Valuation Decoded: From Startups to Giants

Unpacking the Methods, Use Cases & Big Trends in Business Worth



INTRODUCTION

In a market shaped by VOLATILITY, INNOVATION, and INVESTOR SCRUTINY, VALUATION has evolved into a CORE BUSINESS DISCIPLINE. No longer limited to transactional events, it is now a CONTINUOUS, forward-looking exercise EMBEDDED IN STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING.

From EARLY-STAGE STARTUPS defining product-market fit to LISTED MULTINATIONALS considering SPIN-OFFS OR ACQUISITIONS, VALUATION INFORMS:

- CAPITAL ALLOCATION,
- PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT, and
- STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE.

This edition explores:

- the FUNDAMENTALS OF VALUATION,
- · the METHODOLOGIES that drive it,
- its ROLE ACROSS SECTORS, and
- a brief overview of how it shapes STARTUP FUNDING — from SEED TO GROWTH ROUNDS.

We also examine RECENT VALUATION TRENDS that signal how MARKETS ARE REASSESSING VALUE IN REAL TIME.

UNDERSTANDING VALUATION is not just about *financial insight* — it's about **POSITIONING, POTENTIAL,** and **PREPAREDNESS.**

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VALUATION is the ANALYTICAL PROCESS of determining the PRESENT WORTH of a BUSINESS, ASSET, or LIABILITY.

It's not only a *financial metric* — it is a **STRATEGIC TOOL** that informs:

- INVESTMENT DECISIONS
- TRANSACTIONS
- REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
- INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

It goes beyond simple metrics like REVENUE or EBITDA.

TRUE VALUATION considers:

- FUTURE POTENTIAL
- RISK EXPOSURE
- MARKET SENTIMENT
- and increasingly, non-financial indicators like:
 - ✓ ESG PERFORMANCE
 - ✓ DATA ASSETS
 - ✓ INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)

In today's environment, VALUATION IS BEING INFLUENCED BY:

- GEOPOLITICAL VOLATILITY and MACROECONOMIC CYCLES affecting discount rates and market multiples
- INTANGIBLE ASSETS (e.g., BRAND, TECHNOLOGY, USER DATA) forming the BULK OF ENTERPRISE VALUE in several sectors
- SECONDARY SHARE MARKETS and PRE-IPO ROUNDS causing interim valuation fluctuations
- REGULATORY OVERSIGHT, especially in TRANSFER PRICING and CROSS-BORDER M&A

VALUATION IS NO LONGER JUST A TRANSACTION STEP — it is a **RECURRING PROCESS** embedded in:

- CORPORATE DECISION-MAKING
- INVESTOR RELATIONS
- EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION FRAMEWORKS

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LIFE SCIENCES & BIOTECH

EARLY-STAGE FIRMS are often PRE-REVENUE;

valuation hinges on IP, R&D MILESTONES, and REGULATORY PROBABILITIES.
STANDARD FINANCIAL MODELS are
ADJUSTED FOR
CLINICAL RISK and PATENT RISK.

TECHNOLOGY & SAAS

and USER GROWTH METRICS;
VALUATION OFTEN EXCEEDS the TANGIBLE
ASSET BASE,

requiring FORWARD-LOOKING MODELS. //

ENERGY & RENEWABLES

VALUATION MODELS here **INTEGRATE**:

- ASSET LIFECYCLES
- REGULATORY ARBITRAGE
 - CARBON PRICING
- LONG-TERM SUPPLY CONTRACTS
- especially relevant in *ESG REPORTING CONTEXTS*.



Critical

CONSUMER GOODS & RETAIL

BRAND VALUATION, CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE, and OMNICHANNEL CAPABILITY are now AS IMPORTANT AS INVENTORY TURNOVER and PROFIT MARGINS.

FINANCIAL SERVICES & FINTECH

CAPITAL ADEQUACY, REGULATORY RISK, and SYSTEMIC DEPENDENCIES impact VALUATION;
DIGITAL FINANCE MODELS bring in USER STICKINESS and ECOSYSTEM VALUE.

STARTUPS & VC-BACKED ENTITIES

VALUATIONS are driven by:

- FUNDING DYNAMICS
 - UNIT ECONOMICS
- SCALABILITY ASSUMPTIONS Notably, FOUNDER RISK and EXIT OPTIONALITY

often carry VALUATION WEIGHT.



INCOME-BASED

MAJOR POINTERS

CONCEPT

THE INCOME APPROACH focuses on the FUTURE CASH FLOWS that an asset is expected to generate and DISCOUNTS THEM BACK TO THE PRESENT using APPROPRIATE DISCOUNT RATE.

