

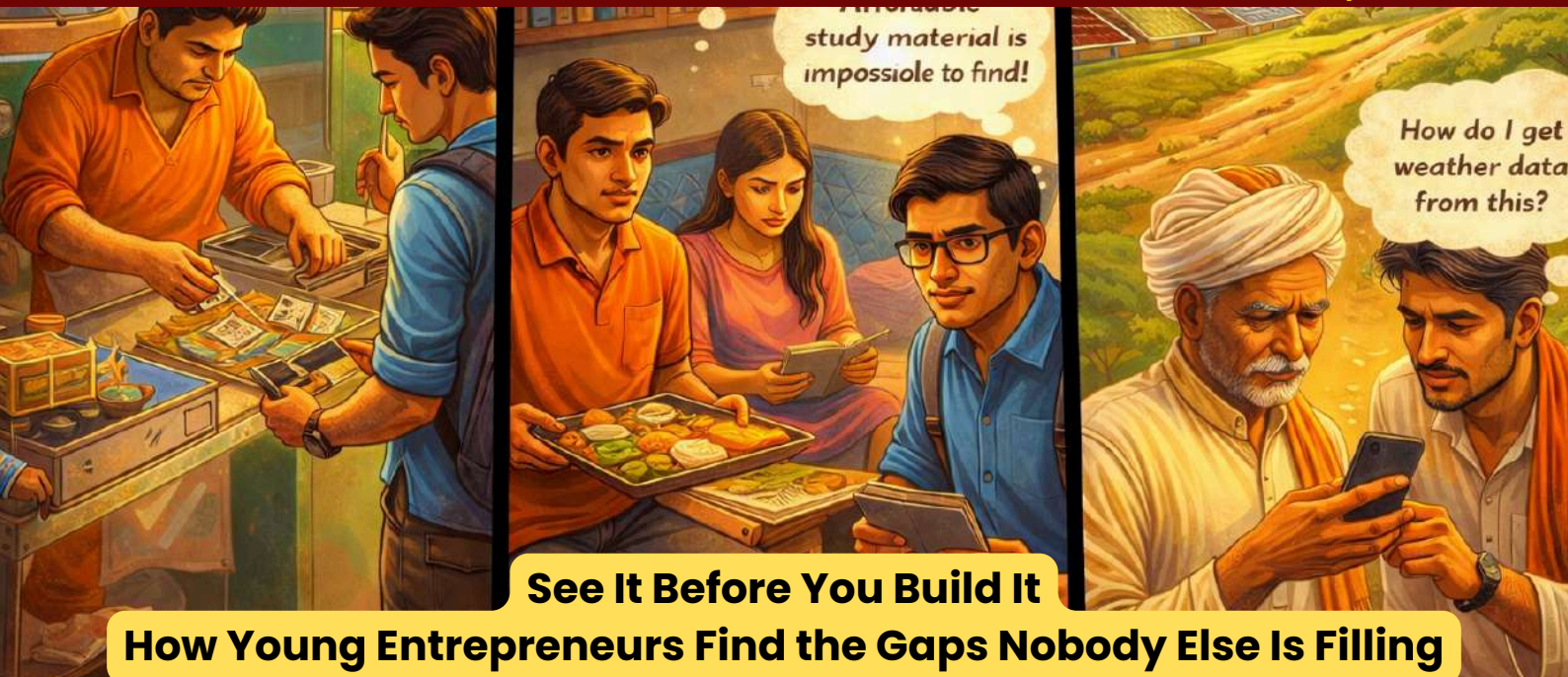
Vision: What future we want to create? To be known as the best B-School for aspiring management leaders in the country with an industry-focused curriculum and practice.

Mission: Why we exist? To create value for students, business and society by providing intellectual leadership, advancing the science and practice of management, and developing confident leaders to be the agents of change in a world driven by data, technology and innovation.

STARTUP SPARK

YOUR FORTNIGHTLY GUIDE TO INDIA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL NEWS

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Picture this.

