



Received: 09-07-2024
Accepted: 19-08-2024

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Green Enterprises through Home-based Enterprises in the Sonitpur District of Assam

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2024.4.4.3175>

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Abstract

Our survival is largely dependent on the environment, which is also influenced by the work we do for a living. The business and the environment should go hand in hand with industrialization. In order to succeed in the domains of industrialization and the environment, we must embrace green technologies that guide us towards sustainable development. Environmental issues like pollution, global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, climate change, and other natural disasters brought on by ecosystem disruption give rise to the idea of the "green entrepreneur." Moreover, customers are becoming more conscious towards eco-friendly or green products due to the growing awareness of environmental issues. Thus, the growth of the green market is a result of consumer inclination. The term "Green Entrepreneurship" was first used by Gustav Berle in 1991 in his book "The Green Entrepreneur: Business Opportunities That Can Save the Earth and Make You Money." Home-

based Enterprises (HBEs) help to show the local talent with available local resources at a very minimum cost of capital. These enterprises belong to the micro-enterprise category. The HBEs generate employment opportunities and promote self-employment by boosting entrepreneurial activities. Generally, HBEs are run by family members from their homes to meet local requirements. The government of India included 112 types of home-based/service industries and 9 special types of home-based industries for Rural India under the list of Group-A and Group-A (1) respectively in the Master Plan 2021. These enterprises are environment friends since they are established along with the home. This paper is focused on how some home-based enterprises practice green entrepreneurship in the region. A field study was also conducted, with a sample of 50 units in the district by applying the judgment sampling method.

Keywords: Green Economy, Green Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development, Home-based Enterprises, Household Industries

1. Introduction

There is no other planet except the one we live on; therefore, as humans, it is critical that we save our planet. The most important challenges of today are environmental protection and ensuring that future generations inherit a clean environment from us. It is critical for the development of green entrepreneurship that society's attitudes towards nature and green production evolve and are promoted on a daily basis. Furthermore, as people become more aware of environmental issues, they are becoming more inclined to buy eco-friendly or green products. This will naturally highlight the importance of critical issues like energy and environmental conservation, increased recycling, promoting reusability, and economic development. Green entrepreneurship promotes green innovation and new product development to meet consumer demands and contribute to sustainable development over time. Green Entrepreneurs prioritise innovation and sustainability, creating a competitive advantage by offering environmentally friendly products and services. We live in a dynamic world in which things can change in the blink of an eye. Change is a natural phenomenon which occurs anywhere. Consumer behaviours are evolving alongside environmental changes. Due to a paradigm shift towards green production and green consumption over the past few decades, Indian markets are also reacting to the global phenomenon of climate change. Indian consumers' needs, wants, and preferences are changing in favour of goods and services that are ecologically friendly. This shift could be brought about by rising per capita income, changing consumer awareness of environmental issues, and altered lifestyles. India's green markets have emerged as a result of shifting consumption patterns. Green markets give business owners the chance to adapt to the shifting needs of their clientele by creating eco-friendly concepts, products, processes, and creative marketing strategies.

According to Bocken *et al.* (2014) and Elkington (1997), the sustainability concept encompasses three dimensions in general: environmental, social, and economic. Over the past century, there has been significant economic growth and advancement in human development, but basic societal issues like population expansion, environmental degradation, and climate change are getting worse. Therefore, in order to "meet the needs of current generations without compromising on the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," sustainable development is required. This type of development simultaneously creates economic, social, and environmental value. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were established by the UN in 2015, are the cornerstones of their sustainable development agenda. Four of these SDGs specifically address innovation and entrepreneurship, demonstrating their importance to sustainable development. Entrepreneurs are thought to be the engines of economic growth and the ones who can solve environmental and human problems because they find, create, innovate, and eventually seize opportunities.

