



A Study On The Distribution Of Start-Ups And MSMEs Across The 8 North Eastern States And Their Performance On Various Parameters

Arindom Hazarika^{1*}, Dr Rashmita Barua²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Management arindamhazarika@gmail.com,

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management Assam Don Bosco University. rashmita.barua@dbuniversity.ac.in

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Start-ups and MSMEs are recognised as drivers of growth and employment in India. Accordingly, the central and state governments have introduced multiple schemes, programs and grants to support both Start-Ups and MSMEs in the country. The general belief is that education drives innovation and organisation in business. This study attempts to find the correlation in the 8 North Eastern states between start-up registrations and MSME formalisation against Literacy and Poverty rates. We examined the uptake and use of 2 specific schemes by Start-Ups and MSMEs from the North Eastern states of India. DPIIT, the Start-Up India scheme, is the flagship program towards supporting Start-Ups in the country, and Udyam is a focused program to support MSMEs with a single-window registration platform.

Methods: The research follows a mixed methodology relying on secondary studies and interviews. Multiple government databases, statistical reports, and state-level publications were studied. Selected start-ups from each state were interviewed to understand their perspective on the startup ecosystem in their state and the ranking followed in this study.

Results: The results indicate while Assam, Manipur and Tripura are front runners in per capita numbers for Start-Ups, Sikkim, Mizoram and Manipur are the best performing states in terms of per capita MSME numbers. Sikkim and Tripura were the most consistent performers while Meghalaya and Nagaland had lowest overall ranks. There appears to be no correlation between literacy levels and state performance, however poverty levels and state performance were found to be correlated. It was found that on average, over 80% of small and medium enterprises were concentrated in 4 districts in each state. The significant disparity between the eight states in terms of numbers and performance imply that there are notable localised differentiators that presently affect the ecosystem and thus warrant a more detailed study on the same.

Key Words: Start-Ups, DPIIT, MSME, Literacy Rates, Poverty Rates, Start Up Rankings, Geographical Spread

Introduction

Micro, Small and Medium, Enterprises, collectively called the MSMEs of India, form one of the major pillars of production, manufacturing and exports in the country. MSMEs on average contributed 28.9% share of MSME Gross Value Added (GVA) in all India Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 36.5% share of MSME manufacturing output in all India during 2019-20 to 2021-22. They also contributed and 46% share of export of MSME specified products in all India exports during the period 2019-20 to 2022-23. MSMEs are also recognised as the second largest employment generator in the country after Agriculture. Start-Ups have over the last few years emerged as a focus area for innovation, research and employment generation. Start-Ups are strictly defined under the DPIIT guidelines just as MSMEs are defined under the MSME framework. However, there are overlaps and similarities between both. The General Financial Rules (GFR, 2017) norms of procurement published by the Ministry of Finance, GOI, groups MSMEs and Startups under the same family of eligible entities. The study attempts to study how MSMEs and Start-Ups are distributed across the eight

north eastern states, employment generation figures, related macro data on innovation, literacy and geographical spread of these enterprises.

Review Of Literature

(Reynolds & Cox, 2003) Point out that there are no countries with high levels of entrepreneurship and low economic growth. As per his studies there is a positive correlation between entrepreneurship and economic growth. This provides a basis to estimate growth potential of a geography given data on enterprise and innovation in the region.

The MSME sector is called the dominant sector of Assam with 61.48 of total enterprises in North East India, concentrated within Assam. Looking at growth in number of MSMEs across districts year on year, it was seen that 13 districts reported a CAGR above the state's average which is 3.44%. Highest CAGR was reported in Chirang lowest in Cachar districts respectively. (Dey & Datta, n.d.)

MSMEs in Assam employ about 1.5 million people in 4,00,000 MSME units contributing to 34.54% of the Gross State Domestic Product of the state. It is also noted that MSMEs are the backbone of the economy and development. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS), and the Technology Upgradation Fund (TUFS) are key schemes that support MSMEs in the state. (Bordoloi, 2023)

The state start-up ranking framework (SRF 2021) provides an in-depth analytical window in how DPIIT analyses state level performance in startup promotion including access to mentors, funding opportunities, capacity building and networking. (STATES' STARTUP RANKING 2022 Framework on Support to Startup Ecosystems, 2021.)

