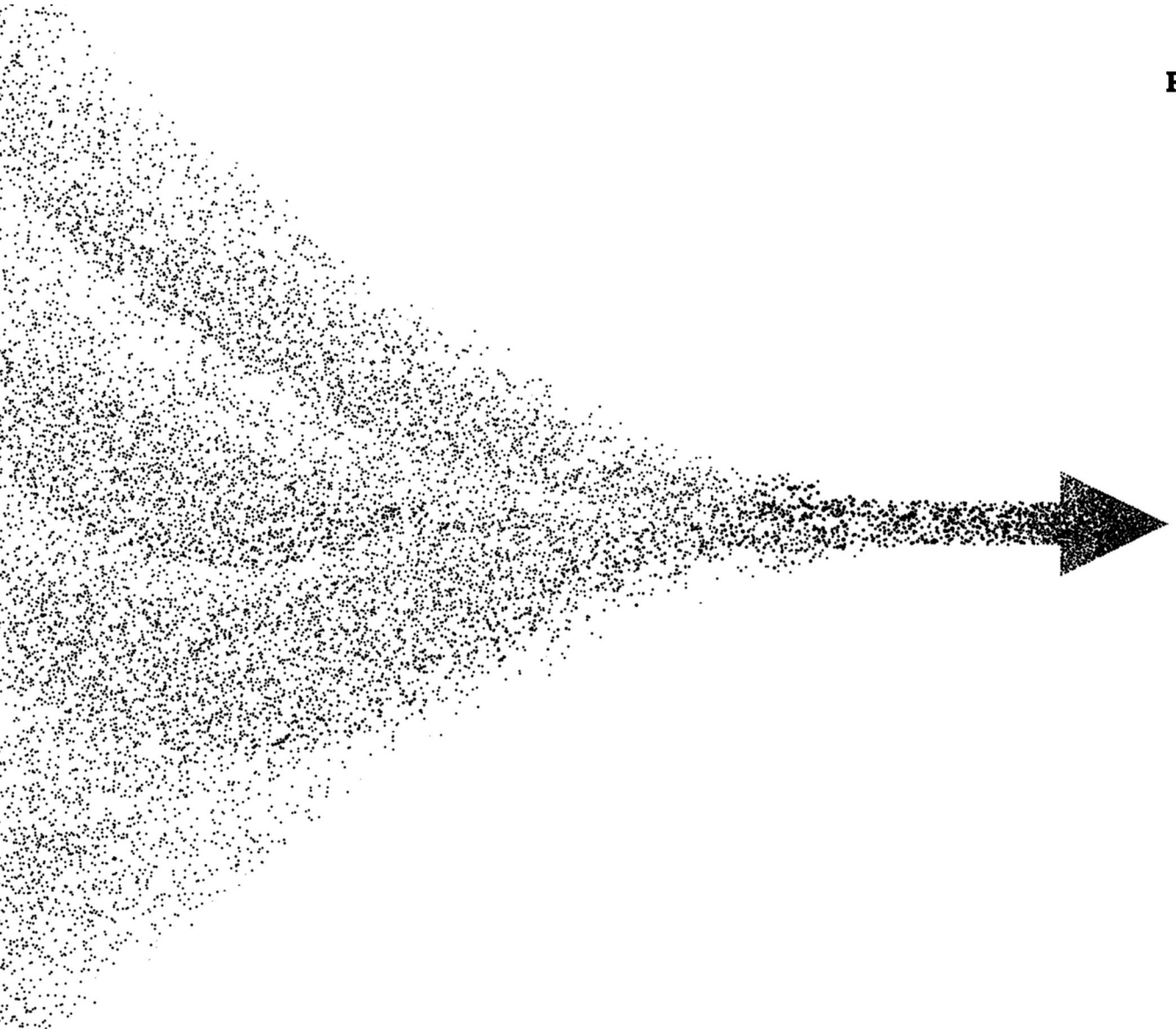
Futurewerk



AT THE
HEART OF

INDIA'S GLOBAL INNOVATION STORY

TELANGANA

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited.

Albert Einstein

Foreword

Jayesh Ranjan
Special Chief Secretary
Government of Telangana

A new model for innovation-driven growth

Over the past decade, Telangana has emerged as one of India's most dynamic and future-ready innovation hubs. With a deep-rooted commitment to technology-led transformation, the state has not only built an ecosystem conducive to startups and enterprises but has also positioned itself at the forefront of cutting-edge advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), deep tech, cloud computing, and Industry 4.0 solutions.

Hyderabad, in particular, has evolved beyond being a global IT and business process outsourcing (BPO) powerhouse, it is now a thriving hub for innovation, research, and entrepreneurship.

Telangana was one of the first states in India to recognise that innovation cannot be an afterthought but must be embedded into governance, industry, and education.

Innovation cannot be an afterthought. It must be embedded into governance, industry, and education.

With initiatives such as T-Hub, the Telangana AI Mission (T-AIM), and the Cloud Adoption Framework, we have created a model where government, academia, and industry collaborate to drive forward-looking solutions.

Our AI and emerging technology initiatives have placed Telangana on the global map. We are not just adopting AI for efficiency but leveraging it to address societal challenges: be it in healthcare, agriculture, or urban development.

The state has implemented over 50 AI-led solutions in governance and industry, reinforcing our vision of responsible AI adoption. Furthermore, our proactive policies on data-driven decision-making, blockchain integration, and quantum computing research are setting new benchmarks in India's digital economy.

Beyond enterprise-led innovation, Telangana has also fostered a vibrant ecosystem for startups and deep tech ventures.Through incubators like T-Hub, we have helped nurture some of the most promising startups in AI, robotics, fintech, and space technology.

Simultaneously, large global companies continue to expand their research and development (R&D) presence in Hyderabad, recognising the region's unparalleled talent and conducive business environment.

This publication, *Telangana: At the Heart of India's Global Innovation Story*, serves as a testament to the state's remarkable journey and its commitment to shaping the future of technology. As we enter an era defined by AI, automation, and digital transformation, Telangana stands ready to lead, inspire, and drive meaningful change.

I invite you to explore the insights and success stories in these pages, and I look forward to collaborating with stakeholders across industries to continue our mission of innovation-driven growth.

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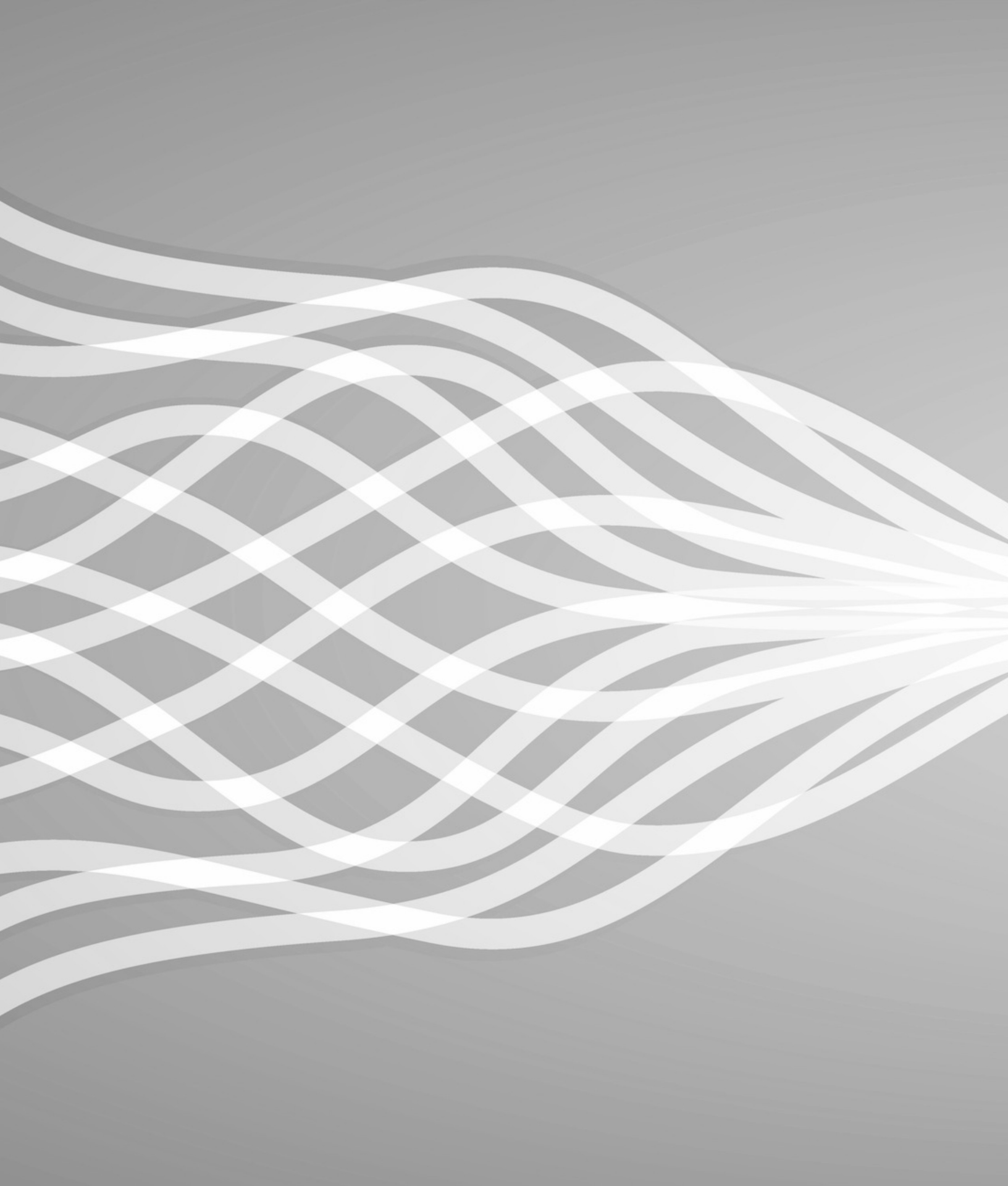


INTRODUCTION

A view from the ecosystem

Telangana's innovation ecosystem did not emerge by accident or through scale alone. It reflects deliberate choices where a leadership mindset, long-term thinking, and institutional clarity have combined to transform potential into sustained capability.

This transformation is not rooted in any single initiative. It has evolved through a consistent approach to aligning policy, talent, infrastructure, and ambition.

What began as an effort to attract investment and technology players has evolved into a dynamic ecosystem.

Telangana today is home to over 1,500 startups, 400+ GCCs, pioneering AI-driven public services, and strong institutional support from IIIT-H, T-Hub, and WE Hub.

Long-standing firms like Apollo and Bharat Biotech now innovate alongside emerging players like Darwinbox, Dhruva Space, and global tech leaders.

What makes Telangana worth studying is not just the outcomes. It is how innovation has been operationalised through an ecosystem mindset, collaborative execution, and a strong public-private-academic interface. In this environment, innovation is not episodic; it is continuous, embedded in how institutions think, act, and evolve.

This publication does not offer a model to replicate. Instead, it serves as a reference point for leaders navigating inflection points, whether building startups, scaling platforms, transforming enterprises, evolving GCCs, or shaping public policy.

The contexts may differ, but the underlying drivers of innovation remain relevant across settings.

Throughout the essays, five recurring themes emerge:

- Ecosystems and policies that foster entrepreneurial growth
- Leadership that drives innovation through mindset and purpose
- Startups, pioneering organisations, and institutions expanding beyond their original charter
- GCCs evolving into strategic platforms for enterprise transformation
- Long-standing innovators that continue to lead with agility and purpose

These are not abstract ideas. In Telangana, they are applied, in how strategy is shaped, how teams are structured, and how systems are built to last.

This is not a celebration of scale. It is a study in intent, execution, and the long view of innovation.

Foundations of an innovation hub

Telangana's emergence began with deliberate investments in ecosystem-building across venture capital access, institutional mentorship, and inclusive policy.

Sateesh Andra reflects on the evolution of India's funding landscape and founder maturity. Sita Pallacholla explains how WE Hub is advancing inclusive entrepreneurship. Rajesh Pagadala shares how communities like TiE Hyderabad have helped institutionalise entrepreneurship.

The people driving the innovation culture

Culture follows leadership. In Telangana, we see how clarity of purpose, systems thinking, and long-term vision have reshaped how organisations behave and evolve.

BVR Mohan Reddy shares the values that guided Cyient's global evolution. Dr. Sangita Reddy explains how innovation in healthcare must be grounded in empathy and systems thinking. Prof. Ramesh Loganathan discusses the mindset shifts needed for research and co-creation to flourish.

Scaling innovation: GCCs and product platforms

Telangana is emerging as a destination where global capability centres and enterprise platforms are being designed for scale, agility, and innovation.

Ashish Sinha of Flutter outlines how their GCC has evolved into a strategic hub supporting global product innovation. Sashi Somavarapu, a GCC and platforms veteran, shares a blueprint for building engineering excellence in global teams. Rohit Chennamaneni explains how Darwinbox was built in Hyderabad as an enterprise HR platform now serving customers across Asia and the Middle East.

Building new frontiers

From public health to space infrastructure and defence simulation, Telangana is home to enterprises solving high-complexity, high-impact problems.

Suchitra Ella of Bharat Biotech reflects on how the company built a global innovation engine in vaccines and therapeutics through deep R&D, scientific breakthroughs, and a focus on the health challenges of the developing world.

Sanjay Nekkanti shares how Dhruva Space is building full-stack satellite infrastructure from India, making space access more integrated and commercially viable. Ashok and Kishore Atluri discuss how Zen Technologies developed proprietary defence simulation platforms that modernise training through innovation built in Telangana.

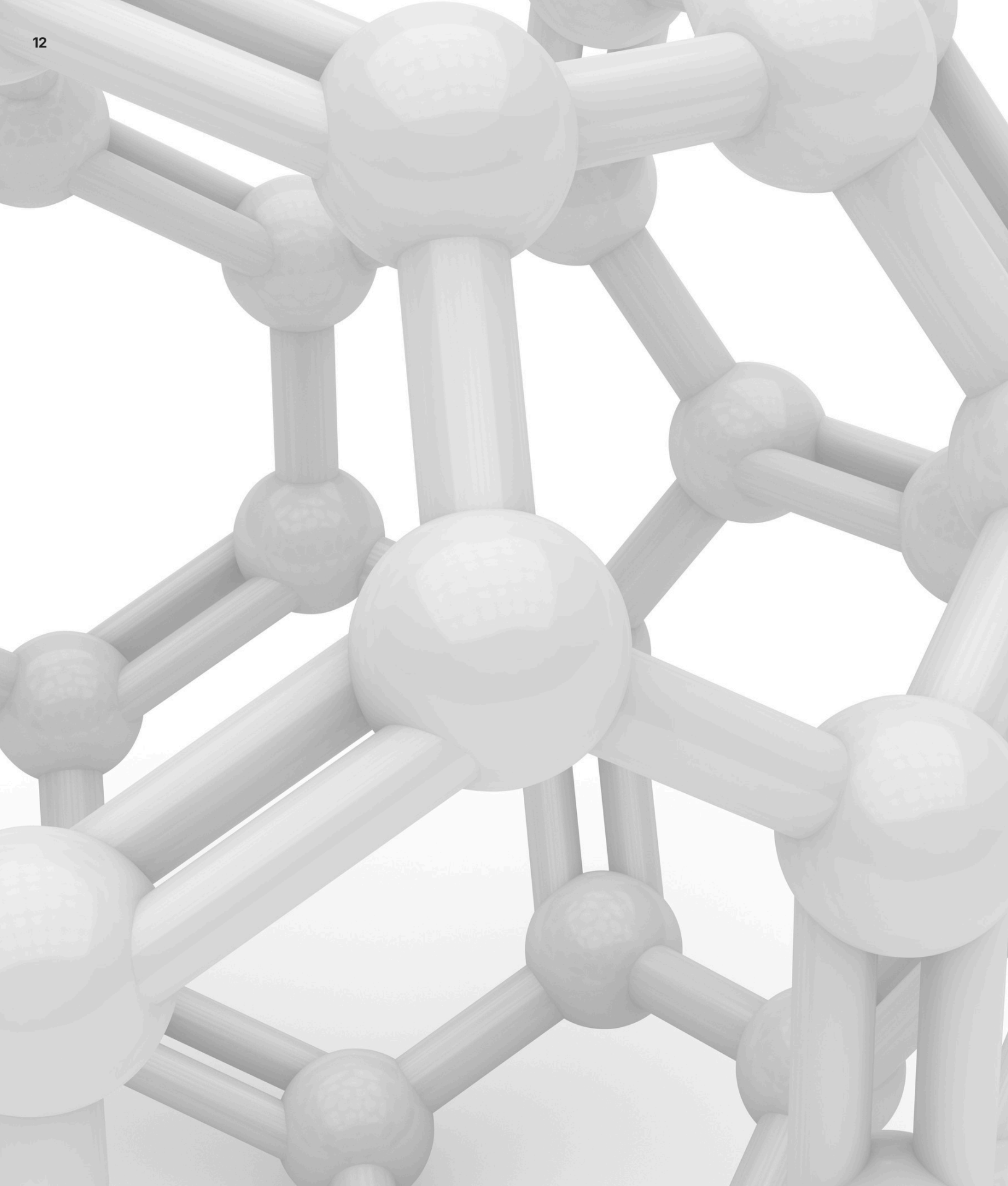
Telangana to the world

Innovation ecosystems do not thrive in isolation. Telangana's long-term success depends on how it is seen, engaged, and integrated into global flows.

Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commissioner, shares a diplomatic perspective on how Telangana is being recognised globally, not just as a place to invest, but as a peer in co-innovation and next-generation capability building.

Telangana's experience is not a blueprint. It is a reference point. It offers a grounded view into how ecosystems evolve, how institutions adapt, and how leadership can turn potential into momentum. The question is not whether others will follow, but how they will apply these lessons within their own contexts.

Sridhar Vedala
Ali Touré
Co-Founders, Futurewerk



Foundations of an innovation hub

Telangana's innovation ecosystem rests on deliberate choices - from capital access and platform thinking to inclusive policy and community building.

