

Entrepreneurial Well-being and Inclusive Growth: A Secondary Review of Evidence from Assam

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Abstract—Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as an important driver of inclusive growth, particularly through the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector. In recent years, entrepreneurial well-being has emerged as a crucial factor influencing enterprise sustainability and development outcomes. This study examines the role of MSMEs in promoting inclusive growth in Assam and analyzes the linkage between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth outcomes using secondary evidence. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based on data drawn from government reports, MSME publications, national surveys, and recent empirical studies. The findings indicate that MSMEs contribute significantly to inclusive growth through employment generation, livelihood creation, and regional economic participation. Further, factors such as access to finance, income stability, and business resilience enhance entrepreneurial well-being, which in turn strengthens enterprise sustainability and inclusive growth processes. The study highlights the importance of integrating entrepreneurial well-being into MSME and regional development policies to foster inclusive economic development in Assam.

Index Terms—Entrepreneurial well-being, MSME development, Inclusive growth, Enterprise sustainability

I. Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged that entrepreneurship is the driving factor behind regional development, job creation, and boost to the economy, especially in nations that are emerging. However, in recent years, the discussion about entrepreneurship has broadened to incorporate the idea of entrepreneurial well-being in addition to conventional performance indicators like profitability and firm development. The ability of entrepreneurs to maintain business operations while sustaining their personal and professional quality of life is apparent in their entrepreneurial well-being that involves the economic, psychological, and interpersonal facets of their existence. This change in approach is in accordance with the emerging concept of inclusive growth, which emphasizes equal opportunities and better living conditions for a variety of social groups in addition to economic advancement.

Inclusive growth has emerged as a primary policy goal in India, particularly in areas marked by structural limitations, insufficient industrialization, and socio-economic inequalities. Assam, located in India's North-Eastern region, provides a distinctive developmental atmosphere in which Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in livelihood generation, local employment and regional economic integration. Despite major governmental interventions aimed at supporting entrepreneurship and MSME growth, entrepreneurs in Assam continue to encounter obstacles such as access to capital, infrastructure shortfalls, market connectivity, regulatory difficulties, and business uncertainty. These difficulties have a direct impact on entrepreneurial well-being, as well as consequently, the inclusiveness, and sustainability of regional growth.

While there is a considerable corpus of literature on entrepreneurship and MSME achievement throughout Assam, entrepreneurial well-being has received comparatively little attention as an

interface between business creation and inclusive growth. Existing studies frequently focuses on output-oriented outcomes such as job creation and revenue generation, ignoring the well-being conditions in which entrepreneurs work. However, emerging data suggests that entrepreneurs with greater levels of well-being are more resilient, innovative, and capable of sustaining businesses that make a substantial contribution to inclusive economic development.

Within this background, the current study conducts a secondary assessment of data on entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth in Assam. The study aims to identify the significant factors of entrepreneurial well-being and its implications for inclusive growth outcomes by integrating ideas from government publications, policy papers, national surveys, and previous empirical research. The study adds to the literature by bringing entrepreneurial well-being into regional development discourse and emphasizing the importance of well-being oriented policy frameworks in MSME development. Such a strategy is especially important in Assam, where entrepreneurship is not just an economic activity, but also a key tool for social inclusion and balanced regional progress.

II. Objectives of the study

- To examine the role of MSMEs in promoting inclusive growth in Assam based on secondary evidence.
- To analyze the linkage between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth outcomes in the state.
- To derive policy implications for integrating entrepreneurial well-being into MSME and regional development strategies in Assam.

III. Review of Literature

Over the past decade, research on entrepreneurial well-being has gained significant momentum within entrepreneurship studies, reflecting a shift from traditional economic performance a shift metrics to more holistic indicators that include psychological, social, and subjective dimensions of entrepreneurs' lives. Recent literature underscore the complex interplay between entrepreneurial well-being, enterprises sustainability, and broader socio-economic outcomes.

A recent scoping review by Barbosa et al. (2024) synthesizes the main theories and trends in entrepreneurial well-being research, identifying core theoretical frameworks such as the job-demand-resources model, self-efficacy perspectives, and stress models that are frequently used to explain well-being outcomes among entrepreneurs. The review also highlights that the field is expanding rapidly but remains limited in studies from developing economies where contextual factors are distinctly different compared to developed contexts.

Complementing this bibliometric overview, Casanova et al. (2025) provide a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial well-being research landscape, showing that psychological constructs such as autonomy, life satisfaction, and emotional well-being are central to the field. This study identifies two dominant narratives in entrepreneurial well-being research-hedonic well-being focused on positive emotional states, and eudaimonic well-being emphasizing purposeful engagement and personal growth. The authors also note a research bias towards developed nations, suggesting an emerging need for studies from regions like South Asia.