The annual reports published from the office of Auditor General for Patents and Trademarks for the period 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 provided state level data on patents filed and trademarks applied for. (Annual Report, Office of CG of Patents, designs, Trademarks and GI, 2021)

The OCED report on Patents and Innovation discusses the importance of patents in economic performance and innovation. It provides structure to the study looking to establish a relation between innovation and economic growth in the states of the region. (Patents and Innovation: Trends and Policy Challenges Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, OCED, 2004)

(Krishnan, 2012) Documented how youth unemployment contributes to a multitude of social and cultural ills plaguing the society. Social, economic and economic challenges that stem from youth unemployment were derived from this study and used to understand possible challenges of unequal development in our states.

Udyam registration is now the go to mechanism for registration of new MSMEs. However, the last NSS report estimates that India has over 6 crore MSMEs, while Udyam now has close to only 2 crore registrations. The MSME annuals reports were studied to assess employment generation, spread and sectoral break up of enterprises in India. (Ministry of MSME, 2023)

Study approach and Design.

They study focusses on enterprises from the entire North Eastern Region spanning the 8 states. Focus was on analysing trends and distribution patterns of such enterprises. The research design is focussed on secondary study. The initial study was focussed on data collection from external sources, RBI statistical handbooks, MSME annual reports, Ministry of Commerce websites, DPIIT websites, IPR Annual reports, EXIM Bank reports and research papers. While shortlisting data sources for the secondary study it was limited to Government Data sources, Ministerial Reports, Annual Reports and live data from departmental websites.

The secondary data was analysed in isolation across parameters of employment (rural and urban), employment generated (MSMEs and Start-Ups), Innovation (Patents and Trademarks filed), geographical spread of MSMEs, Literacy Levels and Poverty Levels. The study allocated ranks to each state across each of these parameters.

Multiple data sets were then combined to arrive at a composite rank for each state, from 1 to 8. The study uses Spearman's rank coefficient to assess the correlation between the composite rank of each state with macro data of literacy and poverty. The study also looked at 8 real life enterprises and stakeholders from the 8 states in the region. The study looked at their direct and indirect footprint, employment generation and feedback on the ranking methods used in the study.

Study results and observations with respect to MSME registration, job creation and unemployment data.

There has been a shift in how India tracks and monitors the MSME sector. The Udyam platform is now the one stop solution for registration of MSMEs. Udyam is also necessary for enterprises to access government assistance and benefits, with the earlier Entrepreneurs Memorandum and Udyog Aadhar platform being slowly phased out

The 73rd National Sample Survey (NSS), conducted in 2015-16 reported over 6.3 Crore MSMEs which generated over 11 Crore jobs in India at the rate of about 1.75 jobs per enterprise. There were few Pvt Limited Companies, Partnerships or LLPs as per the survey with 96% of the enterprises reported to be Proprietary firms. This was before the Udyam Platform was available in India.

Table 1A – Job creation by various categories of MSMEs as per NSS survey

Category of Enterprise	Number of Enterprises (Lacs)	Jobs Created (Lacs)	Per Enterprise
Micro	630.52	1076.19	1.71
Small	3.31	31.95	9.65
Medium	0.05	1.75	35.00
Average			1.75

Adapted from MSME Annual Report 2022-23 Published by MoMSME.

The data from Table 1, shows that over 99% of the total MSMEs belong to the micro category and generate under 2 jobs per unit. This indicates that most of these enterprises may be family run businesses where the husband, wife and children are the primary employees. While they contribute to the GDP and manufacturing output of our country, it is evident that they are more an avenue of meaningful self-employment and not an employment generation avenue for others.

It is pertinent to note that, the above data is derived from the NSS study, and an analysis of enterprises registered on UDYAM indicate a different picture.

As per the MSME dashboard which provides updated information on State and District level statistics, there are a total of 1,97,00,573 MSMEs under Udyam with 1,90,72,775 micro, 5,74,064 small and 53,736 medium enterprises. There are currently 13,40,87,279 people employed by these enterprises, which equates to an average of 6.8 jobs per enterprise.

