

WAYSIDE STALLS IN LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT OF ASSAM: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF INFORMAL RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT:

Informal economy is a striking factor in rural India to support livelihood, especially where there is agrarian uncertainty and less formal jobs. This paper focuses on economic form, contribution of wayside stalls to livelihood, and developmental importance of wayside stalls in Lakhimpur district of Assam. The paper examines the variations in income, diversification of products sold, cost structures, and participation by the entrepreneurs based on primary data collected during field visit and interviews of 25 wayside stall operators combined with secondary data comprising of government reports and academic studies. The results indicate that wayside stalls, although using low-capital and informal structures do yield a stable auxiliary income, enhance agricultural connections of the region, and more young educated rural population is being pulled into the value-added sphere. The paper contends that wayside stalls help bring localized economic recovery, through diversification of rural livelihood, lessening of market intermediaries and increasing income resilience. Policy recommendations include recognition of formality, access to credit, skill training, and infrastructure as a way of enhancing sustainability of informal businesses operating in rural areas.

KEYWORDS: *Informal Economy, Wayside Stalls, Rural Entrepreneurship, Assam, Livelihood Diversification, Economic Turnaround.*

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