



VIKSIT DISTRICTS FOR VIKSIT BHARAT

**District Entrepreneurship and Local
Economic Growth**

*A Chronicle of how local ecosystems are enabling entrepreneurs,
livelihoods and economic opportunity*



Global Alliance For
Mass Entrepreneurship™

The DEM Chronicle

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01

The Need to Catalyse Local Entrepreneurship Ecosystems at Scale

More local businesses growing at scale will help create more jobs and greater prosperity.

For India to become truly developed, its towns and cities must become engines of inclusive economic growth. The core of this transformation lies in unlocking the potential of small entrepreneurs, helping them start, grow, and scale businesses that generate jobs and prosperity.

India has built a strong policy and programme foundation for entrepreneurship. The next opportunity is to translate this momentum into stronger district-level ecosystems where entrepreneurs can access the right combination of markets, finance, capabilities and institutional support.

To unleash India's entrepreneurial engine, there is a need to develop self-sustaining ecosystems, where entrepreneurs are supported end-to-end, and local institutions own and drive the change, leveraging existing government and ecosystem efforts around shared district priorities.

Basis for the Hypothesis

India has about **7.83 crore** MSMEs registered on the Udyam Registration Portal, with over **97%** being micro enterprises. It's a pyramid with a huge base of solopreneurs, microenterprises, some small and medium firms, a few large and modern enterprises and a **missing middle**.

There is significant potential to increase productivity, revenues and employment by creating stronger pathways for enterprises to move from subsistence and self-employment towards sustained growth. There is also opportunity to increase the number of formal enterprises so they can avail of schemes and programmes designed for their growth.

For India's economy to grow at reasonable rates and create adequate employment and prosperity, we need to fill in this "missing middle", with millions of more enterprises that are growth-oriented, start out formal, and are capable of growing to mid-size or large firms. The "growth escalator", or the favourable conditions that create such growth, has to be restarted.

Sources: PIB, 30 Mar 2026 (Udyam Registration Portal); PIB; NITI Aayog, *Designing a Policy for Medium Enterprises*.

Learnings that Informed Our Work

1 **Growth is not limited due to a lack of resources; it is sometimes the absence of structured inputs and peer learning networks.**

This was the insight from the growth accelerator programme conducted in Bangalore and Ludhiana. Structured inputs over 6 months resulted in:

94%

of the participants foreseeing an increase in their revenue in the next 3-5 years

44%

anticipating recruiting 20 or more employees each

39%

of enterprises witnessed growth events such as the launch of new products, entry to new geographies and sales through various online and offline channels

LATENT INTENT

Much of the value of accelerator programmes stems from the fact that they engineer formation of social relationships. One of the key outputs was the economic value of informal social capital networks. These relationships can lead to better decision making and more business.

2 **Challenges linked to Access to Finance, Market and Mentorship vary across segments**

(New to credit entrepreneurs, Small enterprises, Informal enterprises, Collectives)

INSIGHTS FROM WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

This is based on our work with over 11,000 women across 3 states who were first time women borrowers (they were from existing Self Help Groups who wanted to start individual businesses).

- Programme assistance and support for bank linkages, documentation, and business proposal preparation has a high impact in reducing the cycle time for bank linkages by 83-93%.
- Post loan, the income increase has been 75-150%, based on verbal information from the women.
- The impact on women entrepreneurs includes increased confidence ~ 93-99% and enhanced decision-making capabilities.

Hand holding support along with banker sensitisation are key requirements for first time women borrowers

INSIGHTS FROM SCHEME FACILITATION SUPPORT FOR NEW ENTREPRENEURS

This is based on our work with the Government of Uttar Pradesh on MYUVA (Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan) programme to nurture and empower young entrepreneurs by providing financial and capacity-building support, thereby fostering self-employment and boosting MSME development. The analysis of over 1.8 lakh applications gave insights into the support required by applicants through the lifecycle. It was augmented by the focused support that was extended to youth in Nagpur to avail the CMEGP funding for first-time entrepreneurs.

- Pre-application support in terms of readiness with documents, business plans and scheme applicability is critical for first time entrepreneurs
- New business ideas, business support to run the operations are essential for sustenance
- Scheme utilisation can be enhanced with decision support dashboards linked to data across the application life cycle (for visibility on rejections, area wise sanctions, bank level information)

INSIGHTS FROM WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

The programme goal was to identify pathways for women to enhance their income by being part of the digital platform economy. The 4 pilots for Rural e-commerce, Social commerce, Gig economy and Job tech were piloted across states with an outreach to over 2.5 lakh women. The key insight was that Access to markets through digital platforms was the most effective pathway. Designed with Collectives/Aggregate Enterprises at the centre, this programme increased revenue by 79% at an aggregate level and lifted the share of online sales from 8% to 57%.

KEY INSIGHT

E-commerce was not the engine of growth. It was the “gym” where entrepreneurs built capability. Although digital marketplaces accounted for only a small share of overall sales, participating enterprises developed critical business skills such as pricing, packaging and branding, inventory planning, quality consistency, and unit economics. These capabilities translated into stronger performance across all sales channels, with offline revenues growing even faster than online sales.

3 **Ease of Doing Business is critical but needs to be a collaborative programme with government departments and sector experts.**

This came out from the EoDB programme run in Punjab working closely with the administration using a simplify-digitise-decriminalise approach. The 2-year programme, which was a consultative process, resulted in a report on “Transforming Ease of Doing Business for MSMEs in Punjab” and a slew of reforms shaped by the recommendations being implemented.