Table 1B – Job creation by MSMEs as per Udyam

Category of Enterprise	Number of Enterprises (Lacs)
Micro	190.00
Small	5.74
Medium	0.50
Total jobs created 1340 lacs	Average Jobs Created per Enterprise 6.8

North Eastern states have higher unemployment rates when compared to the Indian average. Analysis of unemployment data from Reserve Bank of India's Handbook on statistics show that 4 and 5 states are below the national averages for Rural Unemployment and Urban Unemployment respectively. Table 2 and Table 3 The numbers also show that unemployment for the North Eastern States is an incremental challenge with 6 out of 8 states reporting growing rural unemployment and 5 out of 8 states reporting growing urban unemployment compared to the baseline year of 93-94.

It is reported that unemployment is the precursor to crime and social unrest, poverty and starvation, reduced tax base, healthcare issues, pandemic risk and high social costs. (Krishnan, 2012). *These are pertinent issues in the context of North East India. The high instances of militancy, protests and bandhs may be attributed to a growing challenge of unemployment amongst youth.*

A clear concentration of enterprises in and around the main cities and capitals was observed. This indicates the need to study parameters affecting MSME scheme penetration across the states and possible lack of access to registration in remote areas.

The study analysed both urban and rural unemployment data for all 8 states. The study also looked at jobs created by MSMEs and Start-Ups in the region.

Table 2 – Rural Unemployment figures for NER States.

Rural Unemployment		Per 1000								
State	Rank	93-94	99-00	04-05	09-10	11-12	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
Arunachal Pradesh	7	10	5	9	13	17	53	73	63	48
Assam	5	52	39	26	39	45	83	63	78	36
Manipur	6	10	19	11	38	26	116	98	95	38
Meghalaya	2	2	4	3	4	4	6	20	11	7
Mizoram	3	10	9	3	13	18	65	52	42	27
Nagaland	8	14	24	18	106	151	216	162	258	178
Sikkim	1	7	28	24	43	10	27	25	20	5
Tripura	4	23	12	133	92	105	63	93	28	29
ALL INDIA		12	15	17	16	17	53	50	40	33

Adapted from RBI, Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 21-22 Rank is calculated on 20-21 unemployment data.

