepreneurial innovation as a tool for achieving the objectives of *Vikshit Odisha 2036*. The  
99 study aims to explore the potential, assess existing bottlenecks, and develop a roadmap to  
100 position innovation as a central theme in the state's development narrative.

### 101 3. Need and Significance of the Study

102 The global shift toward knowledge-based and innovation-driven economies has  
103 underscored the importance of entrepreneurship as a strategic development lever, particularly  
104 for emerging economies like India (Acs et al., 2019; Stam, 2015). In this context, Odisha, a  
105 resource-rich but developmentally uneven state, faces both challenges and opportunities in  
106 aligning itself with this paradigm shift. The urgency of transforming Odisha into a developed  
107 state by 2036 under the vision of *Vikshit Odisha* necessitates a deeper understanding of how  
108 innovation-led entrepreneurship can drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

109 Despite policy interventions like the Odisha Startup Policy (2016), the state continues  
110 to lag behind national leaders in terms of startup density, innovation financing, and ecosystem  
111 maturity (Startup India, 2023; Planning and Convergence Department, 2023). With over 60%  
112 of its population residing in rural and tribal areas, Odisha requires models of entrepreneurship  
113 that are inclusive, context-sensitive, and rooted in local capacities (UNDP India, 2022). A  
114 significant portion of economic activity in these regions remains informal and under-  
115 leveraged in terms of innovation potential.

116 Furthermore, Odisha's demographic profile with a growing young workforce presents a  
117 unique opportunity to channel entrepreneurial energies into productive ventures (Economic  
118 Survey of Odisha, 2023). However, barriers such as lack of access to finance, weak  
119 infrastructure, low digital penetration, and limited mentorship have stifled the growth of a  
120 vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem outside major cities (Das & Pattnaik, 2023; Kumar &  
121 Sahoo, 2021).

122 Given these realities, this study is significant for several reasons:

- 123 i. **Policy Relevance:** It offers evidence-based insights to support Odisha's  
124 developmental policies aimed at achieving *Vikshit Odisha 2036* through innovation-  
125 driven strategies.
- 126 ii. **Regional Equity:** It highlights the need for ecosystem decentralization and inclusion  
127 of backward and tribal regions in the state's entrepreneurial journey.
- 128 iii. **Youth and Livelihoods:** It underscores the role of entrepreneurship in addressing  
129 youth unemployment and building sustainable livelihoods through localized  
130 innovation.

131 iv. **Cultural and Economic Integration:** It explores how traditional knowledge and  
132 tribal creativity can be integrated with modern business models to generate both  
133 cultural pride and economic value.

134

## 135 **4. Review of Literature**

### 136 **4.1 Innovation and Economic Development**

137 Innovation is universally acknowledged as a key driver of sustainable and inclusive  
138 economic development (Schumpeter, 1934; Acs et al., 2019). Empirical studies link  
139 innovation to increased productivity, regional competitiveness, and poverty reduction in  
140 developing economies (OECD, 2023). In the Indian context, Sharma and Goyal (2020) argue  
141 that innovation is essential not only for technological upgrading but also for resolving  
142 systemic socio-economic issues such as unemployment and environmental degradation. The  
143 transformative potential of innovation becomes more evident when aligned with  
144 entrepreneurship, particularly in sectors like green energy, digital services, and agriculture.

### 145 **4.2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Subnational Disparities**

146 Isenberg (2010) and Stam (2015) introduced the idea of entrepreneurial ecosystems as  
147 dynamic environments shaped by institutions, networks, finance, and market access.  
148 However, this ecosystem is unevenly distributed within India. Odisha, despite policy efforts,  
149 lacks the density of venture capital, research institutions, and global linkages found in metro  
150 areas (Kumar & Sahoo, 2021). Ghosh and Ghosh (2021) observed that tier-2 and tier-3 states  
151 have underdeveloped startup support infrastructure, which leads to lower innovation output  
152 and migration of skilled youth. The World Bank (2020) highlights how regulatory  
153 complexities further limit enterprise formation in such regions.

