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26th April 2025



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THE HINDU ANALYSIS

TOPICS COVERED

- **Policy framework that fosters inclusivity in start-ups is need of the hour, say panellists (GS – II & III)**
- **A chance for India's creative ecosystem to make waves (GS – III)**
- **Carrot and stick, The 2015 accord must be revived to prevent Iran going nuclear (GS – II)**

Policy framework that fosters inclusivity in start-ups is need of the hour, say panellists

Context

- Tamil Nadu's startup ecosystem is expanding rapidly with focus on tech-driven and assistive innovations.
- The Hindu Tamil Nadu Startup Summit 2025 highlighted the need for inclusive policies to ensure gender equality, disability inclusion, and diversification.

Policy framework that fosters inclusivity in start-ups is need of the hour, say panellists

At The Hindu Tamil Nadu Startup Summit-25, they discuss the power of inclusive technology, role of academic institutions in fostering such technology, and how inclusion must be unbiased. They further highlight need for diversification in start-ups, including research-based products

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Even as Tamil Nadu is heading towards a vibrant and tech-led start-up ecosystem, there is a need for a policy framework that fosters inclusivity in start-ups, said panellists at a session on 'Building a Diverse Startup Ecosystem: Inclusion and Gender Equality' held in Chennai on Thursday.

They discussed the power of inclusive technology, role of academic institutions in fostering the same, and how inclusion must be unbiased. Speaking on the challenges faced by persons with physical disabilities and the role of innovations through assistive technology in empowering them, Prateek Madhav, co-founder and CEO, Assis-Tech Foundation, said the country was now growing into one of the best assistive technology hubs in the world.

"The number of start-



From right, Prateek Madhav, co-founder and CEO, AssisTech Foundation, Jyotirmayee Dash, managing director, TeraLumen Solutions Private Limited, and Subalalitha C.N., professor, Department of Computing Technologies, SRMIST, at the panel discussion on Thursday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

ups has grown from a mere 10 or 15 to a vibrant ecosystem of 500 start-ups, which have changed lives and enabled persons with physical disabilities to gain better accessibility, independence, and social inclusion. Several of them were from Tamil Nadu," he said.

Highlighting technological innovation as the reason behind societal transformation and the growth of the start-up ecosystem, he said it was essential to include assistive technology in the policy framework.

Noting that persons with disabilities cannot be

left behind in the attempt to build an inclusive ecosystem, Mr. Madhav said they contributed 5% to 7% to the country's Gross Domestic Product. Investment, technological innovations, and research in inclusive start-ups would help in improving the economic impact of including



persons with physical disabilities, he added.

Commercialising ideas

Subalalitha C.N., professor, Department of Computing Technologies, SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), discussed the role of academia in nurturing start-up and entrepreneurial mindset among students and encouraging faculty start-ups.

Besides hackathons and project-based courses, students are encouraged to

commercialise their ideas through industry collaborations. Moreover, faculty start-ups help them align with their research domains and gain exposure to market requirements. This is reflected in the quality of their teaching.

Jyotirmayee Dash, managing director, TeraLumen Solutions Private Limited, elaborated on her journey of building a start-up and the terahertz technology.

Underlining the need for diversification in start-ups, including research-based products and manufacturing, she said consistency and dedication were important to build a company based on deep tech. Collaborations, including those with business experts and various stakeholders, would help balance research and business ventures, she said.

The session was moderated by Ramya Kannan, Chief of Bureau, Tamil Nadu, The Hindu.



Policy framework that fosters inclusivity in start-ups is need of the hour, say panellists

Key Highlights

Assistive Technology & Disability Inclusion

- India emerging as a **global hub for assistive technology**.
- Persons with disabilities contribute **5–7% to GDP** — need for investment and innovation in this sector.
- Inclusion must be part of **formal policy frameworks**.

Academia's Role

- Emphasis on **entrepreneurial mindset** in students via hackathons, research commercialization, and faculty-led startups (SRMIST example).
- Industry-academia collaborations to align research with market demands.

Deep-Tech & Diversification

- Push for **deep-tech, research-based products**, and manufacturing startups.
- Consistency, expert collaborations, and long-term dedication essential for success (TeraLumen Solutions' example in terahertz technology).

