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Emerging landscape of agri-startups in India with special reference to Assam

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Abstract

The landscape of Agri startups in India is undergoing rapid transformation, propelled by increased investments, technological advancement, and proactive government initiatives. The growth trajectory of startups typically progresses throughout the stages of ideation, concept development, commitment, validation, scaling and establishment. Funding sources evolved accordingly, beginning with pre seed and seed stages, followed by early-stage deals, late-stage financing, bridge loans, mezzanine finance, and ultimately, Initial Public Offerings (IPO). The present study is based on data collected from both primary and secondary sources. Eight major Agri startup sectors were identified, with Agri tech accounts for the highest share (42 per cent), followed by food processing (17 per cent) and organic agriculture (15 per cent), while other sector include horticulture, animal husbandry and dairy. Maharashtra leads the nation with 1,363 Agri startups, followed by Gujrat (700) and Karnataka (621), Where Assam ranks seventeen with 124 startups. An analysis of funding received by startups between 2016 to 2024 revealed a substantial annual growth rate of 26.60 per cent, which is statistically significant at 1 per cent level. However, the number of startups founded each year showed a comparatively lower growth rate of 9.43 per cent, also significant at the 1 per cent level. Funding data sourced from the Tracxn database indicated that Agri startups collectively received approximately USD 1.6 billion in 2024. Forecast projections suggest this figure will rise to USD 1.31 billion in 2025 and may reach USD 4.30 billion by 2030, highlighting a strong upward trajectory. Details of 21 Agri startups from Assam are also presented. Despite challenges, continuous policy support, institutional strengthening, and entrepreneurial enthusiasm are expected to accelerate sectoral growth and enable Agri startups to make a sustainable contribution to Indian Economy.

Keywords: Agri Startups, Agri Tech, Startup Ecosystem, Funding Trends, Assam, Growth Rate, Policy Support

Introduction

A startup venture refers to a newly established business in its initial phase of operations, typically funded by an individual or small group of individuals. It represents a young, innovative and scalable business model driven by technology and innovation, wherein founders develop products or services to meet emerging market demands either by disrupting existing industries or by creating entirely new markets. Startups transform innovative ideas into commercial enterprises (Babu and Sridevi, 2019) [3].

The landscape of Agri startups in India is rapidly evolving, marked by substantial growth in investments and increasing government support (Kumar *et al.*, 2024) ^[8]. As the saying goes, "big things come in small packages", which holds true for the emerging startup ecosystem. The startups are proving to be the change engines of the world. These small startup companies are revolutionizing their industries with new ideas and the development of disruptive technologies (Anand and Raj, 2019) ^[2]. As India celebrates its 77th year of independence, the nation recognizes its growing influence in the global entrepreneurial area. From a nascent market, India has emerged as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, encompassing over 3.1 million startups, of which approximately 0.13 million are recognized by the government of India. These enterprises spanning 806 districts and include 107 unicorns, collectively valued at around \$350 billion-a testament to the nation remarkable progress over the past decade. Notably, since 2017-2018, the number of unicorns has surged by 66%, with 42 technology-driven startups attaining unicorn status in 2021-2022 alone.

These startups operate across diverse sectors, including fintech, Agri tech, health tech, attracting significant global investors interest (Kumar *et al.*, 2024)^[8].

Indian Agri tech start-ups are pioneering technological innovations to enhance agricultural supply chains through the integration of internet services, big data analytics, digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT). Their role becomes particularly vital during Covid-19 pandemic, when supply chain disruptions posed major challenges. Amid panic-induced bulk purchasing and artificial scarcity. Agri tech start-ups ensured continuity by effectively linking farmers, producers, distributors, retailers, and consumers (Adhya and Sahoo, 2022) [1]. These enterprises now leverage advanced technologies to address critical issues related to food security, rural livelihoods, and environmental sustainability (Kumar *et al.*, 2024) [8].