It is grounded in the principle that a RATIONAL INVESTOR would pay NO MORE THAN THE PRESENT VALUE OF FUTURE BENEFITS.

This method is particularly useful when valuing:

- BUSINESSES
- REAL ESTATE
- INTANGIBLE ASSETS such as **PATENTS or TRADEMARKS**
- where INCOME is the PRIMARY DRIVER OF VALUE.

GOAL & RELEVANCE

THE INCOME APPROACH is IDEAL FOR VALUING INCOME-**GENERATING ASSETS** and is WIDELY USED IN:

- MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS (M&A)
- FINANCIAL REPORTING
- INVESTMENT ANALYSIS
- REAL ESTATE VALUATION



METHODS

- DISCOUNTED CASH FLOW (DCF) METHOD
- CAPITALIZATION OF EARNINGS METHOD

ADVANTAGES

- Captures the INTRINSIC VALUE based on FUTURE PROFITABILITY
- Useful for valuing CASH-GENERATING BUSINESSES and ASSETS.
- Tailored to INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES and FORECASTS



- NOT SUITABLE for businesses with **VOLATILE** or UNPREDICTABLE INCOME
- REQUIRES DETAILED and ACCURATE FINANCIAL DATA

MARKET-BASED

MAJOR POINTERS

CONCEPT

The MARKET APPROACH determines the value of an asset by COMPARING IT TO SIMILAR ASSETS that have been SOLD or are CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET.

It is based on the PRINCIPLE OF SUBSTITUTION, which assumes that a RATIONAL BUYER would NOT PAY MORE for an asset than the price of a COMPARABLE ONE with SIMILAR UTILITY AND RISK.

GOAL & RELEVANCE

This approach is **WIDELY USED** for valuing:

- PUBLIC COMPANIES
- PRIVATE BUSINESSES
- SECURITIES
- REAL ESTATE
- TANGIBLE ASSETS
- especially when RECENT TRANSACTIONS involving COMPARABLE ENTITIES can be found.

It reflects **REAL-WORLD**INVESTOR **BEHAVIOR** and
PREVAILING MARKET TRENDS.





METHODS

- GUIDELINE PUBLIC COMPANY METHOD (GPCM)
- PRECEDENT TRANSACTION METHOD (PTM)

ADVANTAGES

- MARKET-BASED: Reflects real prices paid by actual buyers
- **SIMPLICITY**: Easier to apply when **relevant** and **recent data** is available
- CREDIBILITY: Often preferred by investors & regulators



- **DATA LIMITATIONS:** Hard to find truly **comparable transactions**
- DIFFERENCES in scale, geography, or operations can distort comparisons

ASSET-BASED

MAJOR POINTERS

CONCEPT

The **ASSET-BASED APPROACH** values a business or asset by determining the

NET VALUE OF ITS ASSETS = TOTAL ASSETS - TOTAL LIABILITIES.

It focuses on the UNDERLYING BOOK VALUE or FAIR MARKET VALUE of individual assets, and is grounded in the idea that a company's worth is tied to the VALUE OF WHAT IT OWNS.

GOAL & RELEVANCE

This approach is most relevant for businesses with SIGNIFICANT TANGIBLE ASSETS, such as:

- MANUFACTURING
- REAL ESTATE
- HOLDING COMPANIES

It is commonly used for:

- LIQUIDATION ANALYSIS
- ASSET-HEAVY BUSINESSES

Situations where EARNINGS-BASED METHODS ARE UNRELIABLE, such as in EARLY-STAGE or DISTRESSED COMPANIES

METHODS

- BOOK VALUE METHOD
- ADJUSTED NET ASSET METHOD
- LIQUIDATION VALUE METHOD

ADVANTAGES

- Useful for ASSET-INTENSIVE BUSINESSES
- Reflects ACTUAL TANGIBLE VALUE of the business
- Effective for LIQUIDATION or EXIT PLANNING



- IGNORES FUTURE EARNINGS POTENTIAL
- UNDERVALUES INTANGIBLE ASSETS like BRAND or GOODWILL

VENTURE-BASED

MAJOR POINTERS

CONCEPT

The STARTUP-ORIENTED APPROACH to valuation focuses on estimating the value of EARLY-STAGE COMPANIES that typically lack STABLE REVENUES, PROFITS, or HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE.

