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"Impact of Student Start-up and Innovation Policy (SSIP 2.0) on Innovation and Entrepreneurial Culture in Higher Education Institutions of Anand District"

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Abstract
The Student Start-up and Innovation Policy 2.0 of the Government of Gujarat were introduced to strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship among students across higher education institutions. The policy aims to create a supportive ecosystem that encourages students to convert ideas into viable products, services, and start-ups. This research paper examines the role and impact of SSIP 2.0 in promoting innovation culture, start-up orientation, and skill development among students of higher education institutions in Gujarat.
The study focuses on awareness level, institutional support mechanisms, financial assistance, mentoring facilities, and student participation under SSIP 2.0. Primary data were collected from students, faculty members and administrative staff of selected colleges through structured questionnaires. Secondary data were collected from government reports, policy documents, and recent research studies. The findings indicate that SSIP 2.0 has significantly improved awareness about innovation and start-up opportunities, enhanced institutional capacity, and motivated students to pursue entrepreneurial activities. However, challenges such as limited industry linkage, procedural delays, and uneven implementation across institutions still exist. The study highlights the need for stronger mentoring networks, simplified processes, and continuous monitoring to improve policy effectiveness. The paper concludes that SSIP 2.0 is a progressive policy that can play a vital role in building a sustainable student-driven start-up ecosystem in Anand District if supported by effective implementation and stakeholder collaboration.

Keywords
Student Start-up, Innovation Policy, Higher Education, Entrepreneurship

Introduction
Innovation and entrepreneurship have emerged as key drivers of economic growth and employment generation in modern economies. In India, higher education institutions are increasingly expected to move beyond traditional teaching and research roles and actively contribute to innovation and enterprise development. Students today are not only job seekers but also potential job creators. Recognizing this shift, both central and state governments have introduced various policies to promote innovation and start-up culture among youth.
Gujarat has a long tradition of entrepreneurship and enterprise. To further strengthen this culture among students, the Government of Gujarat launched the Student Start-up and Innovation Policy in 2017, which was later upgraded to SSIP 2.0 in 2022. SSIP 2.0 aims to create a student-centric ecosystem that supports innovation from ideation to market readiness. The policy covers students from schools to universities and provides financial support, mentoring, incubation facilities, and intellectual property assistance.
Higher education institutions play a crucial role in the successful implementation of SSIP 2.0. Universities and colleges act as nodal centres for awareness creation, idea screening, project support, and fund disbursement. Faculty members serve as mentors, while incubation centres provide infrastructure and guidance. Through these mechanisms, SSIP 2.0 seeks to integrate innovation and entrepreneurship into the academic environment.
Despite its comprehensive framework, the actual impact of SSIP 2.0 depends on awareness levels, institutional readiness, student engagement, and effective coordination among stakeholders. Therefore, it becomes important to study how the policy is functioning at the ground level and what outcomes it has generated in higher education institutions. This research paper attempts to analyse the impact of SSIP 2.0 on fostering innovation and entrepreneurial culture among higher education students in Gujarat.

Student Start-up and Innovation Policy (SSIP 2.0)

The Student Start-up and Innovation Policy (SSIP 2.0) were launched by the Government of Gujarat in January 2022 to build a robust, state-wide innovation ecosystem. Valid for five years (2022–2027), it significantly expands the scope and funding of its predecessor to support young innovators from schools to universities. Compared to the first version, SSIP 2.0 has increased its outreach fivefold, targeting nearly 50 lakh (5 million) students across the state.

Salient Features of Student Start-up and Innovation Policy (SSIP 2.0)

1. Broadened Scope & Eligibility

- Age Limit: Open to any innovator up to the age of 35 years.
- Inclusivity: Covers school students (Class 9-12), diploma, vocational, undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students.
- Alumni & Dropouts: Even alumni (within 5 years of passing) and school/university dropouts are eligible for support.
- Sector Agnostic: While it focuses on "sunrise sectors" (Robotics, AI, Green Energy, Semiconductors, Blockchain), it supports innovations in any field.

2. Enhanced Financial Assistance

The policy provides direct grants to convert ideas into a Proof of Concept (PoC) or prototype:

- School Students: Up to ₹20,000 per innovation.
- Higher & Technical Education: Up to ₹2.50 Lakh per PoC/Prototype.
- IPR Support: 100% of the expenses for filing patents (up to ₹75,000 for domestic and ₹1.5 Lakh for international patents).

3. Institutional Support & "i-Hub"

- **University-Based Centres:** The policy mandates the creation of functional incubators and pre-incubation centres in all state universities.
- **i-Hub (Gujarat Student Startup and Innovation Hub):** Acts as a central "one-stop-solution" providing state-of-the-art co-working spaces, labs, and networking with angel investors and VCs.

4. "Mind-to-Market" Philosophy

- **Seed Funding:** Promising startups can access the Srujan Seed Support (S4), which provides grants between ₹2.5 Lakh to ₹10 Lakh to take a product to the market stage.
- **Mentorship:** Students get access to industry experts, legal services, and business development workshops to help scale their ventures.

