



CULTURE AS A CATALYST FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CULTURE-BASED ENTERPRISES IN ASSAM

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Abstract

Culture-based entrepreneurship has increasingly been recognized as a viable pathway for fostering sustainable and inclusive economic development, particularly in regions endowed with rich cultural heritage. This study examines the role of culture as a catalyst for entrepreneurship in Assam, with specific emphasis on enterprises grounded in traditional knowledge systems, indigenous skills, and artistic practices. The results of the study indicate that cultural elements play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial motivation, value creation, and market differentiation. Respondents largely perceive culture as a key source of authenticity, uniqueness, and emotional appeal, which enhances product competitiveness and strengthens regional identity. The analysis further reveals substantial participation of youth and women in culture-based enterprises, underscoring the inclusive and socially empowering nature of cultural entrepreneurship. The study identifies several structural and market-related challenges that constrain enterprise growth, including low demand, limited market access, inadequate branding and promotion, infrastructural constraints, and insufficient institutional support. The findings also reveal a statistically significant relationship between perceptions of cultural value and entrepreneurial performance. However, existing policy measures and institutional interventions remain inadequate and unevenly accessible. The study concludes that although culture constitutes a powerful entrepreneurial resource in Assam, its full economic potential can be realized only through coordinated policy initiatives, strengthened institutional frameworks, and improved market-oriented support mechanisms aimed at enhancing the sustainability of culture-based enterprises.

Keywords: *Culture-based entrepreneurship, Cultural heritage, Indigenous enterprises, cultural value, cultural entrepreneurship.*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a central engine of economic growth, innovation, and employment generation across both developed and developing economies. In emerging economies such as India, entrepreneurial activity assumes heightened importance due to its capacity to address persistent socio-economic challenges, including unemployment, income inequality, and regional disparities in development. Small-scale and locally embedded entrepreneurial initiatives are increasingly viewed as effective instruments for promoting

inclusive growth by enabling self-employment, fostering innovation, and mobilizing underutilized resources.

In recent years, academic discourse and policy frameworks have shifted attention toward alternative forms of entrepreneurship that extend beyond conventional profit-oriented models. Greater emphasis is now placed on sustainability, social inclusion, and the utilization of local knowledge systems and resources. Within this evolving paradigm, culture-based entrepreneurship has gained prominence as a development pathway that integrates economic activity with cultural preservation. Culture-based entrepreneurship encompasses entrepreneurial ventures grounded in cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, indigenous skills, and artistic expressions. These ventures transform cultural resources - such as handloom weaving, handicrafts, folk art, traditional cuisine, music, dance, and design - into marketable goods and services while retaining their symbolic and cultural significance. Unlike mainstream entrepreneurial models that prioritize economic efficiency and scalability, culture-based enterprises pursue a dual orientation that combines economic viability with the preservation and transmission of cultural identity. As such, they operate at the intersection of culture, economy, and society, contributing simultaneously to livelihood generation and cultural sustainability. Cultural resources function not merely as inputs for production but as forms of cultural capital that add authenticity, uniqueness, and emotional value to products and services. These attributes allow culture-based enterprises to differentiate themselves in increasingly competitive markets. The relevance of culture-based entrepreneurship has become particularly pronounced in the context of globalization and rapid technological advancement. While global market integration and mass production have expanded economic opportunities, they have also contributed to the marginalization of traditional cultural practices and local craft systems. Many indigenous skills and artistic traditions face the risk of decline due to changing consumer preferences, lack of intergenerational transmission, and limited economic returns. At the same time, global and domestic markets have witnessed a growing demand for authentic, locally rooted, and culturally meaningful products. Consumers increasingly value originality, ethical production, and cultural narratives, creating niche markets for heritage-based goods and services. Culture-based entrepreneurship responds to this changing economic environment by enabling communities to leverage cultural assets for income generation while safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

The state of Assam is characterized by a rich and diverse cultural landscape shaped by ethnic plurality, historical influences, and geographical location. Cultural expressions in Assam are reflected in its handloom and textile traditions, bamboo and cane crafts, folk music and dance forms, indigenous art practices, and distinctive culinary heritage. These cultural traditions have been transmitted across generations and continue to play a central role in the social and economic lives of local communities. Despite this cultural abundance, Assam continues to face several structural socio-economic challenges, including limited industrial development, high levels of youth unemployment, underemployment in rural areas, and constrained access to national and global markets. In this context, culture-based entrepreneurship presents a viable alternative livelihood strategy, particularly for women and young people who often face barriers to formal employment. By transforming cultural skills into income-generating

activities, cultural enterprises contribute to employment creation, income diversification, and regional economic development, while also strengthening cultural identity and community cohesion. The expansion and sustainability of culture-based enterprises in Assam are constrained by multiple challenges. Many enterprises operate within the informal sector and remain small in scale, limiting their growth potential. Constraints such as low and inconsistent demand, limited market access, inadequate branding and design innovation, infrastructural deficiencies, and insufficient access to finance and institutional support hinder enterprise development. Although various government schemes and development programs aim to promote traditional industries and cultural livelihoods, their implementation and accessibility vary across regions and sectors.

An empirical examination of culture-based entrepreneurship in Assam becomes essential for understanding how cultural resources are mobilized for entrepreneurial activity, how value is created through cultural differentiation, and how market engagement and institutional support influence enterprise sustainability. Such an examination contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of culture in regional development and provides a foundation for designing more effective policy and institutional interventions.

