



Event Report

"INVESTOR CONNECT"

Organised by: Startup Odisha

Date: 11th November 2025 | **Time:** 9:00 AM – 6:30 PM

Venue: Tower-A, Odisha Startup Incubation Centre, O-HUB, Bhubaneswar

Event Summary:

Startup Odisha successfully concluded the landmark **Investor Connect Program 2025**, bringing together close to 102 innovative startups and 20 leading incubators, along with eminent investors, to catalyze collaborations and strengthen Odisha's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The day-long program featured strategically curated sessions including an inaugural ceremony, investor knowledge sessions, startup pitching rounds, and networking opportunities. The event successfully provided startups with actionable insights, direct investor access, and pathways to funding, marking a significant milestone in strengthening Odisha's position as an emerging startup hub.

Event Objectives:

- **Facilitate Direct Investor-Startup Connections**
Create a platform for meaningful interactions between startups and leading investors to discuss funding opportunities and strategic partnerships.
- **Enhance Investor Readiness**
Equip startups with insights into investor expectations, due diligence processes, and pitch perfection through masterclasses and panel discussions.
- **Showcase Odisha's Innovation Potential**
Highlight the diversity and scalability of startups from Odisha across sectors including AgriTech, HealthTech, Clean Energy, and FinTech.
- **Strengthen Ecosystem Collaboration**
Foster partnerships between leading incubators, investors, and government bodies to create a sustainable support system for startups.
- **Provide Growth Insights**
Share scaling strategies and growth frameworks from successful entrepreneurs and industry leaders like PhonePe's decacorn journey.
- **Enable Immediate Feedback Mechanism**
Offer startups opportunities to receive real-time feedback on their business models and pitches from experienced investors.

- **Promote Funding Opportunities**
Create pathways for seed to Series A funding by connecting startups with relevant investors based on sector and growth stage.
- **Build Mentorship Networks**
Establish initial connections for long-term mentorship relationships between experienced investors and promising startups.
- **Enhance Startup Visibility**
Provide a platform for startups to increase their visibility among investors, media, and potential enterprise clients.
- **Drive Policy Advocacy**
Gather insights from ecosystem stakeholders to inform future policy decisions and support mechanisms for startups in Odisha.

Inaugural Session:

The proceedings commenced with the arrival of distinguished guests followed by a formal inauguration ceremony.

- **Shri Kamaljit Das, Chief Administrative Officer, Startup Odisha** delivered the welcome address and set the context for the event, emphasizing the organization's commitment to creating enabling ecosystems for startups.
- **Shri Rajesh Ranjan, Co-Founder & Designated Partner, O2 Angels Network** shared insights on building sustainable startup-investor relationships.
- **Shri Bhushan Patil, Founder & Investor, Multiply Ventures** highlighted the importance of scalable business models and market fit.
- **Shri Prem Shanth, Principal, a99 VC** discussed emerging investment opportunities in Odisha's startup landscape.
- **Shri Kamal Lochan, Business Head-MSME (B2B Payment Gateway), PhonePe** emphasized corporate-startup partnerships for mutual growth.
- **Shri Nihal Rustgi, Co-Founder, The Zyra** outlined strategies for building impactful and scalable ventures.

The session concluded with a collective commitment to strengthen Odisha's position as an emerging startup hub in India.

"Know Your Investor" Session:

This pivotal panel discussion brought together three distinguished investors who provided invaluable insights into the investment landscape and shared what investors truly look for in startups.

- **Shri. Rajesh Ranjan**, Co-Founder & Designated Partner of O2 Angels Network, emphasized the importance of strong founding teams and scalable business models, drawing from his extensive experience in investment banking and angel investing.
- **Shri. Bhushan Patil**, Founder & Investor at Multiply Ventures, shared practical advice on achieving product-market fit and building sustainable business units, leveraging his expertise in scaling ventures.
- **Shri. Prem Shanth**, Principal at Artha99 VC, highlighted emerging sector opportunities and discussed key metrics that venture capitalists evaluate during funding decisions, providing a VC perspective on startup investing.

The session offered startups rare insights into investor mindsets, due diligence processes, and strategies for building investor-ready ventures, making it one of the most impactful segments of the event.

Unicorn Decoded: PhonePe's Insights for Startup Founders & Investors:

Shri. Kamal Lochan, Business Head-MSME (B2B Payment Gateway), PhonePe distilled key lessons from PhonePe's journey to unicorn and then decacorn status, emphasizing the importance of solving acute consumer problems, leveraging scalable infrastructure like UPI, and building two-sided networks. He highlighted the need for a clear long-term vision, achieving product-market fit before scaling, and maintaining a relentless customer-centric approach. The session provided actionable strategies for startups to design scalable systems, foster ecosystem partnerships, and establish a robust omni-channel presence.