5. Strategic Goals

- **Job Creators:** Aims to convert at least 1% of graduates into entrepreneurs.
- **Innovation Volume:** Targets supporting 1,000 student-led innovations and filing 1,000 patents annually.
- **Capacity Building:** Plans to empower 200+ educational institutions with strong pre-incubation facilities.

Literature Review

1. **Sharma, R., (2023)**, examined student entrepreneurship policies across Indian states and found that structured funding and mentoring significantly improve student participation in innovation activities. The study emphasized that strong institutional support helps convert student ideas into practical and market-oriented outcomes.
2. **Patel, V., & Mehta S., (2022)** studied innovation ecosystems in universities of Gujarat and observed that government initiatives such as SSIP have increased the number of student-led prototypes and start-ups. The authors also reported that differences in institutional capacity result in uneven implementation of the policy.
3. **Kumar, P. (2023),** analysed the impact of start-up policies on skill development among college students and concluded that hands-on innovation projects enhance problem-solving ability, leadership skills, and decision-making capacity.
4. **Rao, N., & Singh, A., (2024)** explored faculty engagement in student innovation programs and found that trained and motivated faculty members play a crucial role in guiding students through technical, academic, and practical challenges.
5. **Desai, K., (2022)** focused on financial support mechanisms for student start-ups in India and reported that timely and adequate funding builds confidence and motivates students to seriously pursue entrepreneurial ideas.
6. **Joshi, R., & Trivedi, M. (2023)** examined awareness levels of start-up policies among higher education students and concluded that workshops, innovation clubs, and regular events significantly improve policy outreach and participation.
7. **Banerjee, A., (2024).** Role of incubation support in higher education institutions. Journal of Entrepreneur (2024) analysed incubation support in higher education institutions and highlighted that access to incubation infrastructure improves the survival rate and growth potential of student start-ups.
8. **Iyer, S., (2023)** reviewed national and state-level innovation policies and concluded that close alignment between education systems and innovation policies is essential for developing a sustainable innovation culture.

Research Problem

Despite the implementation of SSIP 2.0, there is limited empirical evidence on its actual impact on students and institutions in higher education. There is a need to assess awareness, participation, support mechanisms, and challenges associated with the policy.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness about SSIP 2.0 among higher education students?
2. How has SSIP 2.0 influenced student participation in innovation and start-up activities?
3. What types of institutional support are provided under SSIP 2.0?
4. What challenges are faced in the implementation of SSIP 2.0?

Objectives of the Study

1. To study awareness of SSIP 2.0 among higher education students
2. To analyse the impact of SSIP 2.0 on student innovation activities
3. To examine institutional support mechanisms under SSIP 2.0
4. To identify challenges and suggest improvements

Hypothesis of the Study

1. **Ho1:** There is no significant association between a student's level of motivation and their entrepreneurial performance.
2. **Ho2:** The quality of mentorship and industry networking does not significantly affect the progress of student startups.
3. **Ho3:** The accessibility of SSIP Cells and ease of funding have no significant impact on student startup outcomes.
4. **Ho4:** There is no significant difference in startup engagement based on gender, stream of study, or information channels.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the impact of SSIP 2.0 on innovation and entrepreneurial culture in higher education institutions of Anand District.

Population and Sample

The population include students, faculty members, and administrative staff from selected higher education institutions in Anand District. A structured questionnaire is used to collect primary data. Convenience sampling method is adopted due to accessibility and time constraints.

Data Collection

Primary data is collected through a Google Form survey. Secondary data is collected from government policy documents, academic journals, reports, and official SSIP portals.

Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from 105 students, faculty members and administration staff from selected colleges in Anand. Secondary data were collected from government policy documents, reports, journals, and websites.

Scope of the Study

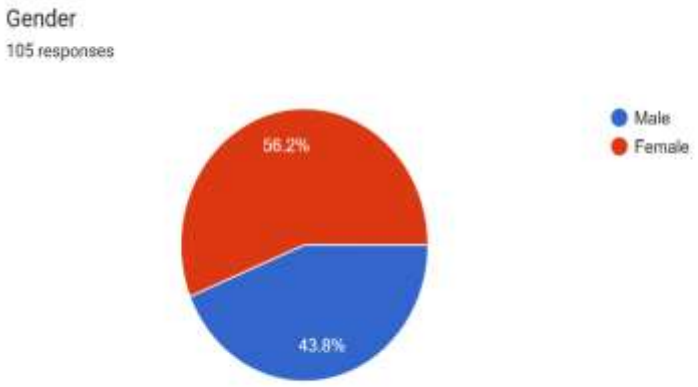
The study is limited to higher education institutions in Anand district and focuses on student-level and institutional-level impact of SSIP 2.0.

Limitations of the Study

The sample size is limited. Responses are based on self-reported data. The study does not cover school-level implementation.