You're at a chai stall near your campus. The owner is writing orders on a torn notepad. He miscalculates the change. The customer argues. A small queue builds up. You've seen this happen before. Nothing unusual. But this time, one thought crosses your mind:

"This guy is losing time and money every single day. Why hasn't anyone made something simple to fix this?" That thought, that tiny shift from "this is annoying" to "this is a problem worth solving" — is where every startup begins. **The Gap is Always There**

Markets are not perfect. People are not fully served. Needs go unmet every single day. The gap between what people need and what currently exists is where startups are born.

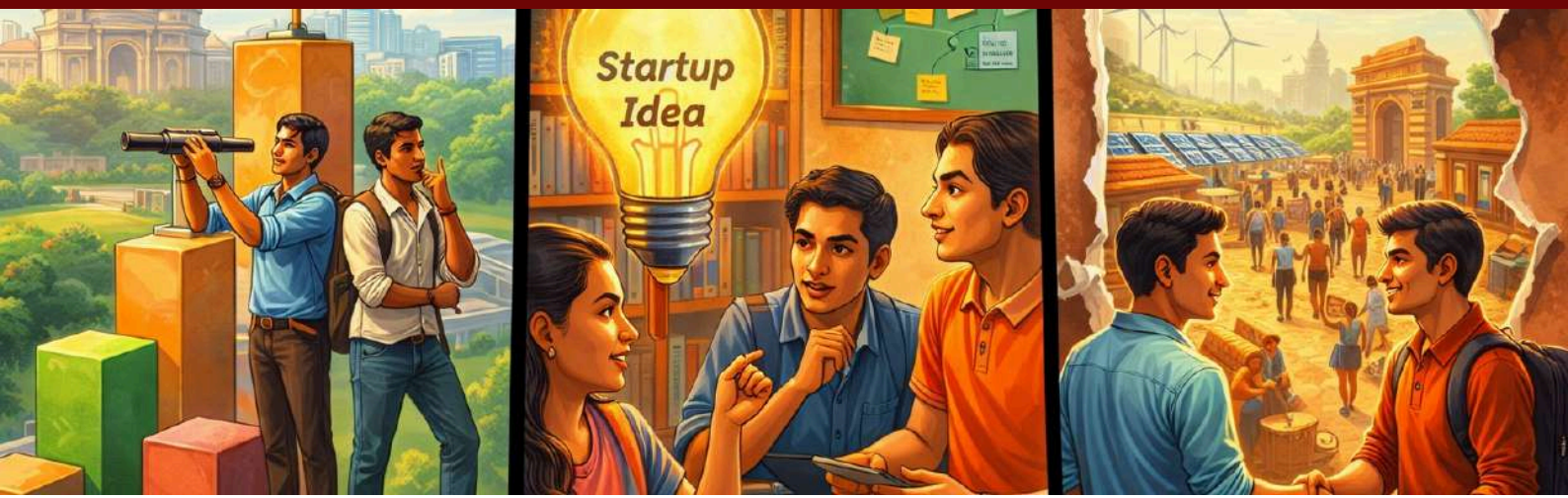
But gaps don't announce themselves. They hide inside habits, workarounds, and complaints that people have just... learned to live with. **Your job as a young entrepreneur is to stop living with them.**

The Entrepreneur's Lens

For most people, a problem is an inconvenience. For a student entrepreneur, it is a signal. So the question shifts from: "Why is this so annoying?" To: "Who else is facing this — and what would they pay to make it go away?"

GAP RADAR: Where Student Founders Look

You don't need a research lab or a billion-rupee fund to find a great startup idea. You just need to look at the right places — with the right eyes. *Here are five places where gaps hide, and what to look for in each:*



1. Observe Friction in Everyday Life

The best problems are hiding in plain sight. In the things that irritate you, confuse you, or make no logical sense.

- What takes too long? (Paying fees, getting documents, finding auto-rickshaws)
- What breaks too often? (Cheap products with zero after-sales support)
- What forces you to use three tools when one should do the job?

Every workaround is a problem waiting to be solved.

2. Listen to Complaints – Especially Repeated Ones

A complaint mentioned once might be personal. A complaint you hear from five different people in a week? That's a market.