Regions like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh have emerged as major hubs for Agri-startup activity (K. N. R. Kumar *et al.*, 2024) ^[8], while Rajasthan has established itself a centre for technology driven entrepreneurs (Beniwal and Mathur, 2023) ^[5]. The government of India has introduced various initiatives to foster entrepreneurship in agriculture, including improve access to resources, funding and market linkages (Beniwal and Mathur, 2023) ^[5]. However, despite such efforts, Indian Agri startups continue to face significant challenges-particularly inadequate funding, limited access to venture capital, and an underdeveloped startup ecosystem. (K. N. R. Kumar *et al.*, 2024) ^[8], Nevertheless, they remain pivotal in transforming Indian agriculture and enhancing farmer's livelihood (Yadav *et al.*, 2022) ^[16].

Growth Stages of a Startup



Funding Stages of a Startup



Research Objectives

To keep in view the overall discussions, the following objectives have been developed for the study;

- 1. Analyse trend and growth pattern in Indian startups
- To Identify existing Agri startups in assam and their focus areas
- To propose strategies/suggestions for fostering robust startup ecosystem

Material and Methods Data Collection

The data collection completely retrieved from secondary sources such government websites, private websites, published research journals, newspaper. Also, data related to startups in Assam collected from North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATEHUB) an incubator of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat-13.

Data Analysis

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Tabulation and basic statistical tools were employed for this purpose.
- **Growth Rate:** To see that Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) was calculated from 2016 to 2024 for funding in Agri-tech startups as well as the number of Agri-tech startups founded each year from 2016 to 2024.

Forecast Method

Historical funding data from 2010 to 2024 were analysed for growth trends. A log-linear regression model was fitted to

the natural logarithm of annual funding, with year as the independent variable. This approach models exponential growth as;

 $log (Funding) = a + b \times Year$

equivalent to Funding = $ea + b \times Year$

Funding = $ea + b \times Year$

Forecast Calculation

Using the fitted regression equation, forecasts for 2025 to 2030 were generated by applying the model to future years. The predicted funding values were then converted back from log scale to the original units.

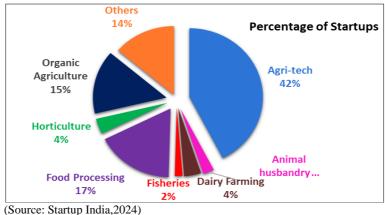
Results

Key Sectors in Agri Startups in India

- 1. Agri tech: This sector includes Agri inputs, farm management solutions, Agri fintech, precision agriculture, supply chain management, market linkage platforms etc.
- 2. Animal husbandry
- 3. Dairy
- 4. Fisheries
- Food processing
- 6. Horticulture
- 7. Organic Agriculture
- 8. Others

(Source: Startup India, 2025)

Sector Wise Number of Agri Startups in India



(Source, Startup Ilidia,2024)

Fig 1: Sector Wise Number of Agri Startups in India

The pie chart above (Figure 1) clearly illustrates that Agritech startups represent the largest segment, comprising approximately 2987 startups recognized by the DPIIT in 2025. This was followed by the food processing sector, which accounts for about 17 percent with 1209 startups. Next was organic agriculture, consisting of 1053 startups. The dairy sector holds 4 percent, while animal husbandry

and fisheries represent 2 percent, respectively. Additionally, other allied sector startups make up about 14 percent, totalling around 968 startups, as recognized by DPIIT in 2025.