Impact & Importance

- **Empowers marginalized groups** through innovation.
- Encourages **economic contribution and independence** of persons with disabilities.
- Builds a **diverse and resilient startup ecosystem**.

Challenges

- Lack of inclusive policy incentives.
- Limited funding for marginalized innovators.
- Low awareness of assistive technologies.

Way Forward

- Design inclusive startup policies with financial and infrastructural support.
- Strengthen academic-industry partnerships.
- Promote public-private collaborations for scaling inclusive innovations.

SOLVE MCQ

Which of the following is a key element highlighted at the Tamil Nadu Startup Summit 2025 for fostering inclusivity in India's startup ecosystem?

- (a) Promoting only tech-driven startups
- (b) Investment in assistive technology and disability inclusion
- (c) Focusing exclusively on traditional industries
- (d) Limiting startup funding to women entrepreneurs only

Answer: (b) Investment in assistive technology and disability inclusion

Explanation:

The **Tamil Nadu Startup Summit 2025** emphasized the need for **inclusive policies** that promote **gender equality, disability inclusion, and diversification** in the startup ecosystem. A significant focus was placed on **assistive technology** and the **economic inclusion of persons with disabilities**, as this sector is emerging as a global hub in India. The summit highlighted the contribution of persons with disabilities to the GDP and stressed the need for innovation and investment in assistive technologies to empower marginalized groups and build a more inclusive startup environment.





- **Option (a)** (Promoting only tech-driven startups) is incorrect because the summit advocated for inclusive policies, not just tech-driven innovation.
- **Option (c)** (Focusing exclusively on traditional industries) contradicts the focus on deep-tech and researchbased innovations discussed at the summit.
- **Option (d)** (Limiting startup funding to women entrepreneurs only) is not aligned with the summit's inclusive approach, which supports broader diversification across marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities.

A chance for India's creative ecosystem to make waves

Context & Background

- India aims to position itself as a global creative powerhouse amid global trade tensions.
- The World Audio-Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025, scheduled in Mumbai (May 1–4, 2025), focuses on boosting the Media & Entertainment (M&E) sector through global partnerships and innovation.
- Key initiative: WAVES Xcelerator (WAVEX) — supporting startups with mentorship, funding, and global exposure.

A chance for India's creative ecosystem to make waves

In the face of global trade tariffs and stock market volatility, India shines as a resilient economy. Leveraging its demographic advantages and technological capabilities, India can turn challenges into opportunities, positioning itself as a global 'Creative Powerhouse.' With a rich storytelling tradition, India's Media & Entertainment (M&E) sector aims to 'Connect Creators' worldwide through the 'Create in India, Create for the World' vision.

Making a mark, globally

India is home to a burgeoning population of young creators across various fields such as film, music, art, and technology. Notably, Namit Malhotra's DNEG, the visual effects and animation studio demonstrated ground-breaking VFX in the Oscar-winning success of *Dune 2*. This marked India's seventh Oscar victory, highlighting India's growing influence in the global entertainment industry. The evolution from traditional film-making to digital production showcases the country's capability in creating world-class content.

WAVES Xcelerator (WAVEX), part of the Government of India's World Audio-Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025, aims to connect young creators with industry leaders and foster startup growth.

Scheduled for May 2025 in Mumbai, WAVES seeks to enhance India's M&E startup ecosystem by providing mentorship, funding, and global opportunities. The sector is projected to grow from ₹2,422 billion in 2023 to ₹3,067 billion by 2027, encompassing innovative fields such as gaming, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the metaverse.

Despite challenges in gaining recognition, WAVES offers a platform for emerging startups to showcase their work to global investors. The initiative also includes women-led startups such as Lapwing Studios and Vygr Media, fostering inclusivity within the M&E ecosystem.

WAVES is committed to creating a dynamic and competitive startup environment, serving as



Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

is Chairperson,
Biocon Group

a launchpad for international success. WAVEX will directly address barriers to capital, mentorship, and global exposure, offering not only financial support but also a structured ecosystem for growth. Having started Biocon with just ₹10,000 and a vision, I understand the significance of such catalytic platforms.

As a supporter of the arts through initiatives such as the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) and Science Gallery Bengaluru, I believe that a nation's culture is rooted in both its arts and sciences. Both arts and science are rooted in creativity; scientists experiment in labs just as artists do on canvas.

