

ECONOMIC EMANCIPATION THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT OF ASSAM: AN ANALYSIS

Dr. Mousumi Gogoi*
Mr. Bijit Konwar**

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship development can be an effective solution for economic empowerment of youth. In addition to reduce poverty and promote diversification of livelihood, entrepreneurship can mobilize resources by generating revenue and provide local employment opportunities. Participation of youths in entrepreneurial activities can boost their economic empowerment. Karbi Anglong district of Assam is a region of huge potential resources with unique multi-cultural and multi-ethnic setting. This paper explores the potential of entrepreneurship development, especially micro-entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of youths of this region. It also examines the problems and challenges in the process of entrepreneurship development in the district. The study finds that there are many prospects to promote entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of youths in Karbi Anglong district. The problems in the way of entrepreneurship development such as insufficient power supply, lack of potential market, scarcity of funds, inadequate training, low market price etc. should be effectively addressed by all concerned.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Economic Empowerment, Financial Institution, Fund.*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship development can be considered as a viable strategy for economic empowerment of youth. It is a prime mover of development. It may be solution for unemployment and poverty. It gives ample scope for improving socio-economic status of people through better livelihood opportunities. Entrepreneurship development has high potential to be an instrument for livelihood diversification, economic empowerment, sustainable development and resource conservation. It necessitates exploitation of both human and non-human resources. Entrepreneurial activity can be taken in different aspects of human life. Each and every components of a culture provide opportunities to develop entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship in food system, local technologies, health care system, craft, textiles, costumes, skills, tourism etc. can sustain long-term development which, in turn, empower the youths economically.

Karbi Anglong district of Assam is still lagging behind the other districts of Assam so far as entrepreneurship development is concerned. The district has unique multiethnic and multicultural settings. This feature has added an extra mileage to develop entrepreneurship in the district. This paper focuses on the potential of entrepreneurship development, especially micro-entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of youths of this region.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Eastern Karbi Anglong College, Sarihajan, Bokajan, Karbi Anglong, Assam, India.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Eastern Karbi Anglong College, Sarihajan, Bokajan, Karbi Anglong, Assam, India.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the potential of entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of youths in the study area.
- To analyze the problems of entrepreneurship development in the study area.
- To give suggestions, on the basis of findings of the study, as to what steps are to be followed to improve entrepreneurship development in the study area

Methodology

Both primary and secondary data have been used in the study. The primary data are collected from the field visit to different villages. A sample size of 55 entrepreneurs has been randomly selected from different localities. The data have been collected by interviewing the respondents with the help of well structured questionnaire. Observation method with practical experiences is used to explain prospects of entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment. The secondary data are collected from books, various report and websites etc.

Limitation of the Study

- The study is restricted to the Bokajan block under the Bokajan sub-division of Karbi Anglong district.
- The study covers only the young entrepreneurs of Bokajan block.

Entrepreneurship Development- Conceptual Framework

Entrepreneurship is an innovative response to all types of economic activities of people like industry, business, skill, education, healthcare, social service, craft etc. In the process of entrepreneurship development, each individual is motivated to achieve predetermined goal by taking calculated risks. Creative thinking, innovation, value addition, risk taking, skill, dynamism, practical knowledge etc. are the foremost elements of entrepreneurship development.

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth by assuming risk of business in terms of commitment of money, time etc. or provides value for the same product or service to create the wealth. (Ronstadt, 1985) The entrepreneur adds value to the product or service by locating necessary skills and resources and makes it unique. Hisrich et.al considers entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new. He has assumed that financial, psychological and social risks are involved in the process of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is the process of identifying opportunities in the market place, assembling the resources required to pursue these opportunities and investing the resources to exploit the opportunities for long-term benefits. (Khanka, 2006) It involves generating wealth by bringing together resources in new and unique ways to establish and operate an enterprise.