Unlike mature businesses, startups are valued based on FUTURE POTENTIAL, MARKET OPPORTUNITY, and FOUNDER/TEAM STRENGTH.

This approach incorporates

QUALITATIVE FACTORS,

INDUSTRY TRENDS, and

INVESTOR EXPECTATIONS.

GOAL & RELEVANCE

This approach is KEY for valuing PRE-REVENUE or HIGH-GROWTH STARTUPS, helping INVESTORS and FOUNDERS navigate FUNDING, EQUITY DILUTION, and EXITS where TRADITIONAL MODELS FALL SHORT.



METHODS

- VENTURE CAPITAL (VC) METHOD
- SCORECARD METHOD
- RISK FACTOR SUMMATION METHOD
- BERKUS METHOD
- FIRST CHICAGO METHOD

ADVANTAGES

- ACCOUNTS FOR GROWTH POTENTIAL and MARKET SCALABILITY
- FLEXIBLE in the absence of HISTORICAL FINANCIALS
- USEFUL for EARLY-STAGE INVESTOR NEGOTIATIONS



- HIGH SUBJECTIVITY in ASSUMPTIONS and SCORING
- DIFFICULT TO BENCHMARK due to LACK OF COMPARABLES

APPLICATIONS IN MNCS



Valuation as a Strategic & Regulatory Lever

In LARGE, COMPLEX ENTERPRISES, valuation TRANSCENDS its conventional role as a TRANSACTIONAL INPUT. It functions as a MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TOOL that underpins STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING, REGULATORY ADHERENCE, and CAPITAL EFFICIENCY.

Fundraising & Capital Restructuring



ENTERPRISE VALUE ASSESSMENTS are fundamental to EQUITY PRICING, CONVERTIBLE SECURITY STRUCTURING, and WATERFALL MODELING across FINANCING ROUNDS.

In **COMPLEX RESTRUCTURINGS**, valuation facilitates:

- FAIRNESS OPINIONS
- DEBT-TO-EQUITY CONVERSIONS
- PRIORITY DISTRIBUTION MODELING in DISTRESSED or RECAPITALIZATION SCENARIOS

Tax Planning & Transfer Pricing

ARM'S LENGTH VALUATION is central to:

- INTERCOMPANY ASSET TRANSFERS
- INTANGIBLES MIGRATION
- CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL PROFIT ALLOCATION

Valuation methodologies must be:

- DEFENSIBLE under OECD BEPS FRAMEWORKS
- Increasingly incorporate:
 - ✓ DEMPE ANALYSES
 - ✓ COST-CONTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENTS
 - ✓ RISK-ADJUSTED RETURNS on INTANGIBLES



APPLICATIONS IN MNCS



Valuation as a Strategic & Regulatory Lever



Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)

In LARGE, COMPLEX ENTERPRISES, VALUATION TRANSCENDS its conventional role as a TRANSACTIONAL INPUT.

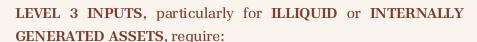
It functions as a MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TOOL that underpins:

- STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING
- REGULATORY ADHERENCE
- CAPITAL EFFICIENCY

Impairment Testing & Financial Reporting

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT under IFRS/GAAP necessitates RECURRING VALUATION of:

- GOODWILL
- INDEFINITE-LIVED INTANGIBLES
- FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS



| ROBUST SUPPORT | AUDITOR-ALIGNED MODELLING



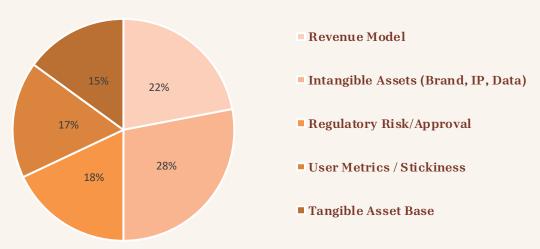
Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A)



Valuation drives **ACQUIRER-TARGET ALIGNMENT**, informs **NEGOTIATION BANDWIDTH**, and underwrites **SYNERGY CAPTURE ASSUMPTIONS**.

It forms the QUANTITATIVE FOUNDATION for PPA, GOODWILL TESTING, and ACCRETION/DILUTION ANALYSIS — particularly in CROSS-BORDER or TAX-SENSITIVE STRUCTURES.

Valuation Drivers Aggregate Weight (%)



What Drives Valuation in India: Sectoral & Strategic Breakdown

From user stickiness in SaaS to IP pipelines in biotech — discover what truly shapes value across India's evolving industries."