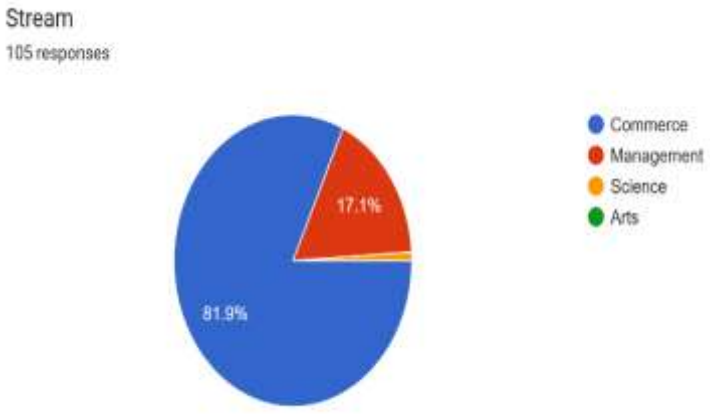
Data Analysis and Interpretation

1.1 Gender Wise Classification



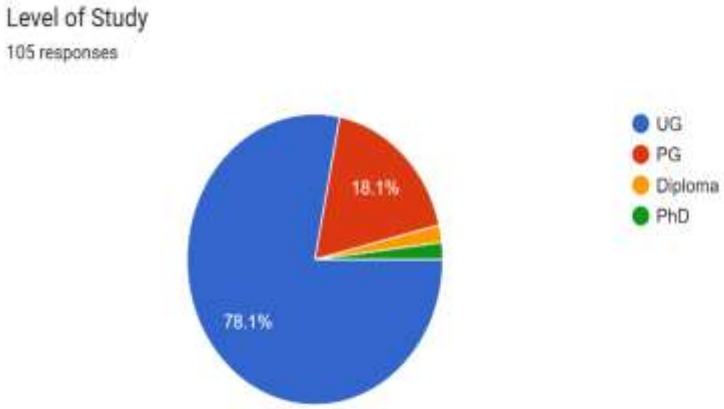
The chart 1.1 displays the gender breakdown of 105 respondents, showing a majority of female participants at 56.2%. This is compared to a male representation of 43.8%, indicating a fairly balanced but female-leaning sample. The data suggests that the survey reached a slightly higher proportion of women than men within the target group.

1.2 Stream Wise Classification



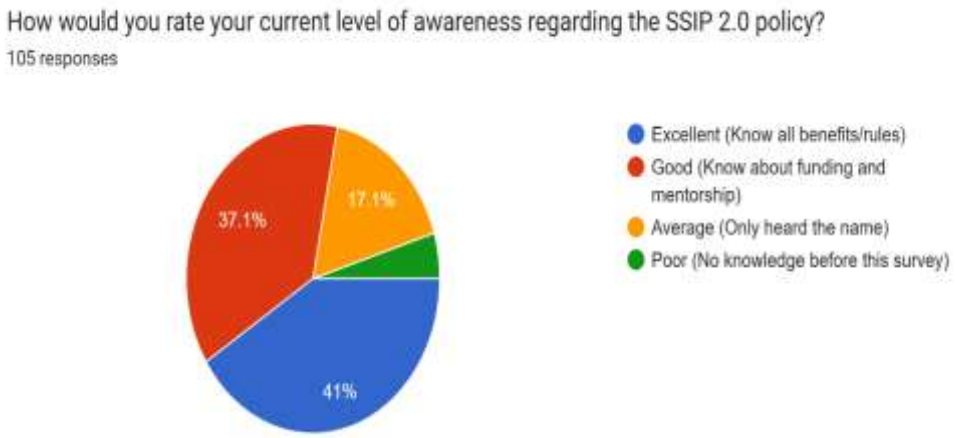
The Chart 1.2 shows that nearly 82% of the 105 people surveyed are from the Commerce stream, making up the vast majority of the group. About 17% of respondents are from Management, while Science and Arts have almost no representation. This means the survey results mainly reflect the views and experiences of students studying Commerce.

1.3 Level of Study Wise Classification



The Chart 1.3 exhibits that a large majority of the 105 participants are undergraduate (UG) students, making up 78.1% of the total. Post Graduate students represent the next significant group at 18.1%, while those in Diploma or PhD programs make up only a tiny fraction of the group. This indicates that the survey results are primarily based on the feedback and perspectives of students currently pursuing their first degree.

1.4 How would you rate your current level of awareness regarding the SSIP 2.0 policy?



The Chart 1.4 shows that about 41% of the 105 participants have an excellent understanding of the policy and its benefits. Another 37.1% say they have a good knowledge of the funding and mentorship aspects, while 17.1% have only heard the name. Overall, this means the vast majority of respondents are well-informed, with only a very small group having no knowledge of the policy before taking the survey.

