



# CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Pioneering Multi-Disciplinary  
Entrepreneurship Education  
and Pedagogy



Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences



## Center for Entrepreneurship – Carving a Niche

Entrepreneurship fuels innovation and empowers individuals to turn ideas into impactful solutions, redefining the world around us. To fully unleash its power, we must go beyond traditional approaches, copybook ideas and conventional measures of success. At the Center for Entrepreneurship (CFE), we focus on something deeper – cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset. This mindset is not just about starting a new business; it is also about solving problems, navigating uncertainty, and leading through challenges. Entrepreneurship education has grown globally, but many educational institutions have lagged. CFE is bridging this gap by offering cutting-edge entrepreneurship curriculum and pedagogy, adaptable across disciplines and embedded in the Indian context.

What began in 2022 as a bold vision during the US visit of Hon'ble Chancellor Dr. M.R. Jayaram and Chief Executive Sri M.R. Sreenivasa Murthy, has evolved into a thriving *Center of Excellence*. And we are just getting started!

CFE is envisioned as a pivotal hub for all things entrepreneurial at RUAS. The Center's mission is to revolutionize entrepreneurship education across India, bringing world-class pedagogy and practice to students and professionals across diverse fields. To achieve this mission, we follow an integrated approach towards **entrepreneurial education, research, and practice-oriented initiatives**.

CFE is pioneering an ambitious and one of its kind programs in India to introduce entrepreneurial education to a multidisciplinary student body. The initiative took root with the launch of the course on "Entrepreneurial Mindset and Action" across the undergraduate programs, which has now reached over 1500 students. It is designed to help students cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and build the attitudes, skills, and perspectives necessary to think creatively, take calculated risks, and identify opportunities for value creation. The reflective exercises and practical assignments encourage the students to step out of their comfort zone, face real life situations as entrepreneurs commonly do and explore their potential. The central premise is that Entrepreneurship is not only about creating new ventures but also about taking action in a variety of settings where one can make a positive difference. In just a year, CFE students have interacted with over 150 entrepreneurs in a unique way where the process became learning in itself!

Beyond the numbers, there are some heartening learning outcomes of the course. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship courses that are typically offered to business management students, our course has takers from social sciences, engineering and technology, art and design, food processing and technology, biotechnology, allied health sciences and other disciplines. Some students have gone on to make their first customer sale during the course. Some have acted on their passion projects in ways they never thought they could. Designed using the latest pedagogical advances and frameworks, this program is just the beginning of what the center aims to achieve.

Our activities extend beyond the campus to serve external audiences through management development programs (MDP), faculty development programs (FDP), capacity building, and partnerships. We are also committed to creating knowledge base and resources for contextually relevant entrepreneurial education that bring the stories of the Indian startup ecosystem and its intricacies into the classrooms.



In alignment with the Hon'ble Chairman's vision to build a globally recognized center, RUAS has entered into a strategic partnership with **Babson College USA**, the leading institution for entrepreneurship education worldwide and ranked as #2 College for Undergraduate Education by WSJ rankings. The partnership initiative was driven by Mr. Aditya Srinivas Prasad – Advisor at RUAS, serial entrepreneur and alumnus of Babson College.

The RUAS-Babson partnership, operationalized by CFE, sets the base for creating long lasting impact in the space of entrepreneurship education and pedagogy in India by bringing together Babson's global expertise with RUAS' deep multidisciplinary approach and understanding of the Indian context. Together, we are building a curriculum that goes beyond traditional management, integrating Babson's action-based methodologies into programs custom-made for diverse disciplines. With faculty development initiatives and co-creation of knowledge resources on the anvil, the alliance with Babson is set to redefine entrepreneurial learning for an international, interdisciplinary audience, bringing the best of India-US collaboration to the forefront of education.



*Hon'ble Chancellor Dr MR Jayaram along with Mr Aditya Srinivas Prasad and President Stephen Spinelli of Babson College*

Going forward, CFE will offer electives and internships, creating opportunities for students to work on their venture ideas while earning academic credits. This creates a pathway for students serious about entrepreneurship to align their startup aspirations with the requirements of their degree programs.