- Hostel mess food complaints = opportunity for cloud kitchens or tiffin services
- "I can't find affordable study material" = edtech, content, or peer-tutoring platforms

Listen to the people around you. They are doing your market research for free.

3. Map the Underserved

Gaps don't just live in big cities or tech hubs. They live at the edges; in communities, languages, age groups, and regions that mainstream products forget.

- Elderly users who can't navigate digital banking without help
- Farmers who need weather data but can't read complex charts

"Who is left out of the current solution?" is one of the most powerful questions in entrepreneurship.

4. Follow the Frustration in Industries

Every old industry has pain points that insiders have accepted, and outsiders haven't noticed yet.

- Real estate: transparency gaps between landlords and tenants
- Healthcare: follow-up appointments that nobody tracks
- Education: practical skills that degrees don't teach

Pick an industry. Spend 30 minutes talking to someone who works in it. You will walk away with three ideas.

5. Study What's Working Abroad. Then Ask: "Why Not Here?"

Not everything needs to be invented. Some of the best Indian startups were successful global models adapted for Indian conditions.

- Swiggy = Indian adaptation of food delivery models from the US/UK
- Khatobook = accounting apps rebuilt for the kirana owner

The gap is often a matter of geography or demographics – not a missing idea.

The Student Founder's Playbook for Finding Problems

Noticing a gap is not enough. You need a system to validate it. Here's how.

Step 1: Keep a Problem Journal

Every time something frustrates you, write it down. Not to complain – to catalogue. Date it. Note who else was affected. After two weeks, look for patterns. Patterns are problems and problems are opportunities.

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Step 2: Talk to 10 People Before You Build Anything

Most student founders make this mistake: they fall in love with their solution before they understand the problem. Talk first. Build later.

- Ask: How do you currently handle this?
- Ask: If this were solved tomorrow, how much would it change your life?

If they shrug, it's a nice-to-have. If their eyes light up, you've found something real.

Step 3: Size the Problem Simply

You don't need a market research report. You need a rough answer to:

- How many people have this problem? (Even a rough count matters)
- How often does it happen? (Daily friction > monthly inconvenience)

If they're paying a workaround tax right now, they'll pay for a real solution.

Step 4: Check if Anyone Else Has Tried

Search for existing solutions. If you find them, good. It means the problem is real. Now ask: why are people still complaining?

- Product too expensive?
- Too complex to use?

Your gap might not be the problem itself. It might be how the existing solution fails to reach or serve a specific group.

Step 5: Build the Smallest Thing That Proves the Idea

Don't build an app. Build a test.

- A WhatsApp group that solves the problem manually
- A Google Form that replaces a broken process
- A one-page website that describes a solution that doesn't exist yet

If people sign up, subscribe, or say 'take my money', you have a startup. Everything else is execution.

A pattern You Should Notice. Every great startup began with someone paying close attention to something others had stopped seeing. The gap wasn't invisible. It was ignored. Student founders have an unfair advantage: you live inside your market. You eat in the mess, travel in the metro, study in the library, and struggle with the same systems as your future customers. Use that proximity. It is your biggest research advantage.

Closing Note

Every great entrepreneur in history, from the founders of Flipkart selling books out of a Bengaluru apartment, to the student who built Ola because he couldn't find a cab in the rain, started with one thing: a problem they refused to ignore. They didn't have special powers. They were paying attention when everyone else had already moved on. Here is the truth about gaps in the market: they are not rare. They are everywhere. The gaps are not hiding. We are.

We hide behind the excuse that someone smarter will come along and fix it. We hide behind the belief that we're too young, too inexperienced, or too small to matter. We hide behind waiting for the perfect idea instead of finding a real problem.

Stop waiting for the perfect idea. Start finding the real problem.

Your campus is a living lab. Your classmates are your first users. Your professors, your canteen staff, your auto driver, they are all potential customers for a problem you haven't discovered yet.

It could be you. But only if you're paying attention. The gap is never invisible. It is just ignored, until someone like you decides to stop ignoring it.

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