

Startup culture has started taking roots in kolkata

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As the state of West Bengal is preparing to welcome their holy deity, amidst the plethora of arrangements one is aware of the fact that Kolkata is one of the cities which is in dire need for some startup love and support.

The state of West Bengal which houses worthy institutes like the NIIT and IIM, however has never emerged as the top go-to city for entrepreneurship.

In an attempt to encourage young and diligent entrepreneurs in the 'City of Joy,' Jaarvis Accelerator and TaxMantra jointly present "Startup Hustle" in Kolkata. The session was aimed at aiding entrepreneurs in the city's startup ecosystem on building a bootstrap business plan and getting a clear idea on the funding process.

Anil Chhikara, Principal at Jaarvis, spoke about his experience in the city and how he was pleasantly surprised by the zeal and enthusiasm of the ecosystem.

How was your experience in the city?

"Before I went to Kolkata, I was sceptical about the quality and maturity of startups that I would meet. I also felt that Kolkata lacks in the most important aspect of startup ecosystem - an active base of angel investors who are clued into the startup investment model which is different from generic business funding model that traditional businesses follow. I was pleasantly surprised on both the fronts.

... I attended the Calcutta Angel Network's annual event where I met several young angel investors who come from traditional family business but are now clued into the startup ecosystem and are keen to invest in new disruptive

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business. This was also demonstrated by the fact that as compared to some other traditional shortlisted startups like School ERP or refurbished mobile phone business, R2 Robotronics, a startup accelerated by Jaarvis Accelerator focusing on building and launching a cloud based platform for managing drone swarms - and with a global futuristic business footprint, was a favourite of the angel investors there and got an amazing response,”

What do you think the ecosystem there needs?

A healthy startup ecosystem needs all the right ingredients in the right mix - successful entrepreneurs turned angel investors, examples of startups at all stage - from early stage to funded to scale up to acquired or closed down, a strong talent pool, easy access to different kind of mentors, startup incubators and accelerators and ample opportunities to network through events and meetups. This takes years to build in any city. In cities like Bangalore, Delhi or Mumbai this is in much more advanced stage. In Kolkata, I can see that it's in much more nascent stage. What's needed is more and more events and opportunities for startups to network and interact with various stakeholders of the startup ecosystem.

What's your view on the entrepreneurship culture in Kolkata? How does Jaarvis plan to motivate entrepreneurs in the city?

I can see that startup culture has started taking roots in Kolkata - thanks to the active role played by Calcutta Angel Network, Headstart and NASSCOM Startup Warehouse and established startups like TaxMantra. We at Jaarvis Accelerator plan to hold more events focused around bootstrapped business

planning, digital marketing growth hacks, pitching to investors and other such events.