Top DPIIT Recognized Number of Agri Startups in India

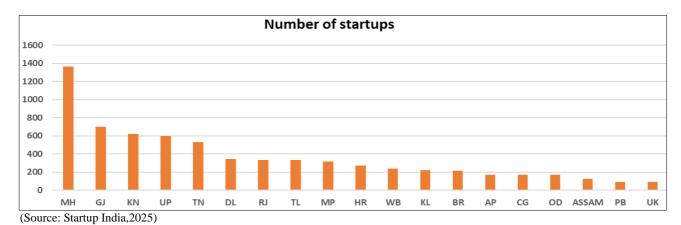
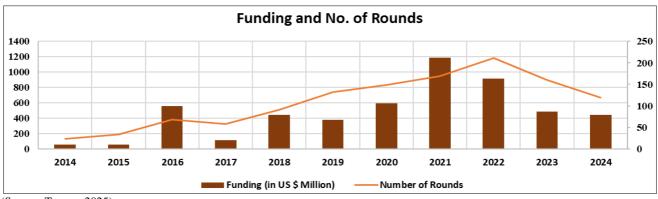


Fig 2: Top DPIIT Recognized Number of Agri Startups in India

This data above (Figure 2) is compiled from Startup India and includes information on states recognized by the DPIIT for their startups. Maharashtra leads the list with the highest number of agri-tech startups, totalling 1363. It is followed by Gujarat with 700 startups in second place, and Karnataka in third with 621. Uttar Pradesh ranks fourth with 596

startups. Assam was in the seventeenth position with 124 startups, followed closely by Punjab with 91 and Uttarakhand with 89.

Investment in Agri Tech Startups in India from 2016 to 2024



(Source: Tracxn, 2025)

Fig 3: Investment in Agri Tech Startups in India from 2016 to 2024

There was no consolidated data available regarding the exact amount of funding received by agritech startups in India over the years. While some information can be found online, the most reliable data was compiled from the Tracxn website. As per figure 3, according to their reports, in 2021, agritech startups received approximately \$1.16 billion in funding. This surge can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a nationwide lockdown. During this time, many people in rural areas began to understand the value of digitalization, allowing farmers to benefit from digital agriculture. They also accessed loans for crop production and received advisory services from startups

through mobile internet facilities. This newfound awareness prompted many startups to raise funds by capitalizing on the emerging business opportunities. However, funding levels subsequently declined in the following years due to uncertainties in the agribusiness sector, leading venture capitalists to lose interest in investing in this area. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for funding received from 2014 to 2024 was calculated to be 26.60 per cent, significant at 1 per cent level of significance.

Forecasting of Fundings in Agri Startups in India

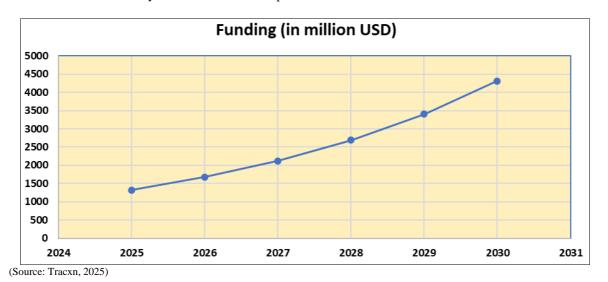


Fig 4: Forecasting of Fundings in Agri Startups in India

It is evident from figure 4 that Indian Agri startups received USD 443 million in funding during the year. After analysing the dataset of funding trends from 2018 to 2024, the forecasting results indicate that in 2025, Agri startups are projected to receive around USD1.32 billion, which is comparable to funding received in 2021. The forecast further suggested an upward growth trajectory, estimating

that by 2030, Agri startups may secure funding of approximately USD 4.30 billion. However, it should be noted that this is a projected analysis based on recent funding trends, and actual figures may vary in the future due to economical and institutional policies.