Discussion and Findings

- **Prospects of Entrepreneurship Development in Karbi Anglong District for Economic Empowerment of youths:** Karbi Anglong district has not been explored so far as prospects of entrepreneurship is concerned. Most of the population of the district is indigenous tribal such as Karbi, Dimasa, Renga Naga, Kuki, Bodo, Garo, Tiwa, Tai Turung, Tai Aiton, Jaintia etc. Other Assamese communities, non-tribals like Bengali, Nepali, Hindi speaking Bihari are also the inhabitants in the district. The culture of these ethnic tribes provides vast scope of entrepreneurship development. Here an attempt has been made to explore the prospects of entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of the youths in the district.
- **Entrepreneurship on Traditional Food:** Traditional food system of each of the tribes dwelling in Karbi Anglong is one of the important areas in which entrepreneurship development can empower the youths economically. Different cuisines of ethnic tribes have given scope to develop entrepreneurship for economic empowerment. With value addition, these cuisines can go a long way in sustainable economic empowerment. The youths can take initiative to develop entrepreneurship in traditional food in new and innovative style coupled with traditional knowledge. The traditional foods like bamboo shoots, Kolakhar, dried fish, dried meat, ethnic snacks, steamed rice cake, pani tenga, dried amla, dried ginger and other dried vegetables, ethnic pickles etc. of different tribes provide opportunities to the youths to develop entrepreneurship in the district.

- **Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Development:** The ethnic tribes in the district have been very active agricultural operation including seed collection, seed preservation and vegetables growing. The youths can engage themselves in these income generating activities with proper training. Their skills and hard work can be effectively exploited through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship can also be initiated in economically important horticultural plants like orange, plum, pineapple, banana, litchi, sugarcane, coffee, papaya etc., various masalas like clove, cinnamon, pepper, chili, fenugreek etc., oilseeds like sesame, mustard, cash crops like citronella, cotton, jute, rubber etc. Horticultural plants hold a good opportunities to establish food processing industries in the Karbi Anglong for economic empowerment of the youths of the district.
- **Entrepreneurship Development on Animal Husbandry and Livestock Management Activities:** All the tribes of the district rear animals. It is a common feature of their culture. Pig and cock are used in almost all the rituals of tribal communities. There is huge potential to develop entrepreneurship in rearing of animals like cow, pig, goat, poultry, bee keeping, lac culture and fisheries in the district to empower the youths economically.
- **Entrepreneurship Development on Handicraft, Handloom and Textiles:** Ethnic dresses of different tribes provide immense scope to initiate entrepreneurship. The youths can establish enterprises on ethnic costumes, traditional craft and handloom products on commercial basis.
- **Entrepreneurship Development on Tourism, Hospitality & Care giving:** There are several tourist destinations in Karbi Anglong. Development of tourism can promote entrepreneurship among the youths. There is huge potential of both eco-tourism and cultural tourism in the district. Entrepreneurship on cultural tourism and eco-tourism provides innovative income generating activities for economic empowerment of youths. Transport, hospitality, care giving, accommodation, catering services, traditional costume information system on travel agency etc. are the different areas that the youth can initiate entrepreneurship. In this regard, we can refer to Karbi Youth Festival held in mid-February every year in which different tribes exhibit their culture, traditional costumes, food habits and dwelling styles.
- **Entrepreneurship on Wellness Industry:** There is ample scope to promote entrepreneurship development in wellness industry in the study area. The youths can initiate entrepreneurship in various beverages including herbal tea and masala tea.

Analysis of Primary Data

Problems Faced by the Entrepreneurs

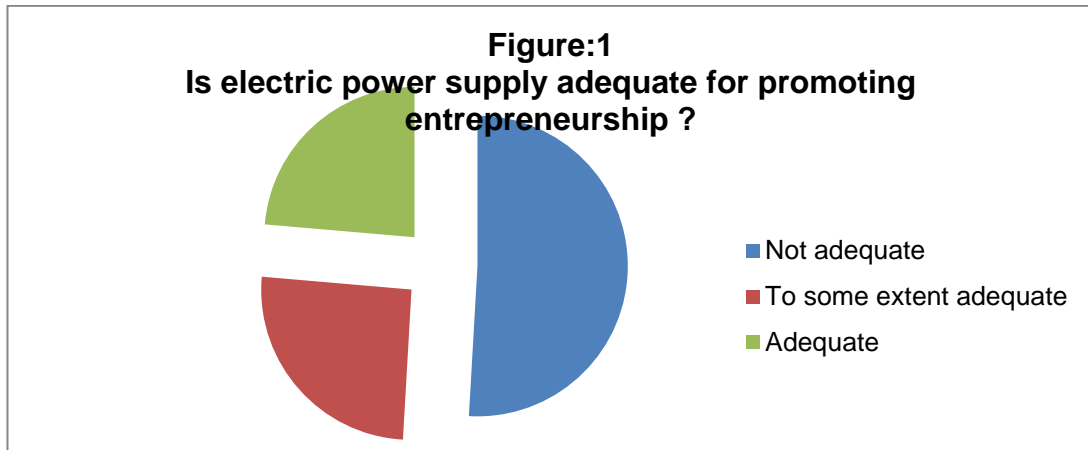
To have a better understanding of the problems of entrepreneurship development in Karbi Anglong, a sample size of 55 entrepreneurs operating small enterprises have been interviewed. The sample respondents have reported that they have to face a lot of problems from demand as well as supply side in executing income generating entrepreneurial activities. The problems on the way of entrepreneurship development are analyzed below:

