

Indian Unicorns and Covid 19: An Assessment and Prospects

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Abstract : *The Indian economy has witnessed a series of unprecedented growth in the form of start-ups in the last two decades. So far, Indian start-ups have created 65 unicorns out of which 28 have been created in the year 2021. This shows that there is an increase scope in this area and a lot of capital is expected to come from angel investors. According to Reserve Bank of India (India, August 2021) latest report on the State of the Economy “the year 2021 could be India’s year of IPOs (Initial Public Offers) with the domestic unicorns setting domestic stock markets on fire and global investors in a frenzy through their public issues”. India is now third in the global list of countries with the highest number of unicorns, behind only United States and China. In this paper, an attempt has been made to assess the growth and prospects of Indian unicorns and to examine various policy initiatives undertaken by the government to promote entrepreneurship culture and to boost up Indian start-up ecosystem.*

Key Words: *Unicorns, Start-ups, COVID 19, E-commerce, FinTech, Shared Economy*

I. Introduction;

With the advent of Industrial Revolution 4.0, Digitalization and Technology Upgradation of operations has become the dire need for the businesses in order to flourish and settle in this highly competitive environment. Further, the outburst of COVID-19 pandemic has profound impact on the business and has been called the “Great Accelerator” of digital transformation, with technology at the forefront of country’s response to the crisis. Business organisations

all over the world have had to adjust to a new way of work. Various Businesses which used to exist in pre-covid times have disappeared as they don’t have customer availability which has been shifted towards the online market. So, Digitalization of business has become the need of the hour for any business to have customer reach. This pandemic has really fast-tracked the process of digitization of businesses which could have occurred in 5 years down the line.

Digital transformation technologies such as Cloud, Internet-of-Things (IoT), Blockchain (BC), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Machine Learning (ML) constitute to bulk of what is being adopted by organisations as a part of their transformation effort (De, Dec 2020). The magnitude of COVID-19 crisis is more acute and completely different from major crisis of the world such as East Asian Crisis 1997, Global Financial Crisis 2008, Recession in Greece 2010, Recession in Nigeria 2016 etc. The pandemic has necessitated to adopt and create new reality and a future wherein business model must be reconsidered. This includes big businesses (Unicorns firms) as well as small (MSMEs) ones.

A Unicorn company or unicorn start-ups a private company with valuations over \$ 1 billion. The term was first popularised by venture capitalist Aileen Lee in 2013 to describe rare technology start-ups. These are also known as a decacorn (valued at over \$ 10 billion) hectogon (valued at over \$ 100 billion). Popular former

unicorns include Airbnb, Facebook and Google. As of July 2021, there are more than 700 unicorns across the globe (CB Insights). With the creation of new tech-based companies and new categories of businesses, the Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated that many more business segments of business are conducted online, and start-ups in the area proliferate in to new territories (Sachdev, 2021). According to CB Insights (2020), there are 448 unicorns' world-wide up to May 2020. Asia is dominating North America with amazing growth in recent years. For Instance, China (the unicorn leader in Asia) had zero unicorn in 2013 to 56 in 2014 and then to 109 in 2020, thereby threatening US dominance of the Unicorn list in recent years. North America has the highest distribution of Unicorns in terms of value, while Asia is the leader in terms of overall market value. The highest valued unicorns. The highest valued unicorns in the world are from China; Toutiao (Bytedance) with a valuation of USD 75 billion and Didi Chuxing with USD 56 billion (Pérez-Morón, Marrugo-Salas, & Tordecilla-Acevedo, 2021). Start-ups have the potential to be engine of growth in the future. The Indian start-up ecosystem has been progressing well, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Research Objectives;

The present study attempts to unfold the growth, recent trends and prospects of Unicorns during COVID-19 period in India. The main question of the research is: in what ways COVID 19 is providing opportunities to speed-up the growth of unicorns in India? This is one of the studies to address the influence of COVID -19 on Indian unicorns and thereby helps to fill the research gap that exists at present. More specifically, we attempt to achieve the following research objectives;

- To trace the growth of unicorns in India during COVID-19 pandemic;
- To understand the recent trends and future prospects of unicorns in India.
- To examine the various reasons/opportunities available to promote unicorn ecosystem in India.