Table 1.1: Contextual Dimensions of Culture-Based Entrepreneurship in Assam

| Dimension | Description | Analytical Relevance |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Cultural Heritage | Encompasses traditional skills, indigenous knowledge systems, artistic expressions, and culturally embedded practices transmitted across generations | Constitutes the primary cultural capital that forms the basis of culture-based entrepreneurial activity |
| Economic Context | Characterized by limited industrial development, employment constraints, and pronounced regional disparities | Creates the necessity for alternative livelihood strategies rooted in local resources |
| Entrepreneurial Orientation | Involves the conversion of cultural skills and heritage-based practices into commercially viable goods and services | Facilitates self-employment, income generation, and enterprise formation |
| Market Dynamics | Reflects increasing consumer demand for authentic, locally produced, and culturally meaningful products | Generates opportunities for niche markets and creative economy engagement |
| Social Inclusion | Participation of women and youth in cultural and heritage-based entrepreneurial activities | Enhances inclusive growth, social empowerment, and community-based development |
| Institutional Environment | Includes government policies, training initiatives, financial support systems, and organizational networks | Determines enterprise sustainability, growth potential, and scalability |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

The conceptual framework explains how culture-based entrepreneurship emerges through the systematic transformation of cultural resources into entrepreneurial outcomes. The framework directly aligns with the research objectives by examining (i) the role of cultural elements in entrepreneurial value creation and (ii) the influence of market and institutional factors on enterprise sustainability.

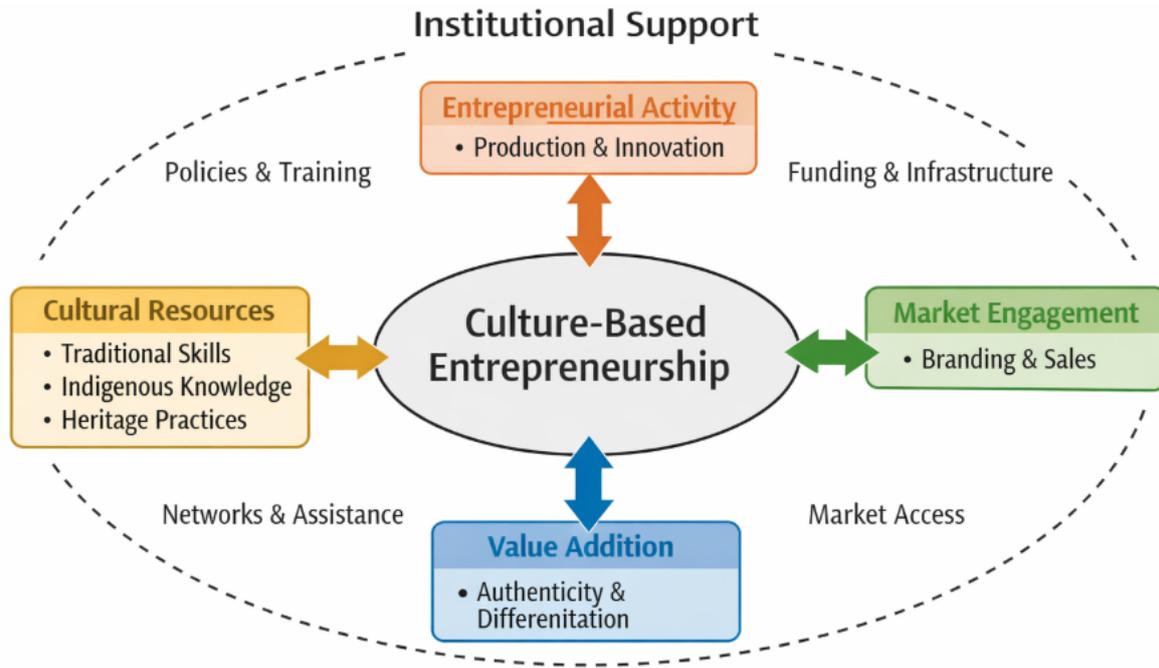


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Culture-Based Entrepreneurship

The framework posits that cultural resources function as the foundational input, which, through entrepreneurial activity, generate value addition and enable market engagement, ultimately leading to sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes. Institutional support operates as an enabling environment that moderates and strengthens these relationships. The framework supports hypotheses that cultural value positively influences entrepreneurial performance and that institutional and market mechanisms significantly affect enterprise sustainability.

Table 1.1: Theoretical Basis of the Conceptual Framework Dimensions

| Dimension | Core Theoretical Basis | Concise Conceptual Explanation | Key References |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Cultural Resources | Cultural Capital Theory | Traditional skills, indigenous knowledge, and heritage-based practices constitute cultural capital that can be mobilized for economic value while preserving cultural identity. | Bourdieu (1986); Throsby (2001) |
| Entrepreneurial Activity | Innovation and Resource Recombination Theory | Entrepreneurship involves organizing and recombining cultural resources to create viable economic ventures | Schumpeter (1934); Audretsch et al. (2006) |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| | | through innovation and enterprise formation. | |
| Value Addition | Differentiation and Cultural Value Theory | Cultural authenticity, uniqueness, and symbolism enhance product differentiation and competitive advantage in niche markets. | Porter (1985); Throsby (2001) |
| Market Engagement | Market Orientation and Creative Economy Theory | Branding, promotion, and distribution mechanisms determine enterprise viability and market reach in cultural industries. | UNCTAD (2010); Kotler (2017) |
| Institutional Support | Institutional Economics | Policies, financial support, and organizational frameworks reduce constraints and enable enterprise sustainability and growth. | North (1990); OECD (2018) |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