1.5 Through which channel did you first learn about SSIP 2.0?

The Chart 1.5 indicates that the majority of the 105 respondents first learned about SSIP 2.0 through official college channels, with 39% hearing from faculty members and 33.3% from notice boards. Social media and government websites served as the initial source for 16.2% of the group, while friends and workshops played much smaller roles. This data suggests that direct communication from college staff and campus displays are the most effective ways to spread awareness about the policy to students.

1.6 Since the implementation of SSIP 2.0, have you participated in any of the following?

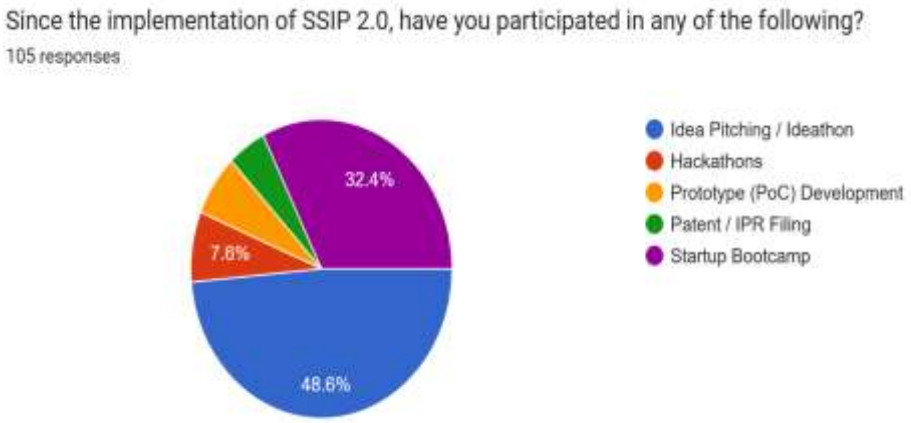
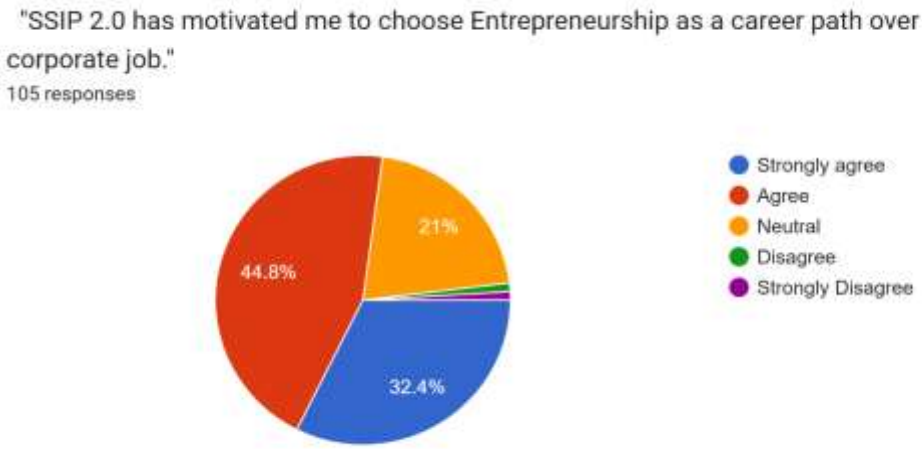
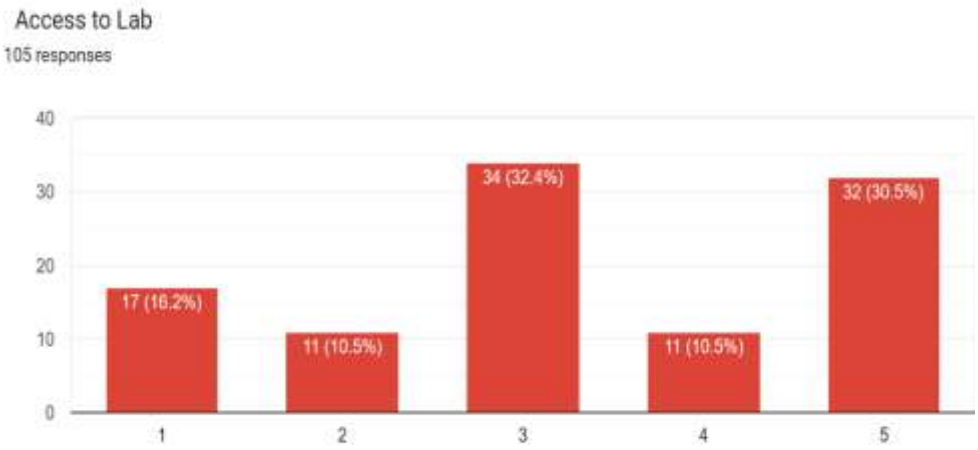


Chart 1.6 reveals that nearly half of the 105 respondents have participated in Idea Pitching or Idea-thons since the implementation of SSIP 2.0. Startup Bootcamps are the second most popular activity at 32.4%, while smaller groups have engaged in Hackathons, Prototype development, or Patent filing. This shows that while interest in early-stage idea generation is very high, there is still significant room for students to move into more technical development and intellectual property activities.