- **Power:** Basic infrastructural facilities viz. power, marketing, communication, transportation etc. are very essential for promoting entrepreneurship. Power is one of the important components of infrastructural facilities to promote entrepreneurship. Electricity is mainly used in small scale industries and agro-based industries in the study area. Low voltage, load shedding are the main problems faced by the entrepreneurs. The responses of the sample respondents about the adequacy of power supply for entrepreneurial activities are depicted in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1: Perception of the Sample Respondents in regard to Power Supply

Question	Nature of Response	Frequency (N=55)	Percentage
Is electric power supply adequate for promoting entrepreneurship?	Adequate	13	23.63
	Not adequate	28	50.9
	To some extent adequate	14	25.45

Source: Author's compilation from Field Study



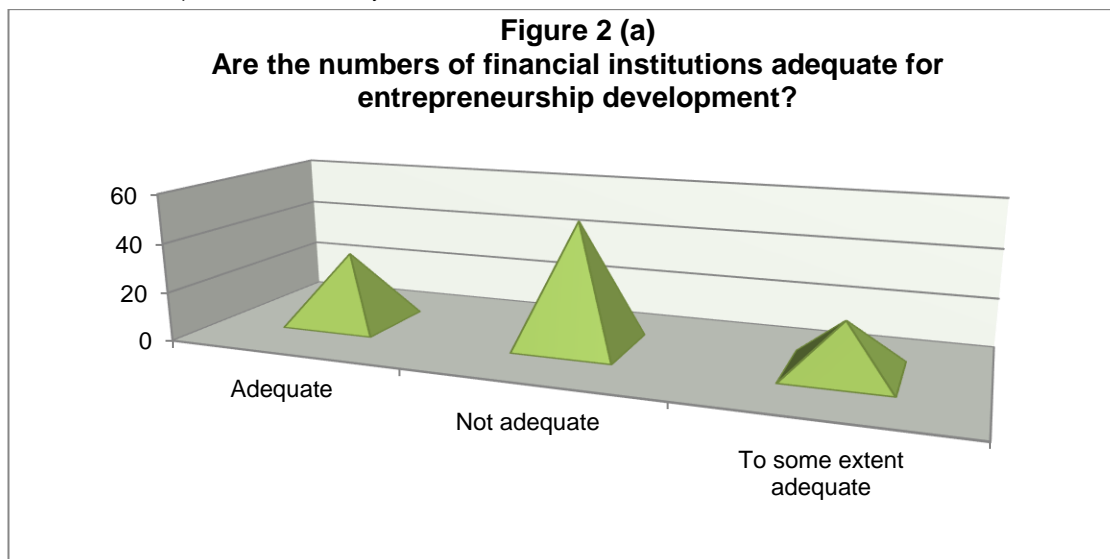
The data shown in table 1 indicates that out of 55 respondents, 13 (23.63%) respondents are of the opinion that power supply is adequate while 28 (50.9%) respondents opine that power supply is not adequate and remaining 14 (25.45%) respondents are of the opinion that power supply is to some extent adequate in the study area to promote entrepreneurship.