Over the past decade, the state has fostered a shift from services-led growth to product and platform entrepreneurship, supported by a strong funding base and active venture networks.

Inclusivity has been built into the ecosystem by design, ensuring broader participation across gender, stage, and sector.

Today, Telangana's entrepreneurial community thrives on collaboration, continuity, and a shared ambition to build for the world.

Building Innovation that Lasts:
A Venture Capitalist's Perspective

Endiya Partners is an early-stage venture capital firm backing entrepreneurs who are building category-defining companies in technology, healthcare, and digital transformation. With a focus on scalable innovation from India, Endiya supports founders through strategic capital, deep domain expertise, and long-term partnership. Its portfolio includes leading startups across enterprise software, deep tech, and healthtech.

MILESTONES

2015 – founded with a focus on early-stage investments in deep-tech, digital health, and enterprise tech

2016 – invested in Darwinbox at seed stage, later becoming one of India's top HR tech platforms

2018 – closed Endiya Fund I with ₹175 crores, backing 16+ startups across healthcare and technology

2021 – launched Endiya Fund II with ₹500 crores to deepen focus on IP-led innovation

2022 – portfolio companies expand into international markets across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the US

2023 – recognised as one of India's most active early-stage VC firms in B2B SaaS and healthtech

2025 – launched Endiya Fund III with ₹800 crores

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Early-Stage IP-Led Innovation Focus

Among the first Indian VCs to invest in deep-tech, SaaS, and healthtech startups building defensible intellectual property from day one.

Venture and Operational Expertise

Offers strategic guidance, market access, and hands-on support, not just capital, helping founders scale with purpose.

Shaping the B2B SaaS and Healthtech

Early backers of category-defining companies like Darwinbox and SigTuple, helping build globally relevant platforms from India.

Backing Founders Beyond Metros

Supports entrepreneurs from diverse geographies, contributing to a more decentralised and inclusive innovation ecosystem.

Sateesh Andra

Managing Director
Endiya Partners

Sateesh Andra is a technology enthusiast and venture capitalist who has a passion for helping entrepreneurs succeed. He brings over two decades of experience in investing, co-founding, leadership, and engineering in the US and India.

Sateesh has led investments in and currently serves on the boards of several companies such as Darwinbox, Kissht, Qapita, Scrut Automation, and Zluri.

His previous investments include Seclore, Little Eye Labs (acquired by Facebook), and mGinger (acquired by Twilio). Prior to founding Endiya, Sateesh was a Partner at Ventureast and DFJ.

Before venturing into investing, Sateesh was the Founder & CEO of Euclid (Synnex), a Silicon Valley-based start-up in the IT management software. He was instrumental in raising over $35 million in venture capital.

Apart from his work at Endiya, Sateesh is involved with the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy, where he promotes sports and raises awareness of chronic diseases.

Sateesh was a top-ranked table tennis player, representing Andhra Pradesh in the nationals.

My journey: from chips to capital

When I returned to India after nearly two decades in Silicon Valley, many thought I was taking a step backward. After all, I had spent the better part of 18 years designing semiconductor chips for companies like Apple and Cisco, founding two venture-backed startups, and eventually moving into the world of venture capital. But for me, the move wasn't about geography, it was about purpose.

In the Valley, I saw what a mature innovation ecosystem could achieve. I saw engineers thinking like product leaders, companies scaling with clarity, and capital backing bold ideas from day zero.

The real opportunity wasn't just to invest capital it was to invest in a generation shaping India's future.

But I also saw the hunger fading in me. India, on the other hand, was just beginning to find its entrepreneurial rhythm. I sensed the opportunity to contribute, not just capital, but experience, and to help shape the next generation of innovators in a country on the brink of transformation.

My career started in engineering building complex semiconductor designs at VLSI and LSI Logic. These were formative years. I worked on chips for Apple, Cisco, and early networking startups like Juniper. But over time, my curiosity shifted from how things were built to why they mattered. What was the customer pain point? Was our technology solving a real need or just adding noise?

That curiosity pushed me into marketing and product strategy. I loved it. I could see the full arc, from ideation to validation to competition. Eventually, I co-founded a software company and raised close to $40 million in venture capital. It was an intense journey with high highs and hard lessons. I scaled the business, made my share of mistakes, and exited. And in that process, I discovered that what truly energises me is not just building, but helping others build.

The three waves of India's startup evolution

When I moved back in the late 2000s, India was still in the first innings of entrepreneurship. What we now call the "ecosystem" was, at the time, a small group of founders, returning professionals, and academics from institutions like ISB and IIT.

The current wave isn't just about local relevance, it's about building deep tech from India, for the world.

Wave one: services

The first wave, starting in the 1990s, was all about services. Companies like Infosys, Wipro, and TCS put India on the global map as a reliable IT services partner. This model created employment, attracted outsourcing dollars, and built the first generation of tech professionals.

But entrepreneurship was still seen as a risk. There were career risks, social stigma, and very limited access to capital. Few people aspired to become founders. Most aimed for jobs in multinationals or secure roles in IT sector.

Wave two: consumer internet

The second wave came post-2008. We saw Flipkart, Ola, and Paytm emerge. Suddenly, building a startup became aspirational. Capital flowed in from global VCs. Mobile internet boomed. Consumer behaviour shifted.

This was also the era when founders without legacy, no prior work at big corporates or elite degrees, began making it big. The playing field widened. Entrepreneurship entered mainstream conversations.

Wave Three: product and deep tech

The third wave, what I believe we're now in, is about product innovation and deep tech. It's not just about local relevance anymore. It's about building from India, for the world. AI, robotics, semiconductors, climate tech—these are no longer buzzwords. They're real business categories emerging from Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Pune.

Building for the world: three case studies

What unites them all is their ambition to scale globally while staying deeply rooted in solving real-world problems.

Darwinbox

India's answer to Workday, but priced for emerging markets. Mobile-first, compliant with regional labour laws, and deeply integrated across the HR lifecycle. Today, it serves enterprise clients across Asia and is expanding into the US.

Steradian

A fabless chip company focused on radar for autonomous vehicles and robotics. They built IP from scratch, secured marquee customers, and were acquired by Renesas, a global semiconductor giant.

Sugar.fit

A digital health startup offering continuous glucose monitoring with AI-based behavioural coaching. What sets them apart is contextual intelligence: local food patterns, lifestyle triggers, and language-based nudges that improve patient outcomes.

What it takes to scale innovation

As an investor, I often get asked: what separates a good startup from a great one? Here's what I've learned.

Founders with domain clarity

Take Darwinbox. It was founded by a team that brought together business consulting, HR, and tech expertise. They didn't just stumble upon a problem, they lived it. That clarity helped them build a full-stack HR platform for the mid-market in India and later scale into Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Execution as a culture

Ideas are easy. Execution is the moat. I've seen companies with average ideas outpace superior competitors simply because they moved faster, hired better, and kept focus. Indian startups today need to think in terms of sprints and systems, not just product launches, but repeatable operating playbooks.

Brand as a strategic lever

This is still a work in progress for many Indian companies. We build great tech, but often struggle to position it. Chinese startups have quietly mastered this. In Europe, you'll find Chinese companies with Scandinavian branding and French design sensibilities.

We must go beyond "Made in India" and aim for "preferred globally."

The role of ecosystem: India's strategic advantage

The biggest tailwind today is the maturity of the ecosystem. Startups are now born into a world with:

- **Plenty of capital:** Pre-seed rounds of $2–3M are not uncommon.
- **Policy support:** From Startup India to sector-specific PLI schemes.
- **Playbooks:** Learnings are now codified, mentors more accessible.
- **Returnees and re-inventors:** Former GCC execs and Valley founders are building or backing new ventures.

Add to that the growing pool of engineers who no longer dream of an onsite job but of creating global products.

Risk and reward: how startups evolve

Founders today face a different risk profile than a decade ago. Market risk is lower and you can test ideas faster.

At Endiya Partners, we focus only on three sectors: healthcare, SaaS, and industrial tech. We believe domain depth is critical. Capital is now commoditised. What differentiates us is how we help founders scale, position, and grow with strategic clarity.

Team risk has increased and talent retention is harder. But the biggest shift is that founders now have help. Sector-specific funds, experienced advisors, and GTM enablers all reduce the learning curve.

As India marches toward becoming a $10 trillion economy, startups will play a central role in that transition, not as side players, but as foundational contributors to GDP, job creation, and global relevance.

From back office to brain trust

Innovation is no longer about geography. It's about mindset, execution, and the ability to build for real problems at scale. India has always had the talent. Now, it has the capital, the confidence, and the conviction.

We're no longer the back office of the world. We're becoming the brain trust. And the next decade belongs to founders who combine vision with velocity, building not just great products, but enduring global brands.

What's next for India?

The goal isn't just to build startups. It's to build categories. We need Indian companies to lead in AI for healthcare, robotics for industry, and energy for the planet. And that will take:

- IP creation over integration
- Brand depth alongside tech depth
- Global ambition without losing local insight

Inclusion is the Strategy that Scales

WE Hub is India’s first state government-led organisation exclusively dedicated to women entrepreneurs. It offers structured programs and systematic engagement to build, lead, and scale their own ventures. At its core, WE Hub is not a building or an organisation. It’s an evolving space where challenges meet solutions, and dreams meet design. It serves as a bridge, connecting aspiration to access, effort to expertise. Over the years, WE Hub has transformed into a nationally recognised institution that anchors women entrepreneurs through every stage of their journey.

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

The power of programs that listen

WE Hub has scaled by designing programs that listen to context and gaps often overlooked. Its tailored support helps women clarify goals, build networks, and grow on their own terms.

Designing for the day-to-day

WE Hub builds programs around the realities of women's lives offering hybrid formats and flexible support that fits their routines.

From quiet villages to global platforms

WE Hub supports women across rural Telangana and urban innovation hubs. Its programs now reach scores of women, with partnerships that connect local ideas to global networks and support systems.

Shaping policy

WE Hub turns on-the-ground insights into policy inputs, advocating for ecosystem changes that help women-led ventures grow sustainably.

Sita Pallacholla

CEO
WE Hub

With over two decades of experience in technology and entrepreneurship. As a computer science engineer, she didn't just code; she questioned how we learn. She co-founded an experiential learning organisation. Later, she led product rollouts across Southeast Asia, launching a multilingual app that gave frontline workers opportunity.

With her work with women entrepreneurs, she saw brilliance hidden behind barriers. So, she built a space for them: The Angel Hub and its flagship, The Angel Summit. Women from across the country-sports women, investors, technologists, UN representatives, politicians, and policy leaders-came together to speak of their challenges and successes.

The same stage held space for founders from across India to pitch their ideas.

Now, at WE Hub, she's rethinking incubation as a personal journey rather than a one-size fits all playbook.

Under her leadership, WE Hub has become a space where first timers and rural innovators feel seen.

The 2024–25 Economic Survey of India calls it a good example from the State of Telangana of how the support of the government can help women's entrepreneurship flourish.

Inclusion begins with scale

When people ask me why inclusion matters, I rarely begin with gender. I begin with something else: scale.

Across the world, the stories may shift, but the script stays the same. Women study, show up, and contribute. But when decisions are made, or credit is given, they're often left out of the frame.

This isn't just unfair. It's inefficient.

Through my work in India, Southeast Asia, and Europe, I've seen how systems are designed to reward visibility, not value.

So when someone asks, "Why inclusion?" I reply, "Because exclusion is the norm."

And if we want systems that last, we have to build with everyone in mind. Inclusion is not a special initiative. It's the foundation.

Redefining innovation: a personal and collective journey

Innovation, to me, has never been about products. It's always been about people. Who gets to solve problems? Who is trusted to lead? Who gets access to the tools of tomorrow?

As an engineer, I built tools. As a founder, I built platforms. But as a woman navigating these spaces, I started building something else entirely - a way forward for those who came next.

From co-founding learning platforms in Singapore to supporting language access across Southeast Asia, my work has always centred around one idea: if people can't access systems, let's redesign the system.

In 2013, I launched The Angel Summit to make women's journeys visible, not just the wins, but the pivots, the detours, the grit. It was a space to make success feel possible, not distant.

That same belief powers my work at WE Hub. We don't just support startups. We strip away what makes scaling hard, whether it's access, networks, or visibility.

Inclusion is not about making room. It is about reshaping the room altogether.

Building systems that include by design

When I joined WE Hub, the vision was already powerful. But the question was: could we go deeper?

Every founder's journey is unique. Some are young mothers. Some are elderly artisans. Some juggle jobs. Some don't even call themselves entrepreneurs yet. But they're all building.

So we redesigned our support around their lives, programs that understand context, not just business models.

We created space for part-time founders, for those with mobility challenges, for those who could only spare evenings or weekends. Our programs flexed with their rhythm.

We began segmenting by life stage, not just business size. And in doing so, we moved from being a support system to being an enabling system.

Because entrepreneurship isn't a personality trait. It's a space of possibility. And when that space is built with care, more people can enter and thrive.

Ecosystem as infrastructure

In Telangana, there is a phrase we return to often: it's not about the idea. It's about the follow-through.

That's why our innovation ecosystem is designed for partnership, not performance. WE Hub works hand-in-hand with T-Hub, T-Works, and TGIC. Each brings their strength. Together, we bring scale.

Easylife Mobility Innovations Pvt. Ltd., one of our standout startups, has developed over 15 unique wheelchair variants- each crafted with a deep understanding of real-world mobility needs. So when T-Hub announced a new cohort focused on assistive technology, we stepped in to make sure she was part of it.

Through this, she gained access to targeted support, meaningful networks, and the resources needed to amplify her impact.

Similarly, Green Breathe Innovations, a startup pioneering moss-based air purifiers, was in the early stages of prototyping a new product. WE Hub facilitated their connection with T-Works, enabling them to swiftly develop a car air purifier prototype while also fine-tuning key components of their existing designs.

This milestone was achieved through the seamless collaboration of ecosystem partners, each playing a vital role in accelerating innovation.

When a space-tech startup from T-Hub AIC began exploring Central Government funding options, we stepped in to support their journey. Understanding both their potential and funding needs, we helped secure their selection under the SAMRIDH Funding Scheme.

It's a testament to how the right ecosystem partnerships can transform ambition into opportunity and momentum into scale.

This is not coordination for the sake of optics. It is operational. I can call a peer institution and align resources for a founder. And they respond because our goals are shared.

Execution is not an afterthought. It is embedded in the culture. At WE Hub, we work with district administrations, adapt to local contexts, and ensure that programs deliver real outcomes.

That's why we call ourselves a nodal agency. We support, connect, and take ownership beyond our own walls. That is how systems grow.

From stories to systems: ground-level impact

The real impact isn't loud. It's steady.

In Manthani, a woman selling millet cookies in unbranded plastic pouches raised her hand at a WE Hub bootcamp and asked, "Can someone help me get into a supermarket?"

We helped her with packaging, lab testing, and licenses. She opened her first bank account. Registered her brand. And little by little, her income grew. So did her children's opportunities. That's what transformation looks like, not overnight, but over time.

In Old City Hyderabad, we worked with women who had never stepped outside alone. Today, over 200 of them are running enterprises.

They started small: a stall, a sale, and a speech. But as they grew, their families grew with them. They didn't just earn. They led.

These aren't stories. They are systems that work.

A blueprint for inclusive scale

Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, and even organisations in Japan and South Africa have reached out. Because the questions we answer here are universal: How do we support the women no one designed for? How do we build a system that listens, adapts, and scales?

In Tamil Nadu, we helped design a rural women entrepreneurship model. In Japan, we're working with a leading VC firm to create one of India's largest women-focused accelerators.

In South Africa, we're in early conversations, but the resonance is already clear.

This model travels not because of its origin, but because of its outcomes. It meets people where they are. And that makes it powerful.

We know we can't do it alone. That's why we collaborate with fellow governmental bodies like SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty), MEPMA (Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas), and the Women and Child Welfare Department, as well as private and global partners like WEConnect, Women in Tech, FICCI, CII, and domain-specific organisations like the Wadhwani Foundation.

Our role is not to compete. It's to connect.

We align with 14 of the 16 UN Sustainable Development Goals-not by design, but by necessity. When women grow, communities follow.

Inclusion must become the default, not an initiative, not an afterthought.

None of this happens in isolation. Real change needs allies: families, educators, policymakers, and men in boardrooms.

Yes, change is slow. But when rooted well, it doesn't break.

That's what we are building: systems that endure, models that travel, and impact that echoes for generations to come.

The Power of Community:
Building the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

TiE Hyderabad is one of the most active chapters of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), a global network dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship. Through mentoring, knowledge sharing, and investor connects, TiE Hyderabad supports founders across stages and sectors. It plays a key role in strengthening the local startup ecosystem by building continuity, trust, and cross-generational collaboration among entrepreneurs.

TiE GLOBAL IMPACT

- Around 70 billion USD in quantum of investments
- USD 1 trillion in wealth created
- 25 million direct employment
- 65 chapters globally
- 27 Chapters in India
- 10,000+ members

Rajesh Pagadala

President
TiE Hyderabad

Rajesh Pagadala is a serial entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience spanning real estate, technology, retail, and startup ecosystems.

He currently serves as the President of TiE Hyderabad (2025), one of the most active chapters in the global TiE network, supporting over 2,000 startups.

He is the Founder & CEO of BuildersMart, an omni-channel platform for construction material procurement, and the Managing Director of Pagadala Constructions.

Rajesh began his career in the U.S., building and exiting successful ventures in retail and IT.

He holds a master's degree in Civil Engineering from Arizona State University and a B.Tech from Nagarjuna University.

A community of builders, bound by purpose

At the heart of TiE Hyderabad's impact lies a belief that entrepreneurship does not thrive in isolation. It is nurtured through meaningful connections, steadfast mentorship, and the courage to think beyond borders.

Founded on the principle that successful entrepreneurs bear a responsibility to uplift the next generation, not merely through capital but through time, experience, and genuine belief, TiE has cultivated an ecosystem uniting founders, investors, and institutions.