Figure 1 – Rural Unemployment from 93-94 to 20-21

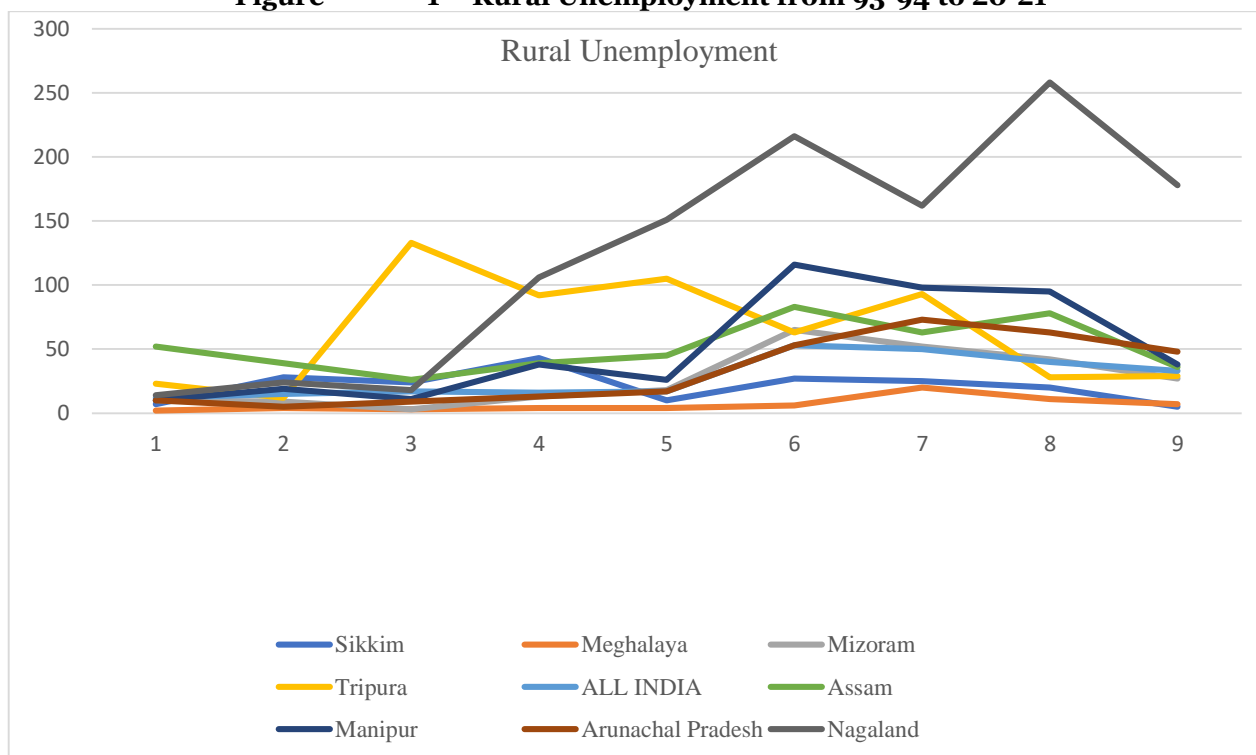


Table 3 – Urban Unemployment figures for NER States.

Urban Unemployment		Per 1000								
State	Rank	93-94	99-00	04-05	09-10	11-12	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
Arunachal Pradesh	7	26	29	12	34	48	99	111	90	106
Assam	5	89	97	72	52	56	63	107	87	78
Manipur	6	42	67	55	48	71	114	92	102	99
Meghalaya	4	17	46	35	51	28	67	75	109	71
Mizoram	2	5	30	19	28	50	144	91	77	44
Nagaland	8	68	91	55	92	238	211	211	257	240
Sikkim	1	31	75	37	-	23	58	49	29	30
Tripura	3	85	58	280	171	252	87	135	46	46
ALL INDIA		45	47	45	34	34	78	77	70	67

Adapted from RBI, Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 21-22 Rank is calculated on 20-21 unemployment data.

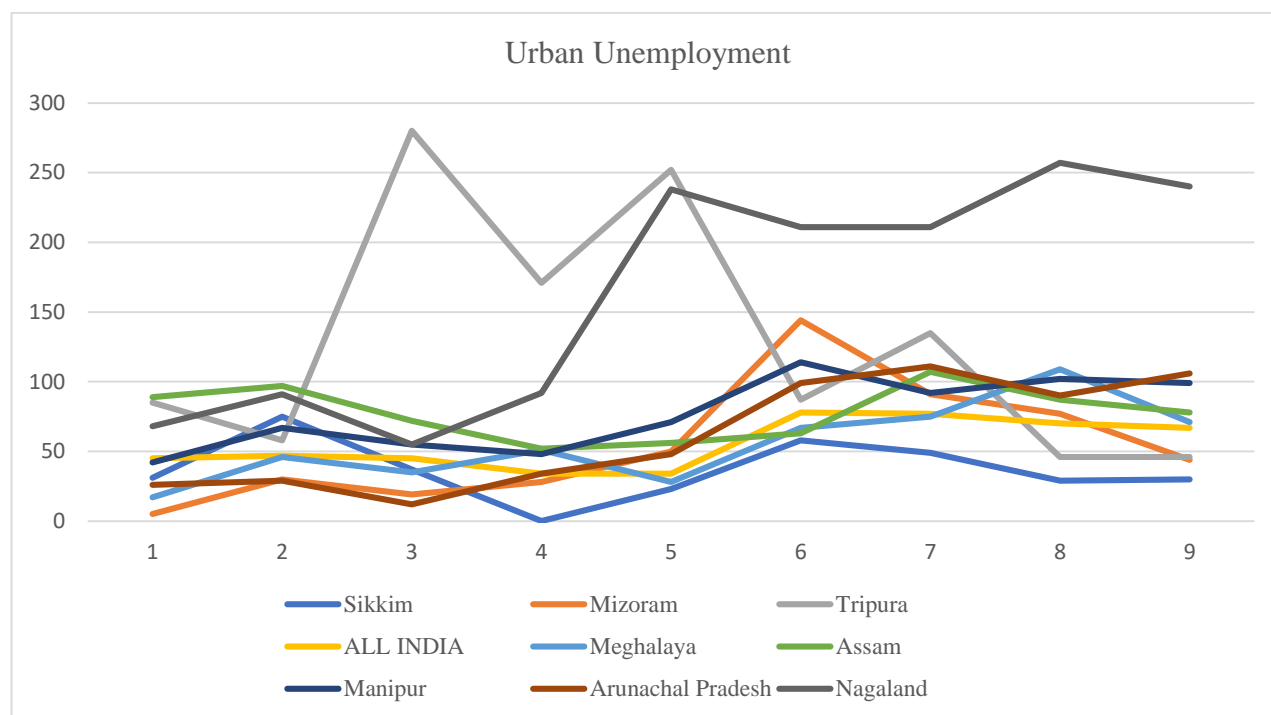
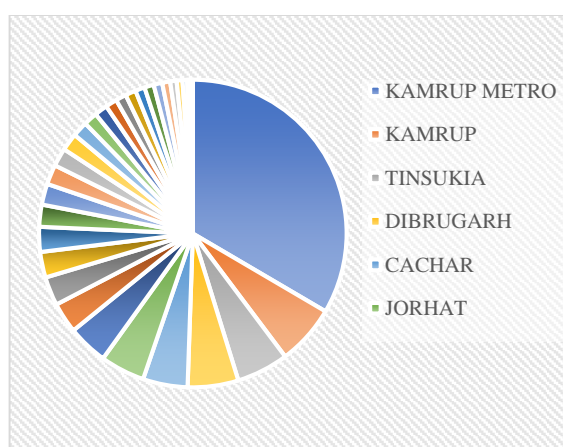


