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ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS AN APPROACH TO REDUCING EDUCATED YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN MIZORAM

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I. Introduction

Education is usually regarded as a means of increasing an individual's chances of obtaining a good job and of creating a better future. Yet the possession of an educational qualification does not always lead to employment. Youth unemployment has become a major issue in India, and this is also true in Mizoram. Many young people in Mizoram complete their studies hoping to find suitable jobs, but often struggle to find employment that matches their qualifications, skills, and interests.

The literacy rate in Mizoram is 98.2 per cent, making it one of the highest in India. Yet even with high literacy levels, job opportunities in the state remain scarce. As a result, many young people struggle to find suitable jobs where they can effectively use their education and skills. A major cause of this issue is the strong tendency among the educated youth to prefer government jobs. Many educated young people prepare for competitive examinations and wait for government jobs since they consider them more secure and stable. Unfortunately, there are only few government job openings, and not all educated youth can find employment in this area. Because of this, some educated youth spend years preparing for these exams yet remain unemployed. There is also the problem of a limited number of jobs in the private and formal sectors. Compared with larger states, Mizoram has a relatively small industrial base, which limits the number of jobs available to young people. Moreover, there may be a mismatch between the skills that young people gain through their education and those that the employers actually require. This makes it difficult for some graduates to find jobs that correspond to their qualifications.

Entrepreneurship development can be a vital means of tackling unemployment among educated youth in Mizoram. Rather than relying completely on government or other salaried jobs, young people should be encouraged to set up their own businesses and consider a variety of income-earning activities. If they receive appropriate training, financial assistance, guidance, and access to markets, they will be in a position to turn their ideas and skills into successful business enterprises. Moreover, entrepreneurship has the potential to create job opportunities and promote economic development in the state. It is therefore important to examine how entrepreneurship development in Mizoram can help young people become more self-reliant and use their skills and abilities to create employment opportunities.

II. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on educated youth unemployment and the role of entrepreneurship in creating employment opportunities in Mizoram. It reviews existing literature on youth unemployment and entrepreneurship, analyses available statistical data on the state of the employment situation, and examines government initiatives to promote entrepreneurship. It also looks at the support provided by the Government of Mizoram to encourage self-employment and help young people start their own businesses. The study relies on secondary sources, including research papers, government reports and

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published statistics, to assess the potential of entrepreneurship as an alternative to regular salaried employment for educated youth in Mizoram.

III. Objectives of the Study

1) To study the trends and patterns of youth unemployment and educated unemployment in Mizoram using available secondary data.
2) To understand how entrepreneurship can provide an alternative to regular salaried jobs for educated young people.
3) To examine the opportunities for entrepreneurship development among educated youth in Mizoram based on existing studies and official reports.
4) To suggest measures that can help promote entrepreneurship as a way to address educated youth unemployment in Mizoram.

IV. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research design based on secondary data. The data is drawn from government reports, statistical handbooks, research papers and existing literature. The data is analysed to find out the level of educated youth unemployment in Mizoram and the extent to which entrepreneurship can provide an alternative source of employment. The study is constrained by the availability of reliable data and does not involve any primary data collection.

V. Review of Literature

Entrepreneurship is seen as a vital means of promoting economic development, creating jobs, and tackling unemployment among young, educated people. Yet, setting up a business involves more than just individual initiative; access to finance, business skills, infrastructure, markets, and government aid are also significant factors. In Mizoram, where industrial development is limited and formal employment opportunities are scarce, entrepreneurship offers an alternative for young, educated individuals seeking work and financial independence. For this reason, it is important to consider the role of government support and business sustainability when examining how entrepreneurship can help address youth unemployment.

Various economists have offered different explanations of entrepreneurship. According to Richard Cantillon in 1755, entrepreneurs were seen as people who assume financial risks, whereas Jean-Baptiste Say in 1803 stressed their function in combining resources such as land, labour, and capital for productive use (Mohanty, 2022; Sharma, 2023). Joseph Schumpeter, in his 1934 work, regarded innovation as a key aspect of entrepreneurship, emphasising the importance of new products, methods, and business ideas. These perspectives demonstrate that entrepreneurship includes risk-taking, resource management, and innovation. It could therefore offer educated young people in Mizoram the chance to apply their knowledge and skills to set up businesses, earn an income, and provide employment for others.

