

# **Aspirational Districts Programme and its Impact on Entrepreneurs in North-East India**

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# **Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion**

## **Summary**

### **Summary: Chapter 1**

Using human capital and entrepreneurship ecosystem theories, the study argues that ADP can enhance economic opportunities by fostering skill development and creating supportive institutional frameworks. However, challenges such as low awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to financial resources hinder entrepreneurship growth in these districts. The study seeks to measure ADP's effectiveness in generating entrepreneurial ventures, assessing the types of enterprises that have emerged, and understanding the benefits entrepreneurs have received.

Given the lack of prior research on ADP's impact on entrepreneurship, this study aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers to enhance the programme's effectiveness. By addressing regional disparities and fostering an enabling business environment, ADP has the potential to drive inclusive growth and economic transformation in North East India.

### **Summary: Chapter 2**

This chapter focuses on reviewing existing literature and outlining the research methodology applied in the study. The first part critically examines studies related to entrepreneurship, the Aspirational District Programme (ADP), and its impact on entrepreneurial development in Northeast India. The literature review identifies key themes, including government initiatives, financial inclusion, skill development, and challenges faced by entrepreneurs, particularly women and rural business owners. It also highlights the role of awareness in improving participation in ADP programs.

The second part discusses the research methodology, emphasizing a quantitative approach with both descriptive and correlational research designs. A structured questionnaire was used to assess awareness and the impact of ADP among entrepreneurs, with data collected from 373 micro-entrepreneurs across 14 aspirational districts. Statistical tools like ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and non-parametric tests were used for analysis. The chapter concludes by identifying research gaps, particularly the lack of comprehensive studies on ADP's long-term impact on entrepreneurship in the region.

### **Summary: Chapter 3**

The chapter analyzes the extent of implementation of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) across India, with a focus on North East India and a detailed case study of 14 selected districts. The study finds that while ADP has contributed to significant improvements in various indicators such as health, education, agriculture, financial inclusion and infrastructure, the progress remains uneven across regions. In particular, North East India exhibits significant variability in outcomes, with some districts achieving substantial gains while others continue to struggle with systemic challenges.

Health and education indicators show overall positive trends, including improvements in school enrolment and immunization rates, though gaps remain in access to medical facilities and sanitation. Financial inclusion has improved in some districts, but challenges persist in loan disbursement and insurance scheme enrolments. Agriculture and water resources interventions show good improvements with further scope for developments in sectors like micro-irrigation coverage, soil health card distribution etc. Infrastructure development has also been uneven, with significant disparities in road connectivity, internet access, and housing availability.

The study highlights the role of real-time data monitoring in driving evidence-based policy adjustments but notes that administrative capacity, resource constraints, and local governance play crucial roles in shaping implementation outcomes. Additionally, the comparative analysis of ADP implementation at the national level versus North East India underscores the need for region-specific policy interventions. Data limitations in certain districts further hinder effective assessment and decision-making. The findings suggest that while ADP has made significant contributions, sustained efforts and targeted strategies are required to ensure equitable development across all aspirational districts.

#### **Summary: Chapter 4**

The chapter examines the state of MSME-based entrepreneurship in the 14 Aspirational Districts of North East India. It explores the differences in MSME growth across districts, analyzing ownership by social categories and sectoral composition (manufacturing vs. service). Findings indicate that micro-enterprises dominate, making up 98.4percent of the total MSMEs. Rhiboi district in Meghalaya has the highest number of small and medium enterprises, whereas Barpeta in Assam leads in micro-enterprises. Ownership distribution shows that the majority of MSMEs belong to the General category (65percent), followed by Scheduled Tribes (17.7percent), OBCs (11.1percent), and SCs (6.1percent). Employment generation is highest in micro-enterprises, though medium enterprises provide more jobs per unit. Growth analysis

reveals that MSME expansion accelerated post-implementation of the Aspirational District Programme, with service enterprises outnumbering manufacturing enterprises. Statistical tests confirm significant associations between ownership category and enterprise type, as well as employment differences across enterprise sizes. The study concludes that higher MSME ownership aligns with the dominant social category in a given district.

### **Summary: Chapter 5 &6**

These chapters focus on the awareness levels of the Aspirational District Programme (ADP) among entrepreneurs in North-East India's Aspirational District, benefits received by the entrepreneurs, and impact of ADP on entrepreneurs. It emphasizes that the success of government initiatives, such as ADP, depends on how well entrepreneurs understand and engage with these programs. Studies show that awareness significantly impacts participation in entrepreneurial activities, with education and local dissemination playing a crucial role.

