

## ***A Significant Role of Entrepreneurship in the Socio-Economic Development of Rural People in Assam***

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### ***Abstract***

*This report attempts to offer a general outline of the contributions that rural women of Assam are making towards social and economic development. The vital role of women in helping to meet the millennium development objectives is among the crucial issues that must be confronted. To do this, we must encourage women to engage in social and economic activities on a constant basis. Practically, the issue has been rendered immaterial since women are enslaved by societal discriminations such as gender inequality, as well as by a lack of education, domestic violence, and other other issues. In order to enhance the socioeconomic position of rural women, numerous programmes have been implemented by the government. However, to successfully implement these plans, society will need to completely modify its views on what is considered normal. Self-help organisations work with rural women to promote education and entrepreneurial transformation, and such changes are more likely to occur when women are aware of these options. Being self-sufficient and monetarily independent permits them to run their own business.*

***Keywords:*** *Socio-Economic Development, Self-Help Groups, Women Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment, Rural People*

## INTRODUCTION

In this instance, we are defining socio-economic in the broadest sense as how economic activities are influenced by social issues. It is an allusion to the societal and economic forces that impact the environment (Szirma, 2015). Our manner of living is determined by a combination of social and economic elements such as money, education, and job. Socio-economic growth helps improve our quality of life, lays the foundation for a robust level of living, and opens us a variety of employment opportunities. It is important for society as a whole to be involved. To help accelerate progress in areas like agriculture, education, gender equality, healthcare, and economic growth, rural women may function as a catalyst.

Today's Globalized world recognises the vital importance of women to the global process of development. Women from all walks of life have a valuable role to play in helping the overall health of the country. More especially, to improve the development process, the improvements must originate from the grassroots level. When considering the rural women as a group, they are important actors in socio-economic development. While completing their daily responsibilities, rural women

often play several roles in the social and economic fabric of their communities. However, they have given an important contribution, but it does not receive the credit it deserves because of societal constraints that have existed for millennia. They are unable of making a significant contribution since they are deprived of education, healthcare, financial freedom, decision-making authority, political engagement, and exposure (Das and Mishra, 2018).

A dramatic step towards improving the socio-economic situation of rural communities may be made by increasing the number of women who are engaged in entrepreneurship. Women, on the whole, have excellent managerial abilities, the ability to devote themselves to a project, and the passion to make people happy. "Do not constrict! And avoid non-permitted attachments." (Horridoss & Frederick, 2009) There are several characteristics including literacy, age, and marital status that impact a person's willingness to take risk, yet those same variables are important to launching a successful business (Seemaprakalpa, 2013).



Figure 1: Timmons Model of Entrepreneurship cycle (Wen and Chen, 2007)