2. Review of Literature

The interface between culture and entrepreneurship has received sustained scholarly attention across economics, sociology, management, and development studies. Culture has been conceptualized not only as a set of shared values and meanings but also as a productive resource that shapes entrepreneurial motivation, opportunity recognition, and value creation. Early theoretical accounts of entrepreneurship emphasize innovation and the creative recombination of resources. In this line, **Schumpeter (1934)** positions entrepreneurship as a dynamic process of innovation through “new combinations,” implying that distinctive local resources - including cultural assets - can be reorganized into new economic forms. Complementing this economic perspective, cross-cultural research underlines that cultural orientations influence risk-taking, achievement motivation, individual autonomy, and tolerance for uncertainty, which collectively shape entrepreneurial behaviour and propensity. **Hofstede (2001)** highlights how cultural value systems condition attitudes toward work, innovation, and enterprise, thereby influencing entrepreneurial intentions and institutional environments.

A major advancement in conceptualizing culture within economic life emerged with the notion of **cultural capital**. **Bourdieu (1986)** argues that culture operates as capital through embodied skills, learned competencies, and symbolic assets that can be converted into economic advantage. This conceptualization supports the proposition that traditional skills, indigenous knowledge, and artistic practices—when mobilized within enterprise contexts—function as productive assets rather than residual traditions. Extending this viewpoint into cultural economics, **Throsby (2001)** conceptualizes cultural heritage as carrying both *cultural value* (identity, symbolism, meaning) and *economic value* (income, employment, market returns). This dual-value premise provides a strong theoretical basis for culture-based entrepreneurship,

where enterprise success is linked to balancing commercialization with cultural integrity. Culture has increasingly been recognized as an engine of development through cultural and creative industries. **UNCTAD (2010)** situates creative industries within development strategies by emphasizing employment creation, export potential, and economic diversification, particularly for regions rich in intangible cultural heritage. Similarly, **UNESCO (2013)** frames culture as a driver of sustainable development, highlighting the role of cultural industries in inclusive growth, social cohesion, and heritage safeguarding. Together, these perspectives position culture-based entrepreneurship not as a marginal economic activity but as an integral component of the contemporary creative economy.

At the enterprise level, several studies emphasize that cultural enterprises derive competitive advantage through symbolic and experiential dimensions. In strategic management, **Porter (1985)** explains competitive advantage through differentiation - an idea particularly applicable to cultural goods, where authenticity, uniqueness, craftsmanship, and identity allow products to occupy niche markets. Cultural products often embody meanings beyond functional utility, enabling emotional resonance and perceived exclusivity. However, cultural distinctiveness alone does not guarantee enterprise sustainability. Marketing and innovation literature highlights that market success depends on branding, customer communication, product adaptation, and distribution channels. **Kotler (2017)** emphasizes branding and promotion as mechanisms through which products gain market recognition and loyalty, while **OECD (2018)** stresses the role of networks, digital platforms, and innovation ecosystems in scaling small and creative enterprises.

In Indian literature on culture-based entrepreneurship has largely concentrated on handloom, handicrafts, and cottage industries, emphasizing their role in rural livelihoods and women's participation in economic activity. **Dutt and Sundaram (2018)** underline the livelihood and employment significance of these sectors, particularly for women artisans, while noting recurring constraints such as limited finance, weak market linkage, and low value realization. In northeastern India, geographical remoteness and infrastructural limitations further intensify these challenges. Region-specific research from Assam points to both cultural richness and structural constraints. **Gogoi and Borah (2019)** highlight the livelihood potential of Assamese handloom and craft-based activities, while identifying limitations related to branding, design innovation, and limited exposure to wider markets. These studies collectively suggest that cultural endowments are substantial, but the conversion of cultural assets into sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes requires stronger market integration and institutional facilitation. Despite the expanding body of literature, notable gaps remain. First, many contributions adopt a sector-specific approach (e.g., handloom alone), limiting broader understanding across multiple culture-based enterprise domains (handicrafts, folk arts, traditional food, creative services). Second, micro-level quantitative evidence based on primary survey data remains limited, especially in Assam. Third, market engagement and institutional support are often discussed descriptively rather than integrated into a unified analytical framework that links cultural resources, enterprise processes, and sustainability outcomes. Addressing these gaps requires integrated empirical analysis that captures entrepreneurs' perceptions of cultural value, constraints, and support needs across cultural sectors.