III. Data and Research Methodology;

We apply descriptive research design primarily based on secondary data sources. The descriptive research is useful as it is structured in nature and provides a clear direction of information collection. (Bajpai, 2018). The secondary data has been collected from reports of CB Insights, NASSCOM, Harun Research Institute, RBI, Policy documents/ notifications of Govt of India etc. In addition, the data has also been collected from reputed journals, research articles, and newspaper articles. After collecting the data, we analyse it empirically in the form of various tables, charts and graphs.

IV. Indian Unicorns: An Assessment

In the last one decade, India has witnessed the surge in new businesses or start-ups setup (which are majorly tech-enabled) and is ranked 3rd globally and thereby for producing a larger number of unicorns around the world. This has made India a popular and attractive destination for the global investors. Investors like Tiger Global, Sequoia Capital, Ant Group, etc. have been the consistent partner for the India Start-ups ecosystem.

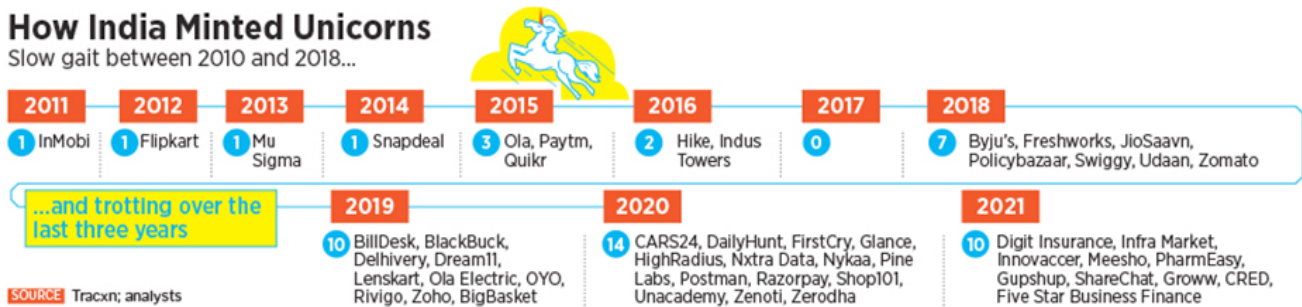
As a result of second generation of economic reforms which was stated in 1991, India was finally catching up with the prevailing global predominant thinking on development strategy; an open economy, market-oriented framework fuelled by higher savings and investment, the economy assented to a higher growth part of around 7 % annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth (Mohan, 2021). These reforms were a major turnaround for the Indian economy. The untapped potential which was existing within the country was being utilized to the fullest. Within the span of just 10 years, India came to be known as “Software Hub” for the world. Companies like Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL, etc. took Indian innovation to next level and India was able to witness the Digital Revolution on time which would have cost a lot if 1991 reforms would have been delayed any further.

So, with the advent of the internet and digital transition taking place within the country, people from various

corners of the country started having confidence to make something of their own which they could capitalize at a bigger level. This gave rise to the Indian Start-ups story as companies like Flipkart (E-Commerce Giant, competing head-to-head with Global giant Amazon in

India), Paytm, Quick Heal, etc. It was a huge success and it had shifted the trend as entrepreneurs all across the country had gained confidence which led to rise in setting up of new businesses within the country.

Figure-1



This shift in trend was not possible without government support as they are major stakeholders in this country. There was the confidence which was being given by the government to change the outlook towards the business. Every Government has contributed a lot to make India a popular destination for investment. So, India has made huge progress from what it was mainly in terms of attitude towards the business as nowadays there exists a

burning desire within the youth of this country to start something of their own. **This confidence is very much required if a country wants to stand upon its feet and become self-reliant.**

It gave us the confidence to compete with the world which can get us on the road to becoming a Superpower quite possibly by the end of this decade.

