

# Exploring the Role of Grampreneurs in Rural Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: A Comprehensive Assessment

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## Abstract

Entrepreneurial ecosystem in Indian perspective have long remained a matter of extensive research yet got into limelight after the boost to startup philosophy in economic policy making. The paper explores the theoretical aspects and conceptual approaches to operationalization of the phenomenon of 'entrepreneurial ecosystems' in perspective of local and regional grampreneurs. For creation of entrepreneurial ecosystem, it requires the alliance of government, other entrepreneurs, lawyers, communities, investors, leaders, research agencies and similar parties to come together and evolve with the spirit of community development. The terms 'grampreneurs' is a combination of two distinct words-gram (village or rural) and entrepreneur. In literal terminology, this represents the entrepreneurs or venture establishment in rural, local, and regional perspective. The research insisted on original and meta-analysis research papers on chronological order from evolution of concept. Indian rural and social entrepreneurship unfold extensive potential in terms of contribution to GDP, value creation, contribution to foreign exchange and local job creation. A dynamic and robust entrepreneurial eco-system in a rural region is an asset for up-gradation; specifically, digital and innovation-led entrepreneurship ecosystem has significant potential to reduce the regional imbalance. The paper hence reflects on the studies that deepen our understanding of the phenomenon in its contextual aspects.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Economic Impact, Rural Grampreneurs, Regional flows, Governance, Community Engagement, Rural Innovation

## 1. Background

Entrepreneurship is a driving force behind economic growth and innovation, playing a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of both local and regional economies. It is widely recognized that entrepreneurial ecosystems, comprising a complex interplay of resources, institutions, and social networks, are fundamental to fostering entrepreneurial activities and facilitating economic development. These ecosystems are typically associated with urban centers and metropolitan areas, where they have been extensively studied and documented. However, the vitality of entrepreneurial ecosystems in rural settings, particularly when viewed through the lens of "Grampreneurs" - a term coined to describe older adults who pursue entrepreneurial endeavors in rural areas - has received limited attention.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystem bear a direct relationship. Entrepreneurial ecosystem in Indian perspective have long remained a matter of extensive research yet got into limelight after the boost to startup philosophy in economic policy making. The concept essentially hinge son the intellectual and theoretical

frameworks and synthesizes the opportunity to explore the granular elements of the system in focus (Stam & van de Ven, 2021). The concept as evident from literature is grossly under researched and the contributing mechanisms for the effective functioning of the system are not well reflected across the literature.

### **1.1 The Origins of Concept**

The hallmark Harvard research on subject underlines the aspects of government's recognition of the potential of entrepreneurship to transform the job creating capability of the economy (Isenberg, 2010). The study further identified the set of practices and protocols that the government sector can undertake to boost the prospects for active and sustainable venture creation and realize the latent job creation capability of ecosystem support to entrepreneurship development in national perspective. The study for the first established the six core dimensions as policy, finance, culture, supports, human capital and markets.

### **1.2 Identifiable Elements of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**

The research (Isenberg, 2010) on entrepreneurial ecosystem often explain the functional and operational role of entrepreneurs and comprises synchronization, modernization, innovation, ownership, risk bearing, the supply of fund, decision creation, choosing an alternative course of action and resource allocation. The studies (Cantner et al., 2021) even attribute the 'entrepreneurial ecosystem' as comprising elements of biotic community, physical environment, interactive complex of entrepreneurial mindsets, knowledge brokers, financing, and mentoring supports; that in altogether make a composite and functional system for breeding ventures and startups.

### **1.3 Diverse Interpretations**

The term "entrepreneurial ecosystems" (Mason & Brown, 2014) is not new to the field of entrepreneurship but has recently gained considerable distinction in the books of both practitioners and policymakers. This metaphor is gaining consideration in academic circles, commerce, and government administration. Entrepreneurial ecosystems engross a network association, of the interconnection of persons, a structural system, entrepreneurs, and enterprises, like mediators from financial institutions, colleges, educational universities and research institutions, resource vendors and customers, international enterprises, or the administration authorities. The 'entrepreneurial ecosystem' can best be interpreted as a composite set of relative actors (Ferreira et al., 2023) that seemingly, directly, and indirectly shape the prospects for the entrepreneurship to thrive and sustain. The aforesaid actors could be the visible players or the invisible players that directly or indirectly support entrepreneurial mechanics.

### **1.4 This Paper and Approach**

In nutshell, the literature is there regarding American, European, and South African perspective, yet the studies on Indian perspective are lesser in number. The paper hence explores the theoretical aspects and conceptual approaches to operationalization of the phenomenon of 'entrepreneurial ecosystems' in perspective of local and regional grampreneurs. The terms 'grampreneurs' is a combination of two distinct words-gram (village or rural) and entrepreneur. In literal terminology, this represents the entrepreneurs or venture establishment in rural, local, and regional perspective. Indian rural and social entrepreneurship unfold extensive potential in terms of contribution to GDP, value creation, contribution to foreign exchange and local job creation. The paper hence reflects on the studies that deepen our understanding of the phenomenon in its contextual aspects. The paper first explores the concept in Indian perspective, then reflects on the methodology adopted, then explores the theoretical frameworks on subject matter and presents the proposed research model before concluding with observations for Indian startups.