Table 2.1: Key Literature on Culture-Based Entrepreneurship

| Author/Institution (Year) | Thematic Focus | Contribution |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Schumpeter (1934) | Entrepreneurship theory | Entrepreneurship involves innovation through recombination of resources into new economic forms |
| Hofstede (2001) | Culture and behaviour | Cultural values shape attitudes toward risk, autonomy, innovation, and enterprise |
| Bourdieu (1986) | Cultural capital | Skills, knowledge, and symbolic assets operate as capital convertible into advantage |
| Throsby (2001) | Cultural economics | Cultural heritage has both economic and cultural value; commercialization must respect identity |
| UNCTAD (2010) | Creative economy & development | Creative industries contribute to employment, exports, and inclusive development |
| UNESCO (2013) | Culture & sustainable development | Culture strengthens inclusive growth, social cohesion, and heritage safeguarding |
| Porter (1985) | Competitive advantage | Differentiation enables competitive advantage through uniqueness and perceived value |
| Kotler (2017) | Branding & marketing | Branding and promotion create recognition, trust, and demand |
| OECD (2018) | Innovation ecosystems | Networks, digital platforms, and institutional ecosystems enable scale and resilience |
| Dutt & Sundaram (2018) | India: handloom/handicrafts | Cultural sectors support rural livelihoods and women's work; face finance/market constraints |
| Gogoi & Borah (2019) | Assam: cultural enterprises | Handloom/crafts have livelihood potential; limited by weak branding and market access |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

Research Gap:

Prior research is largely sector-specific, focusing mainly on handloom or handicrafts, thereby limiting an integrated understanding of culture-based entrepreneurship across multiple cultural domains. Empirical evidence based on primary survey data remains limited, particularly at the micro and regional levels. Moreover, cultural value and authenticity are often discussed conceptually, with insufficient empirical assessment of entrepreneurs' perceptions of value creation. Issues related to market engagement and institutional support are frequently addressed descriptively, lacking integrated analytical treatment. Region-specific empirical research on

Assam remains sparse, despite its rich cultural heritage and unique development challenges. These gaps highlight the need for a comprehensive, empirical, and region-focused analysis of culture-based entrepreneurship.

Table 2.2: Research Gaps Evident in Existing Literature

| Area | Dominant Pattern in Prior Research | Gap Emerging from Prior Research | Relevance to Assam |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Sector coverage | Focus on single sectors (e.g., handloom) | Limited integrated understanding across cultural enterprise domains | Assam hosts diverse cultural enterprises beyond handloom |
| Methodological approach | Case studies and secondary-data emphasis | Limited micro-level quantitative evidence using primary survey data | Need for structured perception-based and constraint-based measurement |
| Market engagement | Discussed generally (often descriptive) | Limited integrated analysis of branding, channels, and reach | Market access is a major constraint in northeastern regions |
| Institutional support | Macro policy discussion dominates | Limited entrepreneur-level assessment of support effectiveness | Institutional access and uneven outreach remain critical issues |
| Cultural value measurement | Conceptual emphasis on authenticity | Limited measurement of how cultural value relates to enterprise outcomes | Cultural value is central to differentiation in Assam’s heritage economy |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- (a) To examine the role of cultural elements in facilitating entrepreneurial value creation among culture-based enterprises in Assam.
- (b) To analyze the challenges and institutional support mechanisms that influences the development and sustainability of culture-based entrepreneurship in Assam.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The research adopts a **descriptive and analytical** design. The descriptive component is used to examine the socio-economic profile of respondents, the nature of culture-based enterprises, and perceptions related to cultural value, market engagement, and institutional support. The analytical component facilitates the examination of relationships and associations among key variables influencing culture-based entrepreneurship. The study follows an **empirical approach**, integrating both **primary and secondary data**. This combined approach allows for

a comprehensive understanding of culture-based entrepreneurship by grounding empirical observations within an established theoretical and policy context.

Table 4.1: Nature of the Study

| Aspect | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| Type of Research | Descriptive and Analytical |
| Research Approach | Empirical and quantitative |
| Data Integration | Primary and secondary data |
| Focus | Culture-based entrepreneurship in Assam |
| Purpose | Analysis of value creation, challenges, and institutional support |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

4.2. Sources of Data

The research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data, ensuring comprehensive coverage of empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents involved in or aspiring toward culture-based entrepreneurial activities. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions and Likert-scale statements designed to capture perceptions related to cultural resources, entrepreneurial activity, value addition, market engagement, and institutional support. Secondary data were obtained from published and credible sources, including academic books, peer-reviewed journals, government reports, MSME publications, and reports of international organizations such as UNESCO and UNCTAD. These sources were used to construct the conceptual framework and review existing literature.

Table 4.2: Sources of Data

| Type of Data | Sources | Purpose |
|----------------|---|--|
| Primary Data | Structured questionnaire (100 respondents) | Empirical analysis |
| Secondary Data | Books, journals, government reports, MSME publications, UNESCO & UNCTAD reports | Theoretical grounding and contextual support |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

4.3. Sample Design

The sampling design was formulated to ensure relevance, feasibility, and representation of culture-based entrepreneurial activities. The study is based on a sample of 100 respondents drawn from selected districts of Assam, representing areas with notable cultural and traditional enterprise activity. Purposive sampling was employed to identify respondents directly engaged in culture-based enterprises, while convenience sampling was used to facilitate access and data collection within practical constraints. The respondents included existing culture-based entrepreneurs, artisans, self-employed individuals, and aspiring entrepreneurs possessing traditional cultural skills.

Table 4.3: Sample Design

| Component | Description |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Sample Size | 100 respondents |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sampling Technique | Purposive and Convenience Sampling |
| Study Area | Selected districts of Assam |
| Respondent Category | Culture-based entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs |
| Unit of Analysis | Individual entrepreneur/artisan |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

4.4. Tools of Analysis

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to meet the research objectives. Descriptive tools such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondent characteristics and perception levels. Inferential statistical tools were applied to test relationships and differences among variables, thereby enhancing analytical depth and objectivity.