4 **Local ownership and place based programmes are feasible and lead to sustained growth**

MANIZALES-MÁS (COLOMBIA): GLOBAL PROOF OF CONCEPT

Entrepreneurship in Manizales, Colombia, has taken off dramatically over the past decade based on the framework of Dan Isenberg which is based on collaborative ecosystem building centered around growth of enterprises. Manizales is now a top-rated city in Colombia on several metrics, including the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business and Porter’s Social Progress Index.

KEY LEARNINGS

- Local champions from Day 0 are critical: Pull instead of Push
- A passionate, committed secretariat drives success
- Driving the growth of existing businesses is the first step, helping deliver quick wins and build momentum before fostering new enterprise creation
- Gradual stakeholder onboarding & training ensures long-term ecosystem buy-in
- Roadmap must be flexible & evolve with local needs

02

District Entrepreneurship Mission

Every district across India as an entrepreneurial hub.

Background

In the past, the programmes were implemented across multiple states and while effective, the compounding of the results was only possible if it was localised to one location. This was the genesis to distil the learnings into a concept note around the need for a National Entrepreneurship Mission that would make every district an entrepreneurial hub. In addition to learnings, a set of recommendations shaped jointly by leaders from various organisations working towards similar causes, and an analysis of the existing ecosystem across Centre, state, and district levels were part of the concept. The concept has since been adapted and implemented in partnership with state and district institutions.

VISION

Make district entrepreneurship ecosystems a new development infrastructure for India in the AI age.

MISSION

Strengthen district entrepreneurial ecosystems so that more and more businesses grow faster and faster, creating more jobs, more entrepreneurs and more prosperity.

The design is adopted from Dan Isenberg's Model which is a strategic, systemic approach to fostering entrepreneurship through ecosystem domains. The model was tested through initial pilots in Ludhiana (2021-2023) following a workshop by Dan Isenberg.

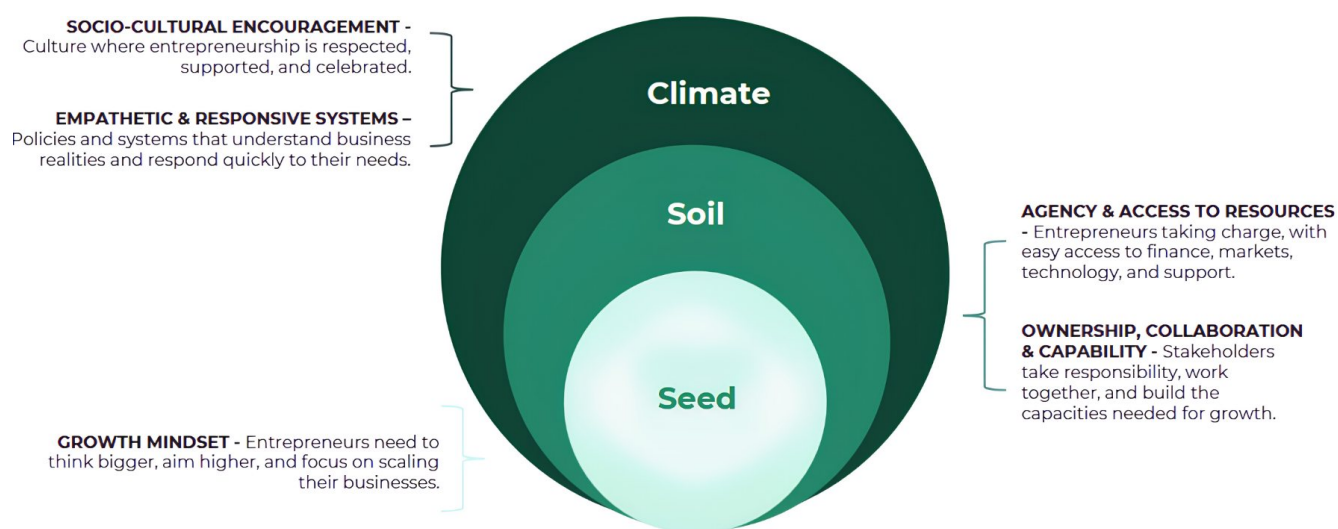
Hypothesis and Theory of Change

The fundamental problem GAME is trying to solve:

“How can entrepreneurial velocity be increased in line with the enormous latent energy that we have in districts?”

The answer is to create an environment where entrepreneurs can start, formalise, grow and create livelihoods faster and with support from the ecosystem: Financial institutions, government departments, mentors, academic institutions, digital platforms, investors and NGOs.

Our work is to make a district better at producing and growing entrepreneurs where the Seed, Soil and Climate is healthy. This means strengthening existing government and ecosystem channels around the entrepreneur and connecting market access, finance, productivity and capability-building to district priorities.



Seed, Soil and Climate: the conditions a district needs.