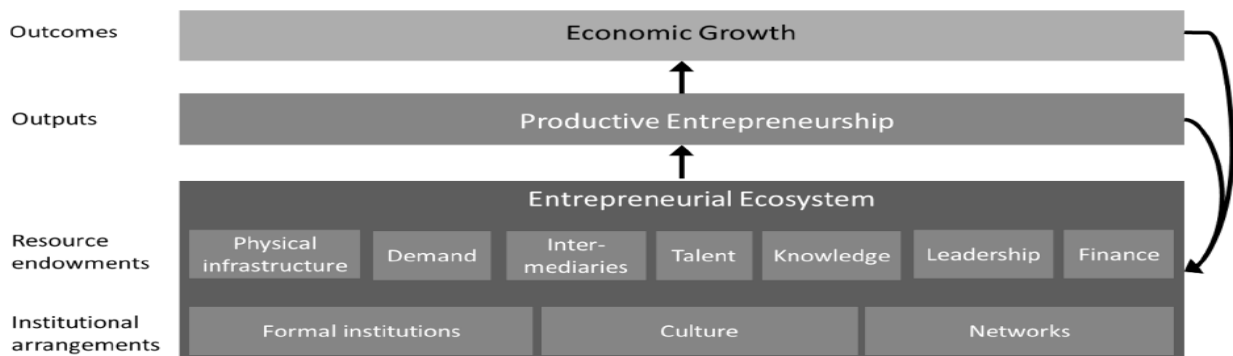
## **2. Research Question**

**RQ:** To review the theoretical frameworks regarding conceptualization of the grampreneurs in Indian perspective.

The nation ranks short on comparative ratings from corner to corner in effortless business movements, entrepreneurship, revolution, and innovations. The generally established and conventional businesses have generally been passive in enticing with emerging startups. The entrepreneurs often figures as an aspect that has been ignored in the literature equates with governance structures policies, and framework of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. For further up-gradation in the research area, the entrepreneurial ecosystem can be linked with digital innovation and business ecosystem for better entrepreneurial growth in rural India.

## 2.1 Understanding Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Indian Perspective

In Indian perspective, the contribution of MSMEs to the GDP in the manufacturing sector is 6.11 percent, while their share in the services sector is 24.6 percent. These industries, which are frequently found in rural regions, play a significant part in the maintenance of India's traditional methods of production and goods, such as handicrafts and handlooms, amongst other things. SMEs contribute a lot in economic development, so creating an effective informative and digital ecosystem that is helpful to the operation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and cottage industries is just as crucial in stimulating entrepreneurial activity as is the facilitation of large-scale companies. The Indian rural entrepreneurial eco-system is a perplexing part of intricacy system which obstructs the scenario of doing business and commerce in India. In the country like India entrepreneurial system is complex, and its rural entrepreneurs have had to put great efforts and struggle to generate and cultivate their entrepreneurial ventures in their regional area. The acceleration of India's regional entrepreneurial system growth largely depends on creation of conditions conducive to effective working – an effective impetus government and authoritarian environment, Conducive digital entrepreneurial ecosystem for digital economy, sufficient capital flow (debt and equity mutually), sustainability in businesses and support from society, and accessibility of suitable talent and mentoring. The studies (Stam & van de Ven, 2021) across low to medium income nations revealed the prevalence of institutional arrangements, resource endowments, outputs as shaping the outcomes. There appears to be a correlation between a country's support for and encouragement of entrepreneurship and its degree of self-sufficiency. Entrepreneurial potential, capacities, and ecosystem development contribute a great deal to the growth of a country's ability to compete economically on a global scale. The entrepreneurship ecosystem has long been hailed as a way to increase youth employment rates across the country (Rathna et al., 2023); as well as boost the chances of incorporating technological advances into economic production, of disrupting established business models, and of fostering a more inventive business climate. Entrepreneurial ecosystem elements have been shown to have a major impact on entrepreneurial development at the national level (Sonkar & Sarkar, 2018).



**Figure 1:** Mapping the influences.

Source: (Stam & van de Ven, 2021)

A study (Batthini & Tripathy, 2005) by entrepreneurship development institute of India observed the incidence of lack of extensive research focus in entrepreneurship education and knowledge brokering and monetization in Indian universities. Another study (Batthini, 2016) delved on the need for improving upon the haphazard need for

institutional mechanisms and formalization of ecosystem elements outreach across masses. The studies (Prashad et al., 2005) have even underlined the scope for academic institutions as adopting curriculum (Parthasarathy, 2005) based changes to prepare the next generation for challenges ahead. Institutional ecosystem seems to be core aspect on which maximum studies have been conducted. Another section of studies (Batthini & Tripathy, 2005) seem to dominate on the institutional ecosystem-industrial linkages as central to agenda of fostering and developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Indian perspective. In fact, initial research on trends shaping entrepreneurship development ecosystem in India; point toward multiple dimensions, aspects, and prospects. The trends are direct as well as lateral, identifiable as well as un-identifiable and vertical as well as horizontal in nature and scope. The respective studies (Parthasarathy, 2005) seem to emphasize diverse parameters on the subject matter as such.