Table 4.4: Statistical Tools Used for Analysis

| Statistical Tool | Purpose of Application | Nature of Analysis |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Frequency & Percentage | Analysis of demographic and enterprise profile | Descriptive |
| Mean & Standard Deviation | Measurement of perception and agreement levels | Descriptive |
| Chi-square Test | Association between categorical variables | Inferential |
| Independent Sample t-test | Comparison of mean differences between groups | Inferential |
| Correlation Analysis | Examination of relationships between key variables | Inferential |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The present study is analysis of primary data collected from 100 respondents engaged in or aspiring toward culture-based entrepreneurial activities in Assam. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to examine the role of culture in entrepreneurial value creation, challenges faced by entrepreneurs, and the influence of institutional support mechanisms.

5.1. Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Table 5.1: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

| Gender | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Male | 42 | 42.0 | 42.0 | 42.0 |
| Female | 58 | 58.0 | 58.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey

The female respondents constitute a larger share of participants in culture-based entrepreneurial activities, accounting for 58 percent of the total respondents, while male respondents represent 42 percent. The cumulative percentage shows that female participation completes the full distribution, reflecting their dominant presence within the respondent group. This distribution suggests that culture-based entrepreneurial activities tend to attract greater involvement from women, potentially due to the close association of cultural enterprises with traditional skills and heritage-based practices.

5.2. Frequency Distribution by Age Group

Table 5.2: Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

| Age Group | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 18–30 years | 46 | 46.0 | 46.0 | 46.0 |
| 31–45 years | 38 | 38.0 | 38.0 | 84.0 |
| Above 45 years | 16 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey

The largest proportion of respondents falls within the 18–30 years age group, accounting for 46 percent of the total respondents. This is followed by the 31–45 years age group at 38 percent, while respondents above 45 years constitute 16 percent. The cumulative percentage indicates that a substantial majority of respondents (84 percent) are below 45 years of age. This distribution reflects strong participation of youth and working-age individuals in culture-based entrepreneurial activities, suggesting that such enterprises are particularly attractive to younger populations seeking livelihood and self-employment opportunities.

5.3. Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Value Perception

Table 5.3: Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|----------------------|-----|------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Cultural Value Index | 100 | 4.18 | 0.66 | 2.60 | 5.00 |

Source: Field survey

The descriptive statistics indicate a high level of agreement regarding the perceived importance of cultural value in entrepreneurial activities. The mean score of 4.18 on a five-point scale suggests that respondents generally hold positive perceptions of culture as a source of value creation. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.66 indicates limited variability in responses, reflecting a consistent perception across respondents. The observed minimum and maximum values demonstrate that responses span a broad range, yet remain concentrated toward the higher end of the scale, underscoring the strong perceived relevance of cultural value in culture-based entrepreneurship.

5.4. Reliability Analysis

Table 5.4: Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach’s Alpha | Number of Items |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 0.84 | 10 |

Source: Field survey

The reliability analysis assesses the internal consistency of the scale used to measure cultural value perception. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.84 indicates a high level of internal consistency among the ten items included in the scale. According to commonly accepted methodological standards, an alpha value above 0.70 is considered acceptable, while values exceeding 0.80 indicate good reliability. The result supports the adequacy of the measurement instrument in capturing respondents’ perceptions in a stable and coherent manner, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness of subsequent analyses based on this scale.

5.5. One-Sample t-Test

The one-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the mean score of the Cultural Value Index significantly differs from a specified test value. The test value was set at 3, which represents a neutral position on the five-point Likert scale used to measure perceptions of cultural value. This test facilitates an assessment of whether respondents’ perceptions are significantly positive or negative relative to a neutral benchmark.

Table 5.5: One-Sample t-Test Results

| Variable | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Cultural Value Index | 17.88 | 99 | 0.000 | 1.18 |
| Note: Test Value = 3 | | | | |

Source: Field survey

The results of the one-sample t-test indicate a statistically significant difference between the observed mean score of the Cultural Value Index and the neutral test value. The calculated t-value of 17.88 with 99 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 1 percent level ($p < 0.01$), indicating that the observed mean is not due to random variation. The positive mean difference of 1.18 suggests that respondents’ perceptions of cultural value are substantially higher than the neutral midpoint of the scale. This implies a strong and consistent agreement that cultural elements play a meaningful role in entrepreneurial value creation.

5.6. Chi-Square Test of Association

A chi-square test of association was employed to examine the relationship between cultural background and entrepreneurial motivation. This non-parametric test assesses whether variations in entrepreneurial motivation are statistically associated with differences in respondents’ cultural backgrounds.

Table 5.6: Chi-Square Test

| Statistic | Value | df | Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 12.47 | 4 | 0.002 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 13.12 | 4 | 0.001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 100 | | |

Source: Field survey

The results indicate a statistically significant association between cultural background and entrepreneurial motivation. The Pearson chi-square value of 12.47 with 4 degrees of freedom is significant at the 1 percent level ($p = 0.002$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis

of independence between the two variables. The likelihood ratio statistic further supports this result, yielding a value of 13.12 with a corresponding significance level of 0.001, thereby reinforcing the robustness of the association.