Table-1 Growth of Indian Unicorns (2014-2019)

Name	Business	Industry	Valuation (in USD)	Year founded	Year of Unicorn Valuation
InMobi	Enterprise platforms for marketers	Tech	\$1.0	2007	2014
Ola	Ride-sharing, taxi, food delivery	Transportation	\$6.2	2010	2014
Snapdeal	E-commerce	Retail	\$1.0	2010	2014
Quikr	Classified advertising	Media	\$1.0	2008	2015
Hike	Freeware, messaging, and voice over IP	Tech	\$1.4	2012	2016
ShopClues	Online marketplace	Retail	\$1.1	2011	2016
One97 (Paytm Mall)	E-commerce	Financial services	\$15.0	2010	2017

Name	Business	Industry	Valuation (in USD)	Year founded	Year of Unicorn Valuation
ReNew Power	Renewable energy	Energy	\$2.0	2011	2017
BillDesk	Online payments	Financial services	\$1.8	2000	2018
Flipkart	Online store	Retail	\$22.0*	2007	2018
Freshworks	Enterprise software	Tech	\$1.5	2010	2018
Musigma	Data analytics and management consulting	Tech	\$1.5	2004	2018
OYO	Budget lodging website	Hospitality	\$10.0	2013	2018
Pine Labs	Merchant payment platform	Financial services	\$1.0	1998	2018
Policy Bazaar	Insurance plan aggregator	Financial services	\$1.0	2008	2018
Swiggy	Online food ordering and delivery	Transportation	\$3.3	2014	2018
Think and Learn Private (Byju's)	Educational technology and tutoring	Tech	\$5.4	2008	2018
Udaan	B2B trading platform	Logistics	\$2.3	2016	2018
Zomato	Restaurant aggregator and food delivery	Transportation	\$2.5	2008	2018
Big Basket	Online megastore	Retail	\$1.2	2011	2019
CitiusTech	Healthcare technology services	Healthtech	\$1.0	2005	2019
Delhivery	Third-party logistics	Logistics	\$1.6	2011	2019
Dream11	Fantasy sports platform	Media	\$1.5	2008	2019
Druva	Cloud-based data protection	Tech	\$1.0	2014	2019
Icertis	Contract management software	Tech	\$1.0	2009	2019
Ola Electric (spin-off from Ola)	Mobility	Automotive	\$1.0	2017	2019
Rivigo	Logistics	Logistics	\$1.0	2014	2019
Lenskart	E-Commerce (Eyewear)	Tech	\$1.0	2010	2019

The Table-1 presents the year-wise breakup of the Indian Unicorns during 2014-2019. India's first fewest unicorns had started their journey in the time frame of 2007-2010. Several Companies which are now big in numbers with their huge market capitalisation have grown in just a matter of 10+ years. The road to Indian Start-up story got accelerated with the success of Flipkart, when it became the perfect competitor for the giant like Amazon in Indian market. Flipkart's success had acted as a stimulator and gave confidence to the new businesses to move forward and compete at bigger level. More companies had started growing big and there came the wave of unicorns in the time

period of 2014-2016. During this time period, 6 start-ups companies joined unicorn club. The 2018 acted as a major turnaround for the Indian Start-up Ecosystem, 11 start-ups were being declared unicorns in just one year. It was the huge success for the country's economy well. In the next year, 9 start-ups got declared unicorn further accelerating the pace of entrepreneurship in India. The outburst of pandemic did not deter entrepreneurial skills of Indian youth and country successfully got 12 unicorns in the year 2020. In 2021 (up to August) within the time frame of just 8 months, India has reported 21 start-ups which have become unicorns. Up to October 2021, the country has minted 31 unicorns.

V. Indian Unicorns: Growth, Recent Trends and Future Prospects;

In 2013, when Aileen Lee, founder of Cowboy Venture, conceptualised the term “Unicorn” to refer to technology start-ups with valuation over USD 1 billion, there were 39 unicorns in the U.S.A and India had none. Here, start-ups environment faced various obstacles such as scarcity of funds and talent, inadequate infrastructure and large number of cultural and social challenges. The young generation was not attracted to entrepreneurship, and inclined more to managerial jobs in large IT and MNCs. But in recent years, particularly after 2019 this trend has been changed and the years 2020- 2021 is going to be memorable and can be termed as “Unicorn Years” for the country. The pandemic which has been having devastating impact on the Indian economy, it has also led to increase in on-line technologies in India. The government is playing a significant role to change the mind set of millennial generation by infusing confidence and adopting business friendly policies and strategies.