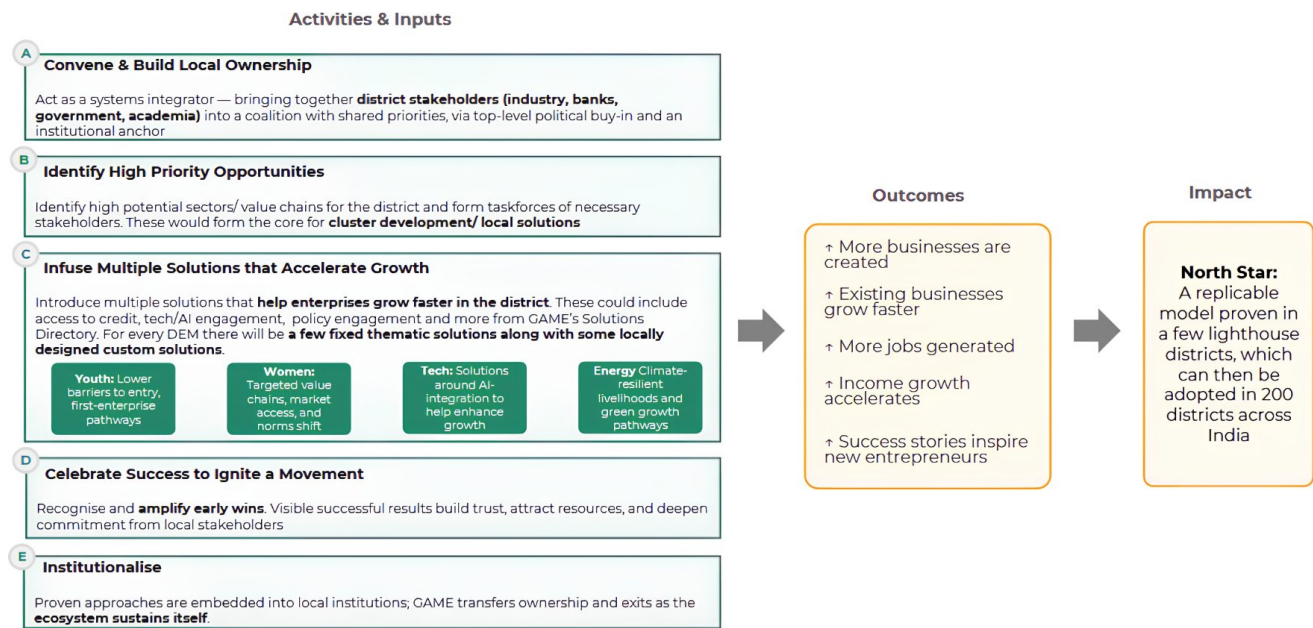
The District Entrepreneurship Mission (DEM) is built on the idea that local economic growth depends on creating a strong base of growing enterprises within each district. As enterprises grow, they generate additional jobs and livelihood opportunities.

In India, employment growth is closely linked to business growth, with research indicating that for every increase in enterprise revenue, employment expands with an elasticity of **0.4 to 0.6**

(Ref:NITI Aayog (2025)- Insights from Employment trends and State level dynamics)

DEM is designed as a district-level economic system, not a standalone programme. It works by building the core infrastructure required for enterprise growth, including market access, finance and productivity tools, and embedding these within existing government and ecosystem channels. By working in close partnership with local businesses, industry associations, bankers & district administration, DEM enables micro and small entrepreneurs, especially women & youth, to increase incomes, improve business resilience, and grow sustainably at scale.

THEORY OF CHANGE



GAME Theory of Change.

THE OPERATING MODEL

In a typical district, DEM operates through 4 building blocks:

District Entrepreneurship Operating System	The coordination infrastructure that allows the district’s existing actors to work as a system.
Enterprise Facilitation	A system and people who listen, understand the problem and connect entrepreneurs to the right solution.
Applications	Targeted interventions for different segments to help entrepreneurs grow.
Evidence and Learning	Common metrics and dashboard which track outcomes, help in District-level intelligence and are inputs to replication playbooks

The District Entrepreneurship Operating System (DEOS) is the neutral backbone that enables entrepreneurs, government, finance, industry and civil society to work as one system. DEOS does not replace existing institutions; it helps them work together around shared district economic priorities.

GAME: District Entrepreneurship Operating System 2.0

From Experiments to Infrastructure. From Programs to Systems Change.