1.7 SSIP 2.0 has motivated me to choose Entrepreneurship as a career path over a traditional corporate job

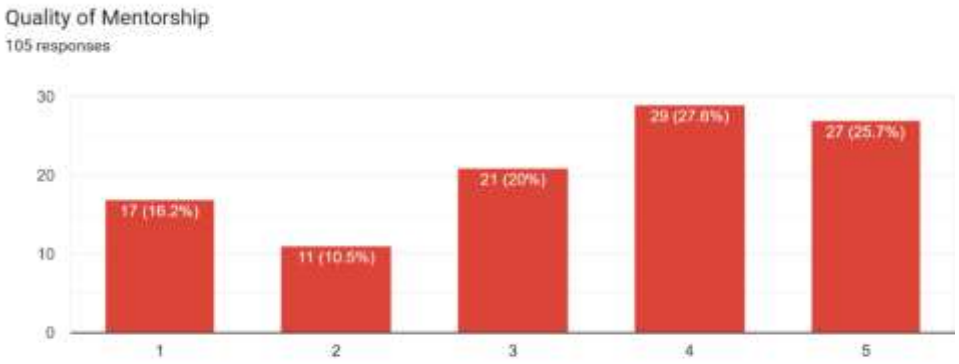


The Chart 1.7 indicates that a combined total of over 77% of respondents agree or strongly agree that SSIP 2.0 has motivated them to choose entrepreneurship over a traditional corporate job. While 21% of the 105 participants remain neutral on this career shift, only a very small minority expressed disagreement. This indicates that the policy is highly successful in its goal of encouraging students to pursue their own business ventures.



1.8 Accessibility of Lab

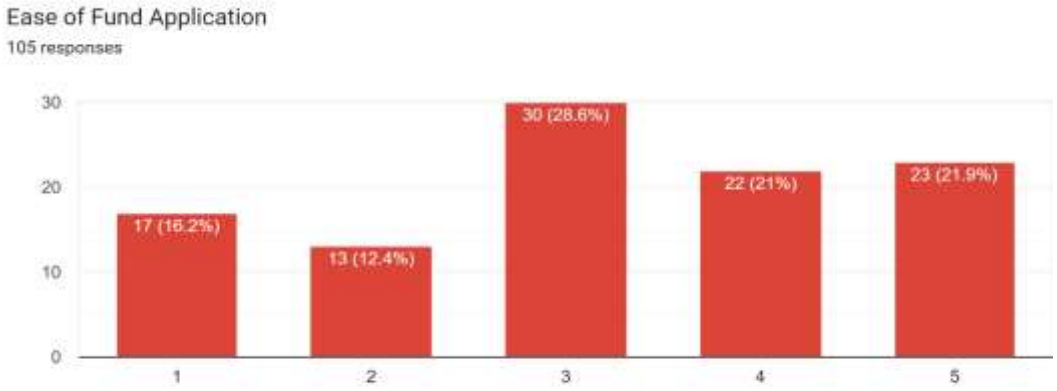
The Chart 1.8 shows that student satisfaction with lab access is varied, with the largest group of 34 respondents (32.4%) giving it a middle-of-the-road rating of 3. However, a significant portion of the 105 participants are highly satisfied, with 30.5% giving it the highest rating of 5. While the overall feedback is leaning toward the positive side, the mixed ratings suggest there is still room to improve the availability or quality of lab facilities for some students.



1.9 Quality of Mentorship

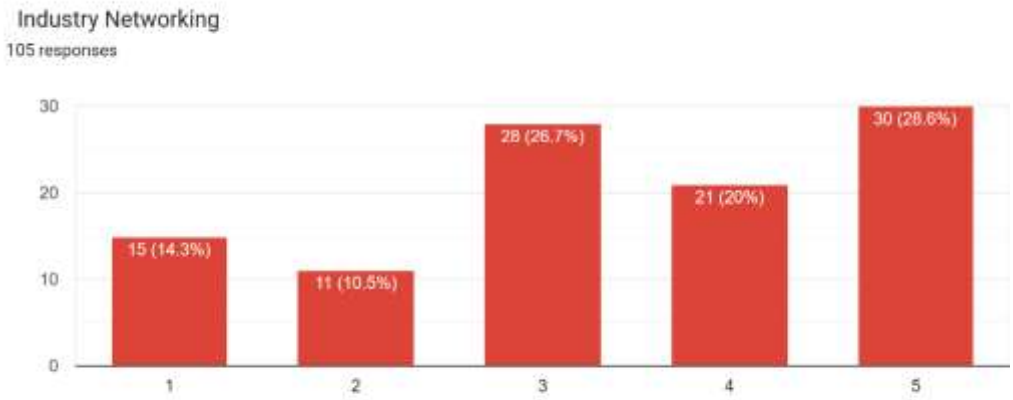
The Chart 1.9 exhibits that Quality of Mentorship, over half of the 105 respondents are satisfied with the guidance they receive, with 27.6% giving it a high rating of 4 and 25.7% giving the top rating of 5. While 20% feel the mentorship is average, a smaller group of about 26% expressed lower levels of satisfaction. Overall, the feedback suggests that while the mentorship program is generally effective, there is still an opportunity to improve the quality of support for all students.