The growth stories of Indian unicorns are being told throughout the country. In India, during the 2020, total 14 companies attained unicorn status. Indeed, the rise of unicorn in this country is not just a boon for those who have invested in them. It must be seen as a sign

that the Indian economy is reaching a turning point and that ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE is maturing here (Narayanan, Winter 2019/Issue 97). Despite COVID 19 pandemic which has been having devastating impact on human lives and businesses, has given an edge to internet and tech-based companies. Despite lockdowns and limited mobility, these tech start-ups have attracted investments from global giants. In India, the year 2020 was good as 14 start-ups entered “Unicorn Club” as against 10 in 2019. **Four Indian Start-ups namely Nykaa, Unacademy, Postman and Razorpay have emerged a unicorn while the pandemic was its peak.** Though Covid-19 affected the Indian start-ups ecosystem badly but remarkable fact is that the ecosystem responded very quickly. In the next section we are analysing various dimensions of Indian unicorns during 2020.

A. Top Unicorns of India: 2020

According to Hurun Global Unicorn List 2020, India is a home to 21 unicorns with valuation USD 73.2 billion. Fintech company Paytm is India’s highest paid unicorns with valuation USD 16 billion. Top ten Indian unicorns make up 78 percent of the total value of unicorns, while Paytm alone claims approximately 22 percent of the total valuation share of these unicorns, with a valuation of USD 16 billion (Table-2)

Table- 2 Top Ten Global Unicorns 2020

Rank	Name	Valuation (US\$ bn.)	Headquarters	Sector
1	Paytm	16	Noida	FinTech
2	OYO Rooms	8	Gurgaon	E-commerce
2	BYJU’s	8	Bengaluru	EdTech
4	Ola Cabs	6	Bengaluru	Shared Economy
5	Swiggy	3.5	Bengaluru	On-Demand Delivery
5	Zomato	3.5	Gurgaon	On-Demand Delivery
7	Paytm Mall	3	Noida	E-commerce
7	ReNew Power	3	Gurgaon	New Energy
7	Zerodha	3	Bengaluru	FinTech
10	BigBasket	2.5	Bengaluru	E-commerce
10	Udaan	2.5	Bengaluru	E-commerce

Source: Hurun Research Institute

The average age of Indian unicorns is seven years, out of which two are less than four years old. Ola Electric is the youngest unicorn on the list (founded in 2017) followed by Udaan which was founded in 2016 (Hurun Research Institute, 2020). The main reason why unicorns are taking less time to scale-up because of increase in internet users from 200 million in 2014 to more than 500 million users in 2020.

B. Indian Unicorns Vs Global Unicorns: A comparison

According to Hurun Unicorn List 2020, India added 21 unicorns in total. U.S.A ranked one in terms of number of unicorns and new unicorns (233 and 60) respectively and accounted 78 percent of the world's unicorns. China is not too far from USA with 227 numbers of unicorns and 38 unicorns in a year. Interesting to note that U.K and India positioned at third and fourth place respectively and India is not much behind U.K.

Table-3 Relative Position of India: 2020

Company Name	USA	China	UK	India	South Korea	Germany
Number of Unicorns	233	227	24	21	11	10
New Unicorns	60	38	10	3	6	2
Years to Unicorn	6.5	5.5	8	7	11	7

Source: Hurun Research Institute

C. Indian Unicorns: Sector-wise Analysis

Indian digital market is a burgeoning and has the potential to tap new opportunities across the globe through E-commerce sector. when we look at the sectors in which largest number of Indian unicorns are

founding, E-Commerce occupies first position where in 33 percent of the unicorns conduct business followed by Fintech (14 percent) and Shared Economy* (9 percent) respectively. From the Table- 4 one can infer that Fintech is promising sector where more unicorns are expected to be come up in the near future.

Table- 4 Indian Unicorns: Different Sectors (2020)

Rank	Industry	No. of Unicorns	% Of Total Value
1	E-commerce	7	33.3%
2	FinTech	3	14.3%
3	Shared Economy	2	9.5%
4	Logistics	2	9.5%
5	On-Demand Delivery	2	9.5%
6	New Energy	1	4.8%
7	EdTech	1	4.8%
8	Big Data	1	4.8%
8	Communication Platform	1	4.8%
10	Gaming	1	4.8%

Source: Hurun Research Institute

*The shared economy is an economic model that allows consumers to share in the creation or use of products, goods and services. This sharing often takes place across digital platforms such as on-lone communities or apps (Lake, 2021).