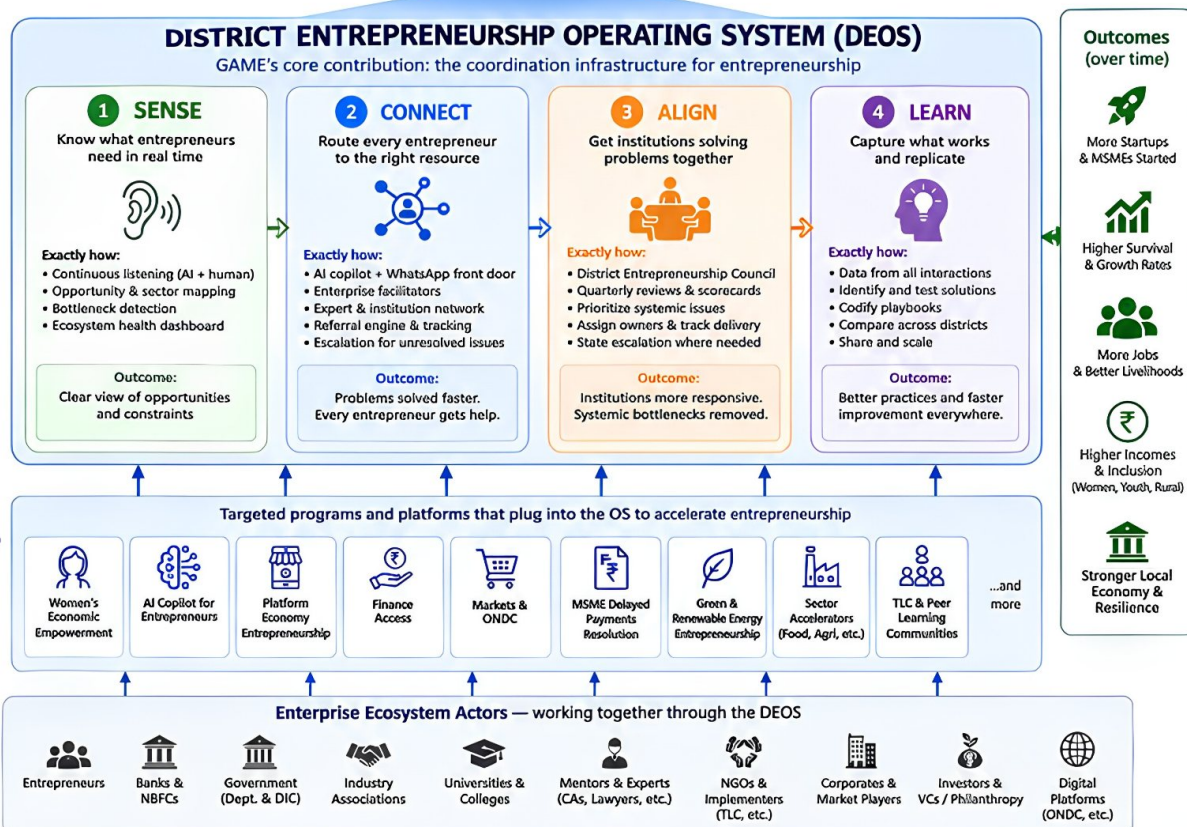
Purpose & North Star



More Businesses • Growing Faster • Creating More Jobs

Higher District Entrepreneurship Velocity — A Stronger, More Inclusive Local Economy

The 4 Core Jobs (OS Functions)
Run continuously in every district



GAME: District Entrepreneurship Operating System 2.0.

The core proposition is **enterprise growth**. In a healthy economy, most businesses stay small, but enough of them climb from small to mid-sized; a few even climb further from mid-sized to large, globally competitive firms. That climbing is what converts a business into jobs, tax base, supplier demand and skilled wages.

“Low entrepreneurship velocity” is not “too few businesses starting”. It is too few businesses climbing from self-employment into something that hires someone beyond the owner. And growth, once visible, does something that starting new businesses alone cannot: it proves growth is achievable locally, which pulls in more and better new entrants. This creates a flywheel in which growing firms generate the proof, capital and demand that seed the next cohort of entrepreneurs.

THE APPLICATION LAYER

The application layer is a set of solutions that solve for different scenarios which include

Starting a business

Ideas for business in a box (micro franchise solutions), opportunities to partner with MSMEs to create solutions, access to Incubators and service providers who help in access to finance/markets and business support.

Growing the business

This includes growth accelerators, Mentorship/peer networking opportunities, Training to access new markets, Access to finance, Operational process improvements, and programmes for Women entrepreneurs who are part of collectives to access digital market platforms.

Technology enablement

Including training and use of AI-enabled tools to solve key business bottlenecks like Onboarding and product listing time, customer conversions, bookkeeping and cash flow visibility

An additional aspect in the model is to foster an Entrepreneurial Culture by spotlighting local success stories to shift aspiration.

ECOSYSTEM ALIGNMENT THROUGH DATA

In addition to a shared vision, a common measurement and tracking dashboard which shows the progress is critical. The district level entrepreneurship dashboard which can be used by Government, Policy/planning institutions and stakeholders to understand the entrepreneurial velocity at the district level is designed for this purpose. The dashboard will track critical metrics like # of MSMEs, Revenue Growth of enterprises, Job opportunities created and the sentiment in the district towards entrepreneurship.

Scale and Replication

For the District Entrepreneurship Mission to scale across districts, the graduation model where districts move through distinct stages of entrepreneurial maturity is shared below:

1

Initiate

This is driven by GAME and involves landscape mapping, convening, facilitation, relationship and trust building.

2

Integrate

This is where institutions begin working together towards a shared plan, doubling down on some big opportunities and the culture is setting in - celebration of entrepreneur successes, growth stories and role models

3

Institutionalise

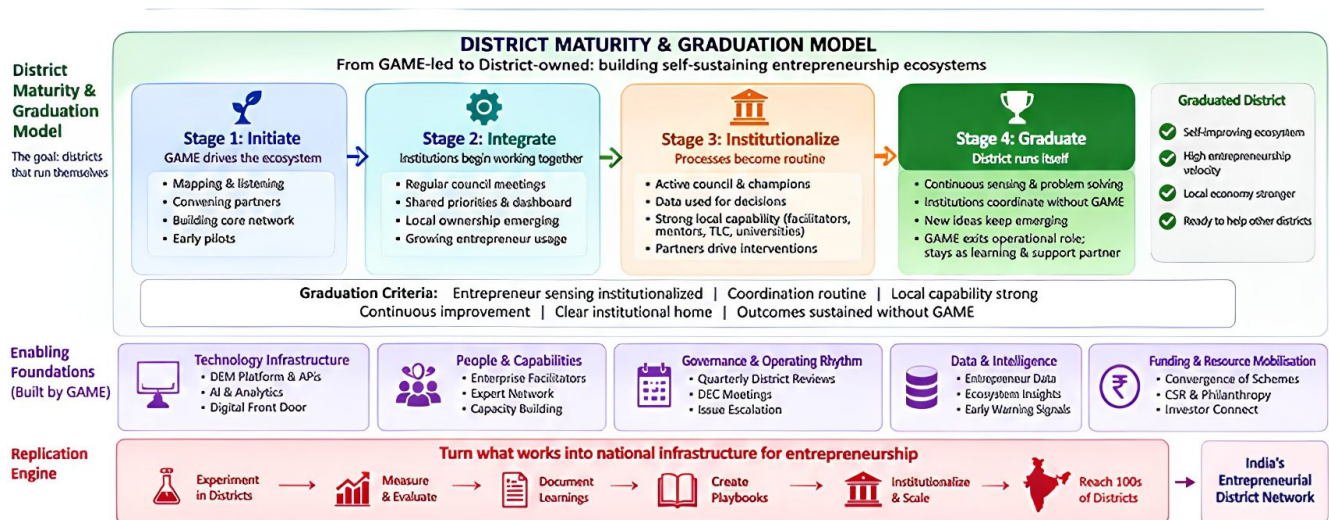
In this stage, the local ownership is driving the plan with more local funding. GAME involvement is lower and supportive rather than leading.