1.10 Ease of Fund Application



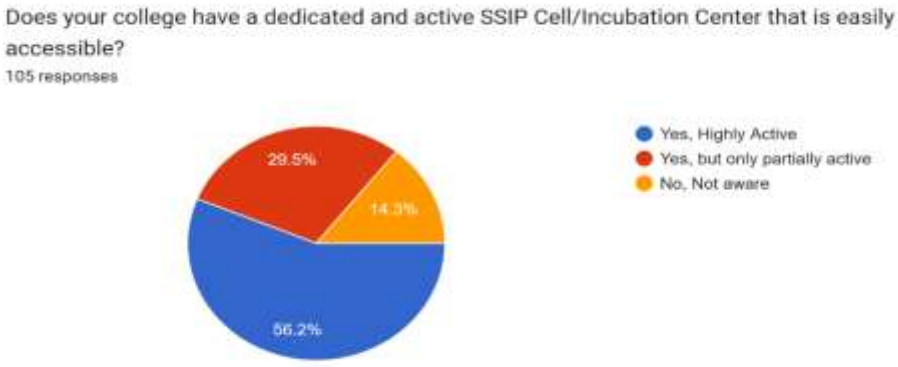
The chart 1.10 shows that the largest group of 105 respondents (28.6%) gave the funding application process a neutral rating of 3. While roughly 43% of participants find the process relatively easy by giving it a 4 or 5, nearly 29% rated it poorly, suggesting it remains a challenge for some. Overall, the mixed feedback indicates that while many students can navigate the system, there is a clear need to simplify the application steps to make funding more accessible.

1.11 Industry Networking



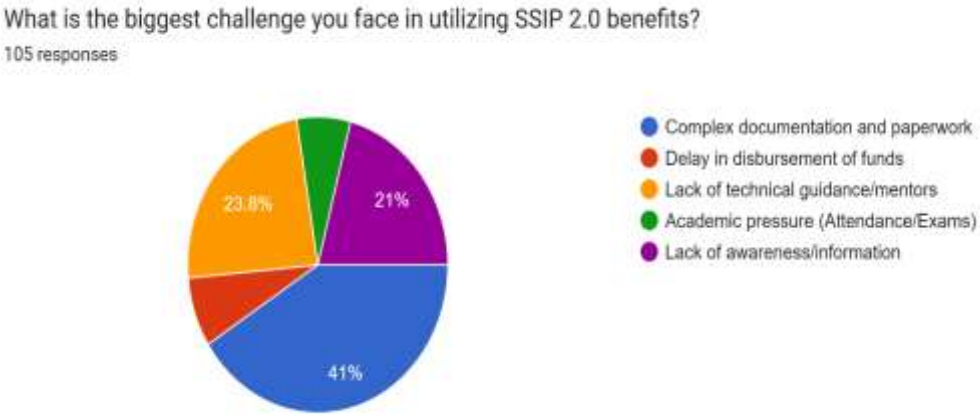
The chart 1.11 reveals that 48.6% of the 105 participants are satisfied with the networking opportunities provided, with the largest group giving the highest possible rating of 5. While 26.7% of respondents feel neutral about these connections, nearly a quarter of the group expressed low satisfaction with their access to industry experts. Overall, the results show that while the policy is successfully connecting many students to the business world, there is still a significant need to expand these networking efforts for others.

1.12 Does your college have a dedicated and active SSIP Cell/Incubation Centre that is easily accessible?



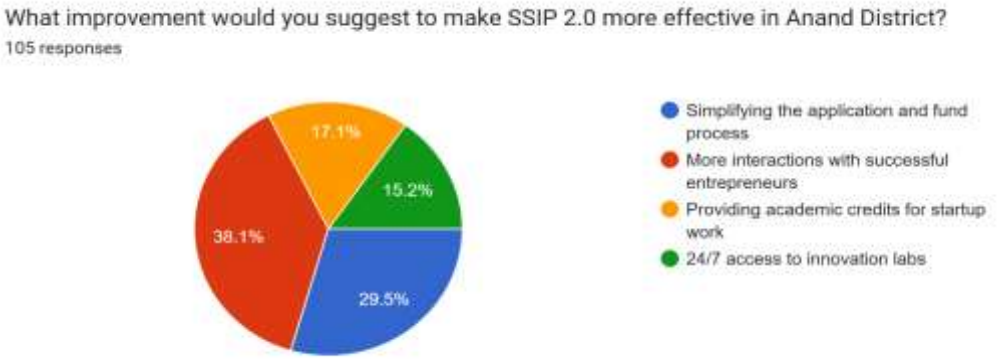
The Chart 1.12 reveals that the majority of the 105 participants (56.2%) believe their college has a highly active and easily accessible SSIP Cell or Incubation Centre. While nearly 30% feel these centres are only partially active, about 14% of students are completely unaware of their existence. Overall, while most students have good access to these resources, there is still a need to increase awareness and activity for the remaining portion of the student body.