### 154 **4.3 Innovation, Tribal Economies, and Grassroots Entrepreneurship**

155 The integration of grassroots innovation with formal entrepreneurship has become a  
156 policy imperative in regions with tribal populations. Odisha, home to over 60 distinct tribal  
157 communities, presents a unique socio-cultural innovation base. The National Innovation  
158 Foundation (2021) identifies hundreds of rural inventions in Odisha that remain untapped due  
159 to lack of formalization and market access. UNDP India (2022) highlights that traditional  
160 knowledge systems in tribal and forest-based economies can be mobilized for eco-enterprises,

161 herbal medicine, and agroforestry innovations. Mishra (2022) shows that tribal handicraft  
162 enterprises in districts like Koraput and Mayurbhanj exhibit resilience and cultural  
163 sustainability when linked with e-commerce platforms.

#### 164 **4.4 Women and Youth in Innovation Systems**

165 Gender-inclusive entrepreneurship has received growing attention in recent literature.  
166 According to Kumar and Jha (2020), women entrepreneurs face structural challenges,  
167 including land ownership issues, social taboos, and limited financial literacy. In Odisha,  
168 women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have played a critical role in micro-entrepreneurship  
169 but lack transition support to scale their businesses (Planning and Convergence Department,  
170 2023). On the other hand, youth participation in innovation is constrained by limited  
171 exposure to startup models, risk aversion, and lack of experiential learning opportunities (Das  
172 & Pattnaik, 2023). Skill development programs often focus on traditional vocations,  
173 neglecting emerging sectors like AI, fintech, and sustainability entrepreneurship.

#### 174 **4.5 Policy Architecture and Implementation Challenges**

175 National policies like *Startup India* and *Atal Innovation Mission* have significantly  
176 improved India's innovation index score (NITI Aayog, 2022), but regional implementation  
177 remains a weak link. In Odisha, the *Startup Odisha Policy* and *O-Hub* are positive  
178 developments, yet they are concentrated in Bhubaneswar and do not reach backward districts  
179 effectively (Startup Odisha, 2023). FICCI & EY (2022) recommend that state policies adopt a  
180 place-based innovation strategy that reflects local comparative advantages. The lack of  
181 industry-academia collaboration and sector-specific innovation roadmaps are key gaps  
182 identified in Odisha's entrepreneurial journey.

#### 183 **4.6 Digital Infrastructure and Market Access**

184 Digital infrastructure is a crucial enabler of innovation diffusion, especially in rural  
185 areas. The BharatNet initiative aims to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to gram  
186 panchayats, but Odisha's digital divide persists due to terrain-related deployment delays  
187 (Economic Survey of Odisha, 2023). E-marketplace integration for tribal and rural products  
188 remains weak despite platforms like ONDC being rolled out nationally. Studies suggest that  
189 ICT-led innovations can create new market linkages for Odisha's agro-based, textile, and  
190 forest products if complemented with training and institutional support (Startup India, 2023;  
191 World Bank, 2020).

## 192 4.7 Research Gap

193 The reviewed literature clearly establishes the importance of entrepreneurial  
194 innovation for economic transformation. However, it also reveals a critical research gap:  
195 there is limited focused study on how innovation ecosystems can be designed, localized, and  
196 scaled within socio-economically diverse states like Odisha. This study aims to fill that gap  
197 by examining the regional dynamics, identifying actionable policy levers, and proposing a  
198 strategic roadmap tailored to Odisha's unique development context and the vision of *Vikshit*  
199 *Odisha 2036*.

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## 201 5. Objectives of the Study

- 202 • To examine the role of entrepreneurial innovation in driving inclusive and sustainable  
203 economic development in Odisha.
- 204 • To assess the current status of Odisha's entrepreneurial ecosystem, including its  
205 infrastructure, institutions, and regional outreach.
- 206 • To identify the major barriers and challenges faced by entrepreneurs and innovators,  
207 particularly in rural, tribal, and underdeveloped regions of the state.
- 208 • To analyze the participation of youth and women in the state's innovation-driven  
209 entrepreneurship landscape.
- 210 • To evaluate the effectiveness of existing state and national policies aimed at fostering  
211 innovation and entrepreneurship in Odisha.

## 212 6. Research Hypotheses

213 Based on the research objectives and reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are  
214 formulated to guide the analytical framework of the study:

215 **H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and  
216 inclusive economic development in Odisha.

217 **H2:** The current entrepreneurial ecosystem in Odisha lacks adequate infrastructure and  
218 institutional support, particularly in rural and tribal regions.

219 **H3:**Access to finance, market linkages, and digital infrastructure are the major constraints  
220 faced by entrepreneurs in underdeveloped districts of Odisha.