Year Wise number of Agri Startups Founded in India

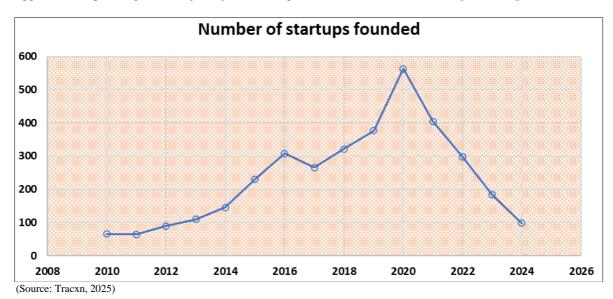


Fig 5: Year Wise number of Agri Startups Founded in India

The graph (Figure 5) reveals that in 2020, the number of Agri startups founded reached its peak at 563. However, a steady decline was observed in the subsequent years, with

405 startups in 2021, 298 in 2022, 183 in 2023 and only 98 in 2024. The annual growth rate of Agri startup formation during this period was 9.43, which is significant at the 1 per

cent level, indicating a decline trend and limited overall growth in the number of new startups.

Discussion

Technical brief of Agri and allied sector startups in Assam

Table 1 below lists several Agri startups operating in Assam. The data on these Agri startups were collected in person by the authors from the North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATEHUB), located in Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat-13. These startups received initial or subsequent funding support at various stages.

Table 1: List of Agri and allied sector startups in Assam which got fund support from NEATEHUB, AAU, Jorhat-13

Sl. No.	Name of Startup	Location	Focus Area	Technical Brief
1	Brightcrop Agro Products Private Limited	Guwahati	Post Harvest Technology	The startup taken initiatives to establish a traceability mechanism for certified organic food products, creating transparent linkages among stakeholders through a comprehensive "farm to fork" monitoring system. This ensures the adoption of proper pre-harvest and post-harvest practices, along with effective processing, quality assurance and food safety measures. utilizing QR code technology, each product packets carry unique code that consumers can scan using any smartphone to access a detailed traceability map, including the name and address of farmers involved.
2	Jeev Anksh Eco Products (P) Ltd.	Guwahati	Supply Chain Management	The startup focuses on creating forward market linkages for organic food products and organic farmers of Northeast India using digital technologies. It also provides technical and technological support to farmers to promote Sustainable Agricultural practices.
4	Symbiotic Foods Pvt. Ltd.	Sonitpur	Animal Husbandry	The startup aims to develop infrastructure for Artificial Insemination (AI) using Liquid Semen to enhance the quality of piglet production among small-scale pig breeders in Assam. Its vision is to provide high quality liquid semen directly to farmer's doorstep.
5	Vreen Spro Solutions LLP	Guwahati, Assam	Post Harvest Technology	The Startup has established a Papain Extraction Unit and is also engaged in the value addition of papaya residues. It processes raw papaya and produces Papain Powder, Enzyme & Tutti Fruti. Primarily, the company focuses on extracting PAPAIN from the latex, the milky fluid of raw papaya to obtain higher yields and superior quality enzymes. Additionally, the papaya used for Papin extraction is further processed to produce truti-fruti, reducing agricultural waste and increasing farmer's income.
6	Jayatu Organics Products LLP	Nalbari	Agri Inputs	The startup manufactures Vermicompost, enriched vermicompost and vermiwash biopesticides, markets the secondary agricultural products that support organic farming. It aims to produce and supply high quality vermicompost and vermiwashed biopesticides at affordable prices by utilizing indigenously derived, plant-based botanicals in the production process.
7	Utoru Conglomerate LLP	Nalbari	Food Processing and Value Addition	The startup produces Nutri rich beverages made from indigenous minor fruits of Assam. These fruits are high nutritious but are seasonal and rarely available in urban areas. Utoru aims to produce and create a market for these unique indigenous fruit juice. These Nutri-rich RTS (ready-to-serve) beverages are prepared and preserved without the use of any chemical preservatives.
8	Pasoli Agro Industry Pvt. Ltd.	Jorhat	Supply Chain Management	The startups is working to streamline the supply chain of vegetables, fruits, fish and meat market by integrating advanced technologies across various stages; including cold chain system, pack house, sorting & grading, production inputs, doorstep delivery, cloud inventory management software, production management software etc.
9	Kraftinn Home Decor India Pvt. Ltd.	Jorhat	Allied Sector	Kraftinn is engaged in the procurement of bamboo-based handicrafts from local artisans and the manufacturing of a range of eco-friendly lifestyle products. The startup began its journey by designing bamboo lamps and has since expanded into other categories such as storage, gardening, and home improvement products, using a variety of sustainable materials including bamboo, water-hyacinth, jute, etc.
10	Chamuah Engineering and Machineries Pvt. Ltd.	Guwahati	Farm Mechanization	The startup is engaged in the manufacturing of technology advanced agricultural tools and implements design to meet the diverse need of farmers. Keeping environmental concerns and the efficiency of electric systems over fossil fuel engines in mind. Chamuah Technologies has developed low-cost, battery-operated equipment that enables farmers to adopt affordable, sustainable technologies and reduce production costs.
11	Manohar Agro Services LLP	Sitajakhala	Animal Feed	The Startup aims to provide dairy farmers with year-round access to green fodder, enhancing animal health and reducing production cost. It focuses to making dairy farming more profitable, thereby contributing to the overall growth and development of the dairy sector in Assam and the NE.
12	Maitrayee Tea LLP	Sivasagar		This startup is engaging in the manufacturing Agarwood tea; a herbal beverage with immense market potential due to its numerous health benefits. Taking advantage of its region's abundant Agarwood plantation, Maitrayee Tea has successfully ventured into producing premium quality tea deriving from Agarwood.
13	Nutrixeric LLP	Guwahati	Food Processing and Value	Nutrixeric has developed a low-cost dehydrator aimed at preserving and supplying dehydrated ethnic and indigenous fruits, vegetables and herbs from the northern

