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An Analytical Study on Entrepreneurial Behavior Among Farmers in Assam

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to assess the entrepreneurial behavior of farmers in Assam. A total of 120 farmers were selected using purposive random sampling, and data were collected through a structured interview schedule covering seven dimensions: risk-taking, innovation, proactiveness, opportunity recognition, business planning, use of technology, and market orientation. Findings revealed that 56.67% of farmers exhibited medium entrepreneurial behavior, 25.83% high, and 17.50% low. Stronger responses were observed in the use of technology and business planning, while lower scores were noted in risk-taking and opportunity recognition. The results underscore the need for targeted interventions such as training, financial literacy, and improved market linkages to enhance entrepreneurial capacity among farmers.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Rapeseed-Mustard growers.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial behavior refers to the set of psychological traits, actions, and responses demonstrated by individuals when they pursue opportunities, take risks, and innovate in their economic activities. In the agricultural context, entrepreneurial behavior reflects a farmer's capacity to adapt to market demands, adopt innovative practices, and manage resources efficiently and sustainably (Hisrich *et al*., 2013). This behavioral orientation is critical in transitioning farmers from subsistence-based farming systems to market-driven, commercially viable enterprises. Entrepreneurial behavior can be attributed as the change in knowledge, skills and attitude of entrepreneurs in the enterprise they have taken up (Subrahmanyeswari *et al.*, 2007). Entrepreneurship serves as a catalyst for multidimensional progress, encompassing risk-taking, resource mobilization, innovation in cultivation practices to enhance both quality and quantity while reducing costs, market expansion, and the effective supply chain management. The rapid agricultural advancement, poverty alleviation, and unemployment challenges has brought rural entrepreneurship to the forefront (Pathak, 2015). The future advancement of the agricultural community hinges significantly on the entrepreneurial actions of farmers (Chikkalaki *et al.*, 2024).

India has placed strong emphasis on agri-entrepreneurship as a strategy for rural development, recognizing its potential to generate employment, increase incomes, and reduce rural-urban migration. Various policy frameworks, such as the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015), Startup India initiative, and the Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (ACABC) scheme, aim to build entrepreneurial capacities among rural populations. Despite these initiatives, the extent of entrepreneurial behavior among Indian farmers remains highly variable, especially in geographically and socio-economically disadvantaged regions. Assam, located in the northeastern region of India, is predominantly agrarian and home to diverse agro-ecological conditions. The state holds significant untapped potential in horticulture, fisheries, organic farming, and agri-tourism. However, the entrepreneurial outlook of farmers in the region remains largely underdeveloped due to multiple constraints, including low levels of market integration, lack of institutional support, infrastructural deficits, and a traditionally risk-averse mindset. Several studies have emphasized the need to assess entrepreneurial behavior as a precursor to effective rural transformation. Boruah *et al*. (2015) noted that entrepreneurial behavior in Assam is often confined to safer domains, such as planning and basic innovation, while risk-taking and opportunity recognition remain weak (Kharlukhi & Jha 2021; Parameswaranaik *et al*., 2020) highlighted socio-psychological factors, such as self-confidence, perceived control, and institutional trust, as influencing entrepreneurial engagement among rural youth in the state. In the present scenario, entrepreneurship development in agricultural sector is a key driver for promoting and sustaining the momentum of growth and providing employment. In this backdrop, this study has aimed to investigate the entrepreneurial behavior of rapeseed mustard growers, its association with their personal and socio-economic traits to evaluate the behavioral dimensions that influence farmers'

entrepreneurial capacities. In this study it becomes critical to explore these dimensions that offer valuable insights into how prepared farmers are for engaging in agri-entrepreneurship and supports the formulation of focused policy measures.

METHODOLOGY

The research study was conducted in Assam in Dhemaji district purposively based on the area and production. Total 12 villages were selected. A total of 10 farmers from each village were randomly selected based on their availability and engagement in active farming such that total 120 farmers were selected. The interview schedule comprising 28 statements was developed through literature review, expert consultation, and pre-testing. Statements were categorized under seven dimensions: (i) risk-taking, (ii) innovation, (iii) proa-ctiveness, (iv) opportunity recognition, (v) business planning, (vi) use of technology, and (vii) market orientation. Each item was rated on a 3-point Likert scale (Disagree = 1, Neutral = 2, Agree = 3). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Based on their overall scores, farmers were categorized into three groups: low, medium, and high levels of entrepreneurial behavior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Entrepreneurial Behavior of Farmers

It is evident form Table 1 that use of technology and business planning dimensions scored highest in agreement. For instance, 76.67% of farmers agreed they use mobile or internet for agricultural advice, while 77.50% agreed they keep records of income and expenses. This strong level of agreement can be credited to the expanding digital reach in rural regions, greater accessibility to low-cost smartphones, and the rising emphasis on farm management practices encouraged by government initiatives and extension support services. These findings align with Trishnamoni (2023); Marak *et al.* (2022) who observed a similar trend among agri-input dealers in Assam. The innovation and pro-activeness dimensions also received positive responses. Approximately 80.83% of farmers agreed they solve problems before they worsen, and 80.83% indicated that they seek new information. This indicates readiness among farmers to adopt progressive agricultural practice. This findings are similar with Bose (2021); Singh *et al*. (2022); Boruah *et al.* (2015).

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses to Entrepreneurial Behavior Statements (N = 120).