Whether guiding first-time founders towards clarity, scaling growth-stage companies, or propelling startups onto the global stage, TiE's model of trust-based community support has proven transformative at every juncture.

Network: the power of connections

When one thinks of TiE, two concepts spring immediately to mind: network and community. This is no accident.

From its inception, TiE was built on a powerful premise. Entrepreneurs must actively enable one another's success. Over time, this ethos has evolved into a global network spanning 65 chapters.

There are over 20 in India, 20 in the U.S., and others across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Among these, Hyderabad has emerged as one of the most dynamic and influential nodes. Hyderabad chapter was started in 1999.

At its core is a group of committed Charter Members. These are seasoned entrepreneurs, CXOs, and business leaders who contribute not only capital and expertise but also deep empathy. They are not passive advisors. They are mentors, door-openers, and champions who engage when it matters most.

TiE Hyderabad alone has over 350 Charter and Associate Members. They form a robust web of opportunity. Whether you are a first-time founder or scaling your venture, this network exists to elevate you.

At TiE, we believe one founder's success should power another's journey. That's why we built a network that feels like a community.

These connections are not merely social. They translate into real outcomes.

A Hyderabad-based founder exploring expansion into Singapore may receive a warm introduction to an in-market Charter Member. What follows is not a cursory email but tailored guidance on market readiness, customer expectations, and strategy.

Co-founders meet at TiE events. Investors back companies discovered through TiE programmes. Struggling startups find renewed momentum through peer referrals. This is not a transactional system. It is relational, built on trust and sustained through mutual contribution.

Beyond individual linkages, TiE Hyderabad collaborates closely with institutions like T-Hub, WE-Hub, the Telangana government, and local corporates. Together, we help startups access not just funding but credibility, mentorship, and long-term perspective. When one founder succeeds, the ecosystem moves forward.

Mentorship: from guidance to growth

Mentorship is the lifeblood of TiE. In Hyderabad, where many entrepreneurs are first-generation founders without established role models or institutional support, it is often the difference between surviving and thriving.

What our founders need is not generic advice. They need clarity rooted in lived experience. Someone who can say, "I've been there. Here's what worked. Here's what didn't." That is the value TiE offers.

Our approach is structured and stage-specific.

Through TiE Young Entrepreneurs (TYE), we engage pupils aged 14 to 18 in business modelling, design thinking, and pitching.

Their insight and ambition often rival early-stage founders. TiE University follows, helping undergraduates turn ideas into viable ventures by connecting them with academic innovation cells, prototyping labs, and investor panels.

TiE Women empowers women entrepreneurs worldwide through learning, mentorship, and funding access. Rooted in community and scalability, it's building a global sisterhood driving real impact.

For operational startups, we offer the Open Mic platform. It is an informal space for pitching and peer feedback.

TiE Scale is a more intensive intervention for startups generating ₹25–50 lakh in revenue but plateauing.

These companies are paired with Charter Members for rigorous strategy sessions, business model reviews, and hands-on guidance. These interactions often lead to difficult but essential pivots. The outcomes are rarely cosmetic. They are transformative.

Peer learning and founder support

Alongside structured programmes, we have also cultivated something quieter but equally valuable: peer learning and mutual support among entrepreneurs.

We organise confidential peer-learning cohorts of 10 to 12 Charter Members who meet regularly. These groups are not designed to offer advice to others, but to reflect, share, and challenge one another as peers. Some have continued for nearly a decade. They represent horizontal learning built on mutual respect and experience.

We do this because we recognise a reality that is often overlooked. Entrepreneurship can be isolating. Founders often face uncertainty, tough decisions, and moments of doubt that are not visible from the outside. In these times, consistent support matters more than quick advice.

At TiE, our role is to be present through those phases. Not just during the visible successes, but when the way forward is less clear. That presence, quiet, experienced, and reliable, often creates the space in which new clarity can emerge.

Taking Hyderabad to the world

Discussions about Hyderabad as a startup hub often centre on infrastructure and investment. But an equally important shift is taking place. More founders are now thinking about global markets from the very beginning.

This mindset is not entirely new. Entrepreneurs from coastal Andhra and Telangana have a long history of looking beyond local markets—whether to the Gulf, the U.S., or across India.

That outward-looking orientation, combined with Hyderabad's inclusive and pragmatic culture, continues to shape the city's entrepreneurial approach.

At TiE, we encourage founders to consider international relevance early in their journey. If a product addresses a meaningful problem locally, there may well be a broader opportunity elsewhere.

One TiE University alumnus, for instance, developed a robot for cleaning high-rise façades. What began as a local solution has since attracted buyers from the U.S. and UAE. The product remained the same. What shifted was the founder's outlook and readiness to expand.

Our global network plays an active role in enabling this. Whether introducing a healthtech startup to hospital networks in the Middle East or supporting a SaaS founder navigating compliance in the U.S., TiE chapters provide practical, experience-based support.

This global interest is reciprocal. Diaspora investors, especially from the U.S. and U.K., are increasingly engaged with Hyderabad's startup ecosystem. What appeals to them is not just innovation, but the grounded and execution-focused approach that many local founders bring.

Enabling an innovation driven community

As Hyderabad's innovation landscape grows more complex, TiE Hyderabad's role continues to evolve. While we remain focused on supporting individual entrepreneurs, we are also working to strengthen the broader ecosystem around them.

The city offers a wide range of institutional support. T-Hub, WE-Hub, academic institutions, government initiatives, and investor networks all play a part. But many of these efforts operate independently, which can make it difficult for founders to navigate them effectively.

TiE is working to address this by serving as a connector. We engage with stakeholders across the ecosystem, encouraging collaboration with the founder's journey at the centre. Whether it is a local corporate or a diaspora investor, our goal is to help create a more coordinated and accessible environment.

We are also focusing on emerging areas such as AI. Through founder groups, focused discussions, and mentoring in sectors like healthtech, logistics, and enterprise automation, we aim to help startups move from experimentation to applied impact.

Our commitment to long-term mentorship remains central. Programmes like TiE Scale, TYE, and peer learning cohorts are designed to support founders at different stages. Not just at launch, but as they scale and adapt.

We see our role as helping to build a stronger foundation for innovation.

One that is more connected, more responsive, and grounded in shared purpose. Our focus is long term: on the founders we support and the community they help build.

The people driving the innovation culture

Innovation does not thrive on policy alone. It depends on people who lead with clarity, purpose, and a long-term view.

In Telangana, leadership across engineering, healthcare, and academia is shaping how organisations think, build, and evolve.

This section explores how deeply held values, systems thinking, and collaborative intent are being translated into innovation cultures that endure and scale, through the ways leaders structure teams, invest in capability, foster inclusion, and embed purpose into daily decision-making, long-range strategy, and the development of resilient, future-ready organisations.

The Innovation Mindset:
Leading with Purpose and Clarity

Cyient has spent over three decades building a reputation for engineering excellence across product, plant, and network value chains. With a presence across 22 nationalities and the trust of more than 300 global clients, including 30 percent of the world's top 100 innovators, Cyient empowers industries ranging from aerospace and defense to healthcare and communications.

MILESTONES

1991 – founded in Hyderabad with a focus on GIS services

2003 – partnered with United Technologies in aerospace engineering

2010 – expanded into US engineering services with Daxcon acquisition

2014 – rebranded as Cyient, with a focus on design-led innovation

2015 – launched Cyient DLM, entering electronics manufacturing

2018 – acquired AnSem to build semiconductor design capability

2020 – entered digital consulting through IG Partners acquisition

2023 – opened Cyientrix, an innovation and experience centre in Hyderabad

2024 – launched Cyient Semiconductors for chip design and embedded systems

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Pioneering engineering services

Among the first Indian firms to deliver outsourced design and GIS services to global aerospace and industrial clients.

Digital transformation with insights

Developed analytics and AI-driven platforms to enable predictive maintenance, smart asset management, and digital operations.

Expansion into semiconductors

Entered fabless chip design and embedded systems, supporting India's semiconductor ecosystem with advanced design services.

Design-led manufacturing integration

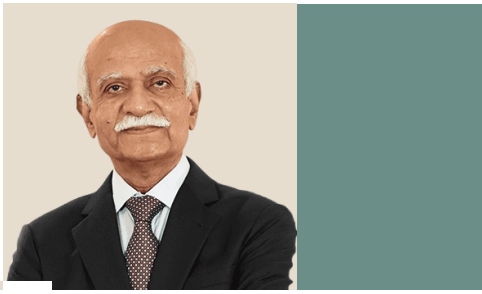
Combined precision manufacturing with engineering services to offer end-to-end solutions in high-reliability industries.

CyientifIQ innovation platform

A structured innovation engine focused on incubating AI, IoT, automation, and next-generation engineering solutions.

Sustainability & cleantech engineering

Introduced services for clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, and circular design to address evolving global priorities.



BVR Mohan Reddy

Founder Chairman & Board Member
Cyient Ltd.

BVR Mohan Reddy is a pioneering entrepreneur and industry leader who founded Cyient in 1991, creating one of the first global engineering services companies from India.

Under his leadership, Cyient became a trusted partner to Fortune 100 companies and contributed over $5 billion in cumulative exports.

He has played a key role in shaping India's IT and innovation landscape, serving as Chairman of NASSCOM, Founding Director of T-Hub, and leading industry bodies like Confederation of Indian Industry.

He currently chairs the Board of Governors at IIT Hyderabad, IIT Roorkee, NIT Warangal, NIT Jalandhar, NIT Jamshedpur, NITK Surathkal, NIT Puducherry.

Mohan is a strong advocate for education, innovation, and nation-building.

He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2017 for his contributions to trade and industry and continues to mentor entrepreneurs and institutions across India.

Planting the seeds of innovation

Every meaningful innovation begins with a question. For me, it's always been about challenging the norm, asking why things are done a certain way, and wondering if there's a better approach. But for too long, our education system taught us not to ask questions. It rewarded memorisation, not exploration.

Innovation isn't a subject to be taught in college. It's a mindset to be nurtured early. If we wait until university, we've already missed the opportunity.

This needs to change and it is changing. In my work with the Ministry of Education, I've seen a real push to reframe how we teach. The new National Education Policy (NEP) is a major step in the right direction emphasising real-world learning, interdisciplinary thinking, and curiosity.

But we must go even further. That's why I'm passionate about initiatives like the Telangana State Innovation Council, which fosters innovation from the school level. I believe it's in those early years that we must sow the seeds, if we wait until university, we've missed the opportunity. Innovation isn't just a subject; it's a mindset and it must be nurtured early.

The four pillars of innovation

At its core, innovation stands on four essential pillars that I've seen play out time and again, both in my own journey and across industries.

Questioning and risk-taking

Innovation begins by challenging the norm. You ask "why" and "what if." Not every idea succeeds and that's okay. But in India, we've traditionally struggled with this acceptance. Failure is often stigmatised, which discourages experimentation. To truly innovate, we must foster a culture that embraces uncertainty and learns from failure.

Patience and persistence

Innovation is not a light bulb moment. It's a long, often arduous journey. Even brilliant ideas need time to take shape into working products, services, or scalable models. Persistence is the bridge between the spark of an idea and its realisation.

Collaboration and openness

Gone are the days when innovation happened in isolation. Today, it thrives in ecosystems. Customers, partners, engineers, and even competitors all contribute. This openness, what we call "open innovation", is what drives real breakthroughs.

Team-first, nation-first mindset

True innovation is not self-serving. It must benefit the larger community. I believe we must move from a mindset of individual success to one that prioritises societal and national progress. Innovation should be about collective upliftment, not just personal gain.

From cost arbitrage to innovation partners: the evolution of India's IT industry

In the early days of India's IT services industry, global companies turned to us for one reason: cost. Talent was abundant, affordable, and skilled but the thinking, planning, and problem-solving remained with the client.

We were expected to execute, not lead. Time-and-materials contracts defined the engagement, clients told us what to do, and we delivered.

At Cyient, the journey toward becoming an innovation partner came to life in real terms.For example, when a leading global aerospace company set out to design a new aircraft engine with an integrated gearbox, which was a complex, first-of-its-kind engineering challenge, we contributed 25% of the total engineering effort. Even more significantly, 20% of the innovations in that engine were co-authored by our team.

It was a moment of pride and a powerful signal: we were no longer just service providers. We had become true innovation partners.

But as the global delivery model matured, expectations shifted. Customers began seeking more than just execution. They wanted insight, ownership, and outcomes.

The industry responded with fixed-price models, outcome-based contracts, and eventually, risk-reward partnerships. These new models didn't just require capability. They demanded confidence, initiative, and trust.

Indian IT companies began to evolve from vendors to true problem solvers and innovators. They moved beyond execution, partnering with clients to refine goals, design smarter solutions, and drive meaningful outcomes.

Cyient's transformation: staying grounded, moving forward

As the industry evolved, we made a conscious decision: to lead with depth, not distraction. While others diversified, Cyient doubled down on engineering, applying innovation not as a label, but as a mindset built on questioning, risk-taking, and consistent execution.

Our belief was simple: focus builds capability. Capability builds trust. And trust opens the door to solving our customers' most complex problems.

Our journey to building this capability was anchored on five key focus areas.

1. Building a culture of innovation

At Cyient, innovation has always been foundational, not a department, not a periodic initiative, but a way of thinking. From the outset, we believed that progress comes from questioning the status quo, taking calculated risks, and persisting through uncertainty.

These weren't abstract values; they shaped how we worked, solved problems, and grew as a company.

Our early focus was on process innovation. Back in the 1990s, we undertook the enormous task of digitising global maps, which was a highly manual effort at the time.

But even then, we weren't just executing tasks. We built robust systems to ensure quality, consistency, and cost-effectiveness. That discipline laid the operational groundwork for what came next.

But we soon realised that true innovation needed to go beyond process; it had to become part of our culture.

Around 12 years ago, we began asking ourselves: How do we embed innovation into our DNA?

The answer was both symbolic and systemic. We created the Innovation Tree, a wall painted with a tree at our R&D centre where employees could post their ideas on paper "leaves."

Every idea was reviewed, and promising ones received funding.

Over time, what began as a physical wall evolved into a company-wide program with enterprise tools, innovation gates, dedicated budgets, and a growing stream of employee-led ideas.

To amplify this, we established a Customer Innovation Centre, a 60,000+ square foot collaborative space where clients could bring their toughest challenges and co-create solutions with our teams.

It wasn't just a showcase; it became a studio for open innovation. We believe that real breakthroughs happen when diverse perspectives come together to solve real problems.

It's a reflection of how deeply innovation is embedded in our culture and how that culture continues to power transformation.

2. Staying true to engineering

At Cyient, our unwavering focus has always been our core and that clarity has been fundamental to our ability to innovate meaningfully. From day one, we made a deliberate decision: we would not chase every opportunity. We would be an engineering company, through and through.

As a mechanical engineer myself, engineering has always been more than a profession, it has been a passion. That personal conviction shaped the company's direction. While others diversified into IT services, BPO, and adjacent domains, we chose to stay focused on engineering. For us, focus was not a limitation, it was our edge.

We committed to building depth over breadth. That meant cultivating deep domain expertise, nurturing talent with highly specialised skills, and solving some of the most complex engineering problems in the world. This focused approach created a strong foundation for everything we did: how we built our teams, how we collaborated with customers, and even how we invested in innovation.

Our strength doesn't lie in how many sectors we serve, but in the depth, rigour, and reliability we bring to the domain that we know best.

3. Empowering people to lead innovation

At Cyient, we've always known that innovation is ultimately driven by people. Ideas don't come to life on their own. It takes individuals with the right skills, the right mindset, and the courage to lead change. That's why we placed people at the centre of our innovation journey.

We made consistent, long-term investments in upskilling and reskilling. Our teams were encouraged to stay curious, embrace emerging technologies, and continuously learn.

We fostered a mindset, one that welcomed change, valued initiative, and was comfortable with taking calculated risks.

We focused on creating an environment where those willing to grow could thrive, where people weren't just contributing to innovation, but leading it.

4. Leading with integrity and purpose

None of this is possible without leadership. At Cyient, we've learned that real transformation starts at the top. Leaders set the tone for culture, for clarity, and for courage.

For me, leadership has always come down to one thing: integrity. It means saying what you mean, doing what you say, and most importantly, taking your people along with you. It's about building trust, staying grounded in purpose, and enabling others to grow and lead.

5. Execution, always

At Cyient, we've always believed that strategy must be backed by structure. It's not enough to update the narrative unless your operating model, mindset, and people evolve, transformation won't take root. Too often, we see organisations talk about innovation but continue to operate with outdated processes and rigid hierarchies.

That's why we've made execution a discipline. It means aligning culture, incentives, talent, and governance with strategic intent. Our new CEO, for example, is driving a company-wide shift, not through isolated projects, but by enabling structural, enterprise-level change.

In the end, lasting transformation is not declared. It's delivered, day in and day out, through how an organisation truly operates.

Balancing innovation and performance

The journey toward innovation shouldn't be derailed by the realities of market performance, but it must operate in balance with them. Running a publicly listed company for nearly two decades has taught me that innovation and quarterly accountability are not mutually exclusive. They must coexist.

Investors expect growth. Employees look for stability. Customers demand value. And society holds us to higher standards. Balancing these expectations is part of leadership and part of building a company that lasts.

At Cyient, we've managed this balance by anchoring ourselves in core values we call FIRST: Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Sincerity, and Transparency.

These principles shape how we respond when trade-offs are required, whether it's between experimentation and execution, or long-term bets and short-term delivery.

Innovation and performance are not at odds, they must be balanced. Leadership is about holding that balance with clarity, so that bold ideas can thrive without losing sight of responsibility.

We also structure our decisions around four key stakeholders: Customer, Investor, Employee, and Society. Their needs don't always align, but our job is to ensure they're all heard and that no one priority undermines the others.

Take our customer focus as an example. We don't stop at delivery, we embed listening and learning into our operating rhythm. Transactional feedback, quarterly evaluations, and a third-party NPS survey across 300+ clients help us stay grounded in what truly matters.