Despite regulations to the contrary in many countries, the home is frequently used as a workshop. In pre-industrial societies, the Industrial Revolution in Britain was marked by the shift from home-based to factory-based manufacturing. It would continue until the modern, sophisticated, and complex production and distribution system took over. Census definition of 'Household Industry' (Home-Based Industries) provides that as an industry conducted by the head of the household himself/herself and/or by the members of the household at home or within the village in rural areas, and only within the precincts (campus) of the house where the household is in urban areas. Home-based Industries cover artisans, skilled craftsmen and technicians who can work in their own houses if their work requires less than 300 square feet of space, less than k.w. power, less than 5 workers and no pollution is caused. Handicrafts, toys, dolls, small plastic and products, electronic and electrical gadgets are some examples of these Industries but exclude pleaders, doctors, barbers, musicians, dancers, dhobi, astrologers.

2. Profile of the Study Area

The present Sonitpur district was created by splitting the old Darrang district in 1983 and again was annexed with the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) of Udalguri during the last decade but before the bifurcation of 2015. It was the second-largest district among the 29 districts of Assam. The Tezpur is the headquarters of Sonitpur district and is situated in the centre of the State. There were 3 subdivisions in the district namely Tezpur-Sadar, Biswanath Charali and Gohpur. From the development point of view, the district was divided into 14 Development Blocks namely Gabhoru (including Tezpur Town Block), Bihaguri, Borchalla, Dhekiajuli, Rangapara, Balipara, Naduar, Sootea, Biswanath, Baghmari, Sakomotha, Bihali, Chaiduar and Pub-Chaiduar. Below the block level set-up, there were 1,876 villages including 78 uninhabited villages governed by various Gaon Panchayats. The district comprised 7 Revenue Circles namely Tezpur, Dhekiajuli, Chariduar, Naduar, Biswanath, Helem and Gohpur. For the industrial development, the district had 5 statutory towns namely Tezpur, Dhekiajuli, Rangapara, Biswanath Charali and

Gohpur.

The District topography is climatically suitable for the development of horticulture. Major fruits grown in the District include Pineapple, Banana, Orange, Lime, Papaya, Mango and other miscellaneous fruits. During the last few years, the farmers were also well acquainted with many crops like Broccoli, Capsicum etc. The District is rich in horticultural crops like Pineapple, Banana, Orange, Mango,

3. Sustainable Home-based Enterprises in India

The government of India includes 112 types of home-based/service industries and 9 special types of home-based industries for village abadi (population) under the list of **Group-A** and **Group-A-1** respectively as per the master plan 2021. Out of these, some industries are very common in the case of NE India. These are Ayurvedic /Homeopathic / Uunni medicines, Atta chakkies, biscuits, cakes and cookies making, Bookbinding, Choir and Jute products, Cardboard boxes, Candles, Carpentry, Dhari and carpet weaving, Dairy products e.g. cream, ghee, paneer etc., Embroidery, Jewellery items, Photostat & cyclostyling, Pan-masala, Repair of bicycles, Rubber stamps, Tailoring, Toys and dolls making, wool knitting (with the machine), cane & bamboo products, pottery industry etc.

4. Objectives of the study

The prime objective of the study is to develop green enterprises through home-based enterprises in Assam in general and in Sonitpur districts in particular.

To obtain the main objective of the study following secondary objectives have been formulated.

1. To analyse the types of viable environment-friendly home-based enterprises of Sonitpur Districts.
2. To the sustainability of HBEs by examining the annual earnings of those enterprises.
3. To examine the employment opportunities offered by the HBEs.

5. Test of relationship:

To find out the relationship between the qualification of proprietors and earnings.

6. Methodology of the study

6.1 Sampling:

(i)**Sampling Frame:** The study is empirical in nature and based on primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected through a sample survey. The identified & viable HBEs in the district are selected after the scrutiny of information collected from the DIC office and other reliable sources. As per the convenience of the study and on the basis of the majority of numbers found in the study, the home-based units are classified into three groups namely Food processing, Garment and Artisan home-based enterprises.