It is especially important for the government to provide support in regions lacking private investment and job opportunities. Assistance with finances, training, and access to markets can enable young people to set up and run their businesses. Halligan and Wills (2008) stress the importance of innovation and cooperation between the government, businesses, and educational institutions. Yet the success of support schemes also depends on how they are implemented. Belitski et al. (2021) have expressed concern that poorly managed programmes might benefit people who are politically connected. Transparent selection procedures and adequate monitoring are therefore essential to ensure that the aid reaches entrepreneurs who deserve it.

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In India, young people are usually considered those aged 15 to 29 years (MoSPI, 2025). Yet obtaining an educational qualification does not always lead to a job. A great many young people have difficulty finding work that matches their qualifications and skills. Changes in technology and in labour demand can also influence employment opportunities (Mishra & Prusty, 2005). In Mizoram, the small industrial base and the limited number of formal jobs make it hard for some educated young people to secure appropriate employment. Entrepreneurship could provide an alternative through self-employment and the creation of additional jobs. However, its success will depend on whether young people have access to the resources, skills and support necessary to set up viable businesses.

Another key point is a business's long-term survival. By enterprise sustainability is meant the capacity of a business to continue operating, manage its costs, earn sufficient income, and remain viable over time (Chaudhary, 2006; Kookueva & Tsertseil, 2020). According to Stam (2008) a supportive business environment is important, and Roshan et al. (2026) stress the need for continued support, finance, and managerial training. It therefore follows that the success of entrepreneurship programmes should not be judged solely by the number of businesses they create, but also by the businesses' ability to survive, their capacity to generate income, and their capability to provide employment.

Ongoing support after the first form of assistance can be just as important. Young entrepreneurs might encounter problems when managing their finances, attracting customers, buying raw materials, and finding markets. Mentoring, follow-up visits, business advice, and assistance in gaining access to markets could help them address these difficulties. It is possible to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of government programmes by examining whether entrepreneurs receive such support and whether their businesses remain in operation.

Infrastructure and the country's geographical features also affect business development. Ghani, Kerr, and O'Connell (2014) highlight the value of both infrastructure and education in promoting entrepreneurship in India. In Mizoram, the mountainous landscape, transportation difficulties, and a lack of industrial development might lead to higher business costs and limit access to markets. On the other hand, sectors such as agriculture, food processing, tourism, and handicrafts offer opportunities for young entrepreneurs. With suitable training, financial help and access to markets, they can turn these opportunities into viable businesses.

While the current body of literature acknowledges the potential of entrepreneurship to promote self-employment and economic development, more research is needed to examine its role in reducing unemployment among educated young people in Mizoram. Specifically, the accessibility and sufficiency of government aid, the difficulties young entrepreneurs encounter, the availability of support after programme completion, and the long-term sustainability of their businesses all require further investigation.

VI. Analysis and Discussion

Unemployment remains an issue in India, especially among educated youth, who find it very difficult to secure jobs appropriate to their qualifications and skills. The PLFS shows the unemployment rate among the population aged 15 and above was 3.2% in 2022 to 2023. The rate in Mizoram was 2.2% according to the NITI Aayog's Summary Report on the State of Mizoram. These are the broad figures and do not really capture the extent of the employment problem faced by educated youth.

The Statistical Handbook of Mizoram 2024 (published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics) goes further in this regard with data on employment exchange registrations. The total number of registered job seekers has come down from 9,803 in 2022 to 2023 to 6,770 in 2023 to 2024. Registrations of graduates in the Arts, Science and Commerce streams

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have increased dramatically from 90 to 1,035, and those of post-graduates in the same streams have increased from 251 to 458. Again, these figures do not tell us anything about the actual level of unemployment among the state's educated youth, but they do point the need to examine the employment opportunities available to them.

The employment structure in Mizoram is also worth noting. The data shows 45.7% of the workforce in the service sector, 43.1% in agriculture and 5.4% in manufacturing. Hence, employment is predominantly in the service and agricultural sectors with a very small proportion in manufacturing. Given this employment structure, it is vital to consider the various options available to provide appropriate employment for the state's educated youth.

A CEDA report also notes that the labour force participation rate of the 15 to 29 years group in Mizoram has fallen from 32.1% in 2018 to 2019 to 28.4% in 2022 to 2023. That gives us a broader picture of youth participation in the labour market, but it does not tell us how many educated youth are unemployed or why the participation rate has declined. The same applies to employment exchange registrations: they do not capture all unemployment, as not all unemployed people register with employment exchanges. The change in registration numbers alone cannot explain the employment situation of educated youth.