Innovation must remain ambitious, but it must also be accountable. That's the discipline we've built: to stay forward-looking while being market-conscious, and to pursue transformation without losing sight of trust, performance, and value.

Innovation is a mindset

Looking back, I feel a deep sense of pride, not just in Cyient's journey, but in how far India has come. We've moved from being a destination for cost-effective talent to becoming a trusted partner in engineering, design, and innovation. Our startups are scaling. Our universities are reforming. Our mindset is shifting from rote execution to purposeful problem-solving.

But this journey is still unfolding.

Innovation isn't a function or a one-time initiative. It's not defined by labs or budgets. It's a way of thinking and a way of being. It starts by questioning the status quo, thrives through collaboration, and endures through clarity of purpose.

At Cyient, that mindset has shaped who we are. It has taught us to stay focused on what we do best, to empower our people to lead change, and to keep executing regardless of market pressures or shifting trends.

The Mindset to Move Forward:
Building a Culture of Innovation at Apollo

Apollo Hospitals is one of Asia's largest and most respected healthcare providers, known for pioneering private healthcare in India. With a strong focus on clinical excellence, technology adoption, and patient-centric innovation, Apollo has consistently led advancements in medical infrastructure, digital health, and preventive care. The group operates a network of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and health-tech platforms serving millions across India and beyond.

MILESTONES

1983 – founded India's first corporate hospital.

1992 – launched India's first telemedicine service.

2019 – introduced Apollo 24/7, an integrated digital health platform.

2020 – deployed the AI-powered Clinical Intelligence Engine (CIE).

2021 – opened South Asia's first Proton therapy centre.

2022 – launched Apollo ProHealth, a personalised preventive care program.

2023 – crossed 25,000 organ transplants across the Apollo network.

2023 – earned HIMSS Level 6 digital maturity at multiple hospitals.

2024 – scaled AI-based triage and remote monitoring via HealthAxis.

2024 – partnered with Microsoft to develop AI copilots for healthcare.

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Clinical Intelligence Engine

An AI-powered tool that supports doctors with real-time decision-making across 1,300+ conditions and 800 symptoms.

Proton therapy centre

South Asia's first proton therapy facility, offering ultra-precise, low-impact cancer treatment.

Apollo ProHealth

A personalised preventive health program that assesses individual risk and enables early intervention through data-driven insights.

Apollo 24/7

A comprehensive digital health platform offering online consultations, diagnostics, e-pharmacy, and personal health records.

Renaissance robotic spine surgery

Advanced system enabling safer, minimally invasive spine procedures with greater accuracy.

TeleICU & remote monitoring systems

AI-enabled solutions for continuous patient monitoring and emergency triage, expanding access to critical care across geographies.

Dr. Sangita Reddy

Joint Managing Director
Apollo Hospitals

Dr. Sangita Reddy is a global healthcare leader, pioneering entrepreneur, and committed humanitarian.

As Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals, she plays a key role in shaping Asia's largest and most trusted healthcare group.

A founding member of the Apollo Hospitals team, Dr. Reddy has been instrumental in driving innovation across the healthcare ecosystem, from early digital transformation initiatives to expanding access through technology-enabled care models.

Her efforts have consistently focused on making high-quality healthcare more accessible, affordable, and future-ready.

She has served in several national and international leadership roles, including President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Chairperson of G20 Empower during India's G20 Presidency, and Chairperson of the BRICS Women's Business Alliance (India).

Most recently, she was appointed to the Board of Joint Commission Resources, Inc. (JCR), where she contributes her global insights to help improve healthcare quality and patient safety around the world.

How belief shapes progress

When my father, Dr. Prathap C. Reddy, founded Apollo Hospitals over four decades ago, the goal wasn't just to build a hospital. It was to transform how India thinks about healthcare. His vision was to go beyond treating illness and focus on improving lives.

He believed that India could not only deliver world-class care but also become a pioneer in shaping the future of health itself. That belief continues to guide us. It taught us that transformation doesn't begin with infrastructure. It begins with mindset.

Today, I see that same principle at work as we step into the next era of healthcare. Whether we are designing AI tools, developing remote care systems, or building preventive health platforms, our mindset is what keeps the organisation evolving.

It allows us to move forward with confidence, even when we have already achieved success.

At Apollo, we have learned that progress comes from belief. It comes from creating an environment where innovation is not a one-time effort but a continuous way of thinking, working, and caring. For us, innovation is not a project with an endpoint, but a mindset that shapes everything we do.

In many ways, Apollo is not a company that adapted to change. We are an institution built to drive it.

Leadership as an enabler

What allows innovation to thrive at Apollo is not just strategy or technology. It is the way leadership clears the path and then steps aside. Across the organisation, our role as leaders is to shape direction, set intent and ensure that people at every level feel empowered to act on ideas that matter.

We do not drive innovation through control. We enable it by letting go.

Some of the most meaningful progress we have made, whether in care delivery, remote monitoring or digital platforms, has come from individuals and teams who were given the freedom to build. Our job is to make sure they have the support and belief to keep going.

That is why innovation at Apollo does not sit in a separate lab or unit. It lives across departments. In clinical teams, technology groups, education arms and operating centres.

People from very different backgrounds, including doctors, data scientists and operational leaders, work together not because they are told to, but because they see shared value in solving problems as a system.

Over the years, we have seen how this approach attracts people who want to build and create a culture where they stay. They come because Apollo is known for being ahead of the curve. They stay because they are trusted to shape what comes next.

Designing for everyday innovation

At Apollo, what makes innovation possible is a structure that allows ideas to emerge, evolve and scale across teams and functions.

Many of our senior administrators come from clinical backgrounds.

Our engineering teams work closely with medical leads. Our education platforms are informed by real-time hospital workflows.

This kind of integration allows us to blur traditional boundaries between technology and care, between research and delivery, and between operations and learning. When people work this closely, ideas move faster. And when those ideas serve a shared purpose, they gain momentum.

We do not rely on silos to push innovation. Instead, we design systems that enable it to flow.

Whether it is through embedded AI in clinical workflows, pharmacy teams reviewing prescriptions digitally, or nursing teams using learning dashboards for upskilling, innovation shows up where work is already happening.

One part of that effort is HealthAxis, which brings together capabilities from across the Apollo ecosystem, including digital health, diagnostics, education and patient experience, and integrates them into cohesive service models.

But the core idea is not centralisation. It is connectivity. People across Apollo understand that they have a role in shaping what comes next.

The result is not just better tools. It is a stronger system, one where innovation is not imposed from the top, but built into the fabric of everyday work.

Bridging borders in healthcare

Apollo's work is deeply rooted in India, where healthcare must be designed for scale, affordability and access. But our perspective has always extended beyond geography.

We are part of a global healthcare ecosystem, learning from it, contributing to it, and building partnerships that matter.

Through initiatives like Heal in India, we are expanding global access to Indian healthcare. We deliver high-quality, affordable care to patients across borders, ensuring that our knowledge and systems create meaningful impact wherever they are applied.

Our leadership is also actively engaged on the global stage, from institutions like the Joint Commission International to platforms such as G20 Empower, shaping healthcare policy and innovation strategy.

This engagement is not symbolic. It ensures that what we build reflects the best thinking worldwide, and that what we learn in India feeds back into global systems.

Our context is unique. We serve a wide spectrum of patients, from high-complexity clinical cases in cities to primary care in underserved regions. This diversity gives us a deep understanding of what it takes to deliver care across different levels of need.

We also contribute to national platforms such as the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and eSanjeevani, while partnering internationally to establish global capability centres in Hyderabad.

These centres draw on Apollo's integrated strengths in clinical excellence, technology and operational delivery.

This blend of local insight and international connectedness is what allows Apollo to evolve as a learning institution.

Taking healthcare beyond the hospital

Healthcare at Apollo is no longer confined to hospitals. While our clinical depth remains a cornerstone, our responsibility has grown to include prevention, access and continuity across every stage and setting of care.

One way we have expanded this vision is through our focus on preventive health.

Non-communicable diseases now account for nearly 67% of deaths in India, making prevention and early intervention more critical than ever. This has shaped our focus on personalised diagnostics and long-term risk management.

Our Zen Health Checks provide a full-body diagnostic experience that gives people visibility into their health risks over the next five to ten years.

Tools like My ProHealth allow individuals to input their lifestyle and health information and receive tailored recommendations on what diagnostics they should consider.

These are not just digital features. They are part of a deliberate shift towards helping people stay healthy, not just treating them when they are unwell.

This focus extends into how we think about geography. In India, access to healthcare is still deeply unequal. Over 60 percent of the population lives in rural areas, yet the majority of care infrastructure is urban.

We have worked to bridge this gap through rural hospitals, telemedicine networks and care models that bring expertise to where people are. In places like Himachal Pradesh, our teams are able to read ECGs remotely and provide emergency triage from our centres in Chennai.

We are also expanding continuous care beyond the ICU. Today, Apollo is monitoring over 2,000 non-ICU beds across 42 hospitals using wearable and contactless technologies.

This technology is also being deployed beyond the hospital, in homes and ambulances.

More than 178,000 patients have been monitored so far, leading to clinically meaningful outcomes, including a reduction in cardiac arrest rates to zero in several sites.

Our TeleICU platform extends this expertise further. It currently supports over 200 critical care beds across India and other countries, helping improve clinical adherence and ensuring 24/7 access to specialist input, regardless of location.

Our aim is to reduce the distance, not just physical but also systemic, between patients and care.

We want healthcare to be predictive when possible, responsive when needed and always accessible. Whether someone walks into one of our hospitals, engages with us online or connects from a village clinic, they should feel that the system is working for them.

Because at the heart of it, this is not about infrastructure. It is about people. Everything we build, scale or transform is rooted in the belief that patients, wherever they are, deserve the best care possible.

And as caregivers, technologists and system builders, we never forget that we are patients too.

An ecosystem designed to scale health

Telangana has long been one of India's leading centres for healthcare and life sciences. With a strong base of hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and healthtech providers, the state established itself early on as a trusted hub for care delivery and clinical excellence.

In recent years, the ecosystem has evolved further. Today, technology and healthcare are not separate conversations, but part of a single, integrated approach to solving complex problems.

We have seen this evolution unfold around us. Hyderabad is not just our home. It is also a place where collaboration between global health systems, local startups and enterprise providers is accelerating.

Whether in the development of digital health tools, AI-based diagnostics or remote care platforms, Telangana has become a proving ground for innovation that blends medical insight with technical depth.

What makes this possible is the state's consistent focus on access, speed and proactive growth. Policy is not just supportive. It is enabling.

The environment encourages partnership, welcomes experimentation and moves with urgency when there is an opportunity to improve outcomes.

This kind of ecosystem, one that brings together research, delivery, technology and policy, is rare.

It is one of the reasons we believe Telangana is uniquely positioned to lead the next phase of healthcare innovation, not just for India, but in collaboration with the world.

The future we are building

The future of healthcare will be shaped by intelligence, equity and empathy, not as abstract goals but as practical foundations for everything we create.

Intelligence means care systems that are deeply informed by data, guided by AI and supported by clinical decision tools. These technologies will not replace human judgement. They will sharpen it, extend it and make it more precise.

Equity means ensuring that innovation is not just accessible but built for scale and inclusion.

Insurance coverage, digital platforms and low-cost delivery models will be essential to making care reach everyone, not just the urban or the affluent.

Empathy means staying rooted in why we do this work. Every advancement must serve a person, a community, a life. If technology does not translate into dignity and wellbeing, it fails its purpose.

At Apollo, these values are not future aspirations. They are design principles. We believe that the most enduring innovation is the kind that understands people and builds for them.

The real transformation

Transformation in healthcare does not begin with technology. It begins with belief.

When leadership believes that better is possible, people take initiative. When organisations align around shared purpose, systems begin to evolve. And when culture supports experimentation, progress becomes a way of working, not a moment in time.

At Apollo, we have not built innovation into a corner of the organisation. We have built it into the way we move forward. It shows up in our decisions, in our risks, in how we respond to what works and what does not.

A culture of innovation takes clarity, commitment and consistency. It is shaped by the choices we make every day.

We are proud to be rooted in India. We are excited to be connected to the world. But more than anything, we are committed to building a future where innovation is not just what we do, it's who we are.

The Co-Innovation Model:
Telangana's Blueprint for Scalable Impact

The International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIIT-H) is a leading research-focused academic institution known for its work in AI, computer vision, robotics, and language technologies. Through its research centres and innovation programs, IIIT-H plays a central role in connecting academia with startups, industry, and government to solve real-world problems at scale.

MILESTONES

1998 – established as India's first autonomous public–private IT institute

2002 – introduced Ph.D. programs in data science and computer vision

2008 – launched CVIT for research in AI and computer graphics

2015 – set up Product Labs for student-led product innovation

2016 – founded KCIS to scale AI research and industry collaboration

2018 – introduced India's first Smart City Living Lab

2020 – partnered with Intel and MEITY on national AI infrastructure

2022 – scaled CIE's deep-tech startup accelerator program

2024 – launched AI Research Centre focused on health, agri, and governance

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Applied AI leadership

A national leader in applied AI research with labs advancing work in NLP, robotics, machine learning, and speech recognition.

A deep-tech startup incubator

The Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship has incubated over 400 startups, including several in AI, medtech, and IoT.

AI for public good

Active research and pilots in areas like AI for agriculture, healthcare diagnostics, public safety, and rural education.

Smart City Living Lab

India's first real-world smart city testbed that supports urban-tech startups and research on mobility, energy, and civic services.

Labs for student-led innovation

A platform enabling students to build and commercialise products, combining academic rigour with entrepreneurial outcomes.

Collaborative research ecosystem

Deep partnerships with global technology companies and government agencies to co-create deployable research and IP.

Ramesh Loganathan

Professor - Co-Innovation, **IIIT Hyderabad**
Former Chief Innovation Officer, Telangana

Prof. Ramesh Loganathan is a leading voice in India's innovation ecosystem, with over 25 years of experience in product R&D and academic-industry collaboration.

He heads Research and Innovation Outreach at IIIT Hyderabad, where he helped establish the Technology Transfer Office, Co-Innovation Labs, and the Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Previously, he led India operations for Progress Software and held senior roles at Pramati Technologies.

Beyond academia, he served as Telangana's Interim Chief Innovation Officer and has been a key ecosystem enabler through roles at HYSEA, NASSCOM, Headstart Network, and various government committees.

He is also a visiting faculty at IIT Hyderabad and sits on the boards of incubators at IIIT-H, BITS, and IIIT-Delhi.

From product labs to academia: why I made the switch

If you'd asked me in 2003 whether I'd ever become a full-time academic, I would have dismissed the idea outright. My life was rooted in product development. At Pramati Technologies, we built globally recognised platforms at the cutting edge of Java server technology.

Later, at Progress Software, I led the India R&D centre and saw firsthand how global product organisations scale, structure, and drive impact.

But a quiet shift began the day I walked into a student lab at IIIT Hyderabad.

I expected to find good intentions and modest experiments. What I actually saw was raw engineering energy: students building live demos, faculty welcoming industry collaboration, and a culture rooted in curiosity and hands-on learning. It felt closer to a startup garage than a research department.

Even after Pramati stepped back, I kept returning. First to support projects, then to teach. In 2002, I was formally made adjunct faculty. That letter remains one of my most cherished milestones.

Between 2002 and 2008, I wore multiple hats. I taught a few courses each year, co-founded Headstart Network, supported early-stage startups, and helped shape Hyderabad's emerging tech ecosystem. But when IIIT launched its incubator in 2008, the dots began to connect.

I didn't enter academia out of detachment from industry. I came in because this institute, and its approach to research, teaching, and innovation, offered a rare convergence.

'This wasn't research for its own sake. It was a space where research translated into application and where impact wasn't just aspirational, but intentional by design.

India's quiet advantage: research excellence waiting to scale

Much has been said about India's engineering scale and rightly so. But far less attention is given to our research capabilities. Quietly and consistently, institutions like IIIT Hyderabad have been producing work that ranks among the best globally.

Take our B.Tech students, not PhDs or postdocs, but undergraduates. Every year, they publish over 50 papers in leading international conferences across areas like computer vision, natural language processing, AI for healthcare, and computational biology.

These aren't just academic exercises; in both rigour and relevance, they stand tall among the best in the world.

Yet the world's engagement with Indian academia hasn't kept pace with this capability.

Many global companies have a third or more of their engineering teams based in India, yet fewer than a tenth of their research collaborations happen here. The strategic problem definitions, product thinking, and deep research partnerships still tend to originate elsewhere.

Our research ecosystem is ready. Now it's time for industry to partner and co-build the future.

Even within India, this strength is often under-recognised. Many enterprises, especially in IT services, remain focused on delivery excellence, with limited engagement in discovery or co-creation with academia. The research exists. The talent is present. What we often lack is a meaningful bridge between the two.

This isn't a limitation. It's a space for transformation.

We don't need to build research capacity. It's already here. What we now need is to connect that strength more meaningfully to real-world application. The opportunity isn't about catching up. It's about leading with a model where research and practical outcomes evolve together.

What's missing: empowerment, engagement, and ownership

The core challenge is often structural. In many global organisations, strategic leadership roles, those responsible for shaping product vision, remain concentrated outside India.The Indian centres, even when staffed with talented scientists and engineers, are rarely given product ownership.

This creates what I've often described as a kind of "execution trap." Teams here take on the heavy lifting, development, QA, operations, but often have limited say in what is being built, or why. Even when high-end work is happening, the direction is remote.

At Progress Software, I was lucky to experience something different. I was told I'd "own the float." That meant I could decide how to reallocate budget surpluses, plan learning programs, and manage team growth, without waiting for approval from HQ. That one shift made all the difference. I had agency and with it, the space to think strategically and act with intention.

Most teams aren't conditioned to seek that kind of strategic engagement.

Over time, we've internalised a mindset that equates scale and efficiency with value, rather than leadership and innovation.

We execute with discipline and quality but often stop short of asking, can we also shape direction, not just deliver on it?

