

DosaVerse, Feelify, Froof & Family

Indian jugaad has morphed into 'entrepreneurship'. Every household has a unicorn dreamer, complete with support of relatives as critics, 'investors' and pesky questioners

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It's said that entrepreneurship runs in the blood of Indians. From our grandmothers running their pickle businesses (wildly successful but tragically unmonetised) to our fathers inventing ways to reuse a single plastic bag, jugaad's been our unofficial startup ecosystem for centuries.

But in 2024, the game changed. Now, every WhatsApp bio reads Founder or CEO, and family WhatsApp groups are littered with Shark Tank memes. Welcome to the era of Desi Startup Culture, where every household has at least one unicorn dreamer—and five sceptics.

Family startup tree | The family's 'serial entrepreneur' comes up with a new business idea every week. This individual attends all startup events in town, and begins discussions with, "You know the world is an oyster and India the pearl..."; every conversation peppered with 'MVP', 'burn rate' and 'GMV'.

Then, there's the family's angel investor, aka the rich uncle. And by 'angel', we mean someone who gives money but badgers you with queries. "Beta, you haven't yet sent me quarterly reports! Am I not entitled to transparency?"

CEO epidemic | Most Indian households today will have at least three people claiming to be CEO. The titles are grand, but the businesses? Questionable.

* Founder, CEO, Chief Ideation Strategist of DosaVerse – A graduate disrupting the dosa market by offering dosas in flavours like avocado or Nutella, served in gravity-defying packaging.

* CEO of Feelify – This guy sells scented candles that smell like things Indians miss: freshly ironed clothes, samosas, and fragrance of fresh earth after first rains.

* Co-founder of Froof – A platform that allows people to rent designer dog clothes. Yes, because dogs in Versace are *totally* a market gap.

* Co-founder of Petflix – Platform dedicated to streaming videos of pets doing random things. Tagline? *Because dogs deserve content too.*

* CEO of Kulcha.ai – Platform that uses machine learning to suggest kulcha & curry pairings.

Their LinkedIn bios, of course, read like Nobel Prize nominations. Their actual achievements? Mostly raising money from dad and uncle.

Pitch deck dramas | The Indian living room's now the arena for pitch rehearsals. Armed with a deck-full of unnecessary infographics, the aspiring entrepreneur practises lines like, "We're solving inefficiency in the cloud biryani space." Mom's Reaction: "This angel investor bit sounds shady. Angels are supposed to bless you, not ask for 30% stake in your profits." Grandma's New Wisdom: "Your presentation is good, beta, but why can't you add Ganpati to the first slide?" Dad's Reaction: "What's blockchain? Can you block your mother on it? She keeps calling during my office meetings."

Shark Tank effect | No Indian startup story is complete without references to *Shark Tank India*. Every pitch at the family table ends with someone mimicking Ashneer Grover yelling, "*Bhai, yeh sab doglapan hai!*" or Namita Thapar sighing and politely declining with, "I don't have expertise in this area."

The aspiring CEO then sulks, saying, "You just wait – next time Peyush Bansal will invest in my idea!" The dad mutters, "*Peyush ka toh chashma business hai*, but you can't even see reality."

Coworking space craze | Desi startup culture thrives in coworking spaces, where hopeful founders sip overpriced organic masala chai while typing furiously on laptops funded by their parents. These spaces have a sacred aura, fuelled by open mic events and pitch nights. The only catch? 80% of these startups are just

trying to do what Swiggy or Zerodha has already perfected. If a chaiwala near a co-working space introduces 'venture-funded chai', rest assured it'll cost ₹300 and be marketed as a health drink with Ayurvedic herbs served in eco-friendly cups.

Failure & reinvention | Of course, most startups eventually run out of funding – or patience. But even in failure, there's resilience. After all, the motto of Indian entrepreneurship is: If you fail – rebrand or pivot.

* Failed at launching avocado-flavoured pani puri? Pivot to health-focused golgappa detox kits.

* Failed at launching eco-friendly toothbrushes? Move to dental wellness retreats.

* Couldn't sell your fitness app? Rebrand it as mindfulness for couch potatoes.

Family reunion | The real test of an Indian startup isn't in the market; it's at the annual family gathering. Relatives are relentless: "Beta, is AI-ML something that teaches you how to become an MLA?" "Govt's encouraging making chips and offering incentives. Have differentiators – make them

truffle-flavoured chips or even from tapioca." Or an old aunt jab: "Namita doesn't have expertise, but do you have expertise in marriage? When are you settling down?"

And there you have it: a startup journey as uniquely Indian as chai and pakoras in the rain. Indians love dreaming big – whether in the chai market or a satellite startup, the entrepreneurial spirit is unstoppable. Not every Indian startup will become the next unicorn, but when the family reunion ends, everyone will go home feeling they're part of a billion dollar startup revolution.



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