Entrepreneurship is certainly worth considering as an alternative to the traditional route of salaried employment. It would allow educated youth to put their knowledge and skills to earn an income, set up their own businesses, and create employment for others. The success of entrepreneurship, of course, is contingent on a number of factors, such as access to finance, training, government support, and markets. It is therefore important to examine the available opportunities and the problems young entrepreneurs face to gain a real sense of entrepreneurship's potential as a solution to educated youth unemployment in Mizoram.

VII. Entrepreneurship Opportunities and Government Support in Mizoram

The Government of Mizoram has been promoting entrepreneurship through the Mizoram Startup Mission (MSUM), established in 2017. The Mizoram Startup Hub in Aizawl also provides support to budding entrepreneurs through mentoring, training, and other amenities. These are key initiatives for educated youth, who often find it very difficult to secure a regular salaried job.

1) **Growth and Opportunities:** As per the 2024 to 2025 figures for the startup ecosystem in Mizoram, the state has over 40 DPIIT-registered startups and more than 350 registered entrepreneurs. Over 30 of the startups have women as founders. The reported funding is ₹75 lakh for the 2024 to 2025 period and over ₹700 lakh since 2017. The ecosystem has also reportedly created over 10,000 jobs.

   Major areas of entrepreneurship in Mizoram are agro-based industries, food processing, IT services, agri-tech, renewable energy, handloom and handicrafts. They are all areas where local resources can be utilised, traditional skills can be promoted, and new businesses can be developed.
2) **Government Support:** The Government supports entrepreneurs via funding schemes, incubation centres and skill development programmes. There are funding schemes such as Mizoram Kailawn, Mizoram Rahbi and the Startup Ignition Fund which provide financial assistance to eligible entrepreneurs at various stages of business development. There are eight incubation centres in the state which provide mentorship, training and networking. There are also various entrepreneurship education and awareness programmes to encourage young people to pursue entrepreneurship.
3) **Relevance to Educated Youth Unemployment:** These schemes can be of great benefit to the educated young people to acquire business skills, become self-employed and, in turn, create employment for others. There are a number of hurdles that could impede the success of such ventures, including limited access to finance, lack of hands-on experience,

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poor infrastructure, and difficulty getting to market. The degree to which entrepreneurship can reduce the problem of youth unemployment among the educated is therefore not simply a function of how many businesses are created but of how many of those businesses are able to survive, grow and generate sustainable employment over time.

VIII. Recommendations and Suggestions

It is important for the government to take steps towards helping young entrepreneurs access markets and sell their products more easily. Young entrepreneurs need assistance in promoting their products through exhibitions, digital platforms, and broader market linkages. There needs to be greater support for local industries such as agriculture, food processing, tourism, handloom, handicrafts, and IT, as these could be areas where educated youth could enter business. Proper monitoring of the schemes is also needed to ensure that the support actually goes to the people it is intended for. The success of the schemes has to be measured not just by the number of businesses that get started, but by the number that survive, the income they generate, and the employment they create. Better employment data is also required to gain a clearer picture of the situation of educated unemployed youth and to assess the long-term impact of the government's entrepreneurship schemes.

Future research could involve collecting primary data from young entrepreneurs in Mizoram to understand their experiences, the problems they are encountering, and the effectiveness of the government's support. It could also examine whether businesses that have received government support are more likely to survive and generate employment. Such research would be valuable in identifying gaps in current programmes and suggesting ways to make entrepreneurship a more viable proposition for the educated youth of Mizoram.

IX. Conclusion

Educated youth unemployment remains a problem in Mizoram, given the state's high literacy rate and the limited scope for formal employment. Entrepreneurship development can provide an alternative to salaried employment, enabling young people to set up a business, become self-reliant and create employment for others.

There are government initiatives in place, such as the Mizoram Kailawn, Mizoram Startup Mission and other entrepreneurship schemes, which offer opportunities through financial assistance, training, and guidance. The success of the venture will depend on a number of factors, including finance, practical skills, market access, and infrastructure.

Entrepreneurship alone should not be seen as a solution for unemployment. It will only work to the extent that there is ongoing government support, access to markets, and the long-term sustainability of the enterprises. With the right planning and institutional support, it can be a useful tool for tackling unemployment among educated youth and promoting development in Mizoram.

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