1.13 What is the biggest challenge you face in utilizing SSIP 2.0 benefits?



The Chart 1.13 indicate results on challenges, the biggest obstacle for students is complex documentation and paperwork, which was cited by 41% of the 105 respondents. Other significant hurdles include a lack of technical guidance or mentors at 23.8% and a general lack of awareness or information at 21%. These findings suggest that while the program is beneficial, simplifying the administrative process and increasing direct support could help more students successfully utilize the policy.

1.14 What improvement would you suggest to make SSIP 2.0 more effective in Anand District?



To make SSIP 2.0 more effective in the Anand District, the largest group of respondents (38.1%) suggested increasing interactions with successful entrepreneurs. Simplifying the application and funding process was the second most popular recommendation at 29.5%, followed by providing academic credits and 24/7 lab access. These findings show that students are eager for more practical real-world connections and a smoother administrative experience to better support their startup goals.

Result of Chi-Square test Analysis

Variable	Chi-Square (χ2)	df	p-value (Sig.)	Association Strength
Motivation	50.579	9	**.000***	**Highly Significant**
Mentorship Quality	39.632	12	**.000***	**Highly Significant**
Major Challenges	33.121	12	**.001***	**Significant**
Industry Networking	29.555	12	**.003***	**Significant**
SSIP Cell Accessibility	19.585	6	**.003***	**Significant**
Ease of Funding	26.129	12	**.010***	**Significant**
Stream of Study	10.718	6	.097	Not Significant
Access to Lab	17.673	12	.126	Not Significant
Gender	4.462	3	.216	Not Significant
Information Channel	13.464	12	.336	Not Significant

(Author's Computation in SPSS)

Summary Table of Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H0)	χ2 Value	p-value	Decision
H01: Student motivation has no significant association with startup outcomes.	50.579	.000	Rejected
H02: Mentorship quality and industry networking have no significant impact.	39.632	.000	Rejected
H03: SSIP Cell accessibility and funding ease have no significant impact.	19.585	.003	Rejected
H04: Gender and Stream of Study have no significant association.	4.462	.216	Accepted

Analysis and Suggested Highly Associated Variables

Based on the Chi-Square analysis, the following variables are highly associated with SSIP 2.0 Policy Awareness:

1. Student Motivation (Highest Association)

- **Result: χ^2**= 50.579, $p < .001$
- **Analysis:** There is an extremely strong link between how much a student knows about SSIP 2.0 and their motivation to pursue entrepreneurship. This suggests that the policy's primary impact on "Culture" is driven by information—students who are aware of the benefits are significantly more motivated to move away from traditional corporate jobs.

2. Quality of Mentorship

- **Result: χ^2**= 39.632, $p < .001$
- **Analysis:** Awareness is deeply tied to mentorship. This indicates that mentors are likely the primary active agents in spreading the details of the policy. Students who rate mentorship high also tend to have a clearer understanding of SSIP 2.0.

3. SSIP Cell Accessibility & Networking

- **Result:** $p = .003$ for both.

- **Analysis:** The physical presence and accessibility of an SSIP Cell/Incubation Centre on campus are critical. If the cell is active and accessible, the awareness level among students is statistically higher. Similarly, students who are aware of the policy are better able to leverage industry networking opportunities.

4. Major Challenges

- **Result:** $\chi 2 = 33.121$, $p = .001$
- **Analysis:** The types of challenges students face (like "Lack of Information" or "Complex Procedures") change significantly based on their level of awareness. Those with low awareness struggle with the "What" and "How," while those with high awareness struggle with the "Process" (Funding/Networking).

Research Suggestion:

Based on the analysis of data from Anand District, it is highlighted that demographic factors (Gender, Stream, and Level of Study) do not significantly dictate awareness. Instead, institutional factors such as Mentorship, SSIP Cell Activity, and Funding Ease are the true drivers of policy awareness and the development of an entrepreneurial culture.

Recommendation: To improve the impact of SSIP 2.0, institutions should focus on strengthening the SSIP Cell's visibility and Mentor-Student engagement, as these have the highest statistical association with student awareness and motivation.