V (ii) Recent Trends in 2021:

The year 2021 is momentous year for the Indian unicorns. Up to July 2021, 17 Indian start-ups have already entered into unicorn house. It is expected that more start-ups will soon occupy unicorn status in near future as investors are showing more confidence in the Indian companies and funding is increasing tremendously. In January 2021, Digit Insurance became the first unicorn of the year and three more namely Innovaccer, infra. Market and Five star were added by the end of March 2021 (Singh, 2021)

One of the remarkable features of this year is that the eco-system has seen the entry of the first health tech, social commerce, e-pharmacy unicorns. In April 2021, six start-ups namely CRED (Fin tech), share Chat (social media), Groww (Wealth management), Gupshup (messaging platform), Meesho (social commerce) and Pharm Easy (e pharmacy) have entered into unicorn house. In May 2021, Moglix and Zeta turned unicorns whereas in June 2021 Browserstack were new member. In July 2021, BlackBuck (logistic tech), Droom and OfBusiness became unicorns. As far as popular sectors are concerned, E-commerce, Fintech and Enterprise tech are popular as there are 12 E-commerce unicorns 12 Fintech unicorns (TeamInc42, 2021)

Table-5 Indian Unicorns 2021: Sector-wise Analysis

E-Commerce	Fintech	Enterprise tech
Flipkart, Snapdeal, First Cry, Moglix, Infra.Market, Udaan, Paytm Mall, Droom	Paytm, PhonePe, Zerodha, Razorpay, Pine Labs	Zenoti, GupShup, BrowserStack, Freshworks, Zoho, Druva, Icertis, Ofbusiness, BlackBuck and others.

Source: Inc42.com

Table- 6 Indian Start-up Unicorns in 2021

Unicorn	Date	Valuation (US \$ billions)	Sector
Digit	Jan-15	\$1.9	Insurance
Innovaccer	Feb-24	\$1.3	Software
Infra.Market	Feb-25	\$1.0	Infrastructure
Five Star	Mar-27	\$1.4	Banking
Meesho	Apr-05	\$2.1	Social Commerce
Cred	Apr-06	\$2.2	Fintech
PharmEasy	Apr-07	\$1.5	E-Pharmacy
Groww	Apr-07	\$1.0	Stockbroking
ShareChat	Apr-08	\$2.1	Social Media
Gupshup	Apr-08	\$1.4	Enterprise Messaging
Chargebee	Apr-20	\$1.4	Fintech
Urban Company	Apr-27	\$2.0	Home Services
Moglix	May-17	\$1.0	B2B E-Commerce
Zeta	May-24	\$1.5	NeoBanking
Browserstack	Jun-16	\$4	SaaS

Source: ET Tech Research

Now we are in the eight month of year 2021 and Indian start-ups eco system has already added 22 new unicorns. **CoinDCX is the latest and the first Indian Crypto start-up to attain unicorn status (Table-7).** According to NASSCOM latest report, India will have

more than 50 unicorns by the end of 2021. It further adds that with the continued addition of new start-ups and increased adoption of deep-tech, the eco-system shows an even more promising future (Rao, 2021).

Table-7 Indian Unicorns 2021: Valuation and Sector wise Analysis

Name of the Company	Sector	Valuations (\$ Billions)
CoinDCX	Cryptocurrency Exchange	1.1
upGrad	Edtech - Higher Studies	1.2
MindTickle	SaaS - HR - Training	1.2
BharatPe	Fintech - Payments	2.8
OfBusiness	NBFC (SME Loans)	1.5
Droom	Marketplace - Used Cars	1.2
BlackBuck	Logistics Services	1
BrowserStack	SaaS - Software Testing	4
Zeta	Fintech - Enterprise Software - Neo Banking	1.4
Moglix	B2B E-Commerce - Industrial Equipment	1
Urban Company	Marketplace - Handyman Services	2.1
ChargeBee	SaaS - Subscription Billing Solution	1.4
Gupshup	Conversational Messaging	1.4
ShareChat	Social Media	2.8
Groww	Fintech - Brokerage & Mutual Funds	1
Pharomeasy	E-Commerce - Online Pharmacy	4
Cred	Fintech - Payments & Credit Card Rewards	2.2
Meesho	E-Commerce - Social Commerce	2.1
FirstCry	E-Commerce - Baby Care Products	1.7
Five Star Business Finance	NBFC	1.4
Infra.Market	B2B E-Commerce - Construction Materials	2.5
Innovaccer	SaaS - Healthcare Data Analytics	1.3
Digit	Fintech - General Insurance	3.5

Source: <https://www.ventureintelligence.com/Indian-Unicorn-Tracker.php>

From Table- 4 one can easily infer that the most attractive sectors for the unicorns in India are E-Commerce and Fintech in 2021 but SaaS (Software as a Service- is a way of delivery over the internet as a service. Services can be accessed through internet, without installing or

maintaining software and making consumers free from complex software and hardware management) is also making its place.