India, which thrives on the synergy of its demographic advantage, technological capabilities, and rich cultural heritage, is a flourishing hub of creativity. This fusion is not merely philosophical in India; it is practical, shaping industries and driving innovation within the M&E sector.

With a storytelling tradition that spans centuries, India is uniquely positioned to emerge as a global creative powerhouse. From classical dance to cinema, and from comics to immersive technology, we are entering an exciting era where creativity intersects with cutting-edge innovation. The vision of 'Create in India, Create for the World' encapsulates this ambition perfectly.

A catalyst for creative startups

WAVES exemplifies the beautiful convergence of technology and storytelling. WAVEX is poised to tap into this by supporting startups in innovative areas such as animation, AI, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR), gaming, and the metaverse.

With more than 4,500 sellers and over 5,900 buyers registered for the WAVES Bazaar, the initiative promises to connect Indian startups with global players, accelerating India's ascent as a leader in the global M&E landscape.

WAVES also champions innovation beyond traditional media. Companies such as Erucanavis Technologies are pioneering AI-driven playable

ads, while Amaze Studios and Offline Human Studios are redefining storytelling through animation and VR. Ed-tech ventures such as InscapeXR and Vision Impact are transforming learning with immersive media. Together, these startups highlight the vast potential and global relevance of India's creative ecosystem.

A vision for the future

India has long been celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and enduring legacy of creativity.

This creative energy finds its most vibrant expression in our youth, who are the creators of today and the visionaries of tomorrow. Across film, music, animation, gaming, and digital media, young Indian creators are pushing boundaries and redefining genres.

The Indian government's commitment to nurturing this potential is evident in its support for initiatives such as WAVES, which is designed to foster a dynamic, innovative, and globally competitive startup ecosystem in the Media and Entertainment sector.

Today, through WAVES, we are not only investing in startups, but we are also investing in storytelling, in self-expression, and in the creative economy that will define the future. Whether it is in a biotech lab or a digital studio, creativity is the currency that will shape tomorrow's industries and identities.

WAVES 2025 is more than a celebration of India's M&E industry; it is a launchpad for the next generation of creators and entrepreneurs poised to transform how the world consumes entertainment, education, and culture.

As an advisory board member of WAVES, I am proud to be part of this transformative journey. The impact of this initiative will go far beyond studios and boardrooms, echoing in every story told, every startup scaled, and every innovation that challenges convention.

India's moment to lead a global creative revolution is here. Let us 'Create in India, Create for the World' and show the world the boundless power of our imagination.

The World Audio-Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025 will be a launchpad for the next generation of creators and entrepreneurs





Key Highlights

- Sector Growth: M&E sector projected to grow from ₹2,422 billion (2023) to ₹3,067 billion (2027).
- Focus on **AI, AR/VR, gaming, metaverse, animation**.
- Over **4,500 sellers and 5,900 buyers** registered for WAVES Bazaar.
- Emphasis on **women-led startups** (e.g., Lapwing Studios, Vygr Media).

Impact & Consequences

- Boosts **startup ecosystem** and global collaborations.
- Positions India as a leader in **creative technology and storytelling**.
- Potential to **reduce brain drain** by retaining talent within India.

Positives

- Strong **government backing**.
- Promotes **inclusivity** and **innovation**.
- Strengthens **India's soft power** globally.

Challenges

- **Execution risks** and sustaining momentum postsummit.
- Facing **global competition**.
- Ensuring **fair resource distribution** among startups.

Way Forward

- Focus on **skill development** and continuous startup engagement.
- Build a **robust monitoring system** for outcomes.
- Learn from global examples like **Korea's Hallyu Wave**.

SOLVE MCQ

Which of the following is a key initiative discussed at the World Audio-Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025 to promote India's creative ecosystem?

- (a) WAVES Xcelerator (WAVEX) providing mentorship, funding, and global exposure
- (b) Limiting sector growth to traditional media channels
- (c) Focusing solely on film and television productions
- (d) Promoting only women-led startups without other inclusivity measures

Answer: (a) WAVES Xcelerator (WAVEX) providing mentorship, funding, and global exposure

Explanation:

The WAVES Xcelerator (WAVEX) is a key initiative at the WAVES 2025 Summit designed to support startups in the Media & Entertainment (M&E) sector through mentorship, funding, and global exposure. This initiative aims to foster innovation, boost the startup ecosystem, and position India as a global leader in creative technology and storytelling. The summit focuses on sectors like AI, AR/VR, gaming, metaverse, and animation, with an emphasis on global partnerships and inclusivity, particularly promoting women-led startups.