Findings:

5. Strong Shift Toward Entrepreneurship: One of the most significant successes is that 77.1% of students feel motivated to choose entrepreneurship over traditional corporate jobs, showing the policy is effectively changing the career mindset of the youth.
6. High Awareness via Institutional Channels: Awareness levels are impressive, with over 78% of students having a "Good" to "Excellent" understanding of the policy. Most learned about it through faculty (39%) and notice boards (33.3%), proving that colleges are the primary information hubs.
7. Focus on Early-Stage Ideation: Participation is highest in low-barrier activities like Idea Pitching (48.6%) and Bootcamps (32.4%). However, there is a sharp drop-off in advanced activities like patent filing or commercialization.
8. The "Paperwork Bottleneck": The biggest obstacle identified by students is complex documentation and paperwork (41%). This administrative burden is a larger deterrent than even a lack of funding or technical skills.
9. Mixed Satisfaction with Funding Ease: While 43% find the funding process easy, nearly 29% find it difficult, and 28.6% are neutral. This suggests that the application interface or approval timeline still feels inconsistent to many.
10. High Value Placed on Industry Networking: Students who have accessed networking opportunities are highly satisfied, with nearly half (48.6%) giving it a top rating. This indicates that "Industry Connect" is one of the policy's most valued features.
11. Active but Under-Promoted SSIP Cells: While 56.2% of students say their college SSIP cell is active, about 14% are completely unaware of it. This suggests that while the infrastructure exists, it isn't always visible to the entire student body.
12. Desire for Real-World Mentorship: When asked for improvements, the top request (38.1%) was for more interaction with successful entrepreneurs, showing that students value practical, "street-smart" advice over purely academic guidance.
13. Gap in Technical Development: While participation in "Idea Pitching" is very high (48.6%), there is a significant drop when it comes to technical milestones, with only 5.7% involved in Prototype Development. This suggests that while students have great ideas, they struggle to turn those ideas into physical or workable products.
14. Infrastructure Satisfaction vs. Awareness: While 30.5% of students give a perfect 5-star rating to Lab Access, a nearly equal number (32.4%) gave it a neutral rating of 3. Combined with the finding that 14.3% of students don't know where their SSIP cell is, it shows that the physical facilities are good, but they are not being fully utilized by all students.

Recommendation:

Based on the Analysis of the data; here are the 10 best recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the SSIP 2.0 policy in the Anand District:

1. Simplify Administrative Procedures: Since 41% of students identified complex paperwork as their biggest hurdle, the application process should be streamlined and digitized to reduce the burden of documentation.
2. Increase Entrepreneurial Interaction: Over 38% of students want more direct engagement with successful entrepreneurs to gain practical insights that go beyond classroom learning.
3. Strengthen Industry Networking: With nearly 25% of students dissatisfied with current industry connections, colleges should host more formal networking events and industry meet-and-greets.
4. Expand Awareness Campaigns: Because 17% of students have only "heard the name" and 14% are unaware of their college's SSIP cell, more aggressive marketing is needed through social media and faculty mentors.
5. Improve Technical Mentorship: Since 23.8% of students face a lack of technical guidance, the program should recruit more specialized mentors to help students move from simple "idea pitching" to "prototype development".
6. Offer Academic Incentives: 17.1% of students suggested providing academic credits for startup work, which would help alleviate the "academic pressure" that currently prevents some students from participating.
7. Enhance Lab Accessibility: While many are satisfied, a significant portion of students requested 24/7 access to innovation labs to support technical prototyping and experimentation.
8. Accelerate Fund Disbursement: To maintain the high motivation levels seen in the survey, the time between a successful application and the actual receipt of funds should be minimized.
9. Activate Underperforming SSIP Cells: Since nearly 30% of students feel their college's SSIP cell is only "partially active," the district should implement performance reviews to ensure every centre is providing full support.
10. Regular Activity Audits: Since 30% of students feel the SSIP cell is only "partially active," the college should publish a monthly calendar of events to prove continuous support and engagement.

Conclusion:

The implementation of the Student Start-up and Innovation Policy (SSIP 2.0) represents a landmark initiative by the Government of Gujarat to transform higher education institutions into hubs of innovation. However, as this research into the HEIs of Anand District demonstrates, the transition from policy formulation to grassroots impact remains a work in progress. Despite the structured framework of the policy, the empirical evidence gathered reveals a significant "awareness-impact gap."

The core finding of this study is the paradigm shift in what drives innovation culture. Traditional demographic variables such as Gender, academic Stream, and Level of Study were found to have no statistically significant association with policy awareness. This is a positive indicator of the policy's inherent inclusivity, suggesting that it does not favor one group over another. Instead, the research identifies Institutional Factors as the true catalysts of success. The quality of Mentorship, the physical and administrative accessibility of SSIP Cells, and the Ease of Funding are the primary variables highly associated with student awareness and entrepreneurial motivation.

In conclusion, while the infrastructure for innovation (labs and mentors) exists in Anand District, it is currently underutilized due to low student awareness. To bridge this gap, HEIs must move beyond passive implementation. The success of SSIP 2.0 depends on proactive institutional engagement, simplified administrative procedures for funding, and aggressive internal outreach. By strengthening these institutional drivers, colleges can effectively cultivate a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem that transcends demographic boundaries and fulfills the vision of a "Startup Gujarat."

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