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## **Developing Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: A Case Study of Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram is one of the largest technological parks in the world. It was established by the Government of Kerala in 1990 as an autonomous organization to meet the infrastructure needs of emerging electronics and Information Technology industry. The Technopark has now expanded to accommodate more than 200 companies that employ a large portion of the IT workforce in Kerala. Besides, Technopark also helps the budding entrepreneurs through its state-of-the-art Technopark Technology Business Incubator (T-TBI) which provides economical plug and play facilities to start-ups in IT/ITeS sectors and support them throughout the gestation period. Characteristic features of Technopark contribute significantly toward developing an enabling ecosystem for the entrepreneurs within the campus. This article provides an insightful account of how the Technopark is changing the entrepreneurial landscape in Kerala and creating opportunities for the young to innovate, grow and become successful in all their ventures. True, Technopark is a success story of a

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government organization turning the tide towards entrepreneurship development in an unconventional manner.

**Keywords:** Technological Parks, Technopark, Start-ups, Entrepreneurship, Thiruvananthapuram, India

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thiruvananthapuram is capital of Kerala –a southern province of India. The city has a unique topography comprising resting hills, flourishing groves, extensive coast lines, chaotic urban trails, and lively metropolitan suburbs. Also, it is the most populous city of Kerala. The city is well connected with the rest of India through railways, roads, waterways, and airways. Traditionally, people of the Thiruvananthapuram district were engaged in mineral processing, sugar milling, textiles, handicrafts, rice cultivation and coastal fishing<sup>1</sup>. However, today it has emerged as a hub of technology-driven industries thanks to an exciting entrepreneurial ecosystem triggered by Technopark. As a result, the city has become hothouse for burgeoning start-ups leading to huge job opportunities for the young and talented workforce drawn from across the country and other parts of the world. Diversity of workforce in the city has also enriched the socio-cultural milieu of Thiruvananthapuram for which significant credit must be assigned to Technopark.

Technopark was established by the Government of Kerala in 1990 as an autonomous organization to meet the infrastructure needs of emerging electronics and Information Technology industry even before India adopted the policy of liberalization, privatization, and globalization. It is registered under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955. By 1995, first phase of Technopark was ready to welcome the entrepreneurs who were interested in setting up their factories or offices in a contemporary industrial campus with all the amenities under the sky. Facilities at the Technopark manifested its vision “to provide a holistic enabling environment to make knowledge industry intrinsically competitive and world class”. Further, the organization truly lived up to its lofty mission statement, “Planning, establishment and management of Electronics Technology Parks in Kerala so as to create the infrastructure and environment required for setting up software

development companies, high technology Electronics manufacturing units and Research Design, Development, Incubating and Training establishments”.

In addition to the vision and mission, the quality policy of Technopark makes the organization distinct: “Provide viably, superior environment and services with assured quality of service to make technology businesses intrinsically competitive and successful and promote regional development through synergistic linkages between industry, government and academia, based on continuous improvement and innovation”. No wonder, Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram has evolved over the years as one of the finest industrial hubs especially for the technology companies in the world. Interestingly, the Technopark campus which is the largest technological park in the country in terms of built-up area is also reputed as one of the “greenest technopolis”<sup>2</sup> in the world thanks to architectural designs imbued with principles of sustainability. Some of the top companies which have their offices in Technopark include Aegis Software, Allianz Cornhill, D+H, Envestnet, Ernst & Young, IBS Software, Infosys, Navigant, Oracle, QUEST, RR Donnelly, Speridian Technologies, Suntec Business Solutions, Tata Elxsi, TCS, Toonz Animation, and UST Global. The Technopark has now expanded to accommodate more than 200 companies that employ a large portion of the IT workforce in Kerala<sup>3</sup>.

#### **CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF TECHNOPARK**

Technopark provides a holistic and enabling ecosystem for the entrepreneurs as well as established corporations. Characteristic features of Technopark are as under<sup>4</sup>:

- **Most lively IT Campus in India:** Technopark has a sprawling campus that accommodates 63000 IT/ITeS professionals. It offers a rich and varied experience with several socio-cultural forums, events, and initiatives. The entire campus boasts of great synergy between employers and employees.
- **Most Customer Friendly IT Campus:** The Single Window Clearance Board (SWCB) ensures a hassle-free business set-up within the campus. All approvals for construction of buildings like building permits, electrical scheme approvals, fire and safety approvals, statutory approvals from Pollution Control Board among others are granted by SWCB within 30 days from the date of submission of application.
- **Stable Infrastructure:** Technopark provides 100% power back-up, uninterrupted power supply, and ambient air-conditioning for all buildings. There are two 110/11 kV

power substations within the campus. Water supply is maintained by Technopark through a dedicated distribution system. Even the support infrastructure at Technopark is great. There is a bustling suburb right outside the Technopark campus. Besides, there is a magnificent food court within the campus. Presence of all the essential commercial shops and establishments make the campus self-sufficient. There is a sprawling guest house within the campus to meet the needs of guests.

- **Green Environment:** The green buildings in the Technopark campus have boosted energy efficiency through much lower power consumption. Besides, there is Solid Waste Management Unit within the Technopark campus.
- **Responsive Maintenance Team:** The operations and maintenance carried out by Technopark guarantees 24X7 assistance to the stakeholders.
- **Safe and Protected Campus:** Technopark safeguards the interests of all the stakeholders with zero man-days lost in the companies' operations within the campus.
- **Excellent Data Connectivity:** Leased line in Fiber connectivity available in all the buildings on the campus guarantees seamless connectivity at lower cost.
- **Start-ups and Incubation support:** The Technopark Technology Business Incubator (T-TBI) provides economical plug and play facilities to start-ups in IT/ITeS sectors.
- **Lower operational costs:** Technopark ensures lower operations cost with a host of SEZ and Non-SEZ rental options.
- **Futuristic:** The hi-tech infrastructure of Technopark is quite futuristic. The brilliantly designed, fully air-conditioned conference halls, seminar and meeting halls are well equipped to meet all the business needs of the stakeholders.

## **THE ROAD AHEAD**

Technopark has not only served its stakeholders in a meaningful way over the years but has also contributed towards job creation, capital accumulation and wealth maximization. However, the organization has a track record of always looking ahead in terms of enriching the experience of all the stakeholders within and outside the Technopark campus while continuously adding value. Sanjeev Nair, Chief Executive Officer, Technopark is taking keen interest in improvising campus amenities and creating new opportunities. An area where Technopark needs to focus is development of non-SEZ commercial and residential buildings<sup>5</sup>.

The organization has already taken a few initiatives like organizing events to promote a culture of innovation on the campus. Technopark can further leverage its location and facilities to become a hub of tourism. It goes without saying that Technopark has emerged as a classic model for all the technological parks in India and other parts of the world. Yet, there is no end to excellence. Interestingly, leadership team of Technopark is already making futuristic strides towards further expanding the vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem within the campus.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Thiruvananthapuram>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.technopark.org/about-technopark>

<sup>3</sup> Nidheesh M. K. (2023). How startups changed Thiruvananthapuram. Mint. <https://www.livemint.com/companies/start-ups/how-startups-changed-thiruvananthapuram-11685559124579.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.technopark.org/why-technopark>

<sup>5</sup> Praveen, S. R. (2023). Technopark in expansion mode, says CEO. The Hindu, 19 March 2023. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/technopark-in-expansion-mode-says-ceo/article66638553.ece>