Valuation Driver Relevance by Industry (India-Focused, 2023–2024)



1

TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Valuation is disproportionately driven by:

- FORWARD REVENUE VISIBILITY
- ACTIVE USER METRICS
- PLATFORM STICKINESS

***** Example:

Zomato Ltd. went public in **2021** with **NEGATIVE EBITDA** but was valued at over **₹1 LAKH CRORE** based on **GMV MULTIPLES** and **MARKET LEADERSHIP** in food delivery.

Investor sentiment hinged on **FUTURE SCALABILITY** rather than **CURRENT CASH FLOW**.

2 FINTECH & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Valuation is shaped by:

- UNIT ECONOMICS
- CAC-to-LTV RATIOS
- REGULATORY ARBITRAGE POTENTIAL
- TECH-STACK IP

***** Example:

Paytm's IPO faced VALUATION MARKDOWNS POST-LISTING due to OVERESTIMATED MONETIZATION CAPABILITIES, despite STRONG GROSS TRANSACTION VOLUMES.

The market correction highlighted the DIVERGENCE between:

- PRE-IPO PRIVATE VALUATIONS and
- PUBLIC MARKET PRICING DISCIPLINE

3 PHARMACEUTICALS & LIFE SCIENCES

Valuations are contingent on:

- PIPELINE PROBABILITY
- IP LIFECYCLE
- REGULATORY CLEARANCES (e.g., USFDA, DCGI)

***** Example:

Biocon Biologics' valuation surged following the acquisition of Viatris' biosimilar assets, reflecting: | INORGANIC GROWTH ACCRETION | A PREMIUM on GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRATION

4

MANUFACTURING & AUTO ANCILLARIES

Enterprise value is still largely **ASSET-TIED**, though **DIGITAL ADOPTION** and **EXPORT DEPENDENCY** are gaining influence.

***** Example:

Motherson Sumi Systems underwent a DEMERGER and RE-RATING as valuation models began isolating:

- ✓ HIGH-GROWTH GLOBAL AUTO-ELECTRONICS from
- ✓ LEGACY DOMESTIC OPERATIONS
- ✓ This improved **CAPITAL MARKET CLARITY**.

5 ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Cash flow predictability and regulatory environment heavily impact long-term discounted value models.

Example:

Adani Green Energy has been valued richly relative to peers due to:

- ✓ Its ASSET PIPELINE
- ✓ AGGRESSIVE CAPACITY EXPANSION
- ✓ Perceived **POLICY ALIGNMENT**

However, recent MARKET CORRECTIONS introduced VOLATILITY linked to TRANSPARENCY CONCERNS.

6 REAL ESTATE & PROPTECH

Valuation hinges on:

- LAND BANK APPRECIATION
- PROJECT PIPELINE VISIBILITY
- ASSET-LIGHT SCALABILITY via TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

***** Example:

Macrotech Developers (Lodha Group) attracted investor interest post-IPO owing to:

- ✓ A DELEVERAGING STRATEGY
- ✓ LUXURY PROJECT LAUNCHES

Meanwhile, newer **PropTech startups** like **NoBroker** command **PREMIUM VALUATIONS** for: **TECH-ENABLED DISRUPTION** of traditional brokerage models — despite **THIN OPERATING MARGINS**.

From Pitch Decks to Pre-IPO

HOW STARTUPS ARE VALUED AT EVERY
STAGE



Funding Round Matrix: Snapshot

Stage	Typical Valuation (India)	Investor Lens	Primary Focus	Known Examples
Pre-Seed	₹1–5 Cr	Vision, TAM, MVP concept	Idea, founder strength	Zepto (early), Agnikul
Seed	₹5–15 Cr	Product feasibility, user interest	MVP, early traction	Jar, BluSmart
Series A	₹25–100 Cr	Retention, CAC/LTV, revenue model	Product-market fit, GTM clarity	Razorpay, Ather Energy
Series B	₹100–400 Cr	Unit economics, burn rate, team scale	Revenue growth, ops scalability	Dunzo, Teachmint
Series C	₹500 Cr– 1,500 Cr	Market share, margin trends, brand power	Market leadership, expansion	Lenskart, Cars24
Series D	₹2,000 Cr+	Pre-IPO metrics, profitability, IPO path	Global scale, exit strategy	OYO, Swiggy, Meesho



BRIEF NOTES PER STAGE

PRE-SEED

Purely **POTENTIAL-BASED**. *No revenue or market validation* required.

ANGEL INVESTORS or ACCELERATORS lead.

Valuation is often NARRATIVE-DRIVEN and HIGHLY NEGOTIABLE.