The heart of CFE is a talented team of faculty members, scholars, operational and industry experts who not only bring a wealth of experience to the study and practice of entrepreneurship but are also committed to the mission of building an entrepreneurial India.

CFE's journey mirrors that of an entrepreneurial venture itself – starting with a single director and evolving into a specialized core team supported by visiting faculty, mentors and experts. Conceived by the university's leadership and brought to life through focused development and execution, CFE began as a one-person initiative, driven by a vision to build a hands-on, real-world entrepreneurship curriculum.

The founding director, Dr. Sonali Gupta, a dynamic leader with over 25 years of experience across entrepreneurship, technology, ecosystem building, education, and research, has been instrumental in shaping CFE's mission and building it into a recognized and respected brand in a short span of time. An alumna of BITS Pilani, IIM Bangalore, and IIM Indore, Dr. Sonali's work spans high-impact initiatives across public and private sectors. Her research work, at the cusp of entrepreneurship and public policy, includes one of India's first longitudinal studies on business incubation, offering rare insights into the challenges and successes of nascent entrepreneurs.

The CFE core team was bolstered by the addition of Dr. Mueen Ahmed as faculty and Mr. Srinivasa V as Assistant Manager in April 2024. Dr Mueen holds a PhD in Strategy and Entrepreneurship from IIM Trichy. His research focuses on the role of daily practices in supporting entrepreneurship within Entrepreneurial Support Organizations, advocating a practice-based approach to understand social phenomena. His case studies are counted among bestseller cases at HBS. Mr Srinivasa is an MBA from RUAS and brings strong operational experience to team CFE's expanding initiatives.



Beyond educational endeavors, CFE is also deeply involved in research and ecosystem-building activities. Our faculty's research has been published in leading ABDC/ABS-ranked journals and selected at national and global conferences like Academy of Management, Babson, EGOS, SMS, RENT, and IIT Madras' ICCSI, INDAM and IMRC at IIM Ahmedabad.



CFE co-organized the "International Confluence Conference on Startups and Innovation" (ICCSI) at **IIT Madras** in December 2023. This conference successfully brought together academics, policymakers, industry experts, entrepreneurs, and investors. Several key sessions and workshops were conducted by Dr Sonali at the conference.

To encourage entrepreneurship among students of life sciences, biotechnology, medical and allied health sciences, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with **Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP)**, the foremost bio and life sciences incubator in India. Facilitated by CFE, this collaboration aims to integrate RUAS into C-CAMP's Life Science Entrepreneurship Development Programme (Life-ED) aimed at promoting life sciences research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the Indian academic community.



Started in February 2023, The Startup Society (TSS) is the entrepreneurship club at RUAS. Powered by CFE, it has become a cornerstone of entrepreneurial energy on campus. With over 500 members across diverse faculties, TSS is more than a club; it's a thriving, inclusive community that brings together students from management, social sciences, engineering, life sciences, nursing, and medicine. Led by dedicated chapters across campuses, TSS fosters collaboration across disciplines, providing a dynamic platform for members to connect, innovate, and lead in the world of entrepreneurship.



CFE's unique model provides a blueprint for larger initiatives as the university gears up to strengthen its foreign collaborations. Looking ahead, we will engage with thought leaders and institutions at the leading edge of entrepreneurship to broaden our impact and further enrich the student experience.

Like an agile startup within a vast university ecosystem, the Center for Entrepreneurship has, in a short span, transformed the entrepreneurial landscape at RUAS – impacting hundreds of students, fostering industry connections, establishing groundbreaking collaborations with top national and international institutions, publishing novel research in leading journals, and pioneering a unique, multi-disciplinary approach to entrepreneurship education.

Like any ambitious venture, CFE has faced its share of challenges in navigating the complexities of pioneering an interdisciplinary program. With a lean team and relentless dedication, CFE's achievements have been built on a foundation of perseverance and innovation. These experiences have strengthened our resolve to continue making meaningful impact, as we set our sights on an even more ambitious future.