In traditional IT services, this mindset can be deeply ingrained. Many companies remain focused on delivery metrics and contract execution, with limited space to explore or propose new approaches. Even when their clients are transforming, the providers stay reactive.

To break this cycle, we need leaders here to step up. To manage upwards, take risks, and show initiative. Because unless you demonstrate you can do more, you'll only be trusted with what you've already done.

Building the bridge: co-innovation in action at IIIT-H

Too often, deep tech research ends up published, but not applied. That's the gap we set out to bridge.

Our translational research model was designed to turn academic strength into functional systems that address real-world problems.

Today, we run seven translational labs across healthcare, language technology, smart mobility, and more. These aren't traditional academic spaces. Alongside students and faculty, we have over 100 full-time engineers working closely to develop real-world prototypes, products, and systems that can be deployed and tested.

This matters because most academic collaborations stop short of execution. Some hand over IP, others offer consulting.

But if you want to deploy AI in a hospital or test traffic optimisation algorithms in a live city grid, you need working systems, not just white papers.

We've done this with AE Live, a global sports graphics company. They needed real-time data overlays for cricket broadcasts.

Our lab developed the AI models, tested them in live matches, and proved their feasibility. AE Live didn't outsource the work, they embedded engineers in our lab. As their CTO put it, "We treat IIIT as our R&D wing."

We've piloted similar efforts with Star Sports, co-creating immersive visualisations using live game data.

And now, we're taking this model even further. For global capability centres (GCCs) that want to innovate but lack the bandwidth to start from scratch, we offer Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) pods.

These are compact, purpose-built teams, usually 5 to 10 members, comprising researchers and engineers who co-create early-stage prototypes tailored to enterprise needs.

It's a thoughtful, low-barrier way to build innovation capability, starting not with scale, but with purpose.

Telangana as a live innovation lab

This model works not just because of policy, but because of the ecosystem behind it.

Telangana has consistently shown a willingness to experiment. Over two decades ago, the state government was already modelling inter-departmental data exchange using XML standards. In more recent years, it was among the first to test AI in school education, health diagnostics, and traffic management.

The real challenge, though, lies in scaling, moving from promising pilots to sustained platforms.

That's why we're now part of a new AI Research Cluster, supported by the government and involving six premier institutions: IIIT-H, IIT Hyderabad, BITS, ISB, NALSAR, and NIT Warangal.

Our priority is simple: scalable innovation with real-world application.

We're applying AI to detect early signs of oral cancer using mobile phone images designed for frontline use, not just academic demonstration. We're working with public hospitals, collecting clean data, and designing tools that can be used by frontline health workers.

Another effort involves Telangana Diagnostics. We're helping them organise diagnostic data from across government hospitals, with the aim of creating India's most robust public health dataset.

This isn't only for state-level application. Once anonymised and standardised, the data can support research and innovation across India.

Our goal is clear: to make Telangana the first Indian state where public data meaningfully supports public innovation.

The time to collaborate is now

At IIIT-H, we believe in preparing students not just for their first job, but for the one that will define their legacy. The role where they lead, shape strategy, or build something that truly makes a difference.

Our pedagogy reflects that. We don't teach Python as a standalone subject. But our students become among the best Python programmers, not through rote instruction, but through deep immersion in real projects.

We also emphasise values and self-reflection through structured small-group discussions on purpose, meaning, and conflict. Because innovation isn't just about knowledge. It's also about judgment, empathy, and the clarity to act with purpose.

And that's why I believe Telangana's model works because it respects depth, encourages experimentation, and stays rooted in solving India's most pressing problems rather than mimicking global playbooks.

But we need more allies. Global capability centres willing to build innovation teams, not just operational arms. Indian enterprises ready to invest in research, not just execution. Government programs that prioritise outcomes, not just optics.

We have the researchers. We have the students. We have the policy tailwinds. What we need now is broader participation, more people willing to lead, explore, and collaborate.

Innovation that endures

I often tell our students, don't just chase the best first job. Prepare for your most meaningful one. The kind of job where you help build something that lasts beyond you.

Innovation isn't just about what you know. It's about what you choose to build and how thoughtfully and persistently you bring it to life.

And that's what we're trying to do in Telangana. One translational lab at a time. One public dataset at a time. One idea, executed well, at a time.

That's what drew me from product labs to academia: a chance to help shape a world where India's builders can also become architects. Where research isn't just published, it's deployed. And where execution isn't rare, but routine.

Enterprise at scale: GCCs and industry platforms

Telangana is home to a new wave of large-scale innovation driven by two distinct but converging engines: Global Capability Centres (GCCs) and enterprise platforms.

GCCs in the state are evolving into strategic hubs, leading global product development, engineering excellence, and digital transformation.

In parallel, a new generation of enterprise platforms is being built from the ground up in Hyderabad, designed for scale, speed, and global relevance.

This section explores how both models are reshaping what enterprise innovation looks like when powered by autonomy, talent, and ambition.

The GCC as a Strategic Platform for Enterprise Innovation

Flutter Entertainment India LLP (FEI) is the Hyderabad-based Global Capability Centre (GCC) of Flutter Entertainment, a leading global digital platform company. With over 1,000 employees, FEI supports global operations across data, HR tech, finance, customer support, and shared services. It plays a strategic role in Flutter's growth, focusing on technology excellence and innovation aligned with global priorities.

Ashish Sinha

Managing Director
Flutter Entertainment India LLP

Ashish Sinha is leading Flutter Entertainment's India centre as a strategic global hub for enterprise innovation and capability. With over two decades of experience, Ashish has played a pivotal role in shaping and scaling global capability centres that drive enterprise value.

He is focused on establishing the India GCC as an integrated partner of the business, one that drives platform innovation, accelerates global capability, and builds talent for the future.

His leadership reflects a deliberate shift in how modern capability centres are designed to shape enterprise outcomes through technology, data, and culture.

Prior to Flutter, Ashish served as Managing Director for Epsilon's APAC and India operations, where he scaled the centre from inception to over 4,000 professionals, while also driving commercial growth across Asia Pacific.

He has also held key roles at AIG, where he built a next-generation enterprise data platform, and at KPMG, where he led the incubation of the global delivery platform (KGS).

Earlier in his career, Ashish held leadership positions at RocSearch, Genpact, McKinsey & Company, and Credit Suisse in New York.

Across roles, he has built a reputation for establishing high-performing, globally aligned teams and operating models that deliver impact.

Building the platform that powers the enterprise

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are undergoing a profound transformation. Once viewed primarily as operational extensions focused on efficiency, they are now being reimagined as strategic platforms that drive innovation, enable agility, and unlock enterprise-wide value.

This shift is not merely semantic, it reflects a deeper change in how organisations think about capability, scale, and competitive advantage in a digital-first world.

At Flutter, this shift has been embraced with intent and the India GCC (FEI) is now integral to the overall strategy of the organisation.

The Flutter Edge in action

At the heart of this approach is the Flutter Edge, which is our key sustainable competitive advantage and global differentiator.

Flutter Edge enables each of our brands to access and contribute to world-class global capabilities in product, technology, and operations, while also benefitting from our vast expertise and scale.

What makes this model unique is that our local brands retain their focus and challenger mindset. This allows them to win in their respective markets without being distracted by central teams or roadmaps.

The India GCC plays a vital role in bringing this vision to life by accelerating platform reuse, driving standardisation, and mobilising talent across brands and markets.

- **Accelerated platform deployment:** Teams in India can rapidly deploy core platforms, enabling real-time interactions and seamless user experiences across new brands.
- **Standardise technology:** Drive global rollouts of systems from a single hub.
- **Mobilise talent:** Mobilise talent in functions like customer operations, bringing proven practices to new markets and, in the process, enabling richer career opportunities across brands.

Redefining the role of the GCC

As businesses face increasing complexity, whether through acquisitions, digital disruption, or evolving customer expectations, the need for integrated, intelligent, and adaptable operating models has never been greater.

GCCs, when designed with intent, can serve as the connective tissue that binds global ambition with local execution.

The modern GCC is no longer just a delivery engine.

It is a platform for reuse, standardisation, and acceleration. When one part of the enterprise builds a robust solution be it a digital platform, a data model, or a customer experience framework, others should be able to adopt and adapt it without starting from scratch.

This ability to scale innovation horizontally across the enterprise is what distinguishes a strategic GCC from a traditional one.

Moreover, the role of the GCC is expanding beyond operational efficiency. Increasingly, these centres are embedding advanced technologies, simplifying processes, and enabling data-led decision-making.

Some are even pioneering the next frontier-autonomous-operations, where intelligent agents handle routine tasks, allowing human teams to focus on high-empathy, high-complexity challenges.

Building from the core

Strategic execution starts with the right leadership, clear ownership, and strong conviction.

One of the most common missteps in setting up a GCC is to begin with infrastructure, offices, systems, and headcount, even before establishing strategic clarity.

In contrast, the most successful centres are those that begin with leadership.

This means appointing senior professionals who can engage with global stakeholders, translate enterprise priorities into local execution, and shape the centre as a true extension of the business.

One such example can be seen in the development of a GCC in Hyderabad, where the leadership team was intentionally prioritised ahead of operational expansion.

Senior professionals were appointed early, selected for their ability to engage with global executive teams, translate enterprise-wide priorities into local execution, and shape the centre with strategic relevance across the enterprise

This leadership-first approach was instrumental in setting the tone for the centre's strategic direction.

Two decisions proved particularly pivotal in the early stages. First, the emphasis on globally capable leadership ensured that the centre could operate with credibility and confidence from the outset.

Second, the presence of strong executive sponsorship provided the mandate and trust required to move decisively, make bold investments, and build long-term capability.

By treating the GCC as a strategic priority from day one, the organisation was able to accelerate its development and embed strategic value at the core of its operations.

This model illustrates how a deliberate, leadership-led approach can transform a GCC from a functional outpost into a high-impact capability platform.

Building a culture geared for impact

Global Capability Centres should not focus on how fast they scale, but on how effectively their teams can deliver value.

Culture in high-performing centres is not an afterthought but a capability in itself; they foster a culture of purpose, transformation, and transparency.

These organisations are often embedded with a purpose-driven mindset, where employees are aligned to work in sync with how their work contributes to broader business outcomes, whether through revenue enablement, business agility, or talent development.

Leaders must be willing to have tough conversations, while rewarding teams who raise issues early on and not hide them.

Leaders should be assessed by how decisively and transparently they solve them, not by the lack of problems.

Transparency, especially in how challenges are surfaced and addressed, builds trust, credibility, and momentum.

Fostering a culture of openness means encouraging teams to speak candidly, not only about what's going well but also about what isn't. We believe that owning problems builds credibility. And credibility builds momentum.

At Flutter, the ambition isn't just to build a centre of excellence—it's to build a capability that is rooted in purpose, driven by leadership, and defined by a culture of continuous transformation.

That ambition comes to life through deliberate choices: hiring with intent, building trust through transparency, and linking every initiative to tangible business outcomes.

Operating models that scale with intelligence

There is no universal playbook for building a great GCC, but certain principles consistently emerge.

A matrix structure that reinforces shared ownership where local leaders align closely with global functional heads, ensuring that the centre remains integrated with enterprise goals.

Local autonomy is equally important, particularly in areas like hiring and compensation, which allows the centre to remain responsive to market dynamics.

Data fluency is another critical enabler. When teams understand how data flows across systems, they gain insight into how the business works. This not only sharpens decision-making but also lays the foundation for meaningful automation and AI capability.

Rethinking success: from scale to contribution

Traditional metrics such as headcount or operational efficiency no longer define success.

'Today's GCCs are recognised for their strategic contributions, including the creation of IP, process innovation, and enhanced experiences.

Employee engagement, automation outcomes, and cross-functional impact are becoming the new benchmarks.

Location as strategy: the choice of Hyderabad

The selection of location for a GCC is no longer driven by efficiency considerations. Considerations such as infrastructure maturity, talent availability, and quality of life have become increasingly significant factors in the decision making process.

Cities like Hyderabad, for instance, offer a compelling mix of deep talent pools, sustainable commutes, and a growing ecosystem of innovation.

These advantages not only improve productivity but also enhance retention and long-term scalability. Hence, Hyderabad gives Flutter the opportunity to scale with fewer constraints.

From intent to impact

The evolution of the GCC is a story of rising ambition. It is about moving from execution to enablement, from operational delivery to enterprise capability, and from support to strategy.

Organisations that recognise this shift and build their centres with clarity, ownership, and presence will be better positioned to navigate complexity and lead with resilience.

While each enterprise will chart its own path, the underlying principles remain consistent: start with leadership, build with purpose, and treat the GCC not as a location, but as a strategic investment for the future.

The Builder's Playbook:
GCCs as Engines of Global Innovation

Sashi Somavarapu

GCC and Engineering Leader
Platforms and Product Innovation

Sashi Somavarapu is a seasoned engineering leader with over 27 years of experience driving product innovation and scaling technology organisations across global enterprises and startups.

An MIT alumnus, Sashi has led engineering and digital transformation at companies including Amazon, Ford, Koch Industries, Reliance Jio, and Deliveroo.

As VP of Engineering and India Country Head at Deliveroo, he established the company's GCC in India, growing it from the ground up to over 400 tech professionals in under three years.

He led critical engineering initiatives across advertising and enterprise solutions, supporting over 100,000 restaurant partners and 60,000 riders across 10 countries.

Previously, at Jio, he scaled the Ajio app into India's largest fashion platform and headed engineering for hyperlocal, supply chain, and D2C initiatives.

He also launched Marketfront, an AI-enabled SaaS platform for India's real estate and retail sectors, automating complex workflows in pricing, cataloging, and customer service.

From support to strategy: the silent GCC revolution

In 2006, our Hyderabad based team saw "innovation" as the ability to resolve customer issues without always routing them through global headquarters. By 2012, we were designing the systems that kept a US-based e-commerce giant's global supply chain running during typhoons in Osaka.

That leap, from reactive support to owning mission-critical platforms, captures the untold story of India's GCCs.

This shift didn't happen by default; it was designed. I watched many companies struggle to unlock the true potential of their GCCs when they focused only on cost arbitrage, instead of enabling them as innovation hubs.

Over the past two decades, India's GCCs have evolved from back-office cost centres to core innovation hubs. But this evolution demands:

- Intentional leadership (not just headcount growth)
- Structural autonomy (not process compliance)
- Cultural trust (not transactional oversight)

At the e-commerce giant, I saw how access to business data turned executors into decision-makers. At a retail platform company, engineering teams based in India outperformed global peers when given ownership. At a delivery platform company, we built a brand that could attract top-tier talent despite limited brand awareness.

GCCs thrive when they're embedded into the enterprise's core and positioned as channels for innovation, not just as avenues for cost savings.

Laying the groundwork: leadership intent and strategic clarity

Most enterprises launch GCCs with good intentions. They want to create value. But over time, many of these centres drift into becoming cost-focused delivery hubs driven by scale.

I once saw our team deliver a near-perfect release. The delivery was timely, clean, and aligned with every requirement. But the business had moved on. We solved a problem that no longer existed.

It was a clear example of execution without alignment, something that happens when GCCs are treated as task centres, not strategic partners.

At the Hyderabad centre of the global e-commerce company, things began to shift when we gave engineers access to real-time metrics. They were no longer just writing code. They were thinking about the business. They started asking how their work influenced conversion rates and customer experience.

In later roles, I ensured the India teams had similar exposure. Engineers knew what mattered commercially, who the end user was, and why changes were being made. That shift in perspective changed how they built, tested, and deployed.

Clarity of purpose should be deeply woven into how the organisation defines, positions, and collaborates with its GCC.

Companies that continue to treat these centres as cost levers rarely attract top talent.

But when a company positions the centre as a driver of innovation, and says things like "This team defines our AI future" or "This team leads the next wave of product breakthroughs," everything changes. It elevates the work, energises the team, and creates a sense of shared ambition that attracts the best talent.

Building the core team: talent as a strategic lever

In my experience, the first 20 hires define your future. You are not just filling roles. You are setting the cultural foundation.

At the delivery platform, we were a relatively unknown brand in India. Competing with global giants like Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook was not easy.

So we focused on presence rather than promotion. We hosted tech talks at colleges, partnered with T-Hub, and showcased our work and thinking. We engaged with talent through conversations about platforms and engineering problems, not just job openings.

We also paid a premium for our early hires. The first 15 engineers cost 20 to 30 percent more than the market average. But they saved us two years of rework. That was not an expense. It was an investment in speed, values, and a culture of innovation that attracted even more curious and driven talent.

At the retail platform, I saw how engineers from non-elite backgrounds consistently outperformed their global peers. It was not because of their academic pedigree, but because they were given real ownership and accountability.

They managed architecture, testing, releases, and monitoring. During a major festival sale, our fashion platform experienced zero crashes. That was not luck. That was commitment.

Skills can be taught. Curiosity and accountability emerge when people are trusted to lead and given responsibility that matters.

Autonomy: the starting point for innovation

Innovation begins with autonomy. Without it, even the most capable teams are reduced to execution arms.

At the e-commerce company, we followed the two-pizza team model of small, focused groups that owned a domain from end to end. These teams had their own backlog, metrics, and the authority to make decisions.

They did not wait for approvals from headquarters. They built, shipped, and learned. The result was a culture of speed, experimentation, and ownership.

In contrast, I have seen GCCs where even minor design decisions required lengthy decks, multi-level approvals, and coordination across time zones.

Governance must enable momentum, not introduce unnecessary friction.

Innovation flourishes when teams are empowered to think beyond code and connect with the business they're building for.

But I have also seen the alternative. At one organisation, when the global cybersecurity function was moved to India, the CIO did not just sign off. He championed it. He came to India, coached the leaders, and ensured that decision-making authority stayed with them. That single act transformed the team's pace, mindset, and ambition.

Autonomy is not about working in isolation. It is about enabling teams to take ownership, connect with the business, and think proactively. When teams understand the business, they ask better questions. When they are trusted to act, they build better solutions.