5.7. Independent Samples t-Test

Table 5.7: Group Statistics

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 42 | 4.02 | 0.68 |
| Female | 58 | 4.29 | 0.62 |
| (Gender × Cultural Value Perception) | | | |

Source: Field survey

The group statistics present the mean scores of cultural value perception across gender categories. Female respondents report a higher mean score (4.29) compared to male respondents (4.02), indicating stronger agreement among women regarding the role of cultural elements in entrepreneurial value creation. The standard deviations for both groups are relatively low, suggesting limited variability in responses and a consistent perception within each gender group.

Table 5.8: Independent Samples t-Test

| t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|----------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 2.31 | 98 | 0.023 | 0.27 |

Source: Field survey

The independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether a statistically significant difference exists between male and female respondents with respect to their perception of cultural value in entrepreneurial activities. The calculated t-value of 2.31 with 98 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 5 percent level ($p = 0.023$). The positive mean difference of 0.27 indicates that female respondents exhibit a higher level of agreement regarding cultural value perception compared to male respondents. This result confirms the presence of a significant gender-based difference in the perception of cultural value.

5.8. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The one-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether enterprise performance differs significantly across different types of culture-based enterprises.

Table 5.9: ANOVA Results

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Between Groups | 8.46 | 2 | 4.23 | 4.62 | 0.012 |
| Within Groups | 88.78 | 97 | 0.92 | | |
| Total | 97.24 | 99 | | | |

Source: Field survey

The results indicate a statistically significant difference among the groups, as reflected by an F-value of 4.62 with 2 and 97 degrees of freedom, which is significant at the 5 percent level (p

= 0.012). The between-group variation in performance is notably higher than would be expected by chance, suggesting that enterprise type influences performance outcomes. This implies that certain categories of culture-based enterprises exhibit relatively higher performance levels compared to others. The observed differences may be attributed to variations in market demand, production processes, scalability, or access to resources across enterprise types.

5.9. Correlation Analysis

Table 5.10: Correlation between Cultural Value and Enterprise Performance

| Variables | Cultural Value | Enterprise Performance |
|---|----------------|------------------------|
| Cultural Value | 1 | 0.61** |
| Enterprise Performance | 0.61** | 1 |
| Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) ** $p < 0.01$ | | |

Source: Field survey

The correlation analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between cultural value perception and enterprise performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.61, which is statistically significant at the 1 percent level ($p < 0.01$), indicates that higher levels of perceived cultural value are associated with improved enterprise performance. The strength and direction of the relationship suggest that cultural elements such as authenticity, heritage, and symbolic value contribute positively to entrepreneurial outcomes. Enterprises that effectively integrate cultural value into their products and services tend to exhibit better performance in terms of demand generation, competitiveness, and sustainability.

5.10. Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary

The model summary indicates a strong overall relationship between the independent variables included in the regression model and enterprise performance.

Table 5.11: Model Summary

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|--|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 0.68 | 0.46 | 0.44 | 0.59 |
| Note: Dependent Variable: Enterprise Performance | | | |

Source: Field survey

The model summary indicates a strong overall relationship between the independent variables included in the regression model and enterprise performance. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.68$) reflects a substantial degree of association between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.46 indicates that approximately 46 percent of the variation in enterprise performance is explained by the independent variables incorporated in the model. This suggests a relatively high explanatory power, implying that cultural value,

market engagement, and institutional support collectively play an important role in determining enterprise performance. The adjusted R Square value of 0.44, which accounts for the number of predictors and sample size, remains close to the R Square value, indicating model stability and minimal overestimation of explanatory power. The standard error of the estimate (0.59) reflects a reasonable level of prediction accuracy, suggesting that the model provides a good fit to the observed data.

ANOVA for Multiple Regression Model

The ANOVA results assess the overall statistical significance of the multiple regression model used to explain variations in enterprise performance.

Table 6.12: ANOVA

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Regression | 44.62 | 3 | 14.87 | 27.27 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 52.62 | 96 | 0.55 | | |
| Total | 97.24 | 99 | | | |

Source: Field survey

The regression sum of squares (44.62) represents the proportion of total variance explained by the independent variables included in the model, while the residual sum of squares (52.62) reflects unexplained variance. The computed F-statistic of 27.27 with 3 and 96 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 1 percent level ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that the regression model as a whole provides a significantly better fit than a model with no independent variables. The statistical significance of the ANOVA confirms that the independent variables jointly exert a meaningful influence on enterprise performance. Consequently, the regression model is considered valid and appropriate for examining the determinants of performance in culture-based entrepreneurial activities.

Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Model

The coefficients present the individual contribution of each independent variable to enterprise performance while controlling for the effects of other predictors in the model.

Table 6.13: Coefficients

| Predictor | Beta | t | Sig. |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------|
| Cultural Value | 0.41 | 5.88 | 0.000 |
| Market Engagement | 0.29 | 2.96 | 0.004 |
| Institutional Support | 0.22 | 2.41 | 0.018 |

Source: Field survey

The regression coefficients indicate that all three predictors exert a statistically significant positive influence on enterprise performance. Cultural value emerges as the strongest determinant ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.01$), indicating that enterprises with higher levels of cultural authenticity, identity, and symbolic value tend to achieve superior performance outcomes. This underscores the central role of culture as a strategic resource in culture-based entrepreneurship. Market engagement also shows a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$), suggesting

that effective branding, promotion, and market access contribute meaningfully to enterprise success by enhancing visibility and demand. Institutional support demonstrates a positive and significant relationship with performance ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$), indicating that access to training, financial assistance, and supportive infrastructure strengthens enterprise sustainability.