**Join us in shaping the future of entrepreneurship education!**





## Glimpses of CFE: 2023-24

### Academic Excellence

#### 1. Research Publications

- a) Research paper titled “Behind every Superman there is a Clark Kent: Discovering the Silent Strengths in the Entrepreneurial Journey” by Dr Sonali Gupta, was published in *Prometheus: Critical Studies in Innovation*, an ABDC ‘B’ & ABS ‘2’ ranked international journal. Vol. 39(2):101-112. DOI: 10.13169/prometheus.39.2.0101
- b) An autoethnographic research paper that delves into the depths on dealing with Benevolent Sexism by Dr Sonali Gupta published in the Journal of Autoethnography. “Be Patient, Don’t Complain (Yet): Beyond the Dichotomy of Confronting or Complying with Benevolent Sexism”. *Journal of Autoethnography*; 5 (4): 472–496. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1525/joae.2024.5.4.472>
- c) Book Chapter titled “Rivers of Change: A Vocalizer's Journey in Innovating Locally for Global Environmental Impact” in Gupta, Vipin (eds.) *How India is Vocalizing Its Localization Dimension*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing. *Forthcoming*.

#### 2. Conferences, Seminars and Symposiums

##### a) Best Paper Award at “International Confluence Conference on Startups and Innovation” (ICCSI) at IIT Madras, December 2023

Dr Sonali Gupta was awarded the Best Paper award for her research on Business Incubators, Accelerators and Innovation Ecosystems. The award was presented by Dr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan, Hon’ble Minister of Information Technology and Digital Services of Tamil Nadu.



##### b) Master Session At IIT Madras

At a by-invite only master session, Dr Sonali Gupta presented her research work in the field of entrepreneurship and public policy. Her research on nascent entrepreneurs is among the rare longitudinal, qualitative studies in the world that explores new venture creation from a policy perspective.

##### c) Presented at INDAM 2023

At the Indian Academy of Management Conference (INDAM) at NMIMS Mumbai, Dr Sonali Gupta presented an analysis of the evolution of entrepreneurship policy in India. INDAM is the topmost conference in the field of management and entrepreneurship in India.

**d) Professional Development Workshop at IIT Madras**

Dr Sonali Gupta received the “Award of Excellence” for conducting a Professional Development Workshop on “Inside the Blackbox of business incubation: Crafting new Directions for research and policymaking” at IIT Madras.

**e) Keynote Speaker at IIT Jodhpur**

As the Keynote Speaker at Doctoral Colloquium of School of Management and Entrepreneurship, IIT Jodhpur, Dr Sonali Gupta spoke about “Making Research Personal: Using Your Life Experiences to Develop Unique Research Topics”.



**f) Online Session on “Research contribution as practitioners” co-hosted with IIT Madras**

Insight sharing and interaction session for practitioner track registrants of “International Confluence Conference on Startups and Innovation” was conducted by Dr Sonali Gupta along with Prof Thillai Rajan of IIT Madras.

**g) Plenary Chair: At IIT Madras, Dec 2023**

The ICCSI conference Plenary session on “Action Under Uncertainty: Lessons from Expert Entrepreneurs” by Prof Saras Sarasvathy, the originator of theory of effectuation was chaired by Dr Sonali Gupta.

**h) International Symposium on Autoethnography and Narrative (ISAN) 2024: March 2024**

The 2024 International Symposium on Autoethnography and Narrative (ISAN) was held in March 2024. ISAN is sponsored by the International Association of Autoethnography and Narrative Inquiry (IAANI), the foremost forum for autoethnography – a qualitative research method that connects a researcher's personal experiences to broader cultural, political, and social meanings. Dr Sonali Gupta presented her paper titled “*Redefining Adventure: Navigating Gender Expectations as an Indian Woman Scuba Diver*”. It was the only presentation from India at the symposium that had over 300 participants affiliated with more than 25 countries.