The secondary data have been used to establish the authenticity of the study.

(ii) **Sampling Methods:** Quota and Convenience Sampling method has been used in collecting data.

(iii) **Sample Size:** In selecting the samples, the total number of selected units is 30 percent (around 50 units) of the total registered and unregistered units that existed in the Sonitpur district.

Table: 1: Distribution of Samples

Sub-division	Frequency	Percentage
Tezpur	25	50
Biswanath Charali	17	33
Gohpur	8	17
Total	50	100

6.2 Data Collection:

Primary Data: The primary data are obtained through personal interview schedules and questionnaires from the respondents. The schedules were adopted for 50 convenient units. The remaining primary data were collected through questionnaires. Personal interviews with some owners were taken for details observation of the units in a qualitative manner.

Secondary Data: The secondary data are collected from the internet, newspapers, magazines, editorials, and register of banks for MSME, register of DIC of Sonitpur District, NGOs' Annual Reports, government rules and regulations on MSME, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) Guwahati, Director of Industries (DI) Guwahati, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) Guwahati etc.

6.3 Data Analysis:

The collected data are analysed with suitable statistical tools like mean, percentage, pie diagram, and bar diagram for better analysis and presentation of data. SPSS package is also used so far to do cross tabulation, Chi-square test, test of significance and ANOVA test to find out the relationship of different variables.

7. Some Famous Home-based Enterprises of Sonitpur districts

Various types of home-based industries are found in the districts, out of which the following industries are very popular in the district.

7.1. Food processing industry:

The Government of India has approved for setting up of a Food Processing Industrial Park at Chaygaon near Guwahati in Kamrup District.⁷ Different types of locally available raw materials help to boost the food processing industry for example pickles from fruits and vegetables, juice, jams, traditional cake (Laru & Pitah) etc. Now a day the 'Laru & Pitah' (typical Assamese cake) become a very popular and demandable items. These items are not only demanded at the seasonal festival but also for different types of occasions like meetings, conferences, seminars, work-shop, marriage parties etc.

7.2 Cane and Bamboo Industry:

Assam has the highest concentration of bamboo having a high potential for commercialization. The region has approximately 60% of the total bamboo of the country. Sonitpur district is rich in sylvan resources and most of its forests are richly stocked with canes and bamboos of various species. One of the most famous bamboo products of the Sonitpur District is 'Japi'. 'Japi' is a traditional head cup of Assamese society, which helps one to protect from sun and rain. Decorative Japi is treated as a symbol of respect in Assamese society and it also serves as an item of drawing-room decoration. There is a village named 'Japi-Xojia' in Sonitpur, which is very famous for Japi-making and almost all the villagers are engaged in this profession.

7.3 Jute Based industry:

Sonitpur district is one of the major jute-growing areas of the state. There are some cottage and home-based industries which are very famous for jute products like jute-bags, jute-carpet, wall-hanging etc. Various shops of home-based industries of jute products are available on the roadside of NH-52.

7.4 Cutting, Tailoring & Embroidery (Garment making) Industries:

It is a popular home-based enterprise in the districts and more than 80 percent of women are engaged in this sector. Moreover, various ethno-cultural groups in Assam make different types of cotton garments with unique embroidery designs and wonderful colour combinations.

7.5 Weaving Industries:

Before the Industrial Revolution, weaving was a manual craft and wool was the principal staple. In the great wool districts, a form of factory system had been introduced but in the uplands, weavers worked from home on a putting-out system. Handloom weaving is very famous among the people of Assam, especially among women. In earlier days Assamese girls were not married if, they did not know how to weave.

7.6 Wood Crafting Industries:

India has been a traditional producer of wood carving for ages. In the Sonitpur district, the woodworking industries are well known for skilled artisans. Varieties of wood are available in the nearby forests to develop the wood-craft in the district. Various types of wooden animals, birds, monuments etc. are made from bansoom-wood, gomari-wood, teak etc.