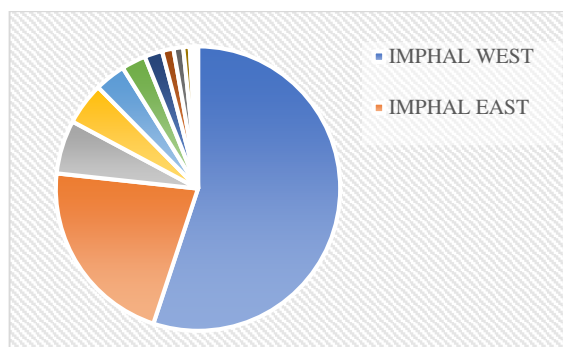
Figure 2. Urban Unemployment figures from 93-94 to 20-21

Study Results and Observations with respect to - Geographical spread of MSMEs in North Eastern States -

India is seeing a constant shift in rate of change of urban and rural populations. There is a clear trend of increasing urbanisation and estimates point to urban populations overtaking rural populations by 2050. (Keshav & Komaraiah, 2015). Urban poverty and Rural poverty manifest itself in separate ways with particularly telling effects on young women and children. (Chattopadhyay et al., 2011). Migration was found to have positive effects on socio economic status by virtue of increased consumption, but detrimental to health and emotional wellbeing of the migrants and their extended families. (Mitra & Murayama, 2009). Urbanisation and migration has also given rise to break down to traditional family values, old parents are left behind in the villages, there is a rise in domestic violence and neglected children. (Rakesh & Bhati, 2015.) Secondary studies show that more and more youth continue to migrate to the larger cities in search of a better life and employment. This makes it important to study the distribution of MSMEs and understand if policy focus is required to ensure a well distributed economy led by a geographically spread network of MSMEs. While data on Micro, Small and Medium enterprises was analysed, the study focussed on Small and Medium enterprises for the geographic spread analysis owing to the incremental scope of employment generation by them. The average employment generated by Micro Industries for India as well as North East is less than 2.

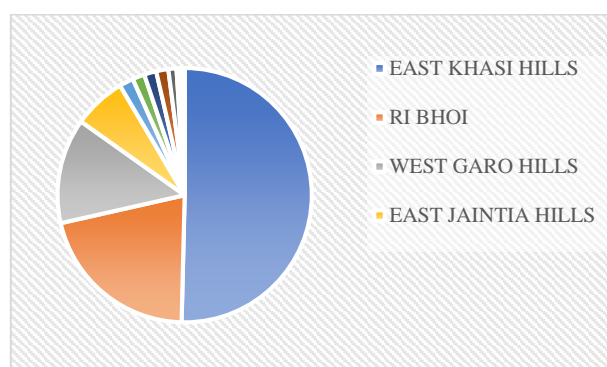


Total districts 34. Top 4 districts have over 50% of the SMEs with top 10 districts having over 50% of all SMEs in the state. Figure 3 – SME spread in Assam.