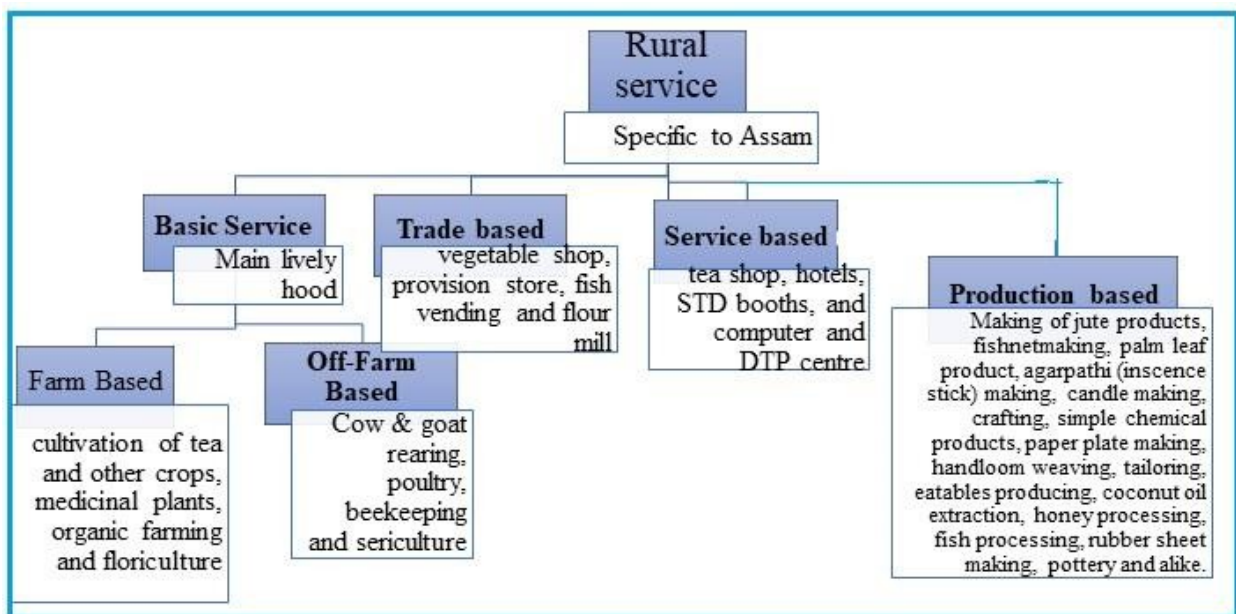


Figure 2: Entrepreneurship in rural Assam (Das and Mishra, 2018)

According to Timmons' model, three significant influences have the capacity to determine the long-term viability of an organisation. These are opportunities, which require more consideration in order to determine whether they have real potential. They must be included into a

functioning team. Additionally, the overall level of the team's creativity and resources is crucial. When seen in this light, these three issues must be appropriately balanced by the entrepreneur for the success of a business. Due to the concentration of agriculture in rural

regions, their resources are predominantly agricultural in orientation. In figure 2, you can see many chances for entrepreneurship in rural locations. This is based on the fact that the villagers have enough of room for a small-scale Enterprise operation. But if you are provided with enough facilities, personnel, and guidance, you may grow your business to a much larger size. Here is a map that represents all of the numerous options available to women.

The female enterprise of Assam proceeded to identify a possible course for further growth, all while remaining one of the few well-established women in the field.

### **1. Objectives of the study**

Following are the objectives for which the study has been carried out:

- To identify the role of rural women of Assam in socio- economic development
- The importance of entrepreneurship in upliftment the status of rural women
- To find out the motivational factors that persuade these women to become entrepreneurs.
- To provide the challenges faced
- To summarize the suitable prospectus for future improvement.

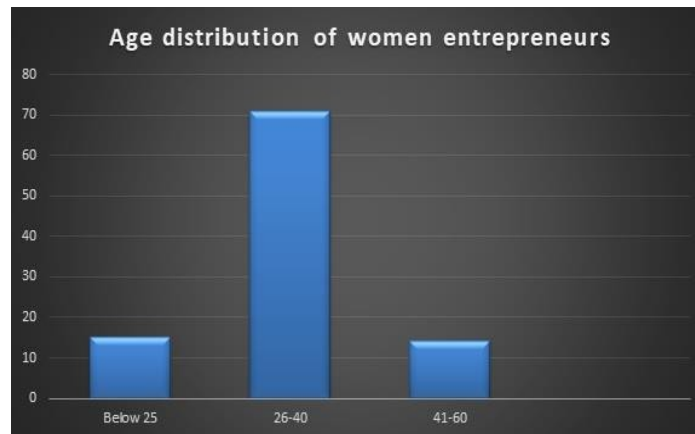
### **2. Status of rural women of Assam in**