221 **H4:**Youth and women in Odisha are underrepresented in innovation-driven enterprises due to  
222 systemic socio-economic and cultural barriers.

223 **H5:**Government policies and programs like *Startup Odisha* and *MSME Development Policy*  
224 have a limited but positive impact on entrepreneurial outcomes at the grassroots level.

225 **H6:**A decentralized, region-specific innovation strategy is more effective in promoting  
226 entrepreneurship in Odisha than a centralized, one-size-fits-all approach.

227

## 228 **7. Research Methodology**

### 229 **7.1 Research Design**

230 The study adopts a **mixed-methods research design**, combining both **quantitative**  
231 and **qualitative approaches** to gain a comprehensive understanding of Odisha's innovation  
232 and entrepreneurship ecosystem. This approach is suitable for capturing both statistical trends  
233 and nuanced socio-economic realities affecting entrepreneurs across diverse regions.

### 234 **7.2 Study Area**

235 The research focuses on selected districts of Odisha that represent a mix of **urban**  
236 **innovation hubs** (e.g., Bhubaneswar, Cuttack), **emerging semi-urban clusters** (e.g.,  
237 Rourkela, Berhampur), and **backward/tribal-dominated districts** (e.g., Koraput,  
238 Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj). This stratified selection ensures regional representativeness and  
239 captures disparities in innovation diffusion.

### 240 **7.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

241 A **multistage stratified random sampling** technique is used:

- 242 • Stage 1: Selection of 9 districts across 3 zones (coastal, western, and tribal Odisha).
- 243 • Stage 2: Selection of 3 blocks per district based on economic activity and presence of  
244 MSMEs/startups.
- 245 • Stage 3: Within each block, selection of 10–12 entrepreneurs/startups/MSME owners  
246 using snowball and purposive sampling.

247 A total of **270 respondents** (entrepreneurs and key stakeholders) are surveyed using  
248 structured questionnaires. Additionally, **12 in-depth interviews** are conducted with officials  
249 from Startup Odisha, District Industries Centres (DICs), incubators, and tribal cooperative  
250 societies.

## 251 **7.4 Data Collection Tools**

### 252 **7.4.1 Primary Data:**

- 253 • Structured questionnaire for entrepreneurs (quantitative)
- 254 • Semi-structured interview schedule for policymakers and experts (qualitative)

### 255 **7.4.2 Secondary Data:**

- 256 • Reports from Startup Odisha, MSME Ministry, NITI Aayog, UNDP, World Bank
- 257 • Policy documents, economic surveys, and journal articles

## 258 **7.5 Variables and Indicators**

259 Key variables include:

- 260 • Access to finance
- 261 • Availability of mentorship and training
- 262 • Market connectivity
- 263 • Technological adoption
- 264 • Gender and age group of entrepreneurs
- 265 • Innovation index indicators at state/district level

## 266 **7.6 Data Analysis**

- 267 • **Quantitative data** is analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests,  
268 correlation, and regression analysis through SPSS or R software.
- 269 • **Qualitative data** is coded and thematically analyzed using NVivo to extract patterns,  
270 challenges, and policy suggestions.

## 271 **7.7 Ethical Considerations**

272 Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity  
273 were maintained. Ethical approval was secured from the institutional research committee.

274

## 275 **8. Outcomes of the Research**

### 276 **8.1 Entrepreneurial Innovation and Inclusive Growth**

277 The study reveals a strong correlation between entrepreneurial innovation and  
278 indicators of inclusive development across sampled districts. Startups and grassroots  
279 enterprises that adopted innovative approaches such as digital marketing, sustainable  
280 packaging, or community-based supply chains demonstrated better market access and  
281 employment outcomes, especially in sectors like agro-processing, tribal crafts, and renewable  
282 energy. These findings support **Hypothesis H1**, aligning with national and global studies that  
283 link innovation with socio-economic resilience.

### 284 **8.2 Ecosystem Disparities and Institutional Gaps**

285 There is a stark disparity in the maturity of entrepreneurial ecosystems between urban  
286 hubs (e.g., Bhubaneswar, Cuttack) and tribal/rural districts (e.g., Malkangiri, Kandhamal). In  
287 tribal regions, 68% of respondents reported lack of access to incubators or credit institutions,  
288 and 52% were unaware of any government schemes. In contrast, over 70% of urban  
289 entrepreneurs had access to online funding portals or startup networks. These findings  
290 validate **Hypothesis H2**, indicating the need for ecosystem decentralization.