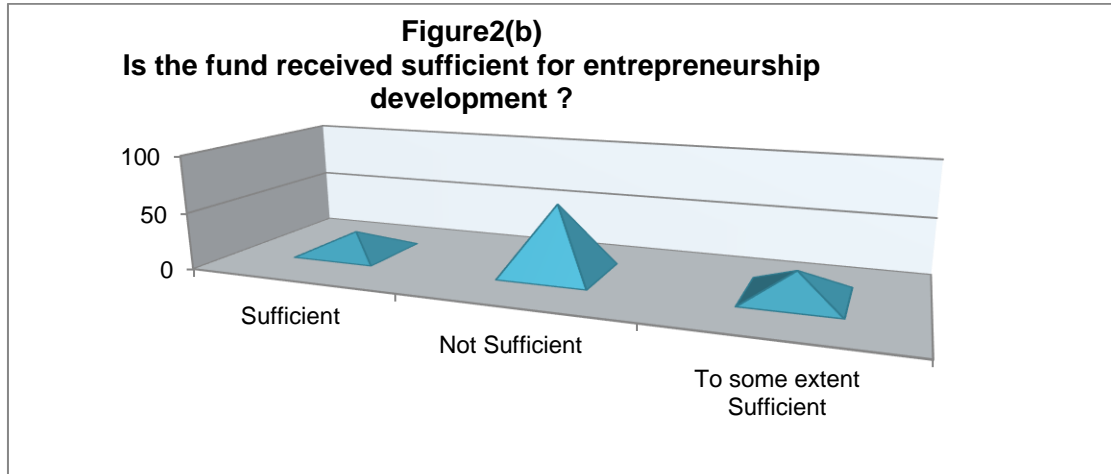
- Financial Problem:** Scarcity of funds is another important problem that makes hindrance in entrepreneurship development. Insufficient fund and inadequate bank loan facilities are the two main financial challenges for the entrepreneurs in the study area. Besides, the extension service of bank is not sufficient. A few of the respondents have not received any bank loans. They are operating their businesses with their own capital.

Table 2: Perception of the Sample Respondents in regard to Fund and Financial Service

Question	Nature of Response	Frequency (N=55)	Percentage
Are the numbers of financial institutions adequate for entrepreneurship development?	Adequate	16	29.09
	Not adequate	28	50.9
	To some extent adequate	11	20
Is the fund received sufficient for entrepreneurship development?	Sufficient	10	18.18
	Not Sufficient	33	60
	To some extent Sufficient	12	21.81

Source: Author's compilation from Field Study





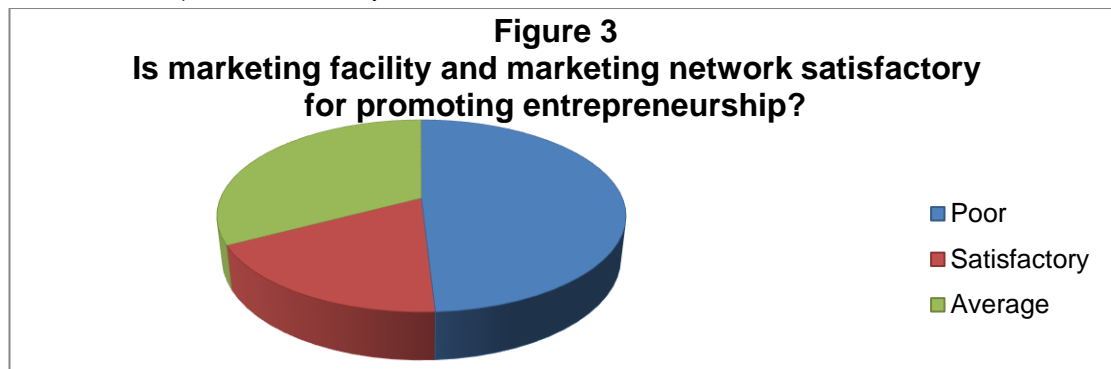
In regard to adequacy of the number of financial institutions for entrepreneurship development, majority of the respondents (50.9%) states that it is not adequate while 16 respondents (29.09%) opine that it is not adequate. Remaining 11 (20%) respondents are of the opinion that number of financial institution is to some extent adequate in the study area to promote entrepreneurship. Further, out of total respondents, 60 percent respondents have not received sufficient fund for their entrepreneurial activities.