#### **socio-economic development:**

In relation to the general condition of rural women in India, the situation of rural women in Assam is better than for other rural women in the country. However, they are plagued with issues of gender parity, domestic violence, illiteracy, poor nutrition, and many other problems. Due to differing resources, however, women will contribute more. Unfortunately, though, the society is not gender neutral. Although women are equal to men in many ways, there are still substantial inequities, resulting in lower involvement of women in the process of development. The sex ratio is another another measure of growth. In this section, likewise, the numbers are inadequate. Another influential aspect in the growth of an area is education. Despite significant efforts like the Government's plan to make primary education available to all by mandating universalization, "Beti bachao, beti padhao" initiatives like as the increased female enrollment in primary schools, which boast an overall enrollment percentage of fifty percent. Another surge in female school dropout rates has also been seen. In Assam, due to the prevalence of the agricultural economy, women's engagement in the primary sector is greater. But, because of the disparity in the division of labour, they aren't reaping the

benefits of that division. Women living in rural areas do not have any financial autonomy, which inhibits their engagement in self-employment. While there have been many initiatives to promote self-employment in rural areas,

women have been left behind. Bivariate relations such as age, education, family size, and yearly income average go a long way toward defining income as a metric of the performance of any business (Ram & Chaudhury, 2012).



**Figure 3: Age distribution of Woman involved in Entrepreneurship (Hazarika, 2016)**

Age has an effect on business performance: the older the team members are, the more successful the company will be. The younger generation has a more positive outlook and is willing to embrace change (Borah, 2014). Though the old individual's expertise and skills are less valuable in the long term, their contribution to the success of the business cannot be overlooked. It can be shown in Figure 1 that there are seven distinct age groups of female general entrepreneurs (Hazarika, 2016).

Marrying status – The engagement of women in business also relies on whether

or not they are married. Married women often become involved in the family business when they're unmarried. On the other hand, a young woman's decision to join the firm is strongly determined by her interests and other aspects, including her capacity and the business and cultural context in which she's situated (Giarratano, 2016).

Caste profile: For several decades, the caste of a society serves as a significant predictor of the employment and social behaviour of the individual. A common tradition is still alive today that holds that a certain caste has their eyes focused on a

certain enterprise that has been in operation for quite some time.

Entrepreneurship is closely related to religion; religion of the entrepreneurs has an impact on a business's success. Some religious beliefs place limitations on the movement of women (Borah, 2014).

A business person must have a firm grasp of how to conduct their company's many functions and strategies if they are to make good decisions and survive. The amount of education assists entrepreneurs in locating new ideas, as well as ideas to improve the company, and bringing these ideas to life on their firms. Because the literacy rate is strongly related to work, the employment rate of women in urban areas is at a greater rate. Cities where the literacy rate is greater record a higher rate of employment. Assam's districts located in the north have a greater literacy rate, which suggests that there is a larger labour engagement of women in those areas. Additionally, rural communities with tea plantations have a greater proportion of female employment involvement. In fact, it has been proven that the tea garden is the only area in which women have greater positions than men (Saha et al., 2019). By going to school, women entrepreneurs are better equipped to go after new

possibilities and have a better understanding of many avenues open to them. In the modern world, problems faced by women with regard to communication are also diminished by education.

Family structure, especially the parents' parenting styles, is significantly correlated with the child's personality and overall success. This is should be taken to mean joint type or nuclear type. It is often assumed that a woman from a nuclear family will start a business because she is able to support herself. In contrast, while joint family systems give moral and financial support to allow a person to establish entrepreneurial capacity, these systems do not provide self-sufficiency.

For general purposes, it may be stated that women's engagement in entrepreneurship may be summed under five headings as shown in Fig. 4. (Dutta, 2014). The first group covers persons who become entrepreneurs because of a financial need. Another group of women is the one who has a personal or familial history that influences them to begin an enterprise, for example, via an interest in a trade or an active pursuit of a talent those who are only trying to show their self-worth, including those in the third category. Finally, we have the fourth type of women,

which has entrepreneurial inclinations owing to specific personality qualities, such as the need for power and influence, the need for accomplishment, etc. Women who engage in this activity as a pastime or in order to use spare time will make extra cash.