In the broader entrepreneurship domain, studies increasingly link well-being with economic and social outcomes. For example, Li et al. (2025) explored connections between entrepreneurial motivation, mental well-being and business performance among women entrepreneurs in China. Their findings indicate that mental well-being positively mediates entrepreneurial performance; especially in contexts with strong social capital, highlighting how psychological and social factors jointly influence entrepreneurial success.

Although not focused exclusively on well-being, recent research on MSMEs and inclusive growth underscores the economic contribution of MSMEs to employment and regional development. Government reports such as the Ministry of MSME Annual Report 2023-24 provide evidence that MSMEs are integral to economic diversification, employment generation, and regional inclusive industrial development in India. These contributions link indirectly to entrepreneurial well-being by shaping access to income and institutional support.

Several empirical studies in the Indian context have started to consider entrepreneurial conditions and socio-economic dynamics that influence MSME outcomes. Deepika (2025) highlights how factors such as financial access, market competitiveness, and institutional challenges affect MSME growth and sustainability, which in turn can shape the subjective well-being of entrepreneurs. Although these studies emphasize structural and economic determinants, they do not directly measure or link to well-being outcomes, suggesting a conceptual shortfall in connecting entrepreneurial conditions with subjective quality-of-life indicators.

Regional studies focusing on the Northeast, including investigations into MSME contributions to employment and entrepreneurship growth, have underscored the role of MSME in livelihood expansion and local economic vitality. Research in Dimapur, Nagaland, finds that MSMEs contribute significantly to poverty alleviation and regional balances, reflecting inclusive growth dynamics at the regional level. However, there remains limited evidence on well-being outcomes for entrepreneurs in these regions, indicating a gap between structural contributions and individual subjective experiences of well-being.

Despite the aforementioned developments, a survey of recent empirical research reveals that few studies specifically look at the relationship between inclusive growth and entrepreneurial well-being, especially in the Indian and Northeast regional contexts. The majority of current research either concentrates on MSMEs' macroeconomic contributions or examines well-being in general entrepreneurial contexts without relating it to inclusive growth measures (e.g., employment equity, participation of underrepresented groups, and regional inequities). This disparity is especially noticeable in developing nations, where entrepreneurial experiences are shaped differently than in industrialized settings due to socio-economic institutions influence entrepreneurial experiences differently than in industrialized settings, this disparity is especially noticeable.

In summary, while the literature has advanced theoretical and conceptual understanding of entrepreneurial well-being, especially through recent and theoretical reviews, there is a notable lack of empirical studies that directly link entrepreneurial well-being with inclusive growth outcomes in specific regional contexts such as Assam. Most research either focuses on general MSME contributions to economic development or examines well-being in isolation from inclusive growth indicators. Thus, a clear gap exists in integrating psychological and socio-economic dimensions of entrepreneurial well-being with inclusive growth frameworks, especially using evidence from developing regions like Assam.

IV. Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based entirely on secondary data. The study examines the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in promoting inclusive growth in Assam, analyzes the linkage between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth outcomes, and derives policy implications for integrating entrepreneurial well-being into MSME and regional development strategies.

Sources of Data

Secondary data have been collected from various published and authenticated sources for the study, including:

- Annual Reports of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India;
- MSME Census and Udyam Registration statistics;
- Economic Survey of Assam and state government policy documents;
- Reports and publications of Reserve Bank of India(RBI) related to MSME finance;
- National Surveys such as the National Sample Survey (NSS) and Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS);
- Various peer-reviewed research articles published in reputed academic journals have been examined to derive theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and conceptual linkages between entrepreneurship, well-being, and inclusive development.

Method of Data Collection

Secondary data were collected through a systematic review of published reports, databases and academic literature. Relevant documents and datasets were identified based on their relevance to MSME development, entrepreneurial well-being, and inclusive growth in Assam. Data were compiled, organized, and analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis techniques to derive meaningful insights and policy implications.

Rationale of selection of this study

The growing emphasis on inclusive growth and sustainable development has expanded the idea of entrepreneurship beyond economic success to include the well-being of entrepreneurs. While Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs) are widely recognized as engines of employment and regional development, limited scholarly attention has been given to the role of entrepreneurial well-being in strengthening inclusive growth processes, particularly in developing and region-specific contexts. Assam presents a development landscape where MSMEs contribute significantly to livelihood generation, yet entrepreneurs face persistent challenges related to financial access, market uncertainty, and institutional support. Despite extensive policy initiatives aimed at MSME promotion, the integration of well-being dimensions into entrepreneurship and regional development strategies remains underexplored.