Table - 8 Indian Unicorns- Top 10 (2021)

Name of the Company	Sector	Valuations (\$ Billions)
BrowserStack	SaaS - Software Testing	4
Digit	Fintech - General Insurance	3.5
ShareChat	Social Media	2.8
BharatPe	Fintech - Payments	2.8
Infra.Market	B2B E-Commerce - Construction Materials	2.5
Cred	Fintech - Payments & Credit Card Rewards	2.2
Urban Company	Marketplace - Handyman Services	2.1
Meesho	E-Commerce - Social Commerce	2.1
FirstCry	E-Commerce - Baby Care Products	1.7
OfBusiness	NBFC (SME Loans)	1.5

Source: <https://www.ventureintelligence.com/Indian-Unicorn-Tracker.php>

Authors compilation

During 2021, BrowserStack working in SaaS- Software resting is the highest valued unicorn followed by Digit and Share Chat.

V (iii): Trends in Future: Global Perspective

According to latest report of CB Insights “50 Future Unicorns” enterprise and big data tools will be dominating sectors in the coming years, around 30 percent of the companies working in these sectors will enter unicorn house soon. As far as, fintech will

account for 20 percent stake as international markets are largely boosting the fintech space, with 6 out of 10 featured fintech future unicorns are located outside U.S.A. Argentina (Uala) and India (CRED) are representative of emerging markets where fintech is gaining momentum. Next Sector will be health care and hard-ware with 8 percent representation each (Figure. -1)

Figure-2

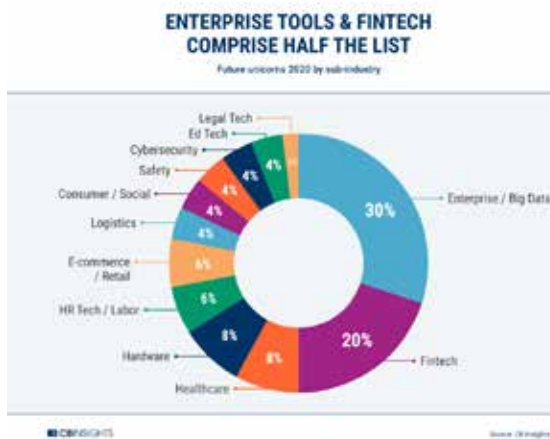
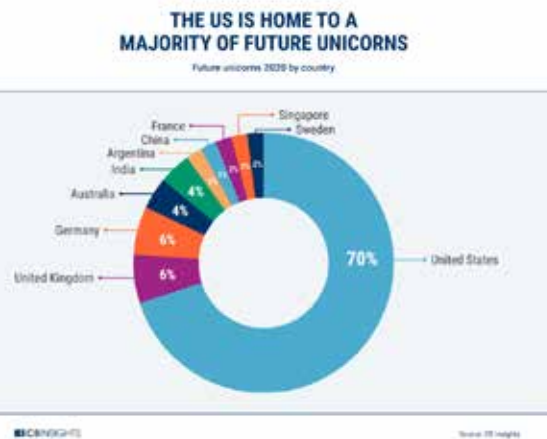


Figure-3



It is further added that U.S.A that out of 50 future unicorns approximately 70 percent i.e., 35 unicorns

will be from U.S.A whereas Germany and UK are each home to 3 percent, India and Australia each will

claim 2 percent. It is interesting to note that according to the report Argentina, China, France, Singapore and Sweden each will represent 1 percent of future unicorn. (Figure-2) (CB Insights Webside, 2020)