4

Graduate

The district runs itself. GAME role moves to sharing learning across districts and no longer operating or funding the system.

Graduation is a combination of coordination maturity and data. A key metric is the number of job opportunities added by the assisted enterprises.



GAME: District Maturity and Graduation Model.

GAME's critical KPI is the Number of districts successfully graduated and the replication engine or playbook that has emerged out from the implementation.

03

District and State Entrepreneurship Mission in Action

The approach has been adapted to different state and district contexts, reflecting local priorities, institutions and economic opportunities.

Pre-planning

Secondary research to identify districts which have high potential or need and onboarding a secretariat team at the district.

Phase 1

Diagnostic and Mobilisation

Conduct diagnostic, work with local leaders to form a Core group who co-own the mission; Prioritise themes and design pilot interventions.

Phase 2

Pilot Execution and Learning

Roll out growth accelerators and scheme access pilots. - Launch sectoral and thematic initiatives. - Organise community showcases and campaigns.

Phase 3

Review and Institutionalise

Review progress using MEL frameworks. - Document and systematise successful pilots. - Strengthen governance structures for scale and replication.



District Convening, Nagpur, October 2023.

DEM in Maharashtra

The Government of Maharashtra collaborated with GAME in 2023 to strengthen district-level entrepreneurship ecosystems.

A detailed landscape study of six districts was carried out as a diagnostic exercise. This was supplemented by discussions with over 200 stakeholders to align on key opportunities for MSME growth in the state. GAME had already worked in Maharashtra on a first of its kind Women Entrepreneurship Policy and Scorecard which had given good insights on the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Among the districts, Nagpur was selected as the first lighthouse district to launch the programme, and it was formally initiated in 2024.



MoU signing with the Government of Maharashtra, November 2025.

Lighthouse district: Nagpur

CONVENING THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM & GOVERNANCE

The programme in Nagpur was initiated with a workshop with over 60 participants where the landscape finding was validated and the areas to take forward were identified.

Since then, local leaders have come together to form a Joint Action Core Group. These 10 local leaders have defined a 24-month vision for Nagpur. They oversee the progress of entrepreneurship-led growth in the district, with GAME's support.

19 convenings have been held since the launch, bringing together relevant stakeholders with shared commitment to nurture entrepreneurial growth. The convening have seen representation from entrepreneurs, Academia, Bankers, Senior leaders who have built enterprises, sector experts and associations.



Foodpreneur Summit, Nagpur.



Nagpur Core Group Meeting, October 2025.

The Solutions Implemented:

A. YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) was rolled out in 30 government-aided schools in Nagpur for ~1000 students in grades 9 and 10 by Udhyam Learning Foundation. The programme encouraged students to undertake business projects, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. At the culmination of the programme, standout projects were selected for an Expo, showcasing the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the participants.



Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum event, Nagpur.



Nagpur NEXT, MSME Student event.

A platform Nagpur NEXT for youth to solve real problem statements from micro /small MSMEs in collaboration with academic institutes saw an outreach to over 1000 students, with teams developing 25 POCs. 9 MSME-student team agreements have been signed and in MVP development.

1000+

students reached

25

POCs developed by teams

9

MSME-student team agreements signed, and one newly registered company

B. ACCESS TO FINANCE: CMEGP SCHEME UPTAKE

This programme was designed to understand the support that first time entrepreneurs needed to access funding from government schemes. The outreach to over 400 aspiring entrepreneurs and facilitation to 100 to avail the CMEGP loans helped curate recommendations to ease the process. This was shared with the DIC for adoption.

C. GROWTH ACCELERATION

A growth-oriented programme facilitated by TLC (Teaching Learning Community) who have trained 1500 enterprises in Maharashtra was initiated. This has built a peer-learning cohort of 100+ MSMEs and is now a growing community where entrepreneurs share challenges, learn from each other, and adopt frameworks for growth planning. The TLC has created strong engagement and has become a visible success story in Nagpur demonstrating the appetite of local entrepreneurs to learn and grow together. A third-party evaluation showed that Growth aspiration grew in 97% of the entrepreneurs and revenue increased by 32% over 6-12 months.



Teaching Learning Community (TLC) Brainstorming session, Nagpur.

100+

MSMEs peer-learning cohort

97%

of entrepreneurs grew in growth aspiration (third-party evaluation)

+32%

revenue increase over 6-12 months

EXPORT MARKET ENTRY

A focused programme on exports has been initiated and is being taken forward as a key enabler for growth. Sector specific programmes including Food entrepreneurship accelerator sessions were conducted in partnership with TiE Nagpur. A consultative workshop on “Energy Efficiency & Green Technologies for MSMEs” for 50+ enterprises was held and 3 pilots on Renewable energy adoption are in progress.