- **Option (b)** (Limiting sector growth to traditional media channels) is incorrect as the summit focuses on innovative sectors such as AI, AR/VR, gaming, and the metaverse, not just traditional media.
- **Option (c)** (Focusing solely on film and television productions) contradicts the diverse sector focus, which also includes newer technologies and startups.
- **Option (d)** (Promoting only women-led startups without other inclusivity measures) overlooks the broader inclusivity agenda of the summit, which includes promoting innovation and diversity across the entire startup ecosystem.





Carrot and stick, The 2015 accord must be revived to prevent Iran going nuclear

Context

- Fresh diplomatic talks between the U.S. and Iran in Muscat and Rome (mediated by Oman).
- Aim: Prevent Iran from weaponizing its nuclear program and revive the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Carrot and stick

The 2015 accord must be revived to prevent Iran going nuclear

The U.S. and Iran are currently engaged in rare high-stakes diplomacy. They have held two rounds of talks, in Muscat and in Rome, with Oman as the mediator, about Tehran's nuclear programme. A third technical round has been confirmed for the coming days. However, tensions still remain high between the Trump administration and the Islamic Republic. It was Donald Trump, during his first term, who sabotaged a functioning multilateral agreement that had significantly curtailed Iran's nuclear programme. Ever since, Iran has accelerated its nuclear activities. While it has not yet decided to build a nuclear bomb, most assessments agree that it has the capability to do so within weeks. At the same time, Iran's regional influence stands diminished as a result of Israel's attacks on its so-called axis of resistance and other regional shifts such as the fall of Syria's Assad regime. Israel is pressing for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, but Mr. Trump, according to American reports, has vetoed those plans, for now.

Mr. Trump has adopted a classic carrot-and-stick approach. He said he wanted a deal with Iran but with a warning that if talks failed, there would be bombing. He has also launched a massive aerial campaign against Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis. In addition, the U.S. has ramped up its military presence in West Asia besides moving B-2 bombers to the Indian Ocean region – all aimed at signalling to Iran that U.S. threats should be taken seriously. But despite the combined military might of the U.S. and Israel, any attack on Iran would be catastrophic for regional security and global economy. Iran's nuclear facilities are scattered and underground, making them extremely difficult to destroy. It was precisely because there was no viable military solution to the Iran nuclear issue that world powers chose the path of diplomacy in 2015, a path Mr. Trump had abandoned in 2018 for no good reason. Nevertheless, despite the challenges and geopolitical pressure, the recent initiation of talks by Mr. Trump and Iran opens a rare window of opportunity to resolve the issue once and for all. For diplomacy to succeed, the U.S. should act as a responsible global power that is committed to preventing weaponisation of Iran's nuclear programme, rather than as a partisan patron seeking to destroy Iran on Israel's behalf. Iran, for its part, has signalled that it was open to scaling back its nuclear activities in exchange for the removal of sanctions and threats. The 2015 agreement, which limited Iran's enrichment capabilities and uranium stockpile, could serve as a reference point for a deal if talks progress constructively.

Background

- **2015:** JCPOA signed — Iran limited nuclear activity in return for sanctions relief.
- **2018:** Trump withdrew from the deal → Iran accelerated uranium enrichment.
- **2025:** Talks resume amid rising tensions and regional instability.

Current Scenario

- Iran capable of building a nuclear bomb within weeks (as per assessments).
- U.S. follows **carrot-and-stick** policy: Offers talks but threatens military action.
- Israel pushing for strikes on Iran's nuclear sites, but Trump vetoes for now.





Impacts Positives:

- Avoids direct conflict, keeps diplomatic channels open.
- Chance to stabilize West Asia and global energy markets.

Negatives:

- Deep trust deficit due to past U.S. exit from JCPOA.
- Military miscalculation risks remain high.

Way Forward

- Gradual, trust-building steps (interim deals).
- Strong IAEA oversight and regional involvement.
- Revival of JCPOA as the negotiation base.

Conclusion

- Diplomacy remains the only viable path.
- Success needs commitment beyond military threats — focusing on de-escalation and mutual guarantees.