The largest impediment that stands in the way of starting up an enterprise in rural regions is the lack of financial backing (Das, 2000). It is important that the equipment is purchased by the women, but the cost cannot be paid by them alone. This applies to rural women, who may not be aware of all the available government incentives. It is time-consuming and complex to get it, so do not expect quick results. It has also been noted that a lack of understanding in the field of technology and marketing is another big restriction. Additionally, there are issues with the availability of adequate transportation, which makes it difficult to source raw materials and to complete the various stages of production and sale. A major issue that the financier refuses to deal with is the fact that the clients cannot buy property that is solely in their name.

A strong confidence in it another challenge women entrepreneurs must overcome is balancing their personal and professional

duties. Even though they are ready to conduct the business, they have a heavy family burden that is limiting their progress.

Some of the reasons women give for why they act as managers in the business is due to fears of sexual harassment. Although there are several reports saying that the position of women in the North-east is better than in other regions, none of them is a guarantee. It is believed to be the case, as it is stated that dowry systems like these are not in use here. In addition, certain tribal societies have matriarchal social structure, which results in better treatment of women. But, on the other hand, crime statistics show a different image. Studies have shown that women who live in rural areas are more vulnerable to violence such domestic abuse and marital rape. In the majority of the cases, the crime was connected to victims who had little or no knowledge about prevention or about risks to personal safety. Due to their illiteracy, individuals are fearful of breaking societal taboos and therefore they do not report these offences. The victims are negatively impacted by these actions in several ways. As a result, women who have experienced domestic violence have an exceedingly low sense of self-worth, which in turn impairs their general growth. While on the

one hand, the government has set in place several measures to improve the protection of women, on the other, NGO

organizations are adopting measures to raise public awareness of this issue.



*Figure 4: Background of Woman Entrepreneurs (Dutta, 2014)*

### 3. Role of entrepreneurship in socio-economic development:

According to the description provided by the Government, women-owned businesses are defined as those which are held by women, in which a lowest financial interest of 51% of the funds and a 51% allotment of the employment are generated in the company, and for which 51% of the capital is owned by the women (Pathak, 2009). However, it may be difficult to satisfy the second criterion but if it can be done, this will result in an enormous amount of women empowerment.

To improve the nation's overall progress, the 12th Five-Year Plan has chosen to focus on "inclusive growth," which incorporates the contributions of all parts of the society. has the capacity to further

support the economic development of the country, contributing to the growth of small businesses and the creation of jobs for women (Pathak, 2009). These actions, however, are largely focused on cities in Assam and do not appear to be very widespread. Climbing Mount Elgon, in eastern Uganda, in late March offers an unforgettable chance to glimpse the wild tea-berries of the species that yields the Limbu and Bordoloi (2015) illustrates the obstacles encountered by the lady entrepreneurs of Assam.

The women of Assam are involved in agricultural activities alongside their male relatives, who perform various duties on the farm. Rural women have the potential to be entrepreneurs, so excellent possibilities are provided to investigate this potential. by developing the ability of

Assamese women to be entrepreneurial, this would result in a dramatic improvement in the socio-economic condition of Assam and the nation as a whole (Bhagirathi, 2006).

The many activities and experience one gains as an entrepreneur has a very good influence on one's growth as a person. One day, they will no longer be viewed as a marginalized and vulnerable member of society, nor will they be subject to social injustice. As a result, crimes against women are less. The company will receive additional social space and attention.

#### **4. Schemes for promoting women entrepreneurship**

Women empowerment needs to be aggressively pushed forward. Many programmes have been launched by the Indian government. These projects, which vary from community involvement to promoting women's economic empowerment, support and enable women who are interested in starting their own businesses as well as talented female entrepreneurs to grow their skill sets and promote their goods and services.

Lifetime employment and literacy rate are linked, since both help to shape the labour participation rate. In countries where the literacy rate is greater, the female

workforce participation rate is also greater. Therefore, steps must be done to ensure that they are literate. The value of education should be increased among the group to which they belong. Even if they possess their own indigenous knowledge, talents, and capacity to lead corporations, these employees nonetheless exhibit a subordinate attitude because of their lack of education, lack of financial autonomy.