**RQ2: How do Grampreneurs influence and shape the dynamics of local and regional entrepreneurial ecosystems in rural areas, and what factors underlie their contributions to these ecosystems?**

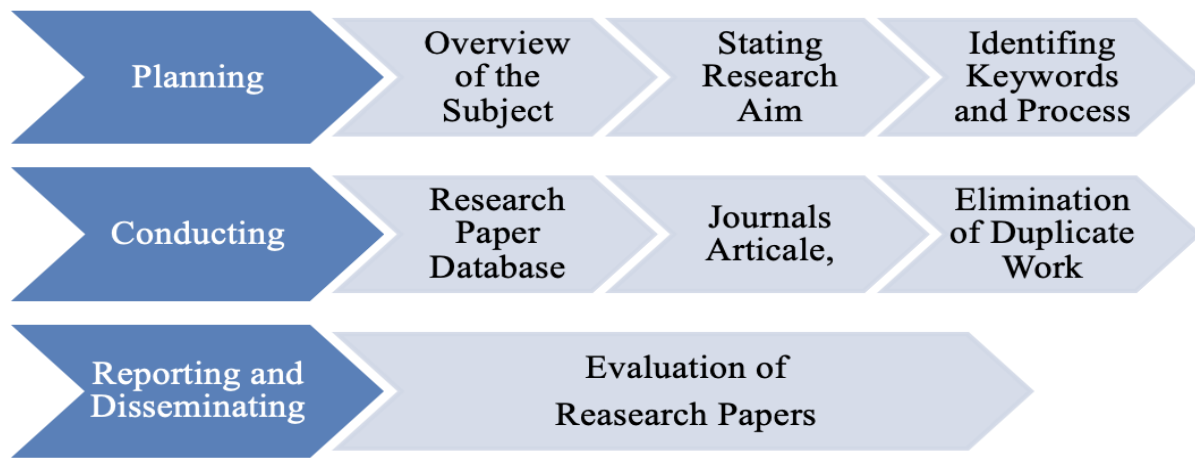
Grampreneurs play a significant role in shaping local and regional entrepreneurial ecosystems in rural areas. Their contributions are multifaceted and extend to various dimensions of entrepreneurship, including economic, social, and cultural aspects. These mature entrepreneurs influence their generation of experiences, Knowledge, skills, and deep-rooted community networks to craft businesses that are often exclusive and personalized to the explicit needs of their rural (Gram) communities. They inoculate vitality into these ecosystems by filling gaps in local markets, cultivating innovation, and offering mentorship to younger entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Grampreneurs are contributory in constructing social capital within their communities; entrepreneurs' businesses often become centers for social interface and community engagement to empower. This promotes a sense of relatedness and togetherness in rural places, therefore making these communities sustainable. Additionally, grampreneurs are known for their resilience and adaptability which is important especially in rural areas with limited resource availability and support systems. The rural entrepreneurial ecosystem is home to grampreneurs who have been successful because of their ability to recognize niche opportunities, adapt to changing market conditions and a strong sense of community. Besides, they have a combination of traditional and modern skills that makes them valuable resources for economic development agencies and local governments promoting rural entrepreneurship.

In summary, Grampreneurs are active agents in rural entrepreneurial ecosystems, and their contributions are essential to the vitality and sustainability of these areas. By understanding the specific roles and factors that drive their success, stakeholders can better support and harness the potential of Grampreneurs, ultimately enhancing the prospects of rural entrepreneurship.

### **3. Methodology**

To achieve a thorough grasp of the local and regional entrepreneurial environment, it is imperative to examine literature pertaining to this phenomenon. Scrutinizing the present state of scholarly investigations and combining the findings is a crucial undertaking in propelling the development of the notion of local and regional entrepreneurial ecosystem in India.

The review consisted of three steps (see Fig. 2): (1) planning, (2) conducting the review, and (3) reporting and dissemination (Tranfield et al., 2003). First, the keywords and search terms which make up the concept of regional entrepreneurial ecosystem in India were identified.