ECOSYSTEM CONVENINGS

In Apr 2025, in collaboration with IIM Nagpur, TiE Nagpur, and Nagpur First Foundation, 20+ key ecosystem stakeholders including leaders from industry associations, financial institutions, academia deliberated the concept and plan the way forward. A Celebration and Reflection event to launch the 24-month roadmap was held in July 2026 with over 100 participants including the District Collector, academia, industry leaders and bankers.



Nagpur Entrepreneurship Mission launch of 24-month roadmap, July 2026.

Results in Practice

Our conviction is strengthened by the mention of GAME in the Economic Survey 2024-25 which highlights the country's economic performance and government policies, GAME is featured as one of the institutions that “address systemic barriers, supporting women-led MSMEs with access to markets, credit, and growth opportunities.”

The Economic Survey highlights the efforts of GAME's Women Entrepreneurs Financial Empowerment Programme (WEFEP), driven in partnership with National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), and how this initiative improves credit access for rural women entrepreneurs.

The survey also mentions the systemic challenges such as skill gaps, compliance barriers, and limited mobility, that restrict women's access to digital platforms and how GAME's Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) programme fosters gender-responsive policies to bridge these gaps.

WEFEP

Women Entrepreneurs Financial
Empowerment Programme, with NRLM

WEE

Women Economic
Empowerment programme

From Buttibori to Africa Rail: Vishvas Power's First Export

How one workshop moved a 30-year-old Nagpur manufacturer from serving the domestic market to exhibiting at its first international expo

Vishvas Power Engineering Services, a Buttibori-based manufacturer of power transformers and switchgear, has been in business for 30 years, serving the Indian Railways and the domestic power sector. The company had grown steadily, deepening client relationships and measuring its progress against a single benchmark: the domestic market. Exporting was something other companies did. Bigger companies.

The Room Where It Shifted

That changed at a workshop GAME convened in Nagpur, held at IIM Nagpur. In the room were entrepreneurs like Vishvas Power's leadership and Dr. Jagat Shah, an expert who has spent decades helping Indian companies establish themselves abroad. The session didn't have the pitch-deck version, but the unglamorous mechanics of documentation, compliance, and pricing to reach buyers.

Vishvas Power walked in believing exports were out of reach; they walked out with a roadmap.

From Roadmap to Result

Months later, Vishvas Power stood at a stall of their own at Africa Rail 2026, their first-ever export expo.

This is the part of ecosystem-building that is easy to miss but it is the essence of what growth looks like; experts and local businesses in the same room, opening up possibilities that are within reach.



Vishvas Power delegation at the Consulate General of India, Johannesburg.



Vishvas Power's stall at Africa Rail 2026, their first international export expo.

Growth Stories: Aspirations and Scaling Enterprises

Since 1998, Beta Computronics Pvt. Ltd. has specialised in complex hardware and software solutions, from Loom Technology to high-frequency equipment, and built over 27 years of rich technical expertise. Yet, for all its engineering depth, the company found itself stuck in a vicious cycle of hard work with limited return.

Sandeep believed that truly world-class management systems were a luxury reserved for large corporations with big budgets. He understood concepts in theory but systematic implementation never materialised. The business remained constrained by perceived shortages of funds, space and talent, and “working harder” no longer translated into “growing bigger”.

As part of Teaching Learning Community’s (TLC) Growth Accelerator, Sandeep’s understanding of professional management changed. He realised that excellence is not about expensive frameworks, but about consistently applying fundamentals in a

practical, context-specific way. Peer and Ripple Meetings helped translate these principles into a tailored blueprint for his manufacturing reality. Turning staff into Change Architects, undertaking process Engineering and 5S, moving from desk-bound management to frequent GEMBA walks and live brainstorming with his teams.

People at the Core: The deepest change occurred in the culture. Execution became co-created and unlocked new production capacity, enhanced quality consistency and improved profitability. The brand now stands as a best in-class enterprise with a strong vision and mission.



Sandeep Dharwekar speaks at the Nagpur Entrepreneurship Mission convening.

“The programme helped us shift from day-to-day firefighting to strategic thinking. It gave me the confidence and structure to grow into a scalable enterprise.”

Emerging Impact of Growth Accelerator Learnings being Implemented in Nagpur

An organisation navigated a legacy leadership transition to achieve significant growth in a single year through data-driven dashboards.

from ₹3.25Cr
₹11.50Cr
GROWTH IN A SINGLE YEAR

Automation company increased turnover in one financial year and started a novel HR practice of retaining interns for full-time employment with KRAs & KPIs

+50%
TURNOVER INCREASE

A Lights company overcame a 15-year plateau by reducing credit cycles and increased new customer acquisition.

60 → 45 days
CREDIT CYCLE REDUCED
+30% customers

SYSTEM VALIDATION

MoU signed with the Directorate of Industries to scale up effort to 10+ districts in Maharashtra over the next 3 years.

DEM in Andhra Pradesh

Lighthouse district – Vizag

A MoU was signed with the Government of Andhra Pradesh- SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty). The programme was initiated with a diagnostic survey and interaction with ~150 stakeholders to arrive at thematic areas. The programme was formally launched in September 2025 with a convening of ~50 stakeholders including Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs, IIM Vizag and Ratan Tata Innovation Hub.

A core group of ~24 leaders came together to define the Vision. Active task forces for Agri/Rural Entrepreneurship, Aqua and Eco-tourism drive the programmes.