SERIES A

The "PROOF OF CONCEPT" round.

REVENUE expected, **RETENTION** and **CAC/LTV** scrutinized.

Valuation backed by **VC Method** or **Forward-looking DCF.**

SEED

MVP tested. EARLY ADOPTERS present.

Investors assess **TEAM'S ABILITY** to execute and learn.

Valuation often uses **SCORECARD** or **RISK FACTOR METHODS**.

SERIES B

SCALING OPERATIONS, EXPANDING TEAMS.

REVENUE MODELS are being refined.

Valuation aligns with MARKET COMPS, especially in similar verticals.

SERIES C

EXPANSION, ACQUISITIONS, or new markets.

Measurable **BRAND IMPACT** and **RECURRING REVENUE** base.

Valuation Anchored in UNIT ECONOMICS and EXIT VISIBILITY.

SERIES D

Strategic moves: **PRE-IPO PREP**, **SECONDARY LIQUIDITY**, or **GLOBAL PLAY**.

PROFITABILITY under the lens.

Often faces **DOWN-ROUND PRESSURE** if growth tapers.

RECENT VALUATION EVENTS & INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS



VALUATION REALIGNMENT: GLOBAL TRENDS RESHAPING CAPITAL EXPECTATIONS

- MACRO TIGHTENING: Rates up, valuations down -
 - SENTIMENT SHIFT: Profit over growth -
 - MARKET RESET: Broad valuation drop -

NVIDIA — SURPASSING \$3 TRILLION IN MARKET CAP

- JUNE 2024: NVIDIA became the world's *Most Valuable Company*.
- \$3.01T VALUATION: Surpassed *Apple* and *Microsoft*.
- AI EDGE: Strategic lead in *AI* Infrastructure drove the surge.
- MID-2022: Klarna *Slashed* its valuation in a *Funding Round*.
- $$45.6B \rightarrow $6.7B$: An $\sim 85\%$ *Drop* despite *Strong Revenue*.
- INVESTOR SHIFT: Focus moved to Profitability Over Hyper-growth.

KLARNA
(SWEDEN) — ONE
OF THE LARGEST
GLOBAL DOWNROUNDS

RECENT VALUATION EVENTS & INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS



INVESTOR FOCUS: SHIFTING PRIORITIES ACROSS INDUSTRIES

- CAPITAL SELECTIVITY: Flight to fundamentals –

- SECTOR DIVERGENCE: Tech under pressure, energy resilient -

- PRIVATE MARKETS: Compressed multiples, longer exits -

STRIPE, REDDIT, AND LATESTAGE STARTUPS

- 2023–2024: Stripe and Reddit faced *valuation* resets pre- and post-public listing.
- $\$95B \rightarrow \$50B$ (STRIPE); \$6.5B IPO (Reddit): Both below earlier expectations.
- MARKET SIGNAL: Public investors now prioritize cash flow and sustainable growth.
- **2023–2024:** SoftBank *marked down* multiple portfolio startups.
- OYO: \$10B → \$2.7B; PharmEasy: \$5.6B → \$2.5B: Ola Electric & *Unacademy* also hit.
- **FOCUS SHIFT**: Scrutiny on *unit economics* and *monetisation*.

SOFTBANK
VISION FUND:
PORTFOLIO
REVALUATION



CLOSING NOTE

VALUATION IS MORE THAN A NUMBER—IT'S STRATEGY IN MOTION

In a world shaped by CAPITAL DISCIPLINE, DIGITAL DISRUPTION, and MACROECONOMIC HEADWINDS, valuation has become a strategic cornerstone—NOT A COMPLIANCE CHECKBOX.

As we've explored in this edition, VALUATION FRAMEWORKS NOW EXTEND FAR BEYOND TRANSACTION PRICING.

They influence:

- how **businesses** are built,
- how investors engage, and
- how long-term value is realized and communicated.

Valuation is not just about what your business is worth today—it's about the story you're telling for tomorrow.

From EARLY-STAGE STARTUPS raising their first round to GLOBAL COMPANIES preparing for IPO or STRATEGIC DIVESTITURES, valuation is embedded in nearly every critical decision.

Its ACCURACY, DEFENSIBILITY, and NARRATIVE ALIGNMENT can either:

- UNLOCK FUNDING,
- SUPPORT STRATEGIC PIVOTS, or
- EXPOSE RISK.

P.S.: We hope this edition of *Valuation Decoded* equips you to read, question, and shape that story better.

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THANK YOU..!!

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