Report of roundtable meeting of Vice-Chancellors of all universities of Gujarat chaired by Honourable Minister of Education, Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama

Date: August 21, 2015
Time: 4:00 PM to 6:15 PM
Venue: Syndicate Room, 1st Floor, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad

(List of key points discussed is attached as Annexure I)
(List of participants present is attached as Annexure II)

On Friday, August 21, 2015, the Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University, Dr. MN Patel, hosted a meeting of Vice-Chancellors of all public and private universities of Gujarat.

The meeting was chaired by Hon. Minister of Education, Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama.

The crucial role of state government and universities to support student startups & entrepreneurship was discussed by all attendees, which included senior-most government officials including the Commissioner for Higher Education, District Development Officer (Ahmedabad), over 25 Vice-Chancellors / representatives of universities, amongst others.

Considering the recent boom in startups & entrepreneurs across the country and the rising job crunch, the Gujarat University Vice-Chancellor proposed an equal partnership between the state government and all universities of Gujarat to develop common policies, frameworks and mechanisms to support and nurture student startups & entrepreneurs.

“The state government and my ministry will take all necessary steps to make this possible. You are all experts in this domain and I request you to guide me to take this forward,” firmly remarked Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama, state cabinet minister for Education, before starting his address to the attendees.

Speaking about the pivotal role of universities and state government in supporting student startups & entrepreneurs, Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University Dr. MN Patel said, “All around the world, like in Silicon Valley in United States, or in Waterloo in Canada, or in Japan or in Australia, the best systems for supporting and nurturing startups & young entrepreneurs are operating successfully around universities in a sustainable manner.”

“In Gujarat, we have close to 15 lakh students in higher education. Did you know more than 180 countries have a population of less than 15 lakhs, and some of these countries include UAE, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Singapore, New Zealand, Ireland, Luxembourg, etc? It is said that at an average a successful startup can create over 100 direct or indirect jobs over five years. What if Gujarat was to create 1000 successful startups every year? Is that not possible, given that we have more than 15 lakh students?,” Dr. Patel said.

Dr. Patel asked, “Why can’t all universities work together with the state government to form a common policy and common frameworks to support and nurture student startups & entrepreneurship?”

Citing the Prime Minister's "Startup India, Standup India" mission, the attendees discussed strategies to make Gujarat the #1 state in student startups.

Minister of Education Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama lauded efforts of Gujarat University and other universities in this area and suggested creation of a coordination committee with representations of the state government, universities, chambers of commerce, and experts from several fields, that shall implement a common student startup policy for Gujarat.

"I am happy that such a meeting has been organised by Gujarat University, and I believe that the state government should take a lead to incorporate such idea to materialise."

Also discussed during the meeting was the "Startup Scheme" developed by the Industries ministry of Gujarat where in a grant of over Rs. 10 lakh for at least 500 startups of Gujarat was approved by the Gujarat government recently. A stipend of Rs. 10,000 per month for each entrepreneur for a period of one year is also provisioned in the Startup Scheme.

Mr. Sunil Parekh, one of the members of the team that drafted the Startup Scheme was also present at the roundtable, and explained the scheme in detail to the attendees present.

"The implementation of the Startup Scheme is to be done by 'nodal institutions' and universities can play a crucial role by applying to become a nodal institute," explained Mr. Parekh.

The meeting was concluded with the decision of expediting the creation of the coordination team to implement the common student startup policy. The team will have significant representations of the universities; education, finance and industries ministries of the state; the industries chambers'; other significant actors from the entrepreneurial ecosystem such as incubators, startups, as well representations from the civil society and the student community.

Annexure I

Key points discussed during the VC Roundtable hosted by Gujarat University in presence of Hon. Education Minister on August 21, 2015

1. Top level policy patronage at government level to take leadership in student start-up movement in the country. Top level patronage from the Education Ministry shall be given to these initiatives so that this becomes one of the top five agendas of Higher Education for the decade in the State.

2. Education department of government of Gujarat to create a uniform student start-up framework catering the need of all universities in Gujarat. Universities need to create their contextual student start-up policy with help of suitable actors and share with government.

3. A state-level university start-up commission/council need to be established comprising representatives of Universities, start-up ecosystem actors, policy makers, secretaries from government, funding agencies, industry chambers and subject experts. This team will make all the strategic road-maps and necessary guidelines.

4. The above council/commission will nominate a small coordination team initially for coordinating the process across universities to develop Gujarat's Student Start-up Policy and make its implementation road-map.

5. Education department to seek/suggest an action agenda to build student start-up culture and ecosystem across all universities in Gujarat with clear action agenda with timeline. Each university will set up basic facility, team and other criteria like setting up *student start-up support system/ student start-up Council*, appointing a dean for entrepreneurship, develop action agendas for short and long-term periods, share complementary resources etc.

6. Creating prototyping support system including pre-seed fund is crucial to help propel student ideas to post-concept stage. A funnel needs to be created where 10x the number of ideas need to be supported at prototype stage if x is the amount of student ideas that are aimed to be converted as student ventures over the long run.

7. Create environment, incentive and process to make a deeper student start-up culture in the state. Create supporting systems at proof of concept (POC) stage. Support 10,000 ideas at POC stage that later on can develop into 1000 student start-ups. Set targets for every university and provide incentives as per performance. Develop complete action plan on how to create 1000 student start-ups involving all universities together.