MoU signing with the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

~150

stakeholders in the diagnostic survey

~50

stakeholders convened at the launch, Sept 2025

~24

leaders in the core group defining the Vision

The Solutions Implemented

GROWTH OF ENTERPRISES

A solution set for exports, demand linked production and value addition in agri/aqua supply chains with a goal of enhanced revenue for ~2000 livelihoods were implemented. These solutions span multiple areas and include:

Export readiness with APEDA

Export readiness and support to 22 Farmer Producer Organisations (~10K farmers) in partnership with APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) to start exports.

In addition to registration, export promotion events and Buyer- seller meet for FPOs and Food Enterprises was held along with the Horticulture Dept APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority)

Resilient Agriculture Pilot

The resilient agriculture pilot with low-cost greenhouses to build capability on crop management, pest control, climate resilience, market access and value-added agro-processing resulted in 21 rural processing units being set up, Rs 2.9 Cr credit unlocked and Rs 1.12 Cr subsidy availed.

69 Climate resilient exotic vegetable clusters using greenhouse technology were also set up with Rs 84 Lakh credit unlocked

Women in Fisheries

Cross functional support to women in fisheries including training, equipment and business support to reduce waste and enhance sales through hygienic handling and storage of seafood was done with 40 women in the aqua sector now producing value added products in the fish value chain.



Growing exotic vegetables as a means to grow income.



Agri and aqua value chain work, Visakhapatnam.

NEW ENTERPRISE CREATION

Community based eco-tourism

Pilot in 4 locations for rural eco-tourism which includes training of local youth/women, marketing and tie-ups with travel operators and community training on sustainable tourism have resulted in 8 homestays and 30 jobs in the locations. The model is now being planned for replication in more areas.

Agri-preneurs

Weekly sessions on agri entrepreneurship which have built a strong community of food-processing entrepreneurs. This led to a Agripreneurs group with ~30 members forming which meets monthly and has worked out a roadmap for growth. These sessions have built a strong community of ~ 180 entrepreneurs who are ideating and supporting new ventures focused on technology, productivity and quality for data-led practices in cultivation and Value addition. Unlike traditional farming, these enterprises are focusing on technology, productivity and quality to implement data-led practices to rethinking cultivation

Youth innovation and incubation

A Youth innovation and incubation event was held in partnership with Ratan Tata Innovation Hub and TiE. This 5-day event saw over 320 students participate and present their ideas to be shortlisted for incubation

8

homestays across 4 eco-tourism locations

30

jobs created in those locations

320+

students presenting ideas over the 5-day event

~180

entrepreneurs in the agri community

~30

members in the Agripreneurs group, meeting monthly

Results in Practice

Andhra Pradesh

Agri Entrepreneurship

What began as informal Saturday awareness sessions for agri-entrepreneurs to learn about government schemes and FPO processes soon began to pull in an unexpected crowd: IT professionals and engineers who were keen to solve real problems on real farms. By December 2025, a volunteer-run “war room” of just over 30 people was meeting monthly, mapping the vulnerabilities of the farmer and building prototypes for labour scarcity and post-harvest crop loss. GAME, with partners like the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub, chose to nurture this energy rather than formalise it too prematurely, and supported the initiative through supporting frameworks and access.

In 7 months, the community has formally registered itself as the Agriminds Ecosystem Foundation, a Section 8 company, built and led entirely by the farmers, processors and technocrats who started meeting on Saturdays.



AgriMinds Launch in Visakhapatnam.



Beyond Tourism: Four Villages Building Community Ownership

The breakthrough in the Eastern Ghats didn't begin with a master plan. It started with months of listening across six tribal villages, until one line from a local elder reframed the entire initiative.

“We want travellers, not tourists. We want people who come to interact, respect, and learn — not just to see.”

A VILLAGE ELDER, ASR DISTRICT

The Village as the Enterprise

In the forests and hills of ASR, individual commercial competition can strain the social fabric. So, a foundational rule was set: the entire village, rather than the individual household, is the unit of enterprise. The community manages visitor flow collectively; deciding how many travellers to host and when. In this way, tourism strengthens rather than strains their forests, farms, and way of life.



Village Eco-tourism,
Eastern Ghats.

Shared roles

Village roles

Selected families host rooms, others run shared kitchens, or act as youth guides.

Pre-arrival curation

Travellers are briefed and sensitised before they arrive.

Living exchanges

Organic farming, shade-grown coffee walks, culture as lived practice.

Decentralised Value Addition

Local agro-processing units keep the margin at home

Historically, raw produce left Visakhapatnam to be value-added elsewhere, reducing the margin. The opportunity to help farmers and rural youth set up tech-enabled processing infrastructure in their own districts, with support to navigate information gaps and government schemes has shown early promise in growing the market and profitability of the units.

Climate-resilient High-value Agriculture

The exotic vegetable cluster

As Vizag grows into a metro, demand for capsicum, broccoli and zucchini is rising fast. Nearly all of it currently being sourced from other states. This initiative worked on testing local produce being grown under shade nets on 10 cents of farmland, turning each plot into a climate-resilient bed suited to exotic vegetables.