When a GCC is empowered with real ownership, it responds with strategic contribution.

Structuring for impact: from task takers to domain owners

How you structure your GCC reflects how much you value it. Too often, I see a fragmented setup: user interface work in India, core logic elsewhere, and business decisions concentrated at headquarters. That is not an integrated team. It is a chain of handoffs.

At the retail platform, when we built the fashion supply chain systems, our engineers in India were not just working on the frontend.

They owned demand algorithms, managed inventory buffers, and fine-tuned fulfilment rules.

The outcome spoke for itself: during a major festival, others faced crashes, but we had zero escalations.

Integrate your GCC as you would any strategic team, with a clear charter, defined ownership, and empowered leadership.

Structure should not be based on geography. It should be based on outcomes.

And the way you measure success matters too. Velocity and story points tell you how busy the team is.

But impact is measured by system uptime during peak periods, how quickly issues get resolved, how many experiments are launched, and where new ideas originate.

That is what signals maturity. That is what builds real relevance.

Culture as a foundation for innovation

Time zones are often cited as barriers to deeper collaboration. But the real barrier is trust, especially when it comes to giving ownership.

In my experience, consistent and structured interaction between the GCC and teams at headquarters builds that trust. Ninety minutes a day of aligned time with the stakeholders helped our teams build momentum, focus on what matters, and reduce noise.

Still, the harder challenge is perception. Some still view India through an outdated lens, as a delivery centre rather than a decision-making hub.

That perception breaks when people engage directly. I have seen it firsthand. Leaders walk into a GCC and leave with renewed confidence after meeting the engineers who run platforms, solve real problems, and contribute to strategy.

But this is not a one-time fix. You need local leaders who can carry context both ways, who can shape product vision and translate local strengths into global outcomes.

Culture is not a backdrop. It is the framework that powers innovation across boundaries.

The future: GCCs as innovation engines

The next phase of GCC evolution is not about scale or support. It is about ownership.

We are already seeing clear signs of this shift. Global teams are now driving enterprise-wide pricing, security, and platform development from India. Some are shaping partnerships and ecosystems too. These are not exceptions. They are the early wave of a broader transformation.

What excites me most is the rise of domain driven innovation, where engineers understand the business. Whether it is retail, logistics, or healthcare, they do not just build faster, they build smarter and more strategically.

We are approaching a tipping point. The next global platform may emerge from a GCC in Hyderabad or Pune because a team was trusted not just to execute, but to lead.

The talent is ready. The infrastructure exists. What's needed now is leadership intent. The opportunity is not just massive, it's ours to lose.

Creating an innovation hub: purpose, not proximity

Innovation is not a byproduct of location. It is a result of how much trust and purpose you build into your teams.

Many enterprises approach their GCCs with a resource mindset. They shift tasks, not ownership. They add people, not purpose. That is not how innovation happens.

Great GCCs are not remote arms. They are extensions of vision. They solve business problems, own outcomes, and bring fresh thinking to the table.

Move the conversation from support to solutions. Let the GCCs drive transformative work.

Give teams the right exposure. Invite them into strategic conversations. Let them own platforms, SLAs, roadmaps. Let them fail. Let them grow.

Innovation thrives when leaders trust teams with the space to explore and own outcomes.

Enterprise HR:
Rebuilt for the People Who Use It

Darwinbox is an enterprise HR technology platform built in India for the world. Designed for modern, agile organisations, it offers end-to-end solutions across the employee lifecycle, including recruitment, onboarding, performance, engagement, and analytics. Trusted by over 900 organisations globally, Darwinbox is one of the fastest-growing SaaS companies from Asia.

MILESTONES

2015 – founded in Hyderabad

2017 – reached 100+ enterprise clients across India

2019 – expanded to Southeast Asia, with regional offices in Indonesia and Singapore

2021 – backed by Salesforce Ventures; named one of the fastest-growing SaaS companies from India

2022 – achieved unicorn status with Series D funding led by TCV

2023 – crossed 850+ enterprise customers across 110+ countries

2024 – launched AI-driven employee experience tools and expanded global product roadmap

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Cloud-native HR suite

Built as a unified platform from the ground up, ensuring seamless data flow across all HR functions.

No-code workflow engine

Enabled HR teams to configure and adapt policies and processes without engineering support.

Deep localisation at scale

Supports region-specific compliance, payroll, and policies across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Mobile-first user experience

Prioritised mobile UX for end-to-end HR processes, especially for deskless and distributed workforces.

AI-driven talent insights

Integrated predictive and generative AI for attrition risk, performance nudges, and career guidance.

Open ecosystem architecture

Offers API-based integration with ERP, payroll, and collaboration tools to simplify enterprise deployment.

Rohit Chennamaneni

Co-founder
Darwinbox

Rohit Chennamaneni is the co-founder of Darwinbox, where he leads key functions including operations, customer success, global expansion, and investor relations.

With a strong foundation in business strategy and technology, he brings a systems-level perspective to scaling digital enterprises across diverse markets.

Before Darwinbox, Rohit served as an Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Company, where he advised global organisations on large-scale digitisation and technology transformation initiatives.

He is also an ex-Googler, having worked across both the India and Ireland offices, gaining early exposure to high-impact, global tech environments.

An alumnus of IIM Lucknow, Rohit combines a deep understanding of organisational design with a hands-on approach to execution.

His passion lies in building disruptive products, agile teams, and scalable business models that drive lasting value.

A spark of curiosity

Our journey didn't start with a business plan. It began with a question.

At the time, the three of us were engineers-turned-consultants, working closely with large enterprises across industries. We spent our days immersed in systems that powered critical business functions: finance, procurement, operations, and HR. And it was in HR that we noticed something odd.

Despite being the most widely used system in any organisation, touched by everyone from interns to the CEO, HR platforms were the least intuitive. Simple actions like applying for leave or giving feedback felt unnecessarily complex. These systems didn't feel like tools built for people. They felt like tools built for the process.

This disconnect stood out more starkly when compared to the digital ease in our personal lives. We could order food, hail a cab, or manage finances in seconds, yet workplace systems remained clunky and impersonal.

We weren't trying to start a company. We were just curious. Why hadn't HR systems evolved with the rest of the digital world? Why were they still designed for administrators rather than employees?

That curiosity became a lens through which we began to see the broader opportunity. A gap not just in functionality, but in philosophy.

From realisation to mission

As our curiosity deepened, the patterns became impossible to ignore. The problem with HR systems wasn't just poor design. It was a fundamental misalignment. These platforms were built for compliance, not experience. They served administrators, not employees. And yet, HR was the only enterprise system used by every single person in an organisation.

What started as a question about usability turned into a mission to change what HR could be.

Around the same time, a second realisation emerged: while India had built world-class IT services companies, we had yet to create globally scaled enterprise product firms. The talent was here. The understanding of complex business workflows was here. But product companies? Still rare.

We began to ask a new question: What if we stopped tailoring custom solutions for each client and instead built a platform that could evolve, scale, and serve thousands without reinvention?

That question sparked a shift.

We didn't want to build just another HR tool. We wanted to reimagine HR as a system of engagement: intuitive, inclusive, and built for the people who actually use it. And we wanted to prove that such a platform could come from India.

That's when Darwinbox was born. Not as a company chasing market share, but as a mission: to rebuild enterprise HR for the modern workforce and to do it from the ground up.

Built for people, designed to evolve

Most HR software had been designed with the administrator in mind. Purchase decisions were driven by checklists, compliance needs, and IT integration. But no one seemed to be asking: What's it like for the employee?

We flipped that logic. We believed that if HR systems were the most widely used tools in the enterprise, then user experience had to come first. It wasn't just about better design. It was about creating systems that felt intuitive, empowering, and built for how people actually work.

From the outset, our purpose was clear: to build for the people who actually use the system, not just the ones who buy it.

That belief also shaped our architecture. We chose a NoSQL foundation to support dynamic, evolving org structures such as matrix teams, dotted-line reporting, and regional rules, all without hardcoding or rewriting. Flexibility wasn't an afterthought; it was baked into the core.

Equally critical was going mobile-first. In many of our target markets, large segments of the workforce didn't have corporate email, let alone laptops. So we designed for mobile from day one making it possible for anyone to apply for leave, track attendance, or give feedback with just a phone number and OTP.

That's also where our name comes from. Like the species that adapt to survive and thrive, businesses need systems that evolve with them.

Darwinbox was built to adapt so HR could move at the speed of its people.

Entering the market with strategic timing

When we entered the HR tech space, most mid-to-large enterprises in Asia were still running on legacy, on-premise systems. Cloud adoption was gaining momentum, but HR remained stuck in the past often bundled as an afterthought within broader enterprise software suites.

This created the perfect storm for disruption.

Enterprises were modernising their infrastructure and rethinking digital experiences, but their HR systems hadn't kept up. In many cases, they weren't just outdated. They were barely used. Adoption rates were low. Frontline employees worked around the system. HR teams relied on manual processes and spreadsheets to bridge the gaps.

We saw an opportunity to lead this transition to become the HR platform of choice for companies moving to the cloud. But we knew that product strength alone wouldn't be enough.

Speed became our differentiator

Where traditional vendors took 9 to 12 months to implement, we promised and delivered go-live outcomes in just 8 to 12 weeks. We built migration accelerators for legacy enterprise systems and designed a platform that could adapt quickly without custom builds.

Today, over 250 enterprises have replaced their legacy HR platforms with Darwinbox. That shift didn't happen on paper. It happened in practice, because the difference in speed, usability, and adoption was impossible to ignore.

We didn't just offer a modern HR system. We offered a faster path to value. And in a market hungry for change, that made all the difference.

Building a culture of innovation

Innovation at Darwinbox was never about chasing trends. It was about staying true to our purpose. From the beginning, we believed the best enterprise technology isn't what dazzles in a demo. It's what quietly transforms how people work. That belief shaped how we built, how we led, and how we made decisions.

We didn't chase hype, we built with purpose. And that's what turned innovation into culture.

We created space for teams to experiment, not just to deliver features, but to question assumptions. That mindset led to early innovations like launching one of the first voice bots in HR and piloting blockchain for background verification. Even when experiments didn't scale, they deepened our understanding.

As founders, we stayed close to the ground. We were involved in customer escalations, sprint reviews, and early implementations, not because we had to, but because it kept us connected to the people we were building for. That connection became our compass: solve real problems, for real users, in real time.

We also committed to pace. While others operated on annual release cycles, we maintained monthly product updates shipping real value, fast.

Our investors supported this long-term mindset, not chasing vanity milestones, but helping us stay focused on building the right thing.

In the end, innovation wasn't just a function. It became our culture. Empowered teams, user-centric thinking, and a willingness to try. That's what continues to push us forward.

Scaling up with the same ingredients of innovation

As Darwinbox began to scale, we made a conscious choice: we wouldn't trade agility for size, or innovation for structure. The same ingredients that powered our early momentum such as curiosity, user obsession, fast execution, had to remain at the core as we grew.

That meant preserving speed, even as teams grew. We kept our monthly release cadence. We empowered local teams to respond rapidly to market needs. And we ensured that customer feedback continued to shape our roadmap, not filtered through layers, but absorbed directly by those building the product.

It also meant doubling down on our architecture. From day one, we built a platform designed to scale: single codebase, highly configurable, and ready for global complexity.

That foundation enabled us to expand across India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and now into Europe and the U.S., all without compromising product consistency or performance.

Scaling didn't mean adding layers. It meant adding clarity, speed, and deeper relevance for every user we served.

In each new market, one of us founders is on the ground during the early phases immersing ourselves in customer contexts, helping navigate localisation, and building trusted relationships.

And the product adapts alongside us. Whether it's Arabic right-to-left interfaces, Bahasa language support, or region-specific payroll compliance, we make localisation seamless without custom forks or code changes.

In short, we didn't outgrow innovation, we scaled by reinforcing it.

Because the bigger we got, the more important it became to stay close to our origin story: building with intent, evolving with our users, and delivering impact without compromise.

Hyderabad: the environment that enables us to thrive

Choosing Hyderabad as our home wasn't just a personal decision; it became a strategic advantage.

Yes, we had roots here. I grew up in the city, and my co-founders had deep family ties. That support system mattered in the early years, giving us stability in a phase defined by uncertainty. But beyond the personal, Hyderabad offered something few cities could match: the perfect environment to build a global product company.

The tech ecosystem here is grounded and focused. Unlike trend-driven hubs, Hyderabad's talent pool is known for staying power and depth. That continuity helped us build a strong engineering culture, one that values ownership, not just output.

The presence of global players like Microsoft, Google, and Salesforce also raised the bar. Engineers and product leaders here understand what it takes to build at scale and meet global standards.

Add to that the quality of life: shorter commutes, reliable infrastructure, and a welcoming, cosmopolitan culture. Hyderabad becomes a magnet for talent. It's a place where people not only come to

For us, Hyderabad isn't just where we started; it's the foundation that continues to support our growth, culture, and global ambition.

Hyderabad wasn't just our starting point. It gave us the grounding to build globally, the talent to scale with depth, and the continuity to stay true to our culture. It's not just where we began. It's why we've thrived.

Looking ahead: deepening impact over chasing scale

As we step into our next phase, we're mindful not to lose sight of how it all began, with a simple question: Why hasn't HR technology evolved with the people who use it?

That curiosity still drives us.

It's easy to get distracted by growth metrics: new markets, logos, headcount. But for us, scale is not the goal.

Scale is the outcome of staying true to our purpose: delivering meaningful value to the end user, with speed, flexibility, and intent.

We'll continue to expand globally. Our product is already used in over 100 countries, and we're deepening our presence in the U.S. and Europe. But every market we enter, every feature we build, must answer one question: Does this make work better for the people using it?

Our next frontier is AI, not as a buzzword, but as a tool for relevance. With our deep integration into the broader ecosystem, we're bringing intelligent agents into day-to-day HR: automating feedback loops, streamlining workflows, and enabling decisions through real-time insight.

And the world is taking note. Today, we're proud to be the only Asian-origin platform on the Gartner Magic Quadrant for HCM, a signal that the original question we asked didn't just spark a product. It started a movement.

And that movement is just getting started.

Building new frontiers

Telangana is home to enterprises tackling some of the world's most complex and consequential challenges: from global public health to satellite infrastructure and defence simulation.

These organisations are not just responding to demand but setting new standards through deep scientific research, original IP, and mission-driven innovation.

This section explores how long-term investments in R&D, talent, and manufacturing capability are enabling companies to build from India for the world, shaping industries that are central to national strategy and global resilience.

Vaccines with a Vision

Powering India's Biotech Future

Bharat Biotech is a global leader in vaccines and biotechnology, known for developing safe, affordable, and innovative solutions for public health. Headquartered in Hyderabad, the company has delivered over 9 billion doses across 125+ countries and holds over 220 patents. With multiple first-in-the-world vaccines, Bharat Biotech combines cutting-edge research with a strong commitment to equitable healthcare access.

MILESTONES

1996 – founded to develop innovative vaccines for the developing world

2002 – launched Revac-B+, the world's first eco-friendly Hepatitis B vaccine

2007 – commissioned WHO- and USFDA-approved cGMP facility

2014 – introduced ROTAVAC®, the first oral rotavirus vaccine from a naturally attenuated strain

2015 – launched Typbar-TCV®, the first conjugate typhoid vaccine with long-term immunity

2021 – developed COVAXIN®, India's indigenous COVID-19 vaccine

2022 – surpassed 9 billion vaccine doses delivered globally

2023 – Suchitra Ella appointed Managing Director, steering global expansion

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Revac-B+

First eco-friendly recombinant Hepatitis B vaccine (free of Thiomersal and cesium chloride)

ROTAVAC®

First oral rotavirus vaccine derived from a naturally attenuated human strain

Typbar-TCV®

First conjugate typhoid vaccine offering long-term and broad-spectrum immunity

COVAXIN®

India's first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine, developed in collaboration with ICMR

REGEN-D®

Innovative epidermal growth factor therapy for diabetic foot ulcers and burns

Zika and Chikungunya vaccines

Among the first globally to initiate development for these emerging diseases

Suchitra Ella

Managing Director
Bharat Biotech

Suchitra Ella is the Co-founder and Managing Director of Bharat Biotech, and a respected leader in global healthcare and biotechnology.

With a background in economics and international business, she has been instrumental in shaping the organisation's growth from a research-focused startup into one of the world's leading vaccine developers.

Her leadership has guided Bharat Biotech through several breakthrough innovations, including vaccines for Hepatitis B, Rotavirus, Typhoid, and COVID-19, with a deep focus on addressing public health needs in underserved populations.

Under her stewardship, the company has delivered over 9 billion vaccine doses globally and earned a reputation for scientific excellence, regulatory rigour, and ethical clinical practices.

Beyond the lab, Suchitra is a strong advocate for women in science and entrepreneurship, and serves on several national and international advisory boards.

She is widely recognised for her commitment to innovation with purpose and building institutions rooted in inclusion, quality, and global impact.

The origins of a biotech hub

When we founded Bharat Biotech in 1996, Hyderabad's biotech landscape was only just beginning to take shape. Instead of following the well-trodden path of established global hubs, we chose to build from the ground up, guided by the belief that innovation and impact could thrive within a local ecosystem.

That belief led to a pivotal step. Dr. Krishna Ella and I proposed the creation of a biotechnology knowledge park to the then Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh.

The idea was approved with remarkable speed, and land was allotted by the State's Industrial Infrastructure Corporation. This vision soon evolved into what is now known as Genome Valley, a cornerstone of Telangana's life sciences journey.

Within a year, in 1997, we had established our first manufacturing facility for the Hepatitis B vaccine. This partnership between industry and government sparked a transformative moment, not just for our company, but for the region.

Bharat Biotech's early presence helped catalyse the region's life sciences journey, with initial investments laying the groundwork for what would become a globally recognised cluster.

Today, nearly three decades later, Genome Valley is home to over 200 companies from 18 countries, including R&D centres for six of the world's top ten pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms.