8. Major Findings of the Study

1. There was the highest number of Food-processing enterprises i.e. 22 units (44 percent) which were followed by 16 units (32 percent) of garments enterprise and 12 units of artisan (24.0 percent) out of 50 HBES surveyed in the districts of Sonitpur.
2. Maximum numbers of HBES' owners were women i.e. 36 (72 percent) units were run by women out of the total sample units. Only 14 units of HBES were run by men, which was 28 percent of the total sample units.
3. It has been found that 32 (64 percent) HBES had received training from various institutions whereas only 18 (36 percent) HBES were running their business without any formal training.
4. Out of the 50 sample HBES of Sonitpur districts only 28 HBES (56 percent) had taken loan from any financial institutions.
5. The Average Monthly Earning of 14 (28percent) units earned below Rs.60,000 per annum; 22 (44 percent) sample units were between Rs.60,001 to Rs. 1,20,000 per annum; 10 (20 percent) units earned between Rs. 1,20,001 to Rs. 1,80,000 per annum and only 4 (8 percent) units earned above Rs. 1,80,000 but not more Rs. 20,000 per annum by any unit. The average monthly income of 50 sample units is Rs.94,320 per annum.
6. 19 (38 percent) HBES generated a minimum of 3 employment opportunities whereas only 2 (4 percent) HBES generated a maximum of 8 employment

opportunities in each unit. The average employment opportunities created by 50 sample HBEs is 3 (2.77 mean) persons in each unit.

- The Food Processing industries generated more employment i.e. 44 percent of the total employment created by 50 sample HBEs. These industries generated employment opportunities for up to 8 persons in each unit. 32 percent of employment was generated by Garments industries and 24 percent was generated by Artisans.

9. Test the relationship between Earning and Qualification by applying the One-way ANOVA Test

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference among the mean earnings of owners with different educational qualifications:

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$$

Where,

μ_1 = Average earning below HSLC

μ_2 = Average earnings of below HS

μ_3 = Average earning of below Graduate

μ_4 = Average earning of Graduate

Alternative Hypothesis, H_1 : There is a difference among the mean earnings of owners with different educational qualifications:

$$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_3 \neq \mu_4$$

Analysis: One-way ANOVA results show that the value of $p = 0.000$ is lower than the table value of 0.05 at 95% confidence level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Post-hoc test reveals that there is a significant difference in earnings of all categories of the educational background of proprietors.

Therefore, it has been found that there is a significant difference among the mean earnings of owners with different educational qualifications. The qualification of owners below HS level had good prospects in HBEs i.e. mean of 2.44 in comparison to below graduates whose mean value was 1.10.

10. Conclusion

Home-based industries are sustainable in nature because power and fuel-consuming plants and types of machinery are hardly used in these category industries. The Industrial Policy of Assam 2015 identified thrust areas, which are labour-intensive and require less power. The Industrial Policy of Assam 2018 also listed the names of non-polluting industrial activities such as Tailoring/garment making, Handloom weaving, Furniture (wooden & steel), Assembly of domestic electrical and electronic appliances/equipment, Candles, Carpentry (excluding sawmill), Manufacture of steel trunks and suit-cases in Annexure – III which are basically home-based industries. The term ecopreneurship and green entrepreneurship is a new term for social researchers. Although this phenomenon was first propounded in the 1970s, it got attention from researchers in the 1980s and 1990s. The term has been defined by various economic groups and researchers in different ways depending on different aspects. In 1997 Anderson and Leal

defined green entrepreneurship as, “Entrepreneurs using business tools to preserve open space, develop wildlife habitat, save endangered species and generally improve environmental quality”. Green enterprise models have the potential for transformative change from the status quo, as these models combine the three dimensions ecological environment, technology, and entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is important to explore this changing business environment, specifically, empirical Green enterprise models.

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