Building for the Next Billion: Creating Impact at Scale:

Shri. Nihal Rustgi, Co-Founder, The Zyra shared key insights on driving mass impact through scalable solutions. He emphasized solving widespread problems with accessible, affordable models that leverage technology for social good. His session highlighted the importance of understanding local contexts, building sustainable ventures, and scaling purposefully while measuring real-world impact and fostering community-driven change.

Fireside Chat: Fostering Investor-Startup Synergies:

Moderator: Shri. Nihal Rustgi, Co-Founder, The Zyra (Ex-apna & NSDC) led an engaging discussion with leading investors on building effective partnerships between startups and investors.

Featuring:

- **Shri. Rajesh Ranjan**, Co-Founder & Designated Partner, O2 Angels Network
- **Shri. Bhushan Patil**, Founder & Investor, Multiply Ventures
- **Shri. Prem Shanth**, Principal, Artha99 VC

Key insights from the session included:

- **Align Vision and Values:** Ensure strategic alignment between investor expectations and founder vision
- **Build Trust Through Transparency:** Maintain open communication and clear reporting from day one
- **Focus on Sustainable Growth:** Prioritize long-term value creation over short-term gains
- **Leverage Investor Expertise:** Utilize investors' networks, mentorship, and industry knowledge
- **Establish Clear Metrics:** Define and track key performance indicators mutually
- **Navigate Challenges Collaboratively:** Work as partners during difficult periods
- **Create Win-Win Structures:** Design terms that benefit both founders and investors
- **Plan Exit Strategies Early:** Discuss and align on potential exit avenues
- **Foster Regular Engagement:** Maintain consistent touchpoints beyond formal board meetings
- **Build for Scalability:** Focus on creating business models capable of exponential growth

Startup Pitching Sessions:

Ideas took center stage across O-Hub during **Investor Connect 2025**, as the heart of the event beat across three parallel pitching sessions that transformed the venue into a vibrant hub of entrepreneurial energy and investor engagement. The conference halls buzzed with activity as innovative startups presented their vision to leading investors. Session Highlights:

Startup Pitching Session 1 - Shri. Bhushan Patil, Founder & Investor, Multiply Ventures evaluated pitches from:

- Early-stage startups demonstrating product-market fit and scalable business models
- Founders presenting sustainable unit economics and customer acquisition strategies
- Ventures showcasing market validation approaches and growth metrics

Startup Pitching Session 2 - Shri. Prem Shanth, Principal, Artha99 VC engaged with:

- Growth-stage startups preparing for Series A funding
- Companies presenting market expansion strategies and operational scalability
- Businesses discussing revenue models and competitive positioning

Startup Pitching Session 3 - Shri. Rajesh Ranjan, Co-Founder & Designated Partner, O2 Angels Network reviewed:

- Diverse sector presentations including AgriTech, HealthTech, and Clean Energy
- Startups emphasizing social impact and sustainable solutions
- Ventures demonstrating long-term viability and community impact

The pitching sessions successfully provided a platform for startups to receive direct feedback, establish investor connections, and refine their funding strategies, marking a significant step forward in Odisha's entrepreneurial journey.

Participant Engagement & Feedback:

The event witnessed overwhelming enthusiasm and active participation from all stakeholders. Nearly **102 startups** took part in pitching sessions and networking, leading to over **200 meaningful investor interactions**. Feedback from participants reflected high satisfaction- startups appreciated the direct access to investors and actionable insights gained, while investors lauded the quality of innovations and the platform's effectiveness in fostering genuine connections. The resounding positive response underscores the event's success in strengthening Odisha's vibrant startup ecosystem.

Conclusion:

The **Investor Connect 2025** successfully served as a transformative platform, uniting startups, investors, and incubators to accelerate the growth of Odisha's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through insightful sessions, dynamic pitching stages, and meaningful networking, the event not only facilitated immediate connections but also laid a strong foundation for long-term collaboration and innovation. The overwhelming participation and positive feedback underscore the growing potential of Odisha as a hub for scalable and impactful ventures. As we move forward, the relationships forged and insights gained will undoubtedly fuel the next wave of startup success stories, driving sustainable economic growth and positioning Odisha firmly on India's innovation map.



Startup Odisha