Backed by a scientific workforce of over 15,000 professionals and world-class infrastructure, including industrial parks, knowledge parks, SEZs, and advanced lab and incubation facilities, Telangana has emerged as a national and global leader in life sciences.

The State now contributes nearly one-third of global vaccine output, a testament to visionary leadership, long-term investment, and a culture of science-driven collaboration.

Science must serve the underserved

At the heart of Bharat Biotech lies a simple principle: science must serve the underserved. From the very beginning, we recognised that public health challenges in low- and middle-income countries were often ignored, not due to a lack of need, but a lack of market incentives.

Rather than see this as a barrier, we saw it as a mandate.

We focused on diseases that others overlooked, including hepatitis, rotavirus, typhoid, cholera, chikungunya, malaria, and Zika.

These diseases disproportionately affect the developing world, yet receive limited attention in global vaccine pipelines.

For us, addressing them was not optional, it was essential. Balancing affordability, accessibility, and scientific excellence is no easy task. Vaccine development is complex and resource-intensive.

To meet these challenges, we invested early in research and development infrastructure, establishing BSL-3 laboratories, cell culture platforms, and robust in-house capabilities.

This gave us the ability to innovate at speed while maintaining global standards of safety and efficacy.

In more recent times, we also responded to global challenges. Bharat Biotech developed Covaxin, making India one of just six countries in the world to create and manufacture its own COVID-19 vaccine entirely through indigenous efforts.

Our partnerships with global health organisations like WHO and PATH have helped scale and distribute our innovations to the populations that need them most.

But our measure of success remains singular: whether the vaccines we produce are saving lives where the need is greatest.

Redefining what's possible from India

India has long possessed the scientific depth to lead in global health. What remained was recognition, both internal and external, of this potential. At Bharat Biotech, we set out to change that narrative not through declarations, but through delivery.

Developing the world's first typhoid conjugate vaccine and India's own COVID-19 vaccine, Covaxin, are milestones we're especially proud of. These are not simply scientific successes, they are statements of what is possible when innovation is purposeful.

Covaxin, developed entirely in Telangana, continues to demonstrate its value through ongoing clinical studies, even five years after the pandemic's onset.

While many vaccine efforts have faded from view, Covaxin remains relevant, offering evidence of safety and efficacy, and reinforcing the strength of India's scientific ecosystem.

These achievements are grounded in sustained investment in R&D, careful risk-taking, and a commitment to inclusive innovation focused on real-world outcomes.

Our work is anchored in outcomes, including real-world relevance, clinical rigour, and lasting health impact. For too long, India's role in the life sciences sector was limited to manufacturing.

We chose to challenge that perception by demonstrating that India can not only produce but also invent, backed by data, scientific rigour, and global credibility.

Quality as a way of life

Trust in vaccines is not built overnight. It is earned through decades of consistency, integrity, and a culture of uncompromising quality. At Bharat Biotech, quality is not a checkpoint, it is a mindset.

This mindset shapes every stage of the product lifecycle, from early discovery to final delivery. Whether adhering to cGMP standards, upholding data integrity, or conducting clinical trials with complete regulatory transparency, we treat these not just as compliance needs, but as moral responsibilities.

We work on vaccines that reach the most vulnerable populations. That comes with a heightened sense of duty.

Our internal discipline and high-quality control systems have earned us approvals from global regulators, including the US FDA, KFDA, and WHO.

For us, science is not a race for results. It is a long-term commitment grounded in trust and responsibility. We do not pursue innovation for profit alone. We do it to protect lives, to strengthen public health, and to contribute to national and global priorities.

Built for the long term

Our journey has reinforced a simple truth: to innovate meaningfully, you must invest in capability, not just products. From the very beginning, we built foundational strength across infrastructure, platforms, and people.

We did not depend on outsourcing for core functions. We established BSL-3 labs, developed full-scale R&D and manufacturing capabilities, and created a system that allowed us to go from concept to clinical trial quickly, efficiently, and independently.

This long-term thinking has created flexibility and resilience.

It allows us to respond effectively to public health emergencies and to innovate even in challenging environments. It has also shaped a culture where everyone, from researchers to operators, understands the broader purpose of their work.

At Bharat Biotech, science is not confined to labs. It lives in the daily decisions of our teams, in the discipline of our processes, and in our collective drive to deliver solutions that matter.

Leading the next wave of biotech

As we look ahead, India and Bharat Biotech are poised to lead in the next era of health innovation. The pandemic was a turning point, revealing the strength of Indian science. Now, the task before us is to channel that momentum into long-term progress.

We are entering new frontiers. Our work in advanced biologics, including cell and gene therapies, reflects our belief that the future of medicine must be more inclusive and accessible.

These technologies have the potential to treat diseases once considered untreatable. Our goal is not just to develop them, but to ensure they are affordable and accessible to those who need them most.

Vaccines remain our core strength. The intranasal platform we developed during COVID-19 is now being expanded to address other respiratory pathogens. This technology represents scientific advancement and improved delivery, especially in low-resource settings.

We continue to pursue solutions for diseases that may not dominate headlines but continue to burden vulnerable populations.

Collaborating for collective progress

India's innovation landscape is changing. The rise of public-private partnerships, stronger academic linkages, and a new generation of scientific entrepreneurs is creating fertile ground for progress.

Government initiatives such as the National Biopharma Mission and regulatory modernisation efforts have created an enabling environment for biotech innovation.

In Telangana, we have seen how sustained government support, institutional collaboration, and industry participation can build an ecosystem that not only scales, but also innovates with intent.

At Bharat Biotech, we believe that science cannot thrive in isolation. It needs policy support, ecosystem thinking, and global engagement. Our aspiration is not only to build great products, but to contribute to a system that fosters innovation for the long term.

A new kind of innovation model

The world needs more than innovation. It needs a better kind of innovation—one that is equitable, scalable, and grounded in purpose. At Bharat Biotech, this has always been our guiding belief.

Our focus has always been on addressing real public health needs. We measure success not by scale, but by the relevance and impact of our work.

For every product we develop, the guiding question is simple: can it make a meaningful difference where it is needed most?

That approach has shaped everything we do. It has guided our choices, informed our investments, and built a legacy that we are proud of.

Moving forward, we aim not just to deliver breakthrough vaccines, but to build a model of innovation that is rooted in equity, driven by science, and centred on human well-being.

This is the future we are building. And we believe India has the potential, and the responsibility, to lead the world toward it.

To Boldly Build the Spacetech Frontier

Dhruva Space is India’s first private spacetech startup and a full-stack space engineering company. It offers end-to-end satellite solutions including design, manufacturing, launch, and ground operations. Dhruva has emerged as a key player in India's growing space ecosystem, delivering global-ready platforms from India.

MILESTONES

2022 – launched the Thybolt Mission, marking the successful deployment of India’s first privately built satellites to be authorised by the Government of India

2022 – initiated construction of a 280,000 sq ft spacecraft manufacturing facility in Telangana to scale global satellite manufacturing operations

2020 to 2025 – established strategic partnerships with global space players such as Swedish Space Corporation, Kinéis, Sodern ArianeGroup, Redwire Space, SatSure, Pixxel, Larsen & Toubro, Manastu Space, Skyroot Aerospace, and Comat

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Rapid mission execution

Dhruva Space has successfully launched eight space objects, including two satellites, across four missions.

Vertical integration

Dhruva Space offers fully integrated, end-to-end capabilities from satellite design and manufacturing to launch support and in-orbit operations.

Commercial satellite imagery

AstraView is Dhruva Space’s satellite imagery platform offering on-demand, high-resolution Earth observation across SAR, RF, and multispectral data. Built through global partnerships, it delivers real-time and archival insights in a seamless, cost-effective manner.

Sanjay Nekkanti

CEO and Co-Founder
Dhruva Space

Over the span of his career, Nekkanti has played a pivotal role in numerous satellite missions across Asia and Europe, including Dhruva Space's landmark Thybolt Mission, the company's inaugural satellite endeavour.

Nekkanti has a bachelor's degree in electronics & telecommunication engineering from Sri Ramaswamy Memorial University, Chennai.

He is also an EGIDE scholar, and has two master's degrees: one in space technology and the other in spatial techniques and instrumentation earned in Europe, through the Erasmus Mundus SpaceMaster programme.

Nekkanti has also been featured in Fortune India's 40 Under 40 in 2022, Forbes India DGEMS 200 in 2023, and as Startup Story's Founder of the Year 2024.

Nekkanti is also the Co-Chair of the FICCI Committee on Space and Geospatial Applications, contributing to policy advocacy and strategic industry development in India's space and geospatial sectors.

Under Nekkanti's guidance, Dhruva Space has been recognised twice by the Government of India: the National Startup Award 2020 and the Pandit Deendayal Upadhaya Telecom Skill Excellence Award 2022.

From possibility to capability

My journey into spacetech began in 2008, just after India's Chandrayaan-1 mission. An ISRO scientist visited our university in Chennai and said something simple, almost offhand: "Students like you can also build satellites."

That one line shifted my perspective. Until then, space felt like something reserved for government agencies. Complex, national and out of reach. But suddenly, it felt possible.

Our university supported us, and we set out to build a student satellite. We quickly encountered two realities: imported components were prohibitively expensive, and there were no private Indian companies we could turn to for alternatives. So we built most of it ourselves.

That experience showed me that the talent and ingenuity were already here in India. We just didn't have the ecosystem to support scaled innovation in space.

Between 2010 and 2012, I kept asking a simple question: why weren't there any private satellite manufacturers in India? The answers I received were vague, usually some version of "It's always been that way." But there was no structural reason it had to stay that way.

At the same time, many aerospace students were looking abroad for careers in NASA, ESA, or private companies in the West. That was the default path. But I believed we could build something meaningful right here in India.

The global space industry was beginning to shift, with more private players and a growing demand for satellite constellations. India had engineering talent. We had the cost-efficiency mindset. What was missing was the belief and the infrastructure to tie it all together.

That became the founding idea behind Dhruva Space: to prove that a private spacetech enterprise could emerge from India. Not as a one-off experiment, but as a global player ready to scale.

From satellite to signal

During my master's studies in space technology and spacecraft instrumentation in Europe, I worked alongside students from across the world. Many of them went on to build careers in established space ecosystems. I came back to India in 2012 with a different intent. I believed our country could play a more defining role in the next chapter of global Spacetech.

By then, I had begun to see the way the global industry was shifting. Space was no longer about a handful of high-stakes missions. Companies were talking about launching entire constellations, hundreds or even thousands of satellites to serve communication, navigation, and imaging needs. It was clear the age of space infrastructure had arrived.

But there was a missing link. Most companies, even globally, were building just one part of the mission. Some focused on satellite manufacturing. Others built rockets. The ground segment, the Earth stations that operate and manage satellites, was often treated as a secondary service. These silos created inefficiencies and bottlenecks.

If we wanted to deliver Space missions that were responsive, repeatable, and reliable, we needed to look at the entire stack.

That is the path we chose at Dhruva Space.

We built our company around three essential pillars of any mission: the space segment, the launch segment, and the ground segment. Our satellites range from CubeSats to microsatellites up to 500 kilograms. They are built as product platforms, standardised enough for efficiency, yet modular enough to serve diverse missions.

Rather than building rockets, we focused on building compatibility. Our payload interface makes it possible for our satellites to ride on almost any rocket worldwide. It is our way of making access to space more flexible and scalable.

And we did not stop at the launch. We developed modular ground stations to ensure seamless communication, control, and mission operations from Earth. Together, these capabilities allow us to offer full-stack mission delivery from design to deployment, integration to operation.

In a sector where over-specialisation often limits speed and resilience, our integrated approach gives us and our customers the ability to move faster, adapt quicker, and deliver at scale.

From prototype to platform

As our ambitions moved from prototyping to production, so did our journey. We began Dhruva in Bengaluru, close to ISRO and India's established aerospace institutions. However, when it was time to scale up, Hyderabad emerged as the right place.

The decision was strategic. Hyderabad already had the depth in precision engineering needed to support aerospace manufacturing. Public-sector organisations like ECIL and the DRDO labs formed a strong institutional base. Private sector partnerships such as Tata-Lockheed Martin, Safran, and others added global standards to the mix. Together, they formed a ready-made industrial backbone.

This ecosystem enabled us to localise our supply chain. Today, more than 90 percent of our components are sourced within a 50 kilometre radius. That has simplified logistics, reduced costs, and accelerated our timelines without compromising on quality.

From defence-grade electronics to antenna systems, Hyderabad delivers Aerospace precision at globally competitive prices.

What also stood out was the innovation culture. Telangana's government wasn't just supporting startups, it was actively shaping policy around them. Platforms like T-Hub and T-Works provided us access to prototyping labs, testing support, and early-stage collaboration. The emerging Space-Tech framework is laying the foundation for long-term industrial development.

What we found in Hyderabad wasn't just an ecosystem. It was alignment between policy and production, ambition and infrastructure.

And I believe this city is well on its way to becoming India's Space capital. Not by replicating Toulouse or Seattle, but by defining its own path with its own strengths, network, and intent.

Scaling with discipline

As our engineering ambitions found their footing in Hyderabad, the next challenge was equally important: building a business that could scale without burning through capital.

Space is inherently capital-intensive. But we have always believed that ambition alone is not enough. It needs to be matched with discipline. From the beginning, we made a conscious choice to grow responsibly, investing in capabilities that would serve both immediate needs and long-term opportunities.

To date, Dhruva has raised approximately US$15 million, largely from Indian venture capital firms and an investor from Vietnam. For a company that builds, launches, and operates satellites, that is considered lean. But for us, it was intentional. Every investment went into building infrastructure we could use, reuse, and expand.

Our virtual constellation AstraView is a good example of that thinking. It connects to over 250 third-party satellites across the world, allowing clients to request targeted Earth imagery, retrieve data, and analyse gaps in coverage. When those gaps become critical, we can design and deploy a custom satellite, essentially turning infrastructure into a responsive service.

We also chose early on not to build our growth strategy around one dominant market. While the United States and China lead global headlines, our customer base spans Australia, the Middle East, Europe, and Japan. These are regions where neutrality, dependability, and platform flexibility matter more than geopolitical alignment.

We have always seen ourselves not as a headline-driven company, but as an infrastructure-focused one.

Our aim is to build reliable, scalable capabilities that enable others to operate and grow.

The next leap forward

With the foundations in place, we are now entering the most demanding and exciting phase of our journey: building for industrial scale.

Our new facility in Hyderabad spans 280,000 square feet. The first phase, 120,000 square feet, is focused on satellite assembly, integration, and testing. Once complete, it will be one of the largest dedicated facilities of its kind in India. But this is not about size for its own sake. It is about readiness for what is coming.

The global demand for satellite infrastructure is accelerating. Between 2025 and 2035, more than 50,000 new satellites are expected to be launched, most of them into Low Earth Orbit. These will not be one-off missions. They will be functional assets supporting communication, agriculture, climate monitoring, navigation, and national security.

This next wave cannot be built using legacy approaches. One-by-one engineering will not meet global demand. What the world needs now is scalable, product-based satellite manufacturing with modular design, integrated systems, and industrial precision.

That is the leap we are preparing to make.

At Dhruva Space, we believe India can move beyond being a reliable launchpad. We can become a manufacturing base for global Space infrastructure.

With our engineering depth, cost efficiency, and supply chain maturity, we are well placed to lead. And in Hyderabad, we have found the environment to turn that ambition into execution.

Around us, more than 50 suppliers are now building components, subsystems, and specialised technologies. Telangana already hosts 22 percent of India's spacetech startups. The ecosystem is taking shape.

In orbit, from here

The next decade in space will not only be defined by who explores it, but by who builds for it. In my view, Hyderabad has all the ingredients to become a global hub for this new frontier.

We offer precision engineering at scale, with cost efficiencies of 60 to 70 percent compared to Western counterparts. We operate with strategic neutrality, enabling us to serve countries and companies without geopolitical constraints.

Our location allows for 48-hour shipping reach to much of the Global South. And our teams bring together hybrid skills across software, systems, and hardware, making them well suited to the complexity of modern Space missions.

We are not trying to imitate legacy aerospace capitals. Hyderabad has the potential to become something of its own. A trade-friendly, innovation-led, and globally connected base for the Space economy.

I have often thought about the paradox of Space. It feels vast and distant, yet building for it begins in the most grounded of places.

On a factory floor. In a quiet lab. Inside a control room. Or in a university lecture hall, where a single idea changes what someone believes is possible.

That is where it started for me. A comment from a visiting scientist. A university project. A question that refused to go away.

Today, that question is a company. It is a set of platforms, partnerships, and people. It is a growing ecosystem that is just beginning to take shape.

We have come a long way. And in many ways, the real work is only beginning. We are building the spacetech frontier we once only imagined. And we are building it from right here.

Transforming Defence Training

Pioneering Simulation Innovation

Zen Technologies is a pioneer in defence simulation and training solutions, developing advanced combat simulators and live-range equipment for armed forces in India and abroad. With a strong focus on indigenously developed intellectual property, Zen plays a key role in modernising defence preparedness through innovation, precision engineering, and systems thinking.

MILESTONES

1993 – founded in Hyderabad

1995 – delivered India's first indigenous firearms simulator

2005 – launched tactical combat simulators for land forces

2021 – introduced Zen Anti-Drone System (ZADS)

2023 – won major domestic defence contracts under Atmanirbhar Bharat

2024 – expanded R&D into AI-enabled combat training platforms

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Pioneering Defence Simulation

One of the first Indian companies to indigenously develop simulators for firearms, combat vehicles, and tactical training.

Anti-Drone Defence Systems

Developed ZADS, a fully indigenous counter-drone platform integrating radar, jamming, and neutralisation technologies.

Training Infrastructure for Forces

Created modular and customisable solutions for army, paramilitary, and police forces, enabling cost-effective deployment at scale.

Integrated Training Platforms

Designed hybrid systems that combine real-world exercises with high-fidelity virtual environments for realistic training outcomes.

AI-Powered Scenario Generation

Incorporated AI to auto-generate complex training scenarios and threat environments, enhancing training effectiveness.