			Addition	region throughout the year. This initiative ensures year-round availability of these products at affordable prices, making them easily accessible to consumers.
15	Pure Seed Agro Products LLP	Guwahati	Food Processing and Value Addition	The startup produces Fresh Mushroom and Value-added mushroom products. It aims to develop a comprehensive line of mushroom-based value-added products using advanced processing technologies.
16	Bor Noi Organics Pvt. Ltd.	Guwahati	Food Processing and Value Addition	Bor Noi Organics processes and manufactures instant food products such as breakfast cereal and cookies made from organically grown Bau Rice, which is cultivated abundantly in Assam.
17	Moriesh Duck LLP	Jorhat	Animal Husbandry	Moriesh Duck sources duck through contract farming, processes them using mechanised slaughtering facilities, and provides frozen duck meat, which is distributed and sold through cold chain.
18	Agrithink Services LLP	Guwahati	IoT in Agriculture	The startup Provides smart agriculture solutions designed to monitor and manage key field parameters, thereby enriching crop yield and overall productivity. Its App based/web-based platforms offer a range of innovations, including a Smart Soil Health Management System, a patented Smart Micro-climate Monitoring and Control System, Live and in-situ expert service/consultancy service for Agri and allied sectors.
19	Tender Buds Teas and Crafts Pvt. Ltd.	Guwahati	Food Processing and Value Addition	The startup Produces speciality and unique tea blend that promote health, wellness and an enriching tea drinking experience. Using a premium tea as the base, it incorporates locally sourced herbs and spices from the NE region to create a variety of innovative blends such as blue tea, strawberry tea, Insulin plant tea, Hibiscus Tea, Bhoot Jolokia Tea etc.
20	AmbyGold Manorama Foods Pvt. Ltd.	Guwahati	Food Processing and Value Addition	The startup specializes in developing functional foods based on indigenous crops and superfood ingredients. Its primary focus is on processing fibre rich food products enriched with vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients. It also functions as community driven enterprise, working to empower and promote grass root level marginal farmers across the North East region.
21	Innotech Agri Postikam Pvt. Ltd.	Jorhat	Food Processing and Value Addition	A technology has been developed for producing mushroom naturally fortified with Vitamin D; the first non-GMO and natural vehicle for vitamin D supplementation. The proof of concept has been successfully established, with over 200% enhancement in vitamin D content validated by third party accredited laboratory. The project received funding from BIRAC (BIG), Department of Biotechnology, for initial laboratory and academic studies. This patented process requires no post-harvest modification, and the fortified mushroom retain their enhanced Vitamin D content even after 20 days of storage, maintaining up to 86% of the concentration after various styles of Indian cooking.