The chapter reviews previous studies on ADP awareness, revealing gaps in comprehensive research covering all aspirational districts in the region. It highlights the need for targeted awareness campaigns, particularly for micro-entrepreneurs. Findings indicate that most entrepreneurs are only somewhat aware of key ADP components like financial inclusion, skill development, infrastructure, agriculture, education, and health provisions. However, awareness of basic ADP objectives remains low. Though many benefits are received by the entrepreneurs, impact of ADP is found to be very low.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) on entrepreneurship in North East India, several strategic recommendations can be advanced to augment both the immediate outcomes and long-term sustainability of the programme. These recommendations are rooted in the empirical evidence and insights derived from the study's multidimensional approach, and they aim to build upon the observed "quick wins" while addressing critical bottlenecks.

First, enhancing awareness and outreach remains pivotal. Future policy interventions should adopt localized communication strategies that incorporate regional languages and culturally nuanced messaging. For instance, leveraging digital platforms and social media channels in tandem with grassroots mechanisms—such as self-help groups (SHGs) and Panchayat-led initiatives—could significantly improve the penetration of ADP information.

This would not only increase awareness but also facilitate greater utilization of financial and training schemes. In parallel, tailored financial literacy programs should be instituted to simplify access to credit facilities. The current data indicate a reliance on subsidies, with low uptake of Mudra loans; thus, streamlining loan application processes and providing targeted financial training may encourage entrepreneurs to engage more robustly with credit-based mechanisms.

Second, the capacity-building and skill development dimension warrants further attention. Expanding the scope and reach of vocational training initiatives—particularly those focused on digital literacy and technical skills—is essential to bridge the existing skill gap among entrepreneurs. Collaborative efforts with industry experts and training institutes can enhance the relevance of these programs, ensuring that they are closely aligned with market demands. Moreover, promoting apprenticeship schemes and certification programs, especially for non-formally skilled workers, could catalyze a more resilient entrepreneurial workforce. This focus on capacity building is expected to translate into enhanced business performance and sustainable growth.

Third, infrastructure enhancement must continue to be a central component of ADP's strategy. The study demonstrates that improvements in core infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and digital connectivity are strongly associated with higher MSME growth rates. Policy measures should thus focus on ensuring that these improvements are both widespread and tailored to the unique needs of different sectors. For example, manufacturing enterprises may benefit from the establishment of industrial clusters and enhanced logistics support, while agro-based enterprises require more robust irrigation and market linkage facilities. Strengthening these foundational elements will help create an environment that is conducive to sustained entrepreneurial expansion.

Finally, future research should consider employing longitudinal designs and advanced analytical techniques to capture the dynamic and evolving impact of ADP. Utilizing econometric models, machine learning, and geospatial analyses could provide more nuanced insights into the causal relationships between policy interventions and entrepreneurial performance. Furthermore, comparative studies across different regions and states could elucidate whether the positive trends observed in NEI are replicable in other contexts. Establishing continuous feedback mechanisms among policymakers, practitioners, and

entrepreneurs would also be instrumental in fine-tuning ADP interventions and ensuring their adaptive and responsive evolution.

In sum, while the current study highlights several notable successes of ADP—particularly in enhancing financial subsidies and infrastructural development—it also identifies areas requiring strategic refinement. By adopting these recommendations, policymakers and stakeholders can transform early successes into sustained, scalable, and inclusive growth, ultimately fostering a more vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in North East India.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) and its influence on entrepreneurship in North East India (NEI). The findings indicate that ADP has contributed significantly to financial inclusion, infrastructure improvements, and skill development, creating an enabling environment for MSME growth. However, regional disparities in implementation, gaps in entrepreneurial awareness, and sector-specific constraints highlight areas that require further attention to maximize ADP's long-term impact. While service-based MSMEs have shown steady expansion, manufacturing enterprises face greater challenges in credit access, market linkages, and regulatory navigation, necessitating targeted policy interventions.

Moving forward, enhancing programme awareness, simplifying access to credit, and introducing sector-specific support mechanisms will be critical in amplifying ADP's effectiveness. Digital outreach, localized financial literacy programs, and infrastructure investments tailored to business needs can serve as key enablers of sustained entrepreneurial success. Additionally, establishing longitudinal impact assessments and comparative regional studies will provide deeper insights into ADP's evolving role in fostering economic transformation.

By leveraging its successes, addressing implementation challenges, and refining its strategic execution, ADP has the potential to transition from an enabler of early-stage business growth to a long-term driver of sustainable, inclusive, and innovation-led entrepreneurship in India's aspirational districts.