6.11. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted to examine the underlying factor structure of perception-based items related to culture-based entrepreneurship and to validate the conceptual framework dimensions. The analysis included 10 perception items measuring cultural value, market engagement, and institutional support.

KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity

Table 6.14: KMO and Bartlett’s Test

| Measure | Value |
|---|--------|
| Kaiser – Meyer - Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy | 0.81 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity – Chi-square | 512.34 |
| Degrees of Freedom | 45 |
| Significance (p-value) | 0.000 |

Source: Field Survey

The Kaiser – Meyer - Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yields a value of 0.81, which exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60 and falls within the range considered meritorious for factor analysis. This indicates that the intercorrelations among the variables are sufficiently strong and that the sample size is appropriate for extracting underlying factors. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity produces a chi-square value of 512.34 with 45 degrees of freedom, which is statistically significant at the 1 percent level ($p < 0.01$). The significance of this test confirms that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and that meaningful relationships exist among the variables.

Table 6.15: Total Variance

| Factor | Eigen value | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
|----------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Factor 1 | 3.42 | 34.20 | 34.20 |
| Factor 2 | 2.11 | 21.10 | 55.30 |
| Factor 3 | 1.46 | 14.60 | 69.90 |

Source: Field survey

The three factors possess eigenvalues greater than one, satisfying the Kaiser criterion for factor retention. The first factor accounts for 34.20 percent of the total variance, indicating its dominant contribution to explaining the underlying structure of the data. The second and third factors explain 21.10 percent and 14.60 percent of the variance, respectively. The three extracted factors explain 69.90 percent of the total variance, which exceeds the commonly accepted benchmark of 60 percent in social science research. This high cumulative variance

suggests that the extracted factors adequately represent the underlying dimensions of the perception-based variables.

Table 6.16: Rotated Component Matrix

| Perception Items | Factor 1 (Cultural Value) | Factor 2 (Market Engagement) | Factor 3 (Institutional Support) |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Culture enhances product authenticity | 0.81 | — | — |
| Cultural identity attracts customers | 0.78 | — | — |
| Cultural elements improve competitiveness | 0.74 | — | — |
| Branding improves product visibility | — | 0.76 | — |
| Market access increases sales | — | 0.73 | — |
| Promotion platforms enhance demand | — | 0.71 | — |
| Training programs support enterprise growth | — | — | 0.79 |
| Financial assistance improves sustainability | — | — | 0.75 |
| Government schemes support cultural enterprises | — | — | 0.72 |
| Infrastructure facilitates enterprise expansion | — | — | 0.68 |

Source: Field survey

The rotated component matrix reveals a clear three-factor structure with strong item loadings and no significant cross-loadings. Factor 1 (Cultural Value) shows high loadings on authenticity, cultural identity, and competitiveness (0.74–0.81), indicating that these items coherently represent culture-driven value creation. Factor 2 (Market Engagement) loads strongly on branding, market access, and promotion (0.71–0.76), reflecting mechanisms of market reach and demand generation. Factor 3 (Institutional Support) comprises training, financial assistance, government schemes, and infrastructure (0.68–0.79), capturing the enabling role of institutions. The results confirm strong construct validity and empirical alignment with the conceptual framework.

7. Findings

The principal empirical insights by systematically linking key dimensions of culture-based entrepreneurship with corresponding statistical evidence. The results demonstrate that cultural background significantly influences entrepreneurial motivation, as indicated by the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 12.47$; $p = 0.002$), highlighting culture as an active motivational determinant. Cultural

value creation is strongly supported by high mean scores for authenticity (4.32), customer attraction (4.18), and competitiveness (4.05), confirming the role of culture in product differentiation. The one-sample t-test further shows that overall cultural value perception is significantly above the neutral level (Mean = 4.18; $t = 17.88$; $p < 0.01$), reinforcing culture’s economic relevance. Demographic analysis reveals higher participation of women (58%) and youth (84% within 18–45 years), with a significant gender difference in cultural value perception ($t = 2.31$; $p = 0.023$), underscoring the inclusive nature of cultural entrepreneurship. Market-related challenges remain prominent, particularly limited market access (68%) and inadequate branding (55%), while institutional support is limited, with only 34 percent reporting access to assistance. The positive and significant relationship between cultural value and enterprise performance ($r = 0.61$; $p < 0.01$), along with regression results identifying cultural value as the strongest performance determinant ($\beta = 0.41$; $R^2 = 0.46$), confirms that cultural value constitutes the central driver of entrepreneurial performance, supported by market engagement and institutional factors.