Export-Ready Indigenous Defence IP

Built a portfolio of export-grade, Made-in-India simulation products aligned with global military standards.

Ashok Atluri

Chairman & MD
Zen Technologies

Ashok Atluri drives strategy and advanced technology development at Zen Technologies, with a focus on simulators, drones, and robotics for defence and homeland security.

A strong advocate for policy reforms that accelerate R&D and procurement, Ashok also contributes regularly to national publications and continues to deepen his learning through executive programs at leading global business schools.

Kishore Atluri

Founder & Jt. MD
Zen Technologies

A postgraduate in Computer Applications from the University of Hyderabad, Kishore Dutt Atluri has played a pivotal role in the design and delivery of advanced simulation systems for India's defence and security forces.

With over 21 patents to his name, he has led the development of Zen Technologies' virtual and live training solutions across infantry, armoured, air defence, and police applications.

He oversees technology direction, product development, and defence marketing, aligning innovation with strategic goals.

From challenge to opportunity

In the early 1990s, we were a group of young entrepreneurs eager to venture into technology and innovation. Computers and software development were still in their infancy in India, and we explored various opportunities.

One came unexpectedly when the Indian Army faced a critical issue with malfunctioning systems from a now-defunct U.S. company. With no support available, the Army turned to us.

This challenge set us on the path to founding Zen Technologies in 1993, redefining how defence training is conducted through simulation.

By identifying the inefficiencies of traditional training methods such as high costs, logistical challenges, and dependency on weather conditions, we saw a unique opportunity.

We envisioned a future where simulators could offer a cost-effective, scalable, and efficient alternative to live firing exercises.

This vision would not only redefine military training but also establish Zen Technologies as a leader in simulation innovation.

Seizing the opportunity: innovating a new category

Recognising the limitations of traditional defence training, we saw not just a problem but a white space, a chance to create a new category entirely.

If we could develop simulators that delivered realism, adaptability, and scale, we could transform how forces prepared for real-world scenarios.

That conviction led us to make a difficult but defining decision: we stopped all other business activities and focused entirely on building world-class simulators.

Our first product, a small arms training simulator, was born out of the Army's need for reliable and efficient training tools. Live firing was expensive and weather-dependent; simulation could offer a better alternative.

We worked for three years without a single major sale. The future was uncertain, but our belief in the long-term potential of simulation technology kept us going.

There were moments when it felt like it would have been easier to just take a job, go to the US, and have a comfortable life. But we stayed back because we believed in what we were doing.

The hardest part was letting go of short-term revenues and committing to long-term R&D.

Our first breakthrough came with the Delhi Armed Police, followed by the National Police Academy. These early wins and recognition from institutions like IDBI Bank validated our direction.

We weren't just fixing a problem; we were defining a new standard for defence training.

Scaling up and innovating for global impact

With early traction behind us, we shifted our focus to scaling and innovating deeper. Each new customer challenge pushed us to expand our simulator portfolio. We moved from small arms to tank simulators, anti-tank missile systems, and vehicle-mounted weapon training. Every product was designed from the ground up, tailored to specific training needs.

A defining moment came with the Hyderabad Police. When they compared traditional training to our simulators, officers trained on our system were combat-ready in just three days versus thirty with live weapons. It was proof not just of efficiency, but superiority.

We never wanted to build something just because it was cheap. The goal was always to create the world's best product in our category.

As warfare evolved, so did we. We expanded into live simulation environments, drone simulators, and robotics-based training systems. We also identified naval simulation, an underserved area in India, and began building advanced maritime solutions.

A major advantage has been our decision to own the entire technology stack. While others rely on integrations and third-party parts, we design everything in-house, from core engines to UI to hardware-software interaction. This allows us to move quickly, customise deeply, and innovate confidently.

We now hold over 150 patents, protecting innovations across simulation architecture, AI integration, scenario engines, and adaptive feedback systems. These capabilities have enabled us to enter and grow in international markets competing not on price, but on performance.

Operationalising the innovation mindset

From the outset, we built a culture that encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and real-world problem-solving.

Many of our engineers and designers have been with us for over 25 years. This continuity has been critical, not just for product development, but for retaining hard-won knowledge and evolving it over time. These are the people who built our first systems and continue to refine them today.

If I had to give one piece of advice to young entrepreneurs, it would be this: Don't chase short-term wins. But if you solve a real problem, the world will pay attention.

Our full-stack approach has helped embed this mindset across the company. Whether it's building a new AI module, refining a sensor interface, or crafting a naval scenario, our teams know that innovation isn't something we occasionally do it's how we operate every day.

Of course, building that mindset internally was only part of the story. The external environment had to support it too.

An ecosystem that is enabling growth

Our ability to sustain this innovation has been deeply supported by the environment we've operated in. Telangana, and especially Hyderabad, has evolved into a business ecosystem where deep-tech companies like ours can grow, experiment, and scale.

The turning point came in the early 2000s, when the state focused on enabling industries through infrastructure, single-window clearances, and proactive engagement. It wasn't just about IT services anymore. Telangana became a hub for defence, aerospace, robotics, and AI.

For us, this meant faster approvals, better access to talent, and the confidence to invest in long-term R&D. Today, Telangana's startup and innovation ecosystem continues to offer the conditions needed for scale with an emphasis on speed, collaboration, and sustained ambition.

Unlike the early years, today we operate in an environment that doesn't just allow innovation, it enables it.

This ecosystem has not only supported Zen but has created a broader momentum, one where more companies are building from Telangana, for the world.

Leading through innovation

Innovation is not just helping us stay relevant. It is actively opening new global markets and deepening our impact. As defence requirements evolve, and as countries seek smarter, scalable, and cost-effective training solutions, our ability to innovate rapidly has become a competitive advantage.

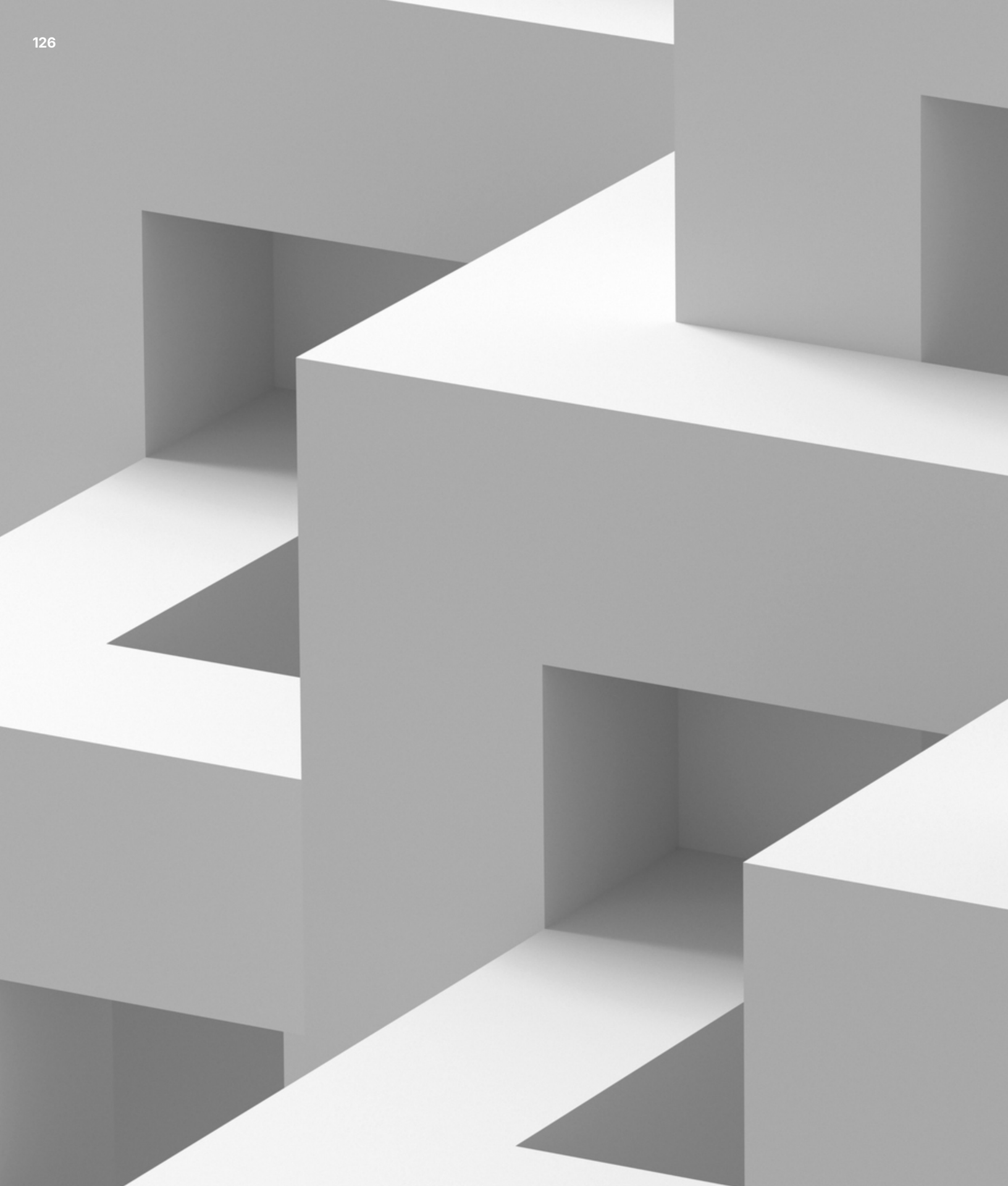
The global demand for high-fidelity simulation systems, drone training platforms, and AI-integrated defence solutions is rising. And because we've built an organisation that can respond with speed, depth, and technical precision, we are increasingly seen not just as a vendor, but as a strategic partner.

We are now exporting to markets traditionally dominated by larger, older defence companies. But we're not winning because we're cheaper, we're winning because our systems are modular, customisable, and often more advanced. That shift has been made possible by continuous investment in R&D, and by retaining full control over our technology stack.

Our patents, deep customer engagement, and ability to prototype quickly have enabled us to stay ahead. Whether it's building naval simulations for scenarios unique to a specific country or tailoring drone systems to a client's terrain and tactics, we're innovating where it matters most.

Our focus isn't on expanding for the sake of scale. It's on solving real problems in better ways and letting that open up new markets.

With Telangana's innovation ecosystem supporting us, and with a team built to learn and adapt, we're not just keeping up. We're setting new benchmarks. And we know that as long as we keep innovating, we won't just grow, we'll help shape the future of defence training itself.



Global relevance and reach

Telangana's innovation story is increasingly global in its outlook and impact.

As startups expand into international markets, GCCs take on end-to-end product responsibilities, and the region's policy models draw attention from governments and institutions abroad, Telangana is emerging as a peer in global innovation conversations.

This section explores how the region is building meaningful international partnerships, contributing to critical global value chains, and positioning itself not just as a destination for investment, but as an origin point for collaboration, capability, and shared progress.

Charting New Orbits:
Telangana's Global Innovation Ascent

Gareth Wynn Owen

British Deputy High Commissioner to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

Gareth Wynn Owen started as the Deputy High Commissioner to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in September 2022. He is responsible for all aspects of the UK's engagement in the two Telugu states.

His role includes promoting business and trade links, strengthening scientific and education cooperation and working with partners to tackle climate change and ensure a transition to clean and sustainable growth.

Prior to this appointment, Gareth led the work on securing the UK's ASEAN Dialogue Partner Status in 2021.

He was also part of the cross-government team that developed the Indo-Pacific tilt framework, which was published in the UK Government's Integrated Review in March 2021.

Gareth has worked in Russia, Armenia, Iran and Azerbaijan for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and has expertise in a number of areas including:

- building science & innovation partnerships
- strengthening commercial collaborations
- working to tackle climate change
- supporting economic development to reduce poverty

He studied economics and development at University College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies.

A region redefining itself

When I first arrived in Hyderabad, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. I'd lived and worked in many cities over my 25 years in the diplomatic service, across Europe, and the Middle East. But nothing quite prepared me for what Telangana has achieved in such a short time.

Three years on, I find myself constantly surprised. Surprised by the pace of innovation. By the ambition of its institutions. By the scale at which it operates. And perhaps most of all, by how under-recognised this transformation still is in parts of the world, including the UK.

This is not just the story of a city catching up. It is the story of a region laying the foundation for a new kind of global innovation hub and the world is beginning to take notice.

Why innovation now leads the agenda

For many businesses today, innovation is no longer optional. It is essential for survival. From digital transformation to artificial intelligence, the pace of change has accelerated dramatically.

This urgency has shifted what companies are looking for. It is no longer just about lowering costs. It is about moving fast, scaling quickly, and building with the right talent. This is where Telangana, and Hyderabad in particular, is beginning to shine.

I have seen first-hand how global enterprises are responding. Take Lloyds Bank, which recently set up a Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad. In just under two years, the centre has scaled to nearly 4,000 employees. That kind of agility, both in hiring and ramp-up, is a significant strategic advantage in today's market.

The perception of India is evolving. The question is no longer 'Can we reduce costs?' but 'Can we grow fast, build smart, and plug into the right ecosystem? More often, Hyderabad is becoming the answer to that question.

What makes Hyderabad different

There are many innovation hubs across the world, from Singapore to Dublin to Berlin. But what sets Hyderabad apart is the combination of infrastructure, talent, intent, and increasingly, momentum.

It starts with infrastructure. Few visitors walk into T-Hub, T-Works, or the IIIT Hyderabad campus without being genuinely impressed.

These institutions signal not just ambition, but a long-term commitment to innovation.

They are more than statements of vision. They are fully operational and changing how entrepreneurs and enterprises engage.

Then there is the presence of global tech giants. When companies like Amazon, Google, and Meta establish large bases in Hyderabad, it creates what I call a “halo effect.” It sends a strong signal to the world that this is a serious tech city.

Hyderabad is also increasingly recognised as a hub for venture-backed innovation. When I arrived, only a few VC firms were actively engaging with startups here. Today, that number has grown substantially.

Hyderabad also continues to attract skilled professionals from across India, and that mobility and diversity are critical for companies building next-generation platforms.

The cultural undercurrent

But Hyderabad's difference is not just structural. It is cultural.

Innovation does not happen only in labs and incubators. It thrives when people feel trusted, empowered, and welcome. And this is where Hyderabad holds a quiet superpower.

In my time here, I have experienced an extraordinary level of warmth and openness. Hyderabadis are not just hospitable. They genuinely embrace you. Whether you are a diplomat, entrepreneur, or investor, there is a sense that once you are here, you are part of the family.

This warmth isn't confined to boardrooms; it's in the streets, where auto-rickshaw drivers and chai vendors greet newcomers like old friends.

This matters. Culture builds trust. And trust builds partnerships. I have worked in many parts of the world, but few cities make outsiders feel like insiders as quickly and as naturally as Hyderabad does.

Put all of this together, and you get a city that is not only building at speed and scale but doing so with a spirit of openness and intent that is quietly and quickly setting itself apart on the global map.

Strength in execution and agility in governance

One of the things that consistently impresses visiting delegations, whether from government, academia, or business, is how quickly Telangana moves from intent to execution.

In today's world, innovation is as much about the speed of implementation as it is about vision. Telangana seems to recognise this instinctively. Decisions are made quickly. Support is mobilised efficiently. And follow-through often happens without delay.

But it is not just the government that moves with purpose. The broader ecosystem is equally responsive. IIIT Hyderabad is launching new programmes, T-Hub continues to attract mentors and partnerships from around the world, and local startups are engaging with UK networks in increasingly meaningful ways.

There is a culture of openness that encourages collaboration and experimentation.

At the same time, there is still room to grow. One important opportunity lies in how Telangana positions itself to firms in the UK and across Continental Europe.

While the region has strong relationships with American technology companies, it is yet to build the same level of familiarity and confidence with European investors and enterprises.

Bangalore's success with European firms offers a blueprint Telangana might learn from. If addressed, this could unlock a new wave of investment and long-term partnership.

How UK partnerships with Telangana are growing

From a British perspective, the engagement with Telangana is still evolving. Compared to the deep, long-standing tech ties between India and the United States, the UK has some catching up to do.

That is not to say we haven't made progress. Over the past few years, we have seen a surge in UK and Telangana collaborations, many of which are quietly reshaping how we think about innovation partnerships.

One standout is the Global Innovation Programme run by Innovate UK in collaboration with T-Hub. This programme brings early-stage UK startups to Hyderabad, immersing them in the Indian market and helps them build relationships and capabilities. It is now in its fourth phase, which speaks to how impactful it has been.

Another success story is the partnership between Health Innovation Manchester and the Government of Telangana, delivered through T-Hub. This collaboration is focused on co-developing health tech solutions that improve healthcare delivery in the UK, with potential for future application in India.

It is a strong example of bilateral innovation, where both sides learn, contribute, and scale together.

More than 100 Telangana-based startups attended London Tech Week in the last two years. This isn't just a statistic. It's a signal of a region looking outward with confidence.

What comes next for Telangana

Telangana is on a promising path. It has the infrastructure, the talent, the governance, and increasingly, the ambition.

But global positioning takes more than capability. It requires clarity, consistency, and storytelling.

If Telangana wants to compete with cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, and stay ahead of Pune and Chennai, it must continue to engage meaningfully with international players, especially those from the UK and other key European markets, to showcase its achievements and foster deeper entrepreneurial ownership and innovation.

From hidden gem to global partner

The UK can play a pivotal role in this journey. Our innovation ecosystems are complementary. Our entrepreneurs face many of the same challenges. And our institutions, from T-Hub to Health Innovation Manchester, have already shown what becomes possible when we collaborate.

When I speak to British companies about India, many still default to Bangalore or Mumbai. But that is beginning to change.

Hyderabad is no longer a hidden gem. It is a visible, viable choice for innovation-led growth.

As more leaders, investors, and entrepreneurs discover what this city has to offer, I believe it will increasingly be seen not as a back office, but as a frontline of global innovation.

The story of Telangana is still being written. But from where I stand, it is already a chapter worth reading and sharing more widely.

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