## Ecosystem Engagement

1. **World Entrepreneurship Day** was celebrated with Madhuchandan S C, Founder & CEO of Organic Mandya as keynote speaker to interact with the students. Madhuchandan narrated the fascinating story of starting up Organic Mandya and how his venture is committed to organic farming practices.



### 2. Entrepreneurship Development Program at GAIL in collaboration with IIT Madras

At IIT Madras's entrepreneurship development program created exclusively for GAIL, Dr Sonali Gupta conducted a 2-day workshop on Entrepreneurship Development at GAIL (Gas Authority of India Limited). The workshop, held at GAIL headquarters in Pata, Uttar Pradesh, was part of Abha program, a unique initiative by GAIL to encourage women entrepreneurship.

### 3. Workshop on "Your Idea, Brand and Your Story"

To introduce students to entrepreneurial marketing skills CFE organized a workshop on "Your Idea, Brand and Your Story" in April, 2024. It was conducted by Tony V Francis, a media professional and Director Learning, Progressive Learning Adventures & You (PLAY). During the workshop, students discovered strategies for cultivating personal brand and effortlessly attract relevant audience on the basis of three strengths – deep knowledge, personality and visibility.





#### 4. Session on Social Entrepreneurship for MSRUAS and BayIND students

Dr. Mueen Ahmed conducted a session for MSRUAS and Bavarian-Indian Centre for Business and University Cooperation (BayIND) students as part of immersion program on “Social Entrepreneurship and Startup Failure”. The session focused on entrepreneurship and the importance of adopting a customer-centric approach by empathizing with target customers so as to develop successful products.



#### 5. Visit by Prof Jay Rao from Babson College

Prof Jay Rao from Babson college visited RUAS in April 2024. During his visit he explored the campus, interacted with the faculty of the Center for Entrepreneurship and met the RUAS leadership. Prof Jay Rao teaches and consults extensively in the areas of innovation and corporate entrepreneurship.



#### 6. CFE Director Featured as a Trailblazer by Shenomics

Dr Sonali Gupta has been featured as one of the trailblazing women leaders in Shenomics' book, "She Leads with an Authentic Brand", unveiled at the Conscious Woman Summit 2023. Her inclusion underscores her exceptional journey and contribution to creating a positive change in the world. Shenomics is the foremost platform for women leaders in India.

## 7. Nikhil Gonsalves – Meet the Entrepreneur Building Indigenous Electric Bikes

CFE hosted an interactive session at Ramaiah Technology Campus, Peenya, featuring Mr. Nikhil Gonsalves, the Founder and CEO of Ingo Electric. The seminar aimed to provide students with in-depth insights into entrepreneurship and the rapidly evolving electric vehicle industry. InGo Electric is revolutionizing the domain of micromobility and championing a sustainable planet with its purpose-built e-bikes for Electric Fleets and businesses.



## 8. A case writing workshop on "Developing Indian Startup Stories into Case Studies"

CFE conducted an intensive case writing workshop for educators and practitioners in August 2024. Titled, **"Developing Indian Startup Stories into Case Studies"**, the workshop equipped participants with skills to craft teaching cases focused on the dynamic landscape of Indian entrepreneurship. The workshop has received a phenomenal response with participants from several leading institutions such as IIMB, IIT, XIM, CCAMP and other organizations. Initiated by Dr Sonali Gupta, the workshop marks the beginning of a larger program to develop a comprehensive compendium on entrepreneurship case studies from the Indian context. Dr Mueen Ahmed, the chief facilitator of the workshop, delved into the intricacies of teaching with cases, writing a business case and creating the accompanying teaching note. In the next phase of the workshop, the cases submitted by workshop participants will be mentored by leading entrepreneurship faculty in India to develop them into publishable artefacts.





## 9. Startup Bootcamp

CFE co-conducted the Startup Bootcamp designed for new entrants of RUAS as an introduction to entrepreneurship. The sessions introduced the students to entrepreneurship as a method. The participants engaged in hands-on exercises that focused on understanding self and environment to come up with venture ideas that matter. And how to evaluate if an idea is an opportunity. The session ended with a pitching session where participants presented their ideas.