Table 7.1: Detailed Summary of Key Findings

| Aspect | Key Finding | Statistical Evidence | Analytical Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Entrepreneurial Motivation | Culture significantly motivates entrepreneurial activity | $\chi^2 = 12.47$; $p = 0.002$ | Cultural background, inherited skills, and traditions significantly influence individuals’ motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities, confirming culture as a determinant of entrepreneurial orientation. |
| Cultural Value Creation | Culture enhances authenticity and differentiation | Mean scores: 4.32 (authenticity), 4.18 (customer attraction), 4.05 (competitiveness) | High mean values indicate strong consensus that cultural elements add symbolic and economic value, enabling differentiation and enhancing market appeal. |
| Overall Cultural Value | Cultural value perception is significantly above the neutral level | Mean = 4.18; $t = 17.88$; $p < 0.01$ | Cultural value is perceived as a significant economic resource rather than a neutral or symbolic attribute, reinforcing its role in entrepreneurial value creation. |
| Gender Participation | Higher participation and stronger | Female = 58%; $t = 2.31$; $p = 0.023$ | Women exhibit higher involvement and stronger cultural value perception, |

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| | perception among women | | highlighting the inclusive and gender-sensitive nature of culture-based entrepreneurship. |
| Youth Participation | Strong involvement of youth and working-age population | 18–45 years = 84% | Culture-based entrepreneurship attracts younger age groups, indicating its relevance as a livelihood and self-employment option for youth. |
| Market Constraints | Market access and branding are major challenges | Market access = 68%; Branding = 55% | Despite strong cultural foundations, limited market integration and weak branding constrain enterprise growth and sustainability. |
| Institutional Support | Institutional assistance is limited and unevenly distributed | Only 34% received support | Existing government and institutional mechanisms have limited outreach and accessibility, reducing their effectiveness in supporting cultural enterprises. |
| Culture–Performance Relationship | Cultural value positively influences enterprise performance | $r = 0.61; p < 0.01$ | A strong positive relationship indicates that enterprises embedding cultural authenticity and identity achieve better performance outcomes. |
| Determinants of Performance | Cultural value is the strongest predictor of performance | $\beta = 0.41; R^2 = 0.46$ | Cultural value plays a dominant role in explaining enterprise performance, while market engagement and institutional support provide complementary effects. |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

8. Policy Implications

The empirical evidence highlights the need for targeted and context-sensitive policy interventions to fully harness the potential of culture-based entrepreneurship in Assam. Although cultural value significantly influences entrepreneurial motivation and enterprise performance, persistent market and institutional constraints limit sustainability and growth.

Strengthening cultural branding and Geographical Indication (GI) tagging is essential to enhance product authenticity, protect indigenous knowledge, and improve market visibility. Effective branding and certification can increase consumer trust and enable cultural products to access premium markets. Expanding market linkages through digital platforms is critical for overcoming geographical barriers and limited market access. E-commerce, digital marketing, and online marketplaces can broaden consumer reach, reduce reliance on intermediaries, and improve revenue generation. Improved access to finance and incubation facilities is necessary to address institutional gaps. Dedicated financial schemes, credit support, and incubation centers tailored to cultural enterprises can enhance scalability, innovation, and long-term viability. There is also a need for region-specific training and skill development programs that integrate traditional skills with design innovation, digital literacy, branding, and entrepreneurial management to improve market readiness.

Table 8.1: Policy Implications for Strengthening Culture-Based Entrepreneurship

| Policy Area | Empirical Basis | Recommended Policy Action | Expected Outcome |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Cultural branding and GI tagging | High cultural value perception; need for differentiation | Strengthen GI registration, cultural certification, and regional branding initiatives | Enhanced product authenticity, premium pricing, and market recognition |
| Digital market linkages | Limited market access reported by 68% of respondents | Promote e-commerce platforms, digital marketing, and online marketplaces for cultural products | Expanded market reach and reduced dependency on intermediaries |
| Access to finance and incubation | Only 34% received institutional support; finance constraints evident | Establish dedicated credit schemes, grants, and incubation facilities for cultural enterprises | Improved enterprise scalability and sustainability |
| Skill development and training | High youth and women participation; need for innovation and market readiness | Design region-specific training programs focusing on design, branding, and digital skills | Enhanced entrepreneurial capability and competitiveness |
| Policy integration | Cultural enterprises largely operate informally | Integrate culture-based entrepreneurship into MSME and startup policies | Improved institutional access and inclusive economic growth |

Source: Compiled by the researchers

9. Conclusion

The culture functions as a powerful catalyst for entrepreneurship in Assam by shaping entrepreneurial motivation, enhancing value creation, and contributing positively to enterprise performance. Cultural resources such as traditional skills, indigenous knowledge, and heritage-based practices provide a strong foundation for entrepreneurial activity, enabling individuals and communities to convert cultural identity into economic opportunity. Culture-based entrepreneurship thus emerges as an important pathway for livelihood generation, social inclusion, and the preservation of cultural heritage in the regional context. The empirical evidence demonstrates that cultural value significantly enhances product authenticity, differentiation, and market appeal, thereby strengthening enterprise performance. High participation of women and youth further underscores the inclusive character of culture-based entrepreneurship and its relevance as a viable self-employment option for traditionally underrepresented groups. These findings highlight the role of cultural enterprises in addressing regional development challenges such as unemployment and limited industrialization. The cultural richness alone is insufficient to ensure enterprise sustainability and growth. Persistent constraints related to limited market access, inadequate branding, weak institutional support, and restricted access to finance continue to hinder the scalability and long-term viability of cultural enterprises. Although cultural value emerges as the strongest determinant of performance, market engagement and institutional facilitation play complementary roles that are critical for translating cultural potential into sustained economic outcomes. The necessity of coordinated and context-sensitive policy interventions. Strengthened cultural branding, improved market linkages, targeted financial and incubation support, region-specific skill development, and formal integration of culture-based entrepreneurship within MSME and startup frameworks are essential to unlock the full economic potential of cultural enterprises. Such interventions can bridge the gap between cultural assets and market realities while ensuring that economic development remains culturally rooted and socially inclusive.

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