VI. Present Government Policy Initiatives and Indian Start-ups Ecosystem;

In recent years, the government of India has taken various measures to support start-ups including enlarging the scope of start-ups by broadening its definition, providing various income tax exemptions and setting up a Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds for start-ups operated by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) (Economic Times, 2021). To facilitate the growth of Start-ups in India central government had announced “Start-up India, Stand-up India” initiative and “Industry-Academia Partnership and Incubation. Some of the latest measures taken by government of India are as follows;

- Start-ups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) scheme was started to enable start-up to take assistance from any empanelled facilitator to file and prosecute their application. As of June 2020, 510 patent facilitators and 392 trade mark facilitators have been empanelled to provide free of charge services to start-ups.
- The “Fund of Funds for start-ups (FFS) with a total corpus of Rs.10,000 crore was established. As of December 2020, SIDBI has provided Rs.4326 crores to 60 Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs) registered with SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India).
- As on November 2020, tax exemptions have been granted to 319 start-ups.
- Start-up Yatra initiative has been started to search entrepreneurial talent in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities through day long bootcamps. A total of 1,424 incubation offers have been given to the start-ups as a result of this initiative.
- In addition, to encourage innovation in the sector and to motivate young generation to develop more technology based innovative products and services, 80 percent rebate has been provided in patent filing fees and 50 percent on trade mark filing fees. As a result, as of June 2020, 3618 patent applications were granted 80 percent rebate on the filing fee and 6832 trademark applications were granted a 50 percent rebate on filing fees (Economic Survey, 2021)
- Initiative like **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** was launched with an aim to provide R&D infrastructure to the budding entrepreneurs and researchers to promote innovation. With the AIM initiative, the Government is setting up some world-class laboratories and research incubators to foster innovation and research.
- In the initial phase of business, it requires huge funds to build the foundations of the business, and the government has realised this need and helps them by providing adequate finances from banks as credit in support of providing stability to the business in the initial phase. The scheme under this initiative is **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)** which provides the availability of bank finance without the hassles of collateral or third-party guarantees to help the first-generation entrepreneurs.

VII. Major Conclusions;

With the government of India vision of Digital India, prowess of digital infrastructure and software development, India has the ability to outpace the other countries in the near future. There is not a day when a new unicorn is not born. It will not wrong to say that India is emerging as a start-up nation. Since 2011, the Indian start-up eco-system has scaled to become the third largest start-up hub in the world followed by the USA and China. It is observed that Covid-19 pandemic seems to have augmented the pace of start-ups entering

the unicorn club. Various venture capital investors and experts perceives that India is expected to have 150 unicorns by 2025 (Business Standard website, 2021). Large and diverse markets, technology innovation, disruptive propositions and extremely high-quality talent a few factors adding to the Indian start-up story. As a result, we have seen emergence of fast-growing companies across several sectors. Indian unicorns have emerged or still emerging from diverse sectors such as e-commerce, fin-tech, mobility, health care, analytics etc. These companies are working in both the categories i.e., enterprise as well as consumer focussed with different business models such as Business to Business, Business to Consumer and Business to Business to Consumer models. In addition, even during pandemic situation, these companies have grown exponentially. They are taking advantages of the changing consumer behaviour and quickly twisted themselves to cater to the changing needs of the consumers. Leveraging new-age technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, big data, robotics etc these new age start-ups are working towards bridging wide -range gaps that were introduced in the market and fulfilling consumer/customer demand for digital which accelerated their growth path (Fortune India, 2021).The factors contributing to the rise of Indian unicorns are: increasing internet penetration and digital payments, availability of private equity funds, more robust infrastructure, the rising pool of skill talent and easy availability of foreign funds. It is interesting to note that despite Covid-19 pandemic badly disrupting the Indian economy 22 start-ups have already entered the unicorn club in 2021. In this context, the role of the government cannot be ignored, India's changing reform measures and policies have helped the Indian start-ups to scale up. The inflows of foreign exchange especially from leading tech companies into the Indian start-up eco-system signals the immense potential of the domestic market. In recent time periods, business models becoming more complex and inter-related and therefore, regulators and policy makers have to play more supportive role in formulating the appropriate

regulations that are directed towards encouragement to innovation and support emerging business models rather than acting as an obstacle to it (Business Line, 2021) . It is not wrong to say that cultural diversity and large pool of young and educated techno savvy youth is our strength. But at the same time, India should also focus on the economic mobility, economic inclusivity, equal access to opportunities and resources and ecological vitality.

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