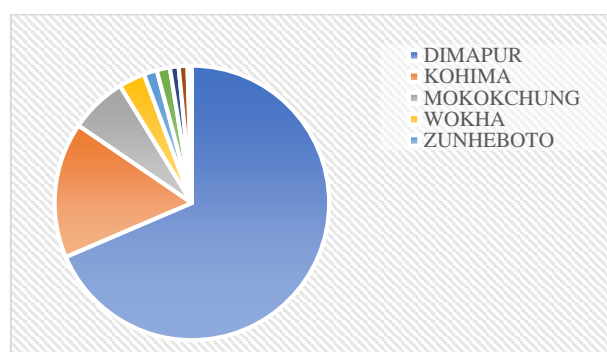
Total districts 16. Top 4 districts have over 87% of the SMEs with top 2 districts having over 50% of all SMEs in the state.

Figure 4 – SME spread in Manipur



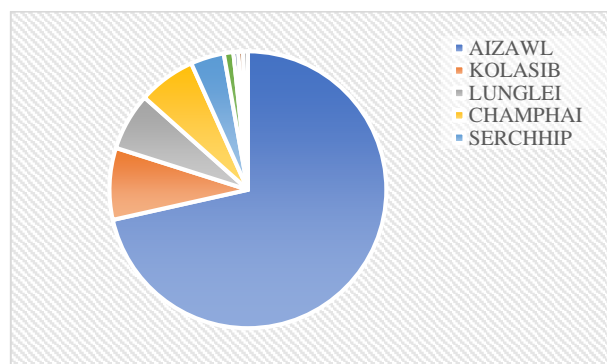
Total districts 12. Top 4 districts account for 91% of all SMEs

Figure 5 – SME spread in Meghalaya.



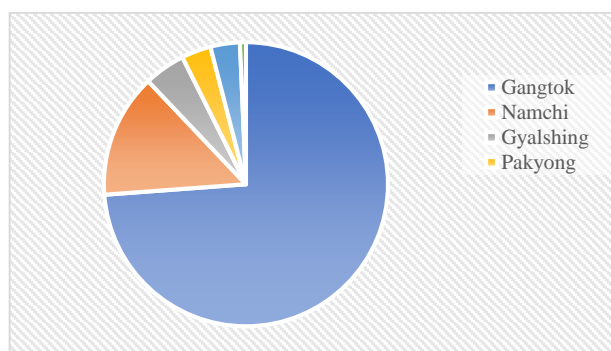
Total districts 16. Top 4 districts account for 94% of all SMEs

Figure 6 – SME spread in Nagaland.



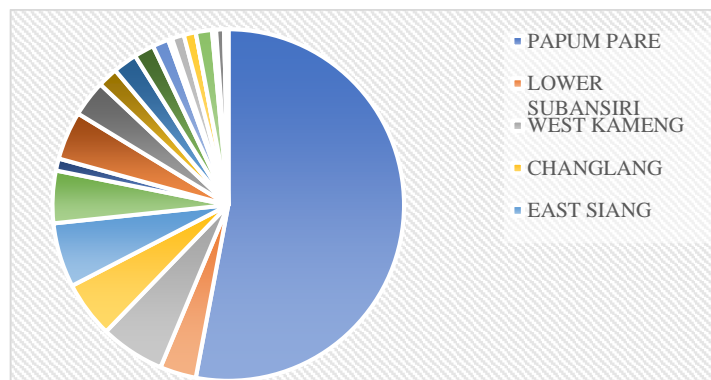
Total districts 11. Top 4 districts account for 93% of all SMEs

Figure 7 – SME spread in Mizoram.



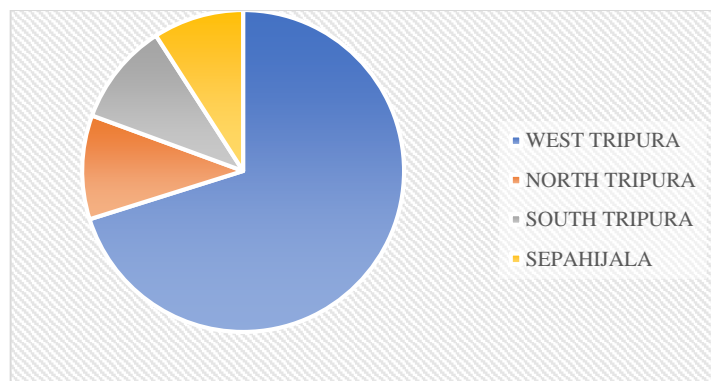
Total districts 6. Top 4 districts account for 96% of all SMEs

Figure 8 – SME spread in Sikkim



Total districts 25. Top 4 districts account for 70% of all SMEs

Figure 9 – SME spread in Arunachal Pradesh.