Dimension	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Risk-Taking	I am willing to try new crops or methods	84 (70.00%)	24 (20.00%)	12 (10.00%)
	I have invested without guaranteed success	69 (57.50%)	35 (29.17%)	16 (13.33%)
	I take financial risks if returns seem better	91 (75.83%)	20 (16.67%)	9 (7.50%)
	I experiment with untested ideas	67 (55.83%)	33 (27.50%)	20 (16.67%)
Innovation	I look for ideas to improve productivity	94 (78.33%)	20 (16.67%)	6 (5.00%)
	I adopt techniques uncommon in my area	86 (71.67%)	24 (20.00%)	10 (8.33%)
	I adapt practices to changing conditions	90 (75.00%)	22 (18.33%)	8 (6.67%)
	I seek information on new practices	97 (80.83%)	18 (15.00%)	5 (4.17%)
Pro activeness	I solve problems before they worsen	97 (80.83%)	16 (13.33%)	7 (5.83%)
	I plan ahead for future seasons	83 (69.17%)	25 (20.83%)	12 (10.00%)
	I try methods before others do	73 (60.83%)	29 (24.17%)	18 (15.00%)
	I manage farming risks in advance	86 (71.67%)	21 (17.50%)	13 (10.83%)
Opportunity Recognition	I identify profitable agri opportunities	88 (73.33%)	22 (18.33%)	10 (8.33%)
	I track changes in market trends	78 (65.00%)	28 (23.33%)	14 (11.67%)
	I sell products less common locally	68 (56.67%)	33 (27.50%)	19 (15.83%)
	I spot new business chances early	84 (70.00%)	25 (20.83%)	11 (9.17%)
Business Planning	I keep records of income and expenses	93 (77.50%)	18 (15.00%)	9 (7.50%)
	I create financial plans or budgets	79 (65.83%)	26 (21.67%)	15 (12.50%)
	I set short and long-term goals	85 (70.83%)	22 (18.33%)	13 (10.83%)
	I manage resources systematically	93 (77.50%)	19 (15.83%)	8 (6.67%)
Use of Technology	I use mobile/internet for farm advice	92 (76.67%)	21 (17.50%)	7 (5.83%)
	I use modern tools and machines	83 (69.17%)	24 (20.00%)	13 (10.83%)
	I attend training/demos	75 (62.50%)	29 (24.17%)	16 (13.33%)
	I use agri-related digital apps	75 (62.50%)	27 (22.50%)	18 (15.00%)
Market Orientation	I farm based on market demand	93 (77.50%)	19 (15.83%)	8 (6.67%)
	I seek markets offering better prices	87 (72.50%)	23 (19.17%)	10 (8.33%)
	I adjust based on price trends	80 (66.67%)	25 (20.83%)	15 (12.50%)
	I gather buyer preferences before production	74 (61.67%)	29 (24.17%)	17 (14.17%)

*Values in parenthesis are percentage of respective score

However, responses in the risk-taking and opportunity recognition dimensions were relatively lower. Only 55.83% of farmers agreed they experiment with untested ideas, and 56.67% agreed they sell products less common in their local markets. This indicates a more cautious approach to entrepreneurship, which may stem from concerns about financial loss, limited exposure to market dynamics, or low levels of financial

literacy and risk management training. Additionally, the absence of strong institutional support, fluctuating market prices, and fear of crop failure may further discourage farmers from exploring new opportunities. Many respondents hesitated to embrace and invest in enhanced practices due to a fear of potential failure. Given that their livelihood depends solely on these practices, they could not afford setbacks. Consequently, they prefered to observe other farmers adopting the technology first before implementing it on their own farms. The findings are similar with (Marak *et al*., 2022; Kumar, 2012).

B. Overall Entrepreneurial Behaviour of farmers

The results from Table 2 revealed that a majority 56.67% of the farmers fell under the medium category of entrepreneurial behavior, followed by 25.83% in the high category, and 17.50% in the low category. The results suggest that the majority of farmers exhibit a moderate degree of entrepreneurial characteristics, highlighting potential for growth through suitable interventions. This pattern may stem from restricted access to entrepreneurial training, limited familiarity with innovative approaches, and a conservative outlook influenced by financial instability, inadequate formal education in entrepreneurship, and reliance on conventional farming practices, limited knowledge and practice of improved methods, high input expenses, lack of irrigation, low confidence, and fear of failure in entrepreneurial activities. These results are consistent with the findings of Ekhande (2016); Choudhury & Easwaran (2019); Seth *et al.* (2020); Patil *et al*. (2017) who similarly observed that most respondents had a medium level of entrepreneurial behavior, followed by high and low levels respectively.

Table 2: Overall Classification of Entrepreneurial Behavior.

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	28–46	21	17.50%
Medium	47–65	68	56.67%
High	66–84	31	25.83%

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that a majority of farmers have medium level of entrepreneurial behavior. While they show readiness in adopting technology and structured planning, gaps remain in risk-taking and opportunity exploitation. To foster a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, region-specific strategies are required. These may include training on risk management, business innovation, and market analysis, alongside improved access to credit, digital tools, and institutional support. Such efforts can help farmers make informed decisions, embrace innovation, and transform their agricultural practices into more commercially viable and sustainable ventures.

FUTURE SCOPE

The future scope of this study on entrepreneurial behavior of rapeseed-mustard farmers includes comparative analyses across regions, gender-based insights, and longitudinal studies to assess behavioral changes over time. Examining the role of extension services, policy interventions, and FPOs in fostering entrepreneurial competencies will be crucial. Future research could also explore digital platforms and ICT tools for supporting entrepreneurial decision-making and market integration. Assessing capacity-building needs, institutional support mechanisms, and the impact on value addition and climate resilience will help inform more effective extension strategies and policy frameworks, ultimately enhancing livelihoods and sustainable practices among rapeseed-mustard farmers.

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Conflict of Interest. None.

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