When it comes to using the abilities of rural women, NGOs, self-help groups, and the like play a significant role. In order to raise their entrepreneurial capabilities, rural women might be trained by SHGs on how to increase their capabilities. They would learn more about the many fields in which they may potentially become self-employed, such as cattle raising, mushroom cultivation, and weaving. Training in these areas would assist entrepreneurs learn to make the most of their abilities and be better at running their companies. This would allow them to improve their economic well-being and provide them with self-sufficiency. By doing this, they will be able to solidify their place in the community. Here are some of the several programmes that are designed to help women advance in the business world.

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In the economic sense, advantages are having a better GDP, having a greater number of jobs, using more resources, reducing poverty, improving the standard of life, regional growth that is more equitable, and a more equal distribution of income.

### **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)**

STEP has been managed by the Central Administration of the Ministry of Labor since 1987-88, under the name of 'Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP) Scheme'. The STEP scheme works to offer skills that empower women to find employment as well as to offer competence and skill that enable women to start their own small businesses. The Scheme is meant to help women who are between the ages of 16 and 60, who are residents of every state and territory in the country. Under the Scheme, institutions that are eligible to receive grant money include, but are not limited to, NGOs, the state governments, and the union territories. Assistance from the STEP Scheme will be made available to any sector, and in addition to imparting skills

in employability and entrepreneurship, will be provided to the agricultural, horticultural, food processing, handloom, tailoring, stitching, embroidery, zari, handicrafts, computer and IT-enabled services, and soft skills and skills for the workplace, such as spoken English, gems and jewellery, travel and tourism, hospitality. the industry/sector scheme”

### **Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme**

According to the Budget Speech for the 2017-2018 fiscal year given by the Finance Minister, the establishment of “Mahila Shakti Kendra” (Women's Power Kendra) is aimed at providing “one stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition.

Also, a new sub-scheme, known as Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) is in place, which will begin operations in 2017 and run through 2019, and under which 20,000 women who are most effective in their work are eligible for grants.

Through these avenues, rural women will have more access to the government and its benefits, while at the same time gaining

a better understanding of their roles, the means by which they empower themselves, and the techniques that they use to achieve these ends. Volunteer students will work to instill an appreciation for the importance of voluntary community service and gender equality. These student volunteers will play an important role as "agents of change" that have a significant influence on their neighbourhoods and the nation.

#### **Mahila E-Haat**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development inaugurated "Mahila E-Haat" on March 7th, 2016, which is a multilingual website including information related to women and children. This platform is a direct internet marketing medium utilising new technology for assisting women entrepreneurs, SHGs, and NGOs to showcase their products and services, which are produced, manufactured, or done by them. It is a move in the direction of addressing the hopes and wants of women. It was done to meet the high expectations and needs of women, so they could better implement technology in their organisations to improve business efficiency and aid in making it available to more of the Indian women in the fields of business and NGO/NGO affiliate work.

#### **Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojna**

In simple terms, the objective of the project is to promote the handloom industry that also looks after the weavers' welfare, while at the same time increasing overall productivity in the industry. The proposal of the Prime Minister led to the adoption of DDHPY, which was named after famous social figure, Mr. Deendayal, who devoted most of his life to helping weavers in rural regions. The programme is centralised at the state and county levels, although decentralisation is facilitated at the local government level. The project package scheme for handloom and the Freelance designer scheme are blended to provide a complete project package system known as DDHPY. DDHPY has specific elements of both the handloom project package and freelance designer project package schemes. The financial aid is awarded based on the merit of the project and in proportion to the development that it has made. When speaking about the money needed at the apex level, each of the three entities—the recipient, the State, and the Central government—agrees to follow the parameters as outlined in the programme.