V. Analysis and Discussion

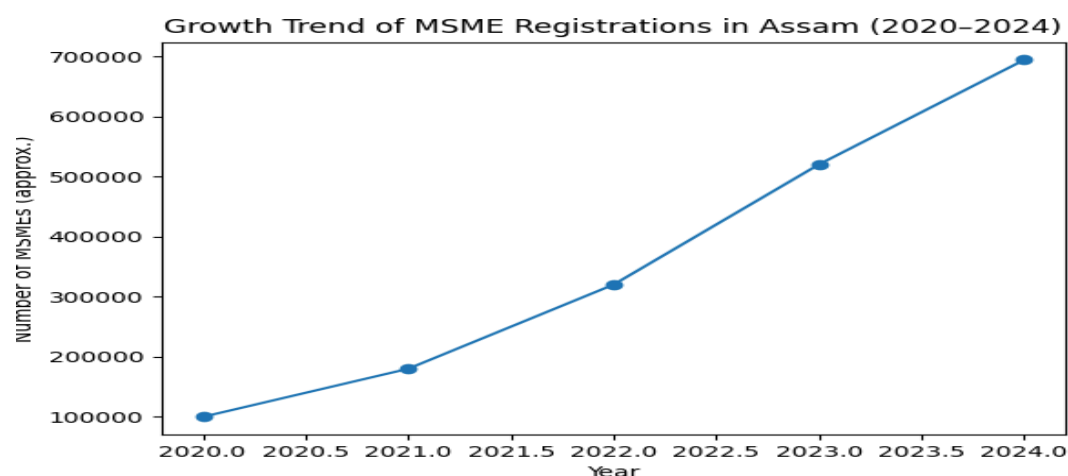
The present study examines the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in promoting inclusive growth in Assam, explores the linkage between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth outcomes, and draws policy implications for integrating well-being into MSME and regional development.

Role of MSMEs in Promoting Inclusive Growth in Assam

The MSME sector is widely recognized as a significant contributor to India's overall economic structure, accounting for about 31.1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing over 328.2 million people, making it the second-largest employment source after agriculture. These national trends contextualize the Assam experience, where MSMEs have become central to regional economic inclusion. It the second-largest employment source after agriculture. Secondary data indicate that between 2020 and early 2025, Assam registered approximately 6.94 lakh MSMEs, which collectively generated over 25 lakh jobs (Table 1). Such figures underscore the

sector's role in expanding livelihood opportunities beyond metropolitan centers and directly supporting inclusive growth through income creation and broadening economic participation.

Table 1: Growth Trend of Registration of MSMEs in Assam (2020-24)



Source: Compiled by the author based on secondary data

The review of secondary evidence indicates that MSMEs play a significant role in promoting inclusive growth in Assam. Data from MSME reports and state economic surveys reveal that MSMEs contribute substantially to employment generation, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, thereby supporting livelihood creation and income opportunities for diverse socio-economic groups. The sector has also facilitated regional economic participation by encouraging small-scale entrepreneurship and reducing dependence on large industries. The findings suggest that the expansion of MSMEs has supported inclusive growth by enabling self-employment, enhancing local economic activity, and improving access to income-generating across different regions of the state.

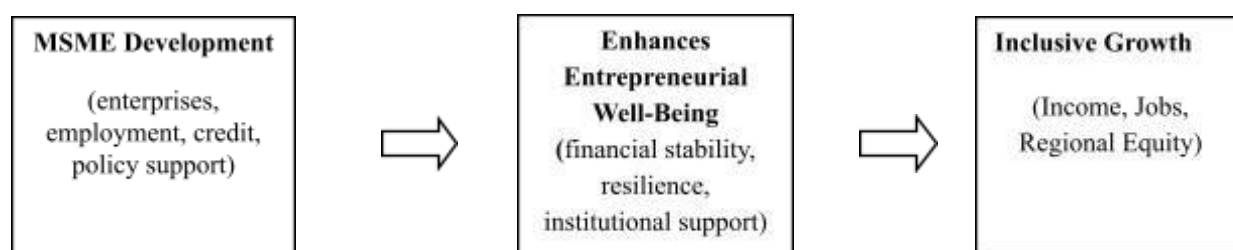
Further, the review shows that the scale and spread of MSMEs in Assam contribute to regional inclusion. According to Udyam registration data, the state's MSME units include a substantial number of micro enterprises, which historically play a critical role in absorbing semi-skilled and unskilled labour, fostering grassroots entrepreneurship, and narrowing rural-urban economic disparities. Moreover, recent state initiatives have targeted increased financial access to small enterprises through schemes that extended credit support amounting to 80,000 crore between 2022 and 2025 and bolstered employment creation, with the highest job generation in 2024 at 7, 26,858 jobs. Such targeted support aligns with inclusive growth principles by empowering diverse socio-economic groups, including youth and marginalized populations.