Total districts 8. Top 4 districts account for 81% of all SMEs

Figure 10 –SME spread in Tripura.

The average number of districts in North Eastern states is 16. The average skew of small and medium enterprises in top 4 districts is 82.4%. This illustrates a majority of employment generating enterprises concentrated in a small number of districts. 82.6% of all MSMEs are concentrated in 25% of all districts in the North East region.

An Udyam registration is the primary requirement for any enterprise to receive any kind of assistance from government programs and schemes. Udyam is also necessary to bid, tender and offer services to Government departments, PSUs and corporations via GEM.

Low numbers of Udyam registration in non-central districts indicate that the enterprises in these districts are neither receiving government assistance nor able to offer their services and products via correct channels to the business to government (B2G) channels.

Employment generated by Start-Ups

Information about the employment generated by Start-Ups in the region was studied and as per self-declaration by the enterprises as on 30th June 2022 the following can be inferred.

Table 4 – Employment Generated by Start-Ups – cumulative as of June 2022

State	Start-Ups as on June 2022	Employment Generated as on June 2022	Per Enterprise	Rank
Arunachal Pradesh	10	69	6.9	8
Assam	602	5335	8.9	4
Manipur	79	806	10.2	3
Meghalaya	23	179	7.8	6
Mizoram	7	87	12.4	2
Nagaland	24	198	8.3	5
Sikkim	8	58	7.3	7
Tripura	62	1005	16.2	1

Adapted from Press Release - Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Shri Som Parkash Lok Sabha, PIB release ID - 1843897, Jul 22.

Study Results and Observations with respect to - Indicators of Innovation and Intellectual Property

The study looked at state wise filings for trademarks and patents for last 3 years. While Patent filing was considered as an indicator for innovation by start-ups, Trademark filing was considered as an indicator for intellectual property development by the MSME sector. Patent landscape can provide an avenue to assess innovation and ideas. (Khan et al., 2023)

Table 5 – Trademarks filed from NER States for last 3 years.

Trademarks	19-20	20-21	21-22	Mean	Population (Lacs)	Population Per Trademark	Rank
Sikkim	68	44	45	52.3	6.58	12,573.25	1
Assam	1312	1729	1983	1674.7	360	21,496.82	2
Manipur	117	65	152	111.3	34	30,538.92	3
Tripura	93	118	144	118.3	41.8	35,357.75	4
Arunachal Pradesh	26	59	27	37.3	15	40,178.57	5
Mizoram	41	25	21	29.0	13.8	47,586.21	6
Nagaland	28	29	51	36.0	23	63,888.89	7
Meghalaya	56	57	59	57.3	37	64,534.88	8

Compiled from the annual reports of 19-20, 20-21 and 21-22. (The Office Of The Controller General Of Patents, Designs, Trademarks And Geographical Indications India, 2020)

Table 6 – Patents Filed from Ner States For Last 3 Years.

Patents	19-20	20-21	21-22	Mean	Rank	Population	Population Per Patent	Rank
Sikkim	6	11	9	8.7	7	6.58	75,923	1
Arunachal Pradesh	9	18	23	16.7	3	15	90,000	2
Mizoram	11	12	8	10.3	5	13.8	1,33,548	3
Meghalaya	16	9	26	17.0	2	37	2,17,647	4
Tripura	20	13	12	15.0	4	41.84	2,78,933	5
Assam	102	96	150	116.0	1	360	3,10,345	6
Manipur	12	6	11	9.7	6	34	3,51,724	7
Nagaland	3	4	6	4.3	8	23	5,30,769	8

Compiled from the annual reports of 19-20, 20-21 and 21-22. (The Office Of The Controller General Of Patents, Designs, Trademarks And Geographical Indications India, 2020)

Table 7 – Consolidated findings and Consolidated ranks for States (R)