Challenges faced by Agri startups

- 1. Lack of Business Knowledge: Many individuals prefer stable jobs in the private or government sectors, which provide a steady income and a sense of security. As a result, most people are resistant to the idea of starting a new business, viewing it as a risky venture that may require a significant financial investment.
- 2. Lack of Seed Funds: Numerous promising business ideas fail to materialize due to insufficient funding necessary to develop them into viable prototypes. This inability to secure adequate financing is a major issue that prevents many innovative ideas from becoming a reality.
- 3. Lack of Mentorship and Limited Incubation Centres: There are very few mentors available to young entrepreneurs who need crucial technological guidance during the initial stages of their ventures. Additionally, the limited number of incubation centres hampers access to necessary support, funding, and knowledge essential for scaling up a business.
- 4. Limited Access to Markets: In India, the availability of regulated markets is quite low, and many existing ones suffer from poor management. The unstructured nature of markets, along with various unethical practices, poses challenges for new businesses aiming for long-term survival. As these nascent businesses develop their products, they often face high costs, which are difficult to cover, especially when consumers-largely from mid- to low-income brackets-

- tend to prefer established products at lower prices, making it harder for new entrants to compete.
- 5. Investor Reluctance Towards High-Risk Ventures: Agriculture startups are often viewed as uncertain investments, with low returns in their early phases. Investors generally consider these sectors too risky after experiencing a significant drop in investments in Agri startups since 2021.
- 6. Limited Knowledge of Available Technology: Many new entrepreneurs lack awareness of the latest technological advancements, which hinders their ability to adapt and stay competitive, often resulting in losses.
- 7. Insufficient Government Support: While the government has initiated various programs to support the startup ecosystem, their impact on the ground is minimal. Many states do not have dedicated startup policies or prioritize the promotion of startup culture, leading to significant challenges for emerging businesses.

Suggestion for Agri Startups

1. The adaptation of innovation and technology addresses the demands of modern life and the rapidly changing landscape of technology. The introduction of various AI software helps propel a country forward. By adopting new and updated technologies, as well as creating innovative ideas, business models, and products, companies can experience rapid growth.

- 2. Fostering public-private partnerships is crucial for enhancing today's businesses at their highest potential. This collaboration is essential in the current environment, as it creates a favourable ecosystem within the country, attracts foreign collaborations, and brings diverse expertise and funding across various fields, which in turn supports the rapid growth of startups.
- 3. Strengthening incubation centres and accelerators, along with arranging more mentorship programs, will assist startups in sustaining their businesses. These initiatives provide essential technical and financial support during the critical early stages of their journey, leading to successful business development.
- 4. The government needs to implement more dedicated policies for startups. This includes increasing seed funding, introducing new dedicated funds for startups, and developing enhanced infrastructure facilities. These efforts will create a more favourable environment for startups to operate effectively.
- Access to new market systems will help startups explore additional market opportunities. By investing more time and resources into market research and development studies, they can create new products and expand their consumer base.
- Improving access to funding opportunities will enable startups to grow rapidly and expand their businesses effectively.

