Introduction

Entrepreneurs are essential drivers of innovation and progress. In the highly competitive business world they act as engines of growth, harnessing opportunity and innovation to fuel economic advancement. The world is facing a worsening youth employment crisis as per the recent Report on Youth 2013 released by International Labour Organization (Anonymous, 2007). India occupies only 2.2% of the world’s land area; it supports over 15% of the world’s population. Almost 35% of Indians are younger than 15 years of age (2011 census). Entrepreneurship development is a major strategy that can provide immediate large-scale employment. Thus it helps to reduce the unemployment problem in the country. Entrepreneurship promotes balanced regional development. Assam is traditionally rich in horticultural production due to its diverse and unique agro-climatic conditions which is conducive for growing wide range of horticultural crops like fruits, vegetables, flowers etc. A horticultural crop occupy about 15 per cent of the gross cultivated area of Assam and annually produces more than 15.0 lakh MT of fruits, 44.0 lakh MT of vegetables (Economic Survey, Assam, 2011-12). There is a huge potential for entrepreneurship development through vegetable production.
Therefore, a comprehensive study was carried out to measure the entrepreneurial behavior of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation. The economy of Lakhimpur district is mainly based on agriculture. 80% of the people of the district depend solely on agriculture for their livelihood. Total cropped area of this district is 2,06,501 ha. Major crops are rice, tea, mustard, sugarcane, etc. Vegetable cultivation in Lakhimpur district has been traditionally practised. Vegetables are playing an important role in commerce and economy, particularly through processing and export trade. They provide an important source of income for the small and marginal farmers of our country as well as upcoming rural youths. Effective extension intervention may aid the process of intensification for full scale commercialization of production of vegetable enterprises and promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment. Therefore, it is assumed that the present study will help in knowing the extent of entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation and harnessing different entrepreneurial opportunities.

**Materials and Methods**

The study was conducted in Lakhimpur district of Assam. A purposive cum random sampling design was followed for selection of respondents for the study. Under Lakhimpur district 4 blocks namely Dhakuakhana, Ghilamara, Lakhimpur and Karunabari were purposively selected. One village from each block were selected randomly. 15 respondents from the total number of rural youths engaged in vegetable cultivation were selected from each of four villages by using random sampling procedure. Thus, the total sample size constituted 120 respondents (youth between 15-29 years). The entrepreneurial behaviour of vegetable grower was measured in terms of nine dimensions namely, innovativeness, achievement motivation, decision making ability, risk orientation, coordinating ability, planning ability, information seeking behaviour, cosmopolitanism and self-confidence. To measure the entrepreneurial behaviour of vegetable grower, an Entrepreneurial Behaviour Index (EBI) was used with the help of the following formula:

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\text{EBI} = \frac{\text{Scores obtained by each respondent}}{\text{Actual total score}} \times 100
\]

Where, EBI = Entrepreneurial Behaviour Index

**Results and Discussion**

Narmatha et al., (2002) stated that innovativeness, achievement motivation and risk orientation were the most important components and further, decision making, innovativeness, management orientation, economic motivation, level of aspiration and risk orientation were found to be crucial in influencing the entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurial behaviour is the composite measure of nine components such as innovativeness, achievement motivation, decision making ability, risk orientation, coordinating ability, planning ability, information seeking behaviour, cosmopolitanism and self-confidence. Similar observations were reported by Manjula (1995). The data in this regard have been presented in Table 1.

It could be observed from the Table 1 that, 71.67 per cent of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation had medium level of innovativeness, whereas 18.33 per cent and 10.00 per cent had low and high level of innovativeness, respectively. Bhagyalaxmi et al., (2003) reported similar kind of observation in