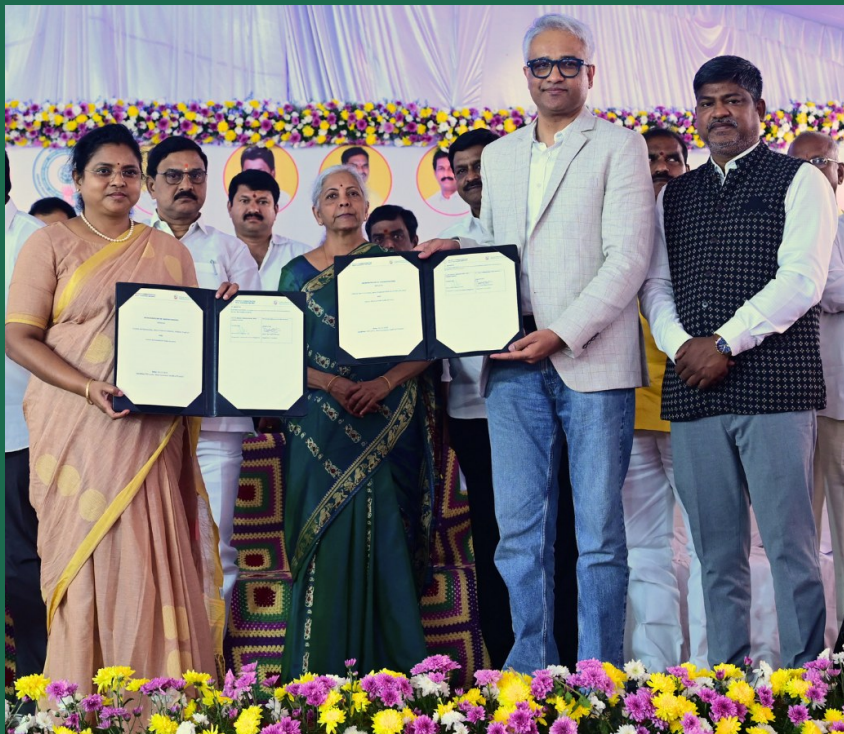
Rural agro-processing unit, Visakhapatnam district.



A 10-cent shade net installed on a smallholder plot.

SYSTEM VALIDATION

In December 2025, GAME entered into an MoU with the district administration to support the design and orchestration of a locally owned entrepreneurship platform, with an ambition to catalyse 5,000 enterprises and 25,000 livelihoods over five years.



MoU handover with the Honourable Finance Minister of India.

Nagaland Entrepreneurship Impact Forward (NEIF)

State Entrepreneurship Mission

Nagaland Entrepreneurship Impact Forward (NEIF) is a state-led, decade-long entrepreneurship agenda focused on increasing incomes, strengthening value chains and creating livelihoods across Nagaland aims to support 10,000 entrepreneurs and create 50,000 livelihoods by 2035.

This was launched by the Chief Minister and a Letter of Intent was signed between the Department of Industries & Commerce, GAME, and Youth Net in Dec 2025.



NEIF launch, Nagaland, December 2025.

NEIF AIMS TO

10,000

entrepreneurs supported by 2035

50,000

livelihoods created by 2035

ACROSS 4 VALUE CHAINS

Honey

King Chilli

Coffee

Handlooms

The programme is focused on income enhancement across 4 value chains: Honey, King Chilli, Coffee and Handlooms. NEIF Secretariat and the Department of Industries are the governing layer for institutional accountability and policy continuity.

The approach is to re-imagine economic growth in Nagaland around its entrepreneurial communities, design sensibility, and ecological wealth, with the aim to position the state as a national powerhouse for premium natural products and sustainable crafts.

ENABLERS AND THE PLATFORM

The enablers are clean energy access, logistics and skills through the Naturally Nagaland platform, and scales the work of the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) platform. Under this initiative, established women-led micro-enterprises come together as a 'Made in Nagaland' collective, and are supported in their onboarding on to digital platforms. The initial pilot was a collaborative effort with hyperlocal producers to market their products on Amazon. 100+ unique products with indigenous brands were able to grow their revenue through access to a larger national market. This also transformed perceptions with women viewing business growth and digital market entry as real, achievable opportunities, and not as distant possibilities.



Made in Nagaland entrepreneurs.

IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS

Implementation is in progress with a detailed sector mapping across the four primary value chains completed and multi-stakeholder workshops with entrepreneur collectives across Handloom, Honey, Coffee, and Chilli sectors with demand baselines established

A statewide baseline livelihood survey is in progress along with a Multi-phase Evaluation Framework and Entrepreneurship Fellows and partner agencies formally onboarded.

The interventions include capability building for Compliance, Cost management, Clean Energy, Access to finance and logistics/quality assurance. Partners for growth acceleration to onboard onto digital platforms, clean energy deployment, value added production and access to finance support are working collaboratively in this programme.

This is what the District Entrepreneurship Mission set out to do: spark genuine local ownership, earn trust on the ground, and work with communities to build and own the institutions that carry a region's growth forward

Experience from Nagpur and Visakhapatnam is informing the adaptation of district-level entrepreneurship approaches in other parts of Andhra Pradesh and beyond.



Our work in Nagaland, Nagpur, Vizag, and West Godavari span different industries and ecosystems but the experience points to a common opportunity: when local institutions, entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners work around shared economic priorities, districts can create stronger pathways for enterprise growth, jobs and livelihoods.



AMBITION 2035

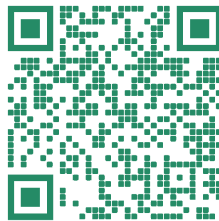
Make District Entrepreneurship Missions a core part of India's development strategy, enabling 200 districts to become thriving entrepreneurial hubs.

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BRING YOUR PLATFORM, CAPITAL, OR RESEARCH INTO THE ALLIANCE.

Fund a district or help us take a working model to the next state.

READ MORE ABOUT OUR WORK



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