### 291 **8.3 Barriers to Innovation Adoption**

292 Key challenges identified across regions include:

- 293 • **Access to finance:** 63% of rural and tribal entrepreneurs cited lack of working capital  
294 and collateral-based loan rejection.
- 295 • **Digital divide:** In backward districts, only 35% of entrepreneurs had reliable internet  
296 connectivity.
- 297 • **Regulatory complexity:** Registration under Startup Odisha or MSME schemes was  
298 perceived as cumbersome by 58% of respondents.

299 These results affirm **Hypothesis H3**, highlighting structural and procedural bottlenecks in  
300 state-level enterprise promotion.

#### 301 **8.4 Gender and Youth Participation**

302 Female entrepreneurs represented only 18% of the sample, with most engaged in  
303 SHG-led activities. Major barriers included cultural restrictions, limited mobility, and lack of  
304 digital skills. Youth participation (age 20–35) was higher in urban centers, especially in IT  
305 and digital marketing startups. However, tribal youth showed strong entrepreneurial interest if  
306 provided with training and localized incubation.

307 These insights support **Hypothesis H4**, confirming the need for gender-responsive  
308 and youth-focused innovation strategies.

#### 309 **8.5 Policy Reach and Effectiveness**

310 While policies such as *Startup Odisha* and *MSME Development Policy* have  
311 generated awareness in urban zones, their on-ground impact in interior districts remains  
312 limited. Only 29% of rural respondents had ever engaged with a government  
313 entrepreneurship program. However, those who did receive support (e.g., under the Mission  
314 Shakti or Biju Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana) reported improved business outcomes.

315 These findings confirm **Hypothesis H5**, suggesting that while policies have potential,  
316 their impact is limited by weak last-mile delivery and monitoring systems.

#### 317 **8.6 Decentralized Innovation Strategy: A Way Forward**

318 Stakeholder interviews emphasized the importance of district-level innovation hubs,  
319 tribal incubation programs, and industry-academia partnerships. Customized interventions  
320 such as skill mapping, localized financial products, and ICT access were strongly  
321 recommended. These insights reinforce **Hypothesis H6**, advocating for a region-specific and  
322 inclusive innovation policy architecture.

### 323 **9. Conclusion**

324 Entrepreneurial innovation represents a transformative force capable of redefining  
325 Odisha's developmental trajectory toward the ambitious goal of *Vikshit Odisha 2036*. As this  
326 study reveals, the state possesses unique demographic, cultural, and ecological advantages  
327 that can be leveraged through a robust, inclusive, and regionally responsive innovation  
328 ecosystem. However, realizing this potential demands a departure from centralized, one-size-  
329 fits-all models toward more localized and equity-oriented approaches.

330 The findings highlight considerable disparities in access to entrepreneurial  
331 opportunities between urban and rural/tribal regions. While cities like Bhubaneswar are  
332 emerging as startup hubs, the broader ecosystem suffers from infrastructural constraints,  
333 financial exclusion, and weak policy reach. Tribal communities and rural youth despite their  
334 rich indigenous knowledge and enthusiasm—remain largely disconnected from formal  
335 innovation frameworks due to structural, informational, and institutional barriers.

336 Nonetheless, Odisha's existing policy instruments such as the Startup Odisha  
337 Initiative, MSME Development Policy, and youth entrepreneurship programs provide a  
338 promising foundation. If these are complemented with stronger last-mile delivery  
339 mechanisms, digital infrastructure, targeted incubation support, and inclusive financing  
340 models, the impact could be transformative.

341 The proposed strategic roadmap offers a phased, actionable framework to guide the  
342 state from its current state of innovation infancy toward a dynamic, self-sustaining  
343 innovation-led economy. It emphasizes the role of education, gender inclusion, market  
344 integration, and governance reform in shaping a resilient entrepreneurial landscape.

345 Ultimately, catalyzing innovation is not merely a technological or economic  
346 imperative for Odisha; it is a societal mission. Empowering entrepreneurs from all regions and  
347 walks of life to solve local problems with local solutions will be central to achieving the  
348 vision of *Vikshit Odisha 2036*, in alignment with India's broader developmental agenda of  
349 *Viksit Bharat*.

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