- Marketing Problem:** A well-organized market and suitable marketing network is very crucial for creating demand for any good or service. There is lack of sufficient organized marketing facilities in the study area. Most of the entrepreneurs use to sell their product through middlemen and so, they have been deprived of getting actual prices for their products. Table 3 depicts the opinion of the sample respondents about the existing marketing facility and marketing network. It is observed that out of total respondents, 49.09% respondents are of the view that marketing facility to sell their products is poor while 32.73% respondents state that marketing facility is average. Remaining 18.18% respondents tells that marketing facility is satisfactory.

Table 3: Opinion of the Sample Respondents in regard to Marketing Facility

Question	Nature of Response	Frequency (N=55)	Percentage
Is marketing facility and marketing network satisfactory for promoting entrepreneurship?	Poor	27	49.09
	Satisfactory	10	18.18
	Average	18	32.73
Have you received expected market price for your products?	Yes	42	76.36
	No	13	23.63

Source: Author's compilation from Field Study



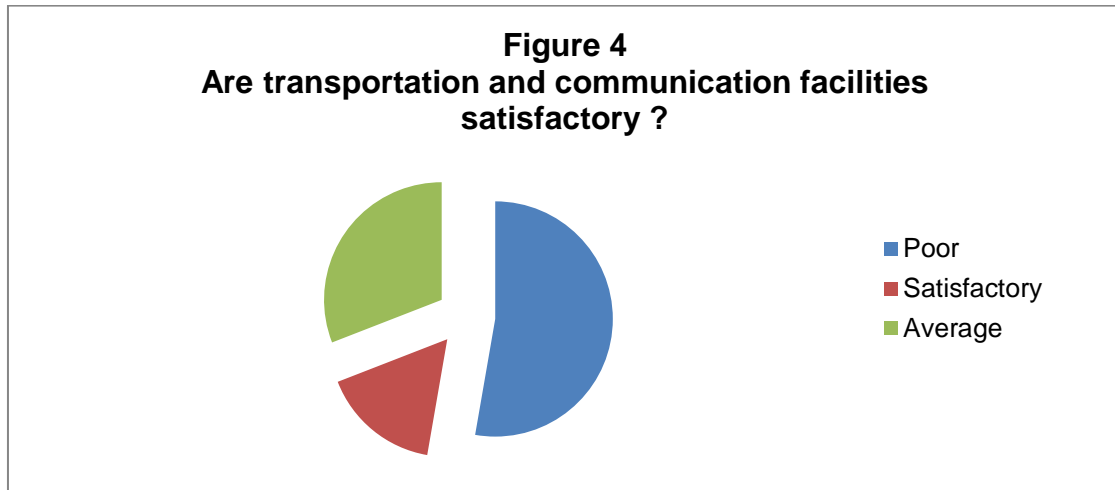
Moreover, majority of the respondents (76.36%) is of the opinion that they do not receive the expected price for their products.

- Transportation Problem:** Transport is directly related to production, distribution and consumption. A good transport system is one of the urgent requirements of entrepreneurship development in an area. Likewise, communication is also important for entrepreneurial activity. The people of Karbi Anglong have to suffer a lot due to inadequate transport facility as well as severe road condition, especially in remote hilly places.

Table 4: Opinion of the Sample Respondents in regard to Transport and Communication Facility

Question	Nature of Response	Frequency (N=55)	Percentage
Are transportation and communication facilities satisfactory?	Poor	29	52.73
	Satisfactory	09	16.36
	Average	17	30.9