**Figure 2:** Systematic Literature Review Process

For the purpose of extensive literature review, a set of core search terms was identified as: entrepreneurial ecosystem, regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, rural entrepreneurship, startup, venture ecosystem, incubator, entrepreneurial orientation, and mentor support for self-venture, entrepreneurial venture, Startup India for rural areas, self-employment, incubation support, tax support for rural entrepreneurs, and financial support for entrepreneurs. The research words were finalized in line with topic and the chosen words related to 'AND' and 'OR'. In addition to this, research relied on four step paper selection criteria. The research insisted on original and meta-analysis research papers on chronological order from evolution of concept. For research to be included in this exercise, it should contain significant empirical evidence of construct operationalization, should be published in standard publication in India or across global prospects, should reflect upon the research construct of entrepreneurial ecosystem in empirical and analytical manner, need to contain the aforesaid key words in factor scheme or as part of hypothesis or research model or as part of scale validation or scale refinement purpose. The rationale was to screen those relevant papers which could provide statistically significant and empirical evidence for construct operationalization. The methodology employed in this research aims to comprehensively assess the local and regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, focusing on the unique perspective of "Grampreneurs" in rural areas. The term "Grampreneur" refers to entrepreneurial individuals, typically individuals, who engage in entrepreneurial activities in rural settings. This research methodology is designed to provide a holistic understanding of how Grampreneurs interact with and contribute to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in rural regions.

#### 4. Theoretical framework

The grampreneurs or rural entrepreneurship (Jha, 2018) is a relatively new research phenomenon in case of Asian and Indian perspective. The process of theorizing the "entrepreneurship phenomenon across ecosystems" draws heavily from the pre-existing literature. According to the research, "psychological" underpinnings direct "individual" patterns and ranges of cognition, sensemaking, and decision-making. The opposite school of thought holds that an "entrepreneur's mindset" is heavily influenced by the local environment, the local actors, and the local influences that are immediately around the person in question. The third form of influence is the government and non-government entities who, through their directive setting, are said to affect how gram entrepreneurs make decisions within their limited resources. A study (Vieira et al., 2023) on social entrepreneurship measurement framework elucidated on the three main schools of thought: American, European, and developing country perspective

**Table 1: Understanding Variables**

	Dimension	Definition of Variables	Theoretical Basis
Macro Level Actors	Governmental Support Mechanism	Government Policy- The variable represents the policy framework, tax, and fiscal incentives to promote and hasten the entrepreneurial activity in national perspective	(Vieira et al., 2023)
		Importance of Finance- The variable stands for the role of finance policies, venture funding, angel investing and likewise credit and control policies for entrepreneurial investments and start ups	(Isenberg, 2010)
		Infrastructure- The variable determines the state of affairs regarding the infrastructure for connectivity-physical and data connectivity as facilitating ore restraining the flow of factors and information and knowledge	(David et al., 2021)
	Social Contexts/Norms	Culture- The variable represents the social norms, mores and general aspirations and outlook for jobs, self-employment in comparison with government sector employment	(Arafeh, 2016)
	Digitalization	Digital- The variable stands for extent of flows of information and data as across digital channels and scope of connectivity in seamless manner	(Cantner et al., 2021)
Meso-Level Actors	Business Ecosystems	Mentor Supports- The variable stands for the presence of mentoring by field experts, existing entrepreneurs and learning ecosystem	(Ferreira et al., 2023)
		Human Capital- The variable represents the skills and talent in form of human capital	(Ferreira et al., 2023)
		Markets-The variable stands for the access to markets and market-oriented approach being adopted	(Cantner et al., 2021)
		Business Incubators-The variable stands for the incubation and institutionalized incubators as facilitating the effective mentoring and incubation of new business ideas	(Arafeh, 2016)
		Business Networking- The variable stands for networking and its presence across the ecosystem in variable proportions	(Bala Subrahmanya, 2022)
Firm level Actors	Firm based presence	Entrepreneurial Orientation of management is a critical variable as this determines the pace and nature of firm-based decision making	(Ferreira et al., 2023)
		Suppliers as variable play a considerable role in outsourcing and getting the services and supplies from within the system rather than going in for self-manufacturing or production	(Cantner et al., 2021)
		Knowledge Brokers-This variable is gaining significance	(Daniel Isenberg,

		as idea economy is picking up	2014)
	Governance Aggregation	Governance Mechanisms- This variable focuses on the aggregation of interests, multiple stakeholders and actors involved in the ecosystem	(Isenberg, 2010)

**Table 2: Analysis of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Model**

Analysis Aspect	Marsh all	Schumpete r	Moo re	Bloo m Dees	Isenber g	Krantis	Koltai' s	Khatta b	Colombeilli
Government Policies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Suppliers	*								*
Competitors	*	*	*						
Market Global R&D					*	*			
Digitalization								*	
Technology								*	*
Mentors, Support Aspects					*			*	
Venture Funding	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pro-Entrepreneur Policies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Human Capital	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Knowledge brokering					*	*			

Source: (Sonkar & Sarkar, 2018)

## 5. Literature

The constructs and precursors of the rural entrepreneurial development across the rural economic sector existing in the developing countries may vary tremendously. Despite the emerging role of micro to small and medium scale enterprises in a transitional economy like India, lesser literature is available specifically with regard to internationalization of SMEs in India in context of resources, Rural Entrepreneurial Orientation and ability to leverage the economic resources in rural perspective. The field of study known as "entrepreneurial ecosystem" encourages a can-do attitude in students and new business owners alike. In an entrepreneurial ecosystem, students are encouraged to cultivate traits such as creativity, independence, initiative, and a willingness to take calculated risks. Vocational and occupational expertise enrichment among youth is the foundation of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Mukesh & Rajasekharan Pillai, 2020).