8. Create action plan and strategies to support start-ups and processes to help them beyond technology students. Make holistic approach and create systems to support ecosystem, process, start ups with inclusion of sectors and spaces.

9. Create proper strategy to link suitable pre-incubation, incubation and acceleration support to student start-ups. Integrate the pre-incubation process in to universities and colleges so that enough student start-ups kick start by young students right in their college days

where the risk is minimum and learning opportunity is high.

10. Universities to play crucial role while operationalsing the Gujarat "Start-up Assistance scheme". Education ministry to help patronising such needs and facilitate universities so that maximum resource support from already declared start-up assistance scheme of government of Gujarat can reach to student start-ups at their early stage.

11. Build capacity of dedicated human resource to trigger and manage both the pre-incubation and incubation processes. State level guidelines need to be developed with inputs from various incubators, experts, NSTEDB and others who have been involved in such efforts since long.

12. State Education department need to take initiatives to link existing Technology Business Incubators (TBIs), incubation and specialized institutes with university start-up support system/council for mutual learning, capacity building and co creation.

13. A consortium to be made through web platform/activities for networking student start up movement covering all universities and operate it agile mode.

14. Create common resource including soft- and hard-infra like common co-working space /pre-incubation space for student start-ups at city centre or similar well accessible public places.

15. State education ministry to create geographic student start-up ecosystem around particular location comprising nearby colleges, local start-up actors and MSME clusters. To start with, these can be at Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar regions.

16. Create decentralised support system for Intellectual Property Right (IPR) to students through university by streamlining government funding schemes and independent schemes of university. This will increase patent filing rate and quality of Gujarat involving young innovators.

17. Set up dedicated fund state education department level / University level to support student start-ups at early stage, student start-up supporting institutes, networks and similar actors.

18. Create culture of student start-ups (perhaps organise a Gujarat student start-up festival at state/university level) by celebrating the efforts and success stories. Create avenue at state and national level events to showcase student start-ups and push them to next stage.

19. Gujarat education department needs to link best practices of university centric start-up ecosystems globally with the efforts done by universities here in a facilitative mode.

20. Create special plan to contribute to PM's call of Start Up India and Stand Up India, link various support systems of MUDRA bank, fund of fund supports, university initiated seed

grants, design centres, angel networks, testing facilities etc. Gujarat education department should create special section/team at top level to closely work with start-up ecosystems within and outside universities and create lateral learning opportunities for universities.

21. Make special efforts to promote start-ups across sectors and not just ICT sector. Create support plan to encourage even the social enterprise domain.

22. Like various research grants and other, students need to be posed challenges based on local and global issues and encourage them to build products, services, solutions and convert them to enterprise to create values.

23. Create bare minimum exposure on how to build a tech start-up in college through proper portion of exposure covering three ways: pedagogic intervention, co-curricular intervention, social inputs/interaction. A through strategy needs to be built on this with inputs from wide range of ground experts and start-up ecosystem actors.

24. Ensure that colleges affiliated to universities and state education department play a crucial role in shaping various city and sector based start-up ecosystems. Create incentives and framework for these. Ensure that the triple helix - university, local industries and public system/government - plays their crucial role in shaping student start-ups, through building processes to hatch them and fostering ecosystems that will give start-ups exposure and necessary regulatory assistance as and when needed.

Annexure II: List of participants present

	Name	Designation/Organisation
1	Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama	Honourable Minister of Education, Government of Gujarat
2	Shri AJ Shah	Commissioner of Higher Education
3	Dr. MN Patel	Vice Chancellor, Gujarat University
4	Dr. AU Patel	Advisor, KCG & Department of Industries
5	Prof. RL Godara	Vice Chancellor, HNGU
6	Ms. Bhagyesh Soneji	Chairperson, ASSOCHAM Gujarat
7	Mr. Hiranmay Mahanta	Managing Director, Techpedia
8	Mr. Himanshu Pandya	Coordinator, GUSEC
9	Mr. Rahul Bhagchandani	Chairman, Youth Connect Foundation
10	Prof. Saurabh Dave	Head, Centre for Emerging Technology & Incubation, Ganpat University
11	Dr. Sunil Shukla	Director, EDI
12	Prof. Satya Acharya	Head, PG Program, EDI
13	Dr. Anup Singh	Director General, Nirma University
14	Dr. Ravi Gor	Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University
15	Prof. Parimal H. Vyas	Pro Vice-Chancellor & Acting Vice-Chancellor, MS University
16	Prof. Pratapsinh Chauhan	Vice-Chancellor, Saurashtra University
17	Dr. Ketan Kotecha	Provost, Parul University
18	Prof. Anamik Shah	Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapith
19	Mr. Sunil Parekh	World Economic Forum
20	Prof. Shailendra Raj Mehta	Vice-Chancellor, Ahmedabad University

21	Dr. Harish Padh	Vice-Chancellor, Sardar Patel University
22	Prof. Hemant Patil	Professor, SVNIT
23	Prof. Manish Gupta	Associate Professor, DAIICT
24	Prof. RK Jain	Registrar, DDU
25	Dr. MK Arvadia	Navsari Agricultural University
26	Dr. AV Barad	Junagadh Agricultural University
27	Dr. JB Prajapah	Anand Agricultural University
28	Prof Ark Nath Chaudhary	Vice-Chancellor, SSS University
29	Ms. Bhargavi Dave	District Development Officer, Ahmedabad
30	Ms. Kinjal Desai	Joint Coordinator, GUSEC