Source: Author's compilation from Field Study



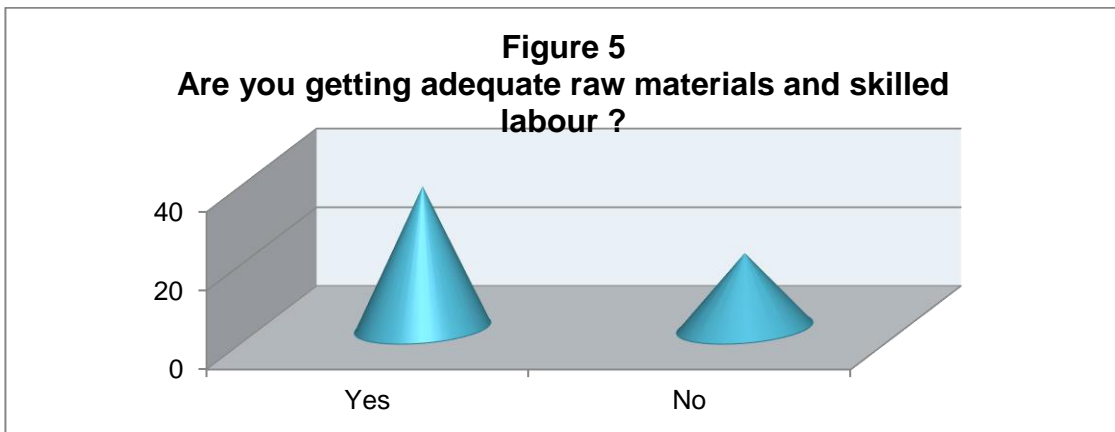
It is seen from the table 4 that majority of the respondents (52.73%) are not satisfied with the existing transport facility while 16.36 % respondents opine that the transport and communication facilities are satisfactory.

- Inadequate Inputs:** To coordinate organizational planning, direction, production and innovation in a planned way, management of skilled labour and adequate raw materials is very crucial

Table 5: Opinion of the Sample Respondents in regard Raw Materials and Skilled labour

Question	Nature of Response	Frequency (N=55)	Percentage
Are you getting adequate raw materials and skilled labour ?	Yes	36	65.45
	No	19	34.54

Source: Author's compilation from Field Study



In regard to adequacy of raw materials and skilled labour, out of total respondents, 65.45% respondents opine that they are getting adequate raw material and skilled labour while 34.54% respondents have negatively answered to it.

- **Inadequate Entrepreneurship Development Programme and Lack of Awareness & Entrepreneurial Motivation:** There is lack of entrepreneurial motivation among the youths of Bokajan block. Besides, entrepreneurship development training programmes organized by Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council are not sufficient to cater to the needs of interested young people. Most of the sample respondents have opined that there is lack of awareness and active entrepreneurial motivation on the part of local people.

Suggestions

- On the basis of our study, we would like to suggest the following measures to improve entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of youths in the study area.
- Entrepreneurship development agencies should come forward to provide skill education and adequate training at regular intervals and other facilities at minimum or no fees.
- Competitive environment should be developed to promote the skills and efficiency of the youths.
- To motivate young people for entrepreneurial activity, govt. should introduce and implement some attractive schemes.
- Financial assistance should be given to young entrepreneurs under various schemes.
- Awareness about schemes, training and financial services among the entrepreneurs should be enhanced. Seminar, workshops, interaction with successful entrepreneurs etc. can be fruitful in this regard.
- Basic infrastructural facilities such as electricity, transportation, banking facilities should be improved for development of entrepreneurship among the youths in the study area.
- A better marketing facility and suitable marketing network are the needs of the hour to promote entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of the youths of Karbi Anglong. Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council should take more initiative in this regard so that the young entrepreneurs can sell their products.

Conclusion

On the basis of the study, it can be concluded that there are many prospects to promote entrepreneurship development for economic empowerment of youths in Karbi Anglong district. Unique combination of cultural diversity of various ethnic groups within the district, tourism and huge natural resources paves a long way to enhance entrepreneurial activities. But despite of having such ample scope for entrepreneurship development, the entrepreneurs are facing several problems like insufficient power supply, lack of potential market, scarcity of funds, inadequate training, low market price etc. Therefore, concerned authority should take necessary steps to mitigate these problems. Entrepreneurship should be developed as a strategy to promote economic empowerment and sustainable development through increasing livelihood diversification. It can be emerged as an instrument for economic empowerment including poverty reduction, income generation, employment generation and development of remote areas.

References

1. Hisrich, R.D., Shepherd, A. & Peter, M.P.(2002) *Entrepreneurship*, McGraw-Hill
2. Khanka, S.S (2006). *Entrepreneurship Development*, S. Chand Ltd.
3. Mali, D. D. (2000). *Training for Entrepreneurship and Self-employment*, 1st Edition, Mittal Publication, New Delhi
4. Ronstadt, R. (1985). *Entrepreneurship: Taste, Cases and Notes*, Lord Publishing
5. Deptt. of Information and Public Relations (Hills), Karbi Anglong. *Information at a Glance, Karbi Anglong District*.