Linkage between Entrepreneurial Well-being and Inclusive Outcomes

The analysis of secondary literature highlights a clear linkage between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth outcomes in Assam. Studies indicate that factors such as access to institutional finance, income, stability, policy support, and business resilience positively influence entrepreneurial well-being. Improved well-being enables entrepreneurs to sustain business operations, maintain employment levels, and engage more effectively in economic activities. The findings suggest that entrepreneurs experiencing better well-being are more likely to contribute to enterprise continuity

and local economic participation, which in turn strengthens inclusive growth processes. Conversely, challenges such as financial stress and institutional constraints adversely affect entrepreneurial well-being and limit the inclusive impact of MSMEs. Secondary studies show that enhanced credit flow, institutional interventions, and regulatory simplifications correlate with improved business continuity and performance. For example, increased outstanding credit to the micro and small enterprise sector in Assam rose by 22%, with total credit rising from approximately Rs 20,865 crore to Rs 29,402 crore between 2022-23 and 2023-24, indicating improved financial conditions for small entrepreneurs. These improvements in financial access can mitigate stress and uncertainty among entrepreneurs, contributing positively to their economic security and subjective well-being factors which literature suggests are crucial for sustained enterprise activity and fuller participation in inclusive outcomes. Beyond purely financial aspects, secondary reports highlight the sector's role in fostering equitable participation among women entrepreneurs. Government initiatives such as targeted grants under the *Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan*, which disbursed **Rs 18.37 crore to 18,370 women entrepreneurs**, demonstrate efforts to enhance access to entrepreneurial opportunities. Such interventions not only contribute to economic inclusion but also likely influence the well-being dimensions of entrepreneurs by increasing access to seed capital and training, which can enhance confidence, business survival prospects, and long-term economic participation.

Table 2: Conceptual framework linking MSME development, entrepreneurial well-being, and inclusive growth.



Source: Developed by the author based on review of literature.

Policy Implications for Integrating Entrepreneurial Well-being into Development Strategies

The synthesis of policy documents and empirical evidence reveals that existing MSMS and regional development policies in Assam primarily focus on enterprise creation and economic output, with limited emphasis on entrepreneurial well-being. The results indicate that integrating well-being considerations – such as financial security, institutional support, and business sustainability-into MSME policies can enhance the effectiveness of inclusive growth strategies. The findings underscore the importance of adopting a well-being-oriented approach to MSME development to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic outcomes. The evidence further reveals that MSME growth in Assam is complemented by broader policy frameworks focused on investment and industrial development, such as Advantage Assam 2.0, which bolsters industrial infrastructure and incentivizes enterprise growth. These structural enhancements support entrepreneurial activity by improving market access, infrastructure and formal sector integration-factors associated in the literature with greater enterprise resilience and well-being.

Overall Impact of the Findings

Overall, the results demonstrate that MSMEs contribute meaningfully to inclusive growth in Assam and that entrepreneurial well-being plays a crucial role in enhancing this contribution. The study highlights that inclusive growth is strengthened when MSME development is supported by policies that address both economic and well-being dimensions of entrepreneurship. These findings provide a foundation for reorienting MSME and regional development strategies towards a more inclusive and well-being-centric framework. Taken together, the analysis confirms that MSMEs significantly contribute to inclusive growth in Assam through employment generation, income creation and expanded regional participation. It also underscores that factor influencing entrepreneurial well-being-including financial access, institutional support, and targeted policy interventions-play a pivotal role in strengthening the sustainable contribution of MSMEs to inclusive development. These interconnections highlight the importance of designing policies that integrate well-being considerations into MSME and regional development strategies to maximize inclusive growth outcomes in Assam.

VI. Conclusion and Implications

The present study examined the contribution of MSMEs to inclusive growth in Assam, explored the relationship between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive development outcomes, and derived policy implications using secondary evidence. The findings indicate that MSMEs constitute a significant driver of Assam's regional economy through employment generation, livelihood creation, and income diversification, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. The sector has expanded economic participation among youth, women, and small entrepreneurs, thereby strengthening the inclusiveness of growth. This study offers several important implications for policy, practice, and research. From a policy perspective, there is a need to integrate well-being indicators- such as financial security, access to institutional support and business resilience-into MSME development frameworks.

From a practical standpoint, development agencies and financial institutions should design support mechanisms that address not only capital requirements but also the psychological and operational challenges faced by entrepreneurs. Holistic support systems can strengthen confidence, improve decision-making, and foster long-term business stability.

From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the emerging discourse on well-being-oriented entrepreneurship by demonstrating the conceptual linkage between entrepreneurial well-being and inclusive growth. It also highlights the need for future empirical research using primary data to measure well-being indicators and assess their direct impact on enterprise performance and regional development outcomes.

Taken together, the study concludes that inclusive growth in Assam requires a shift from a purely output-oriented MSME policy framework towards a more human-centric and sustainability-oriented approach. Enhancing entrepreneurial well-being is not merely a social objective but an economic necessity for ensuring long-term enterprise resilience and equitable development.

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