Benefits of Linking MSMEs with Startups

- 1. Startups can leverage new technologies and solutions developed by MSMEs, which helps integrate traditional methods with modern approaches, leading to the creation of more innovative products.
- 2. Collaboration fosters cost-effective innovation. MSMEs can benefit from the research and development expertise of startups, thereby enhancing the innovation culture in the country.
- 3. Startups tend to be more reliant on funding and have a better understanding of the funding environment and investor behaviour. This knowledge can increase access to funding opportunities for MSMEs.
- 4. Innovative products developed through collaboration can attract larger consumer bases, providing both startups and MSMEs with greater market access.
- 5. Startups are often located in urban areas, while MSMEs are primarily rural-based. Rural regions generally have fewer skilled workers, whereas startups have teams filled with skilled professionals. This collaboration allows MSMEs to utilize these specific skill sets to scale up their businesses and address skill gaps.
- 6. The partnership between startups and MSMEs leads to 2. an increase in manufacturing units or the expansion of existing projects, which in turn creates more jobs.
- 7. Startups typically have more formal management structures, whereas MSMEs are often family-run. This can hinder MSME growth. By collaborating with startups, MSMEs can adopt effective management strategies, which promote better business practices and growth
- 8. Increased collaborations in the context of government initiatives can encourage further support from the government to promote such partnerships.

The Reason for States like Maharashtra, Gujrat are having more Number of Startups Compared to Other States having Low Number of Startups

- 1. Favourable Startup Ecosystem: Maharashtra and Gujarat have more dedicated government policies that support the startup ecosystem. They receive a larger amount of grants for seed-stage funding and benefit from an overall ease of doing business. Entrepreneurs in these states also have access to mentorship that aids them during the ideation stage and helps them scale their businesses. Conversely, other states tend to have rigid government approaches towards startups, with fewer supportive policies and a lack of available mentors or expertise for aspiring entrepreneurs.
- 2. Well-Developed Infrastructure: Both Maharashtra and Gujarat enjoy the status of financial hubs and have a favourable business environment characterized by well-connected roads, railways, sea routes, and cargo facilities. This efficient infrastructure boosts the economy and facilitates business operations, allowing for smoother scaling of ventures without significant social or political hindrances.
- 3. Greater Access to Markets: These states benefit from well-developed markets and a strong consumer base. Consumers here are willing to spend more on quality products. In contrast, states with lower startup numbers often have less developed markets and lower consumer income levels, resulting in consumers being more price-sensitive. The rich consumer base in Maharashtra and Gujarat provides startups the opportunity to test their products extensively and gather valuable feedback, aiding in product development and innovation.
- 4. Entrepreneurial Culture: In many other states, there is a prevailing mindset that encourages seeking stable government or private sector jobs, leading to a reluctance to start new businesses. In contrast, Maharashtra and Gujarat foster an entrepreneurial culture where individuals are more inclined to take business initiatives, invest their own funds as seed capital, and work diligently to establish their enterprises. This attitude contributes to greater financial flow into the Indian economy.
- 5. Robust Financial Ecosystem: Mumbai and Gujarat are recognized as business hubs, attracting a higher concentration of venture capitalists and investors. The presence of these financial backers encourages investment in startups, as they are more confident in receiving good returns on their investments. This financial ecosystem significantly contributes to the growth of businesses in these states.

Prospects

There are very few studies conducted on Agri Startups in India, and even fewer in the context of Assam. The available literature on this subject, especially online, is quite limited. furthermore, there is no consolidated database or comprehensive record of the total funding received by Agri startups in India, nor of their exact number. This indicates the need for a detailed review and further research in this field

In recent years, however, Agri startups have been gaining significant popularity among investors, who are increasingly showing interest in supporting small-scale ventures. Most Agri startups are still in their early stages, but many young

entrepreneurs are entering the Agri business sector. This growing sector is expected to expand further in the future and make a sustainable contribution to the Indian economy.

Conclusion

Agri startups are making significant progress each day by adopting sustainable approaches that extend from production to the end consumers. These efforts contribute to more efficient supply chain management. With government support, public-private partnerships, increased investor interest in small startups, and foreign collaborations, the path for Agri startups towards sustainable long-term development is being strengthened, ultimately contributing a substantial share to the economy. Additionally, incubation centers play a crucial role for entrepreneurs by fostering innovation and providing essential support, which benefits both the enterprises and society.

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