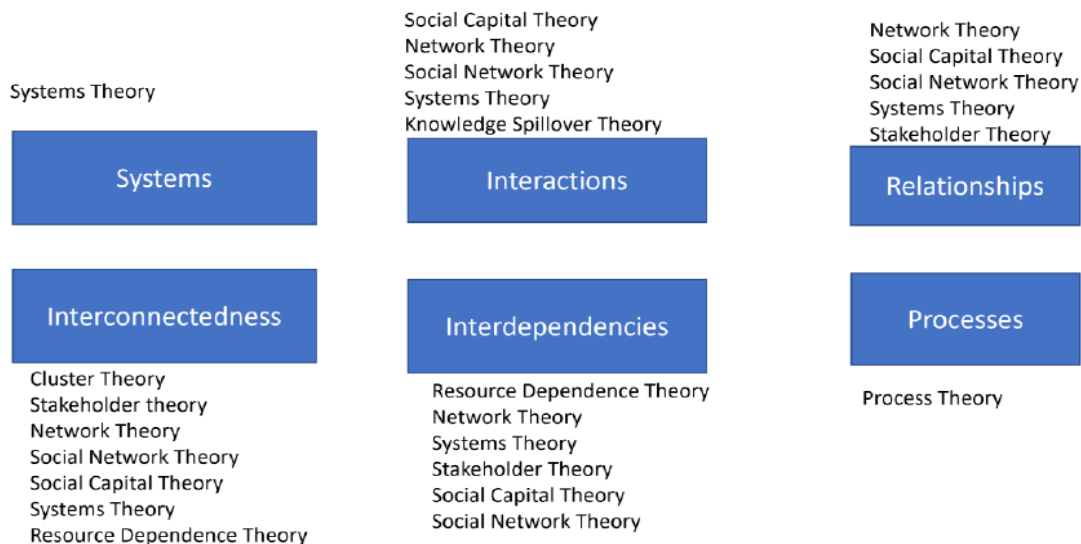
The primary goal of entrepreneurial education programs is to pave the way for individuals to become self-employed and foster the growth of their own businesses. The COVID epidemic has put a spotlight on these types of academic programs. In the simplest terms, the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Higgins & Elliott, 2011) revolves around the



propagation of traits, tendencies, and qualities that, in turn, give rise to the development of novel business models and the combination and permutation of existing production-based factors. Such courses of study (Batthini, 2016) equip students to identify gaps in the market, develop novel, viable business models, and adapt their product or service to ever-changing, unpredictably competitive markets. The traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem formulation model (Pretorius et al., 2005) considers the business knowledge, skills, business plan utilization, learning approaches, facilitator and program context, as essential elements of vocational expertise development in youth. The studies as mentioned in sections below hence seek to bring together the scattered literature on subject matter. Resources and opportunities play a mediating role in harnessing and leveraging the potential market-based options and challenges. The strategic and relational access to resources is vital towards the operationalization of the construct in uncertain and turbulent business environments. The respective growth aspirations supported by control over critical and strategic resources in the growth and evolution perspective. Research on (Stephens et al., 2022) on conceptualization of entrepreneurial ecosystems and dimensions explored the multiple domains and aspects of the research construct. The study across 100 small to micro scale small time businessmen classified the factors as government legislation, culture, finance, access to market and social norms. The study explored the relationship across the constituent factors and the respective development of entrepreneurial ecosystem in rural perspective. Another research (Nthubu et al., 2022) focused on the actor-network prospects in the ecosystem conceptualization and emphasized the rationale for actor's relations in a network as determining the leverage potential. The review of theoretical perspectives (Fubah, 2021) reveal the plethora of theories that collectively seek to reflect on the dynamics of the phenomenon. The Indian rural entrepreneurial eco-system is a perplexing part of intricacy system which obstructs the scenario of doing business and commerce in India. In the country like India entrepreneurial system is complex, and its rural entrepreneurs have had to put great efforts and struggle to generate and cultivate their entrepreneurial ventures in their regional area. The acceleration of India's regional entrepreneurial system growth largely depends on creation of conditions conducive to effective working – an effective impetus government and authoritarian environment, Conducive digital entrepreneurial ecosystem for digital economy, sufficient capital flow (debt and equity mutually), sustainability in businesses and support from society, and accessibility of suitable talent and mentoring. According to the study (Miles & Morrison, 2020), entrepreneurial ecosystem method is used in business, nationwide, or regional framework, and has shown the essential need for transforming economies around the formation of creative and innovative ideas, and technology-based products and services. Entrepreneurial ecosystems work as a network, or system, which creates an interaction of individuals and institutions, like financial and accounting mediators, education institutions and research foundations, vendors and customers, international businesses, or the administrative government. The literature of the study has emphasized on recognizing the appropriate stakeholders like entrepreneurial Firms and entrepreneurs and how these collaborators interrelate with other stakeholders in a specified system. Despite the recognition of the approach, the researchers and practitioners have almost ignored the governance of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Another research (Sussan & Acs, 2017) examined the scope for the prospective need for a conceptualization of entrepreneurial activities in an innovative and digital age. The study introduced a conceptual framework to examine entrepreneurship by integrating (DE) Digital ecosystem and (EE) Entrepreneurial ecosystem. The combination of these two elements facilitated the development of understanding of the enhanced interaction of agents, clients, and users that projects the approaches related to consumer's individual and socialistic behavior. The framework of the digital ecosystem was observed as comprising the digital infrastructure governance, digital user citizenship, digital entrepreneurship, and digital marketplace. The study revealed that that literature in the field of the digital economy is lacking and to fill the gaps the study proposes digital entrepreneurship ecosystem (DEE) structure through combining knowledge from MIS and marketing. Another study (Roundy et al., 2018) explored the construction of entrepreneurial ecosystems is acknowledged as an action which can lead to economic growth and renewal of the community. In the current environment, social entrepreneurship is also receiving rising attention to addressing social and economic problems in a better manner. However, the current researchers seem to be more focused towards entrepreneurial ecosystems, such as agents, shareholders, users and support organizations, influence ecosystem performance, but the role of