## 10. Mayank Nagori – Meet the Entrepreneur making plastic free gum

In October 2024, CFE hosted Mayank Nagori, Co-Founder of GudGum, a successful entrepreneur who has bagged four shark deals on Shark Tank India. Gudgum makes plastic free and all natural chewing gum, in its mission towards creating a more plastic-free planet. Students engaged in an incredibly interactive session, asking insightful questions about entrepreneurship, startups, and the journey behind GudGum. The event also had project showcase where student entrepreneurs showcased their venture ideas and received valuable feedback.





### 11. Somakumar Kolathur – Meet the Entrepreneur “designing” his way to success

"Startup Adda with Somakumar Kolathur", was held in November 2024 at RTC Campus, Peenya. Somakumar, Co-founder of Quantulum Ventures, Monks-of-Method, and Moonraft Innovation Labs (now part of UST Global), shared his journey from intrapreneur to entrepreneur! From the power of "luck vs. skill" to mastering the art of differentiation, attendees left inspired and ready to tackle the world of entrepreneurship. Mr. Kolathur's stories and strategies reminded us that entrepreneurship is not just a career but a way of life.



### 12. Dr. Janani Venkatraman – Meet the Biotechnology Entrepreneur revolutionizing air purification

November 2024 was also the time for “Startup Adda with Dr. Janani Venkatraman”. Dr Janani is CEO & Co-founder of Biomoneta, an innovative healthcare venture that builds transformational technologies, products and solutions for air decontamination. From insights in biotech to a lively quiz and discussion of student projects, the event was a perfect blend of learning and inspiration!



### 13. Jayanth Narayanan – Meet the Entrepreneur and Author who ventured in the QSR space

At Startup Fusion 2024, the semi-annual interfaculty startup contest, CFE hosted Jayanth Narayanan enthralled students and faculty while sharing his journey from tech management to quick service restaurant business. Apart from being a serial entrepreneur and founder of Mani's Dum Biryani, one of the leading QSR chains, Jayanth is also an author of three bestselling books in restaurant space.



#### 14. Visit by Mr. D.R. Widder, Vice President Innovation, Babson College

In December 2024, CFE hosted Mr. D.R. Widder, Vice President Innovation at Babson College USA, at RUAS. His visit marked a pivotal moment in our collaboration, underscoring the shared commitment to advancing entrepreneurial education. During his interactions, Mr. Widder lauded the progress and impact of CFE initiatives, emphasizing the unique and meaningful partnership between RUAS and Babson College. This visit further solidifies our path toward co-creating innovative programs and enriching the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Mr. Widder interacted with the faculty at the Center for Entrepreneurship. He met with the Hon'ble Chairman Dr M.R. Jayaram, Sri M.R. Sreenivasa Murthy, Prof Kuldeep Raina, Mr Aditya Srinivas Prasad and Dr. Sonali Gupta to discuss avenues of collaboration and explore opportunities to further strengthen the partnership between the two institutions.





## The Startup Society – Entrepreneurship Club at RUAS

TSS, the RUAS entrepreneurship club conducted several initiatives to engage and encourage students from across disciplines and infuse an entrepreneurial spirit. These include monthly editions of Startup Adda where students engage in startup games, pitch presentations and brainstorming. TSS also brought together faculty from across departments to organize a multidisciplinary session on “Inspire to Innovate” where innovations in different fields were discussed. The club also conducts Startup Fusion – the interfaculty contest twice a year.

TSS members are actively working on innovative ideas and making their mark within and beyond the campus – Mohammed Saad, winner of Startup Fusion went on to win TIE Ideathon at the TIE Global Summit 2024, from among 300+ teams. Ms Sanjana PC was selected at Hult Prize Campus Director to spearhead the on campus programs in the run upto the \$1 Million Dollar Hult Prize Competition. Catch a trailer of TSS activities over the year!











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