

Event Report

Organized by Ecell, Jadavpur University

Title of the Event: Meet A Venture Veteran: Mr. Pankaj Thakar

Event Date: 16th August, 2024

Event Time: 5.30pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: Seminar room, 1st floor, mechanical engineering department

Faculty Coordinator in Charge: Prof. Aranyak Chakraborty, Prof. Pranibesh Mandal

Student Coordinator in Charge:

Samayan Mazumder (Project Fellow, IIC)

Introduction

An insightful session titled *****Meet A Venture Veteran: Mr. Pankaj Thakar***** was successfully held, featuring a discussion on entrepreneurship, venture capitalism, and disruptive innovation. Mr. Pankaj Thakar, founder of PadUP Ventures, brought his extensive experience in mentoring startups to the event, sharing his knowledge on the challenges and opportunities within the startup ecosystem. The event included a ****Panel Discussion**** with key players from regional, state, and national innovation and startup enablers, and it was conducted as an ****offline seminar****.

Event Agenda and Structure

The event provided a platform for startup founders, ecosystem enablers, and aspiring entrepreneurs to gain insights from a seasoned venture expert. The following key segments were included in the session:

1. **Panel Discussion with Startup Ecosystem Enablers:** A panel discussion was organized, featuring innovation enablers from the regional, state, and national levels. This panel focused on the current state of the startup ecosystem in India, with discussions surrounding the policies, support mechanisms, and opportunities available to entrepreneurs. Mr. Pankaj Thakar, along with other experts, shared insights on the role of regional support systems and government initiatives in fostering innovation.

2. Session with Mr. Pankaj Thakar: Mr. Thakar, a venture veteran, shared his journey as the founder of PadUP Ventures, an organization focused on mentoring early-stage startups. His extensive experience in venture capitalism and disruptive innovation allowed for an in-depth exploration of entrepreneurial intricacies. Topics such as early-stage venture investment, startup scaling strategies, and innovation as a catalyst for growth were addressed. Participants were able to engage directly with Mr. Thakar during the interactive session, raising questions and receiving personalized advice.

Event Overview

The seminar was conducted in-person, offering participants the opportunity to engage with Mr. Pankaj Thakar and other startup ecosystem enablers in an intimate, interactive setting. Startup founders, aspiring entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and innovation supporters from various industries attended the session. The discussions delved into the intricacies of entrepreneurship, with a focus on early-stage venture capital, the importance of mentorship, and how startups can disrupt existing markets through innovation.

Mr. Thakar emphasized the importance of creating a robust support system for startups, particularly at the early stages. The session addressed critical points such as navigating the complexities of raising capital, understanding investor expectations, and how startups can align their goals with the market demand to scale effectively. Additionally, the role of innovation enablers—government agencies, accelerators, incubators, and industry networks—was discussed, highlighting how they can accelerate the journey from concept to market.

Key Themes and Takeaways

Several key themes were explored throughout the event, offering valuable insights for the startup community:

- Early-Stage Venture Capitalism: Mr. Thakar discussed the nuances of securing early-stage funding, including what venture capitalists look for in startups and how entrepreneurs can prepare their ventures for investment. He shared practical tips on building compelling pitches, understanding the risk appetite of investors, and balancing equity with growth.
- Disruptive Innovation: A key focus of the session was on disruptive innovation—how startups can introduce new products or services that challenge established market players. Case studies were presented by Mr. Thakar to illustrate successful disruptive innovations, and practical advice was given on how entrepreneurs can adopt a disruptive mindset to identify gaps in the market and capitalize on them.
- Entrepreneurship Challenges: Mr. Thakar's experience in mentoring startups allowed him to address common challenges faced by entrepreneurs, particularly in the early stages. Topics such as product-market fit, customer acquisition, building a solid team, and managing growth

were discussed in detail. His insights highlighted how resilience, adaptability, and mentorship are crucial to overcoming these hurdles.

- The Role of Ecosystem Enablers: The panel discussion highlighted the importance of a supportive ecosystem in fostering entrepreneurial growth. Innovation enablers from various levels discussed how policies, funding schemes, and networking opportunities can help startups succeed. Special emphasis was placed on the role of regional and state-level enablers in providing localized support and nurturing innovation from the grassroots.

Mentorship and Networking

A significant aspect of the event was the emphasis on mentorship. Mr. Thakar's own experience as a mentor provided firsthand insight into how critical mentorship is in guiding startups through their early stages. Several participants were able to connect with Mr. Thakar and other panelists, establishing valuable relationships that could potentially offer long-term mentorship and support.

The networking opportunities provided during the event allowed attendees to engage with not just experts, but also fellow entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and innovation supporters. These connections are expected to lead to future collaborations, partnerships, and investment opportunities for the startups in attendance.

Conclusion

The "Meet A Venture Veteran: Mr. Pankaj Thakar" was highly successful, offering in-depth insights into entrepreneurship, venture capitalism, and innovation. Mr. Thakar's experience and expertise provided participants with practical knowledge on how to navigate the challenges of the startup ecosystem and leverage innovation for business growth. The panel discussion with startup ecosystem enablers enriched the event, shedding light on the support mechanisms available to entrepreneurs at various levels.

The seminar offered a unique platform for startups to learn from industry veterans, engage with ecosystem enablers, and establish meaningful connections that will support their future endeavors. It concluded with a strong message: that mentorship, resilience, and innovation are the keys to long-term entrepreneurial success.

Attendees list:

Name	Year	Department
Rajobrata Dasgupta	UG-2	Electrical Engineering
Sohamdeep Mondal	UG-1	Civil Engineering
Sayani sarkar	UG-1	Power
Indranil Biswas	UG-3	Mechanical

SABARNA SAHA	UG-1	Power
Shubhayu Roy	UG-1	Food technology and biochemical engineering
HARSH KEDIA	UG-2	IEE
Jotiraditya Banerjee	UG-1	Power Engineering
Souradeep Basu	UG-1	Mechanical
Gourab Paul	UG-1	Food technology and biochemical engineering
Biswayan Paul	UG-2	Chemical Engineering
Pritam Adhikari	UG-1	Power Engineering
Shreejoy saha	UG-1	Chemical engineering
Prithwish Das	UG-1	Chemical Engineering
SAYAN BISWAS	UG-1	CIVIL ENGINEERING

Images:









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Meet A Venture Veteran: Mr. Pankaj Thakar

JU IIC and E-cell present a session with the **Founder of PadUp Ventures**, to discuss the intricacies of entrepreneurship, early-stage venture capital and disruptive innovation.

Time : 5:30 PM Onwards

Date: 16.08.24

Location: Seminar Hall,
Mechanical Engineering
Department, Jadavpur
Campus