State	Rural Unemployment	Urban Unemployment	Jobs Per Start Up	Trademarks	Patents	Start-Ups per population	MSMEs per Population	Jobs per MSME	Mean Overall Rank (R)	Start UP Rankings DPIIT
Tripura	4	3	1	4	5	3	4	2	1	Cat B. Aspiring Leader
Sikkim	1	1	7	1	1	6	3	8	2	Emerging
Mizoram	3	2	2	6	3	7	2	4	3	Cat B. Emerging
Manipur	6	6	3	3	7	1	1	3	4	Cat B. Aspiring Leader
Assam	5	5	4	2	6	2	5	5	5	Cat A. Leader
Arunachal Pradesh	7	7	8	5	2	5	7	1	6	Cat B. Leader
Meghalaya	2	4	6	8	4	8	8	7	7	Cat B. Best Performer
Nagaland	8	8	5	7	8	4	6	6	8	Cat B. Aspiring Leader

Table 7 is derived from data Compiled during the study. DPIIT grades are from 2021 start ranking notification. For Sikkim the DPIIT grade reflects 2019 grade.

Table 8 – Comparison between state ranks by Literacy Levels, Poverty and Rank as per our study.

State	Literacy Levels	Literacy Levels Rank (Li)	15-16	19-21	Poverty Index Rank (Po)	State Rank as per our Study (Ra)
			Multidimensionally Poor Population %			
Manipur	76.94	5	16.96	8.1	3	4
Assam	72.19	7	32.65	19.35	7	5
Tripura	87.22	2	16.62	13.11	4	1
Nagaland	79.55	4	25.16	15.43	6	8
Arunachal Pradesh	65.38	8	24.23	13.76	5	6
Sikkim	81.42	3	3.82	2.6	1	2
Mizoram	91.33	1	9.78	5.3	2	3
Meghalaya	74.43	6	32.54	27.79	8	7

Compiled from various sources including National Multidimensional Poverty Index, Niti Aayog 2023 and GOI, Annual Reports.

Key Findings and Utility of the study.

The novelty of the study stems from the macro perspective it takes to analyse and link multiple studies and government publications in one study. The study looks at factors like employment generation from these enterprises and correlates them to socio-economic factors like literacy level. The study also introduces an alternative system of ranking the states' performances across various parameters like unemployment, enterprise registration numbers and innovation. The ranking system provides an alternative system for states and policy makers to assess ground performance of MSMEs and Start Up ecosystem using macro-economic data and secondary studies.

Over 80% of small and medium enterprises in each state is found to be concentrated in 4 districts, near the capital. This indicates an unequal spread of enterprises, thereby an unequal job creation scenario and possible migration challenges. Smaller states have performed well in the study Both subjects may be studied in detail.

There is a disparity between our ranks and DPIIT ranks. The interviews with stakeholder indicate that the disparity may be attributed to the fact that the DPIIT ranking relies on feedback from startups operating in the states and focuses on reform areas such as Institutional support, Fostering Innovation and Partnerships, Access to Markets, Incubation/Mentoring support, Funding Support, Capacity Building and Road Map. The DPIIT mechanism is focussed on the path to success, while our study focuses purely on the current results on the ground and includes both startups and MSMEs as part of the same study.

The ranks allocated to the states (Ra) was analysed against state poverty ranks (Po) and state literacy ranks (Li) using Spearman's Rank Coefficient.

Literacy levels (Li) and state ranks (Ra) are found *not to* have a statistically significant association. $r_s = 0.619$, p (2-tailed) = 0.101

Poverty levels (Po) and state ranks (Ra) are found *to have a statistically significant* association. $r_s = 0.738$, p (2-tailed) = 0.036

Limitations of the study

The study is primarily done using secondary data sources. No consideration was placed on each state having different core industries and sectors. Intrinsic local employment avenues are not covered in national data.

The study compared states with varying populations and demographics using secondary metrics. Weights were assigned as and when feasible. For Example, Assam has 879 startups amongst 3.6 cr population, while Manipur has 108 amongst 34 lacs population. The weighted population per start up is almost 41,000 for Assam and 31,000 for Manipur and thus Manipur the better performer in our study. The study did not consider enterprise break up across sectors and gender.

Concluding Remarks

MSMEs and Start-Ups are key drivers of employment and innovation in North East Indian states. However, there is a need to study their geographical spread and reasons for concentration in a few districts. There is a potential for a wider development footprint if the MSMEs distribution is spread out across more districts. While there is a biannual ranking system for startup promotion across Indian states, our study demonstrates that with a shift in parameters assessed, the rankings show an alternate picture.

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