### **NEDFI**

This entity is female-friendly and includes programmes like the Women's Enterprise Development Scheme (WEDS), which promotes women's entrepreneurship, and the Scheme for North-East Handloom and Handicrafts (SNEHH), which supports women's crafts.

the government of Assam, in general, has offered several initiatives to aid in the creation of jobs and new businesses and several other plans including those of the likes of Kalapataru (financing), Chief Minister Self Employment Scheme (stipend during training with travel expenses), CM Special Schemes (power tiller), Handloom and textiles (yarn)

Business banks have established financial capital financing plans to aid in their ability to do business. The Annapurna Scheme. Under this programme, the Indian government provides women company owners in the food catering industry with loans ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

### **Mudra Yojana Scheme for Women**

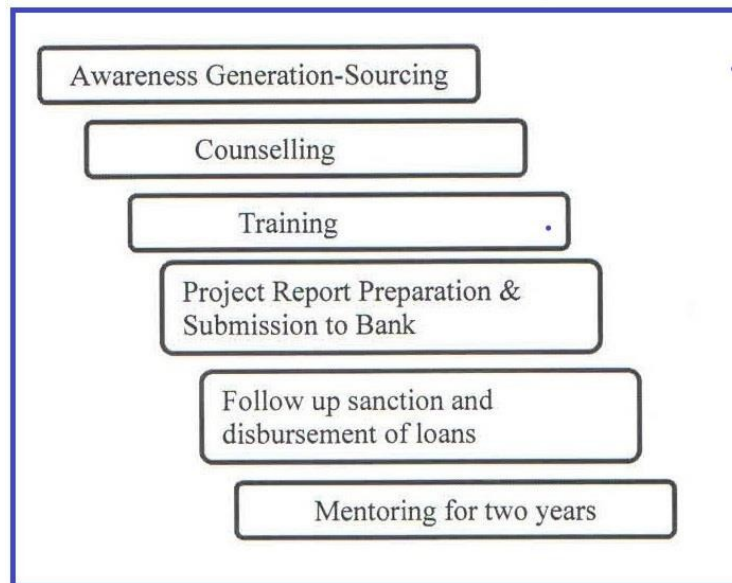
Small business owners and female entrepreneurs alike can benefit from this basic business structure. The Mudra

Yojana offers loans offered by nationalised banks under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. This loan may be utilised to start up a beauty parlour, a tutoring centre, a tailoring workshop, etc. Under this plan, loans ranging from 50,000 rupees to 50 lakh rupees are issued.

### **Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs**

The Stree Shakti Package is an SBI-run initiative aimed at helping women and girls start their own businesses by granting a few incentives. This plan is designed for women who have a majority ownership stake (i.e., at least 50 percent) in a small firm.

It is important for women to get the information and skills they need to advance in the world of business. Despite the involvement of women in STEM professions, their engagement has remained limited. This meant that the government planned to create a supernumerary quota for women in Indian Institute of Technology programmes in order to expand their participation in technical education.



**Figure 5: Steps for Assam Entrepreneurship Promotion**

Collective action on the part of the government, social organisations, and financial institutions are all required to help women business owners to grow. Various programmes have been put in place by the government and financial institutions to aid the women entrepreneurs. However, the most important thing to do is to raise awareness of these programmes. Doing so will enable and encourage women to have a more entrepreneurial mindset. The points mentioned in Figure 5 have been acknowledged by the Assam Entrepreneurship Promotion Organization as being significant toward the growth of an enterprise.

## CONCLUSION

Currently, women no longer are constrained to the stereotypical positions

they are expected to occupy. They are seeking new employment options, and they're asking to have the same amount of responsibility as males. However, rural women are an exception to this rule. Despite being still much behind their urban colleagues, they have caught up. Due to the prior prevalence of social ills such as gender inequality, patriarchy, female illiteracy, and in rural regions, women are currently assigned a lower place in society. However, the status of these problems may be addressed if the correct policies are applied. Finally, to truly realise the scheme's important role for NGOs and SHGs, appropriate implementation is crucial. They may both train and give them with prospects of self-employment. This would provide an opportunity for rural women to be involved in socioeconomic development.

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