social entrepreneurs in the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems is still ambiguous. Nor is it known how social entrepreneurs manipulate and influence the start-up and operations of the ventures. Hence upon the evaluation on various aspects, it was hypothesized that entrepreneurial ecosystem is an activity which influences the working and efficiency of social entrepreneurs through various instruments like demographics of resource providers, labors, support entrepreneurial infrastructure, culture, governance, and knowledge-based opportunities. Another research on the study Digital ecosystem is the most imperative strategic subject in the current progressive digital economy. Digital ecosystem is vibrant and unconventional in nature. The economy progresses as new companies join the industry and heterogeneous systems integrate into different schemes and subsystem of the economy. The features of the digital ecosystem showed that the technological and economic success under the competitive environment with digital platform system. Another study (Stam, 2015) on subject sought to improve the quality of entrepreneurship, the regional entrepreneurship policies are going through a changeover. The study also described the transition of entrepreneurship policy into entrepreneurship economic policy. To accommodate the transition of these policies entrepreneurial ecosystem method is taken into consideration. This study evaluated the features of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and gives a narrative synthesis. It also presented a structure for evaluating the interrelation among the elements of the ecosystem. This study offered various relevant start-up components for further investigations in the context of regional policy and entrepreneurial ecosystem.



**Figure 3: Amalgam of Theories**

Source: (Fubah, 2021)

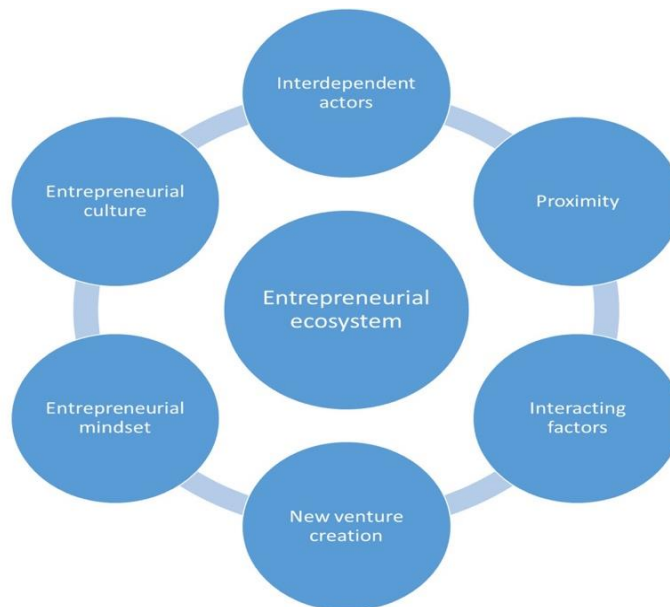
### 5.1 Conceptualization of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The studies on conceptualization of entrepreneurial ecosystems owe a lot to the introductory texts (Arafeh, 2016; Isenberg, 2010; Stam & van de Ven, 2021). The research studies (Daniel Isenberg, 2014) on subject matter seem to divide the discussion across the lines of extent of interdependence as well as in line with the notion of flow of resources, information, and general flows across the ecosystem perspective. The upward or downward causation (Sonkar & Sarkar, 2018) as evident in the ecosystem or communities seem to facilitate the upward and downward flow of resources as well as information. The value creation (Hayter et al., 2018) impetus on the other side stresses the role of collective, horizontal, and vertical value propositions being created and shared. The notion of interdependence across constituent elements focuses more on the interdependency across actors representing consistent flows of supply and demand in terms of knowledge, information, productive factors, and economic resources. The interdependence perspective (Cantner et al., 2021) calls for the extensive relationship across the

elements of cultural, societal, economic, material, and cognitive perspective. The interdependence perspective reflects extensively on the notions of cross exchanges and mutual directional flows of material and information, knowledge, and mentoring. The perspective advances the school of thought involving the focus on accelerators specializing in connecting, developing, coordinating, and selecting the stakeholders that equally contribute to knowledge flows and informational flows along with material sharing and flow of goods and services. The perspective witnesses the linear and non-linear co-evolutionary dynamics across the ecosystem elements in a regional or local perspective. The other school of thought (Hayter et al., 2018) emphasizes the focus on extent and pattern of connection across the stakeholders and the constituent actors across the ecosystem in consideration. The research on subject regards the manner and pattern of ecosystem configurations as severely influencing the entrepreneurship outcomes and outputs in more than one aspect. The studies (Ferreira et al., 2023) even reflect on the gender issues, discrimination and other social inclusion and exclusion as severely shaping the ecosystem's properties to thrive and contribute. The prospective linkages (Jha, 2018) between the ecosystem evolution, rate of transformation and entrepreneurial activity and digitalization is indeed influenced by the startup rates, rate of registration of enterprises and meaningful economic activities. The literature on subject (Mason & Brown, 2014) seems to link the productive entrepreneurship with the outcomes and structural changes in economy as well.

## 5.2 Approaches on Regional Conceptualization

The regional conceptualization (Cantner et al., 2021) emphasizes the focus on path dependency, downward causation, horizontal and vertical exchanges that usually are undertaken across the length and breadth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystem (Spigel, Ben, 2008) in local, regional, and rural perspective will hinge on the pace of relationships that are being formed and multiplied. The study identified the relationships as either nascent, strengthening or weakening or exhibiting resilience across the space and time. The actors and processes (Hayter et al., 2018) no doubt constitute the essential elements, yet the levels of connectivity across government-based macro actors, meso actors and micro actors do determine the scope and pattern of relationships. The leverage of resources, extent of co-sharing and collaboration regarding informational and non-informational resources, regarding human and nonhuman resources; seem to impinge heavily upon the ecosystem design, typology and internal functioning and benefits to be realized as illustrated in figure below.



**Figure 4: Entrepreneurial Ecosystems**

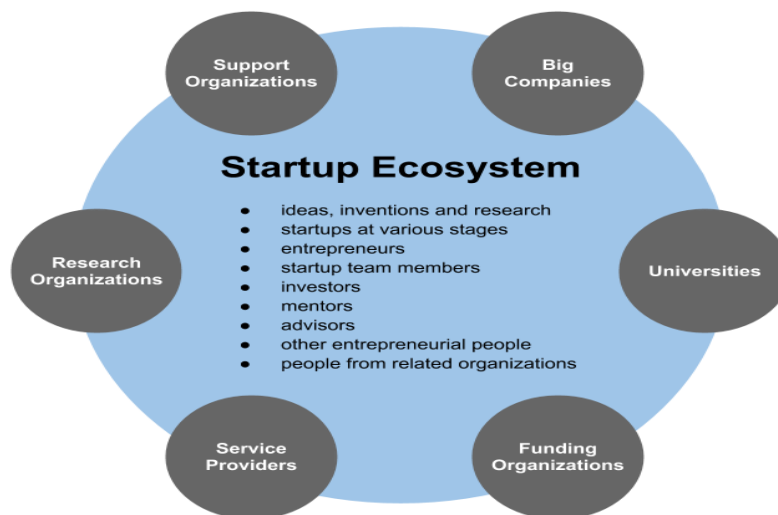
Source: (Spigel, Ben, 2008)

**Table 3: Trends in Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Evolution in India**

Trends in Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Evolution in India	
<b>India based studies</b>	(Arafeh, 2016; Batthini, 2016; Batthini & Tripathy, 2005; Mukesh & Rajasekharan Pillai, 2020; Parthasarathy, 2005)
<b>North India based studies</b>	(Adhana, 2020; Ali & Jabeen, 2022; Korreck, 2019; Sharma, 2018)
<b>NCR based studies</b>	(Bala Subrahmanya, 2022; David et al., 2021; Jha, 2018; PIB, 2023; Rathna et al., 2023)
<b>Rural India based studies</b>	(Bhatia et al., 2022; Narayan et al., 2018; Prashad et al., 2005; Sharma, 2018; Sonkar & Sarkar, 2018)

### Startup India Initiative

The startup India mission under the Atam Nirbhar approach is a landmark initiative that seeks to accord official recognition to the new startups in the areas of technology, agriculture, food processing, biotechnology, and rural self-employment enhancement. The program ensures the formal and institutional support to the recognized ventures, in terms of tax incentives, in terms of knowledge sharing, in terms of business incubation.



**Figure 4: Startup Ecosystems**

Source: (PIB, 2023)

### Key Themes in the Literature

The existing literature underscores several key themes that pertain to the topic of assessing rural entrepreneurial ecosystems through a Grampreneur lens:

1. **The Role of Grampreneurs in Rural Ecosystems:** Grampreneurs bring innovation, social capital, and a sense of community to rural entrepreneurial ecosystems. Their activities often result in the diversification of local economies and the strengthening of social networks.
2. **Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Entrepreneurship:** Rural entrepreneurship faces distinct challenges, such as limited access to financing, but also unique opportunities related to community engagement and the preservation of local traditions.

3. **Adaptation of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Models:** There is a growing need to adapt traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem models to account for the rural context. Rural areas require tailored strategies to support and stimulate entrepreneurship.

## 6. Significance of the Research

This research on "Exploring the role of grampreneurs in rural entrepreneurial ecosystems" holds significant implications on multiple fronts. Firstly, it addresses the pressing need to understand the evolving entrepreneurial dynamics in rural settings. In a world where urban-centric entrepreneurship often dominates discussions, this research highlights the often-overlooked rural entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Furthermore, the study is significant in its exploration of the unique role played by Grampreneurs, older adults or retirees, in rural entrepreneurship. Their contributions extend beyond business profitability; they serve as vital bridges between generations, preserving traditional knowledge and skills, and fostering community development. By examining this demographic within the entrepreneurial context, the research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship's social and economic dimensions. The research findings have the potential to influence regional policy and intervention strategies. By shedding light on the challenges and opportunities faced by rural Grampreneurs, the research equips policymakers and community leaders with insights to design tailored initiatives that support and invigorate the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The study's significance extends to the broader academic landscape. It not only adds to the body of knowledge on rural entrepreneurship but also offers a framework for analyzing entrepreneurial ecosystems in specific demographic contexts. By emphasizing the importance of community, culture, and intergenerational knowledge transfer, this research underscores the richness and complexity of entrepreneurial ecosystems and their vital role in regional development.

## 7. Observations

The term "entrepreneurial ecosystems" is not new to the field of entrepreneurship but has recently gained considerable distinction in the books of both practitioners and policymakers. This metaphor is gaining consideration in academic circles, commerce, and government administration. Entrepreneurial ecosystems engross a network association, of the interconnection of persons, a structural system, entrepreneurs, and enterprises, like mediators from financial institutions, colleges, educational universities and research institutions, resource vendors and customers, international enterprises, or the administration authorities. In this contemporary era of innovation, various researcher and investigators have revealed enormous concern over the growing regional imbalance. Specialists from economic background concur that regional economic expansion depends on generating ecosystems that sustain new value creation and creative entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the resources, ethnicity, customs, and requirements of one district community differ significantly from the other, predominantly communities from a small and rural background that face various challenges in demographics, communication, infrastructure, wealth creation, hi-tech technological, accommodation and housing challenge distinct from the other major urban areas. The studies considered in this paper unanimously point towards the incidence of region and nationwide differences in operationalization of entrepreneurship ecosystem in Indian perspective. The national institutions and university groups have been observed as focusing on standalone curriculum absorption whereas regional institutions incorporate geographic and locally prevalent business opportunities and sectors into the operationalization of entrepreneurship ecosystem. The regional institutions seem to harp more on the locally prevalent factors of production and respective economic sector based specific options in operationalizing the education perspective. The rural India based studies (Gulsia & Yadav, 2022) seem to focus more on the traditional handicrafts and rural interface based entrepreneurial ecosystem opportunities. In terms of stakeholder's perspective, the studies seem to focus more on the industry-institution or industry-academia linkages, vocational expertise, and market opportunity

linkages in ecosystem perspective. The literature review (Sinha et al., 2019) stresses the role of the incubation, business intelligence haring and pooling as vital to the effective functioning and working of the business ecosystem.

**In conclusion,** these observations provide a multifaceted view of rural Grampreneurship and its profound impact on the local and regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. Grampreneurs, through their entrepreneurial activities, represent a critical force in the preservation of local traditions, the enhancement of local economies, and the fostering of community engagement. They are dynamic agents of change who, while facing their own challenges, contribute significantly to the sustainability and vitality of rural areas. Further research and analysis will help delve deeper into these observations, offering valuable insights and recommendations for the continued development of entrepreneurship in rural regions.

## 8. Future Scope

The nation ranks short on comparative ratings from corner to corner in effortlessness business movements, entrepreneurship, revolution, and innovations. The generally established and conventional businesses have generally been passive in enticing with emerging startups. The grampreneurs often figures as an aspect that has been ignored in the literature equates with governance structures policies, and framework of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. For further up-gradation in the research area, the entrepreneurial ecosystem can be linked with digital innovation and business ecosystem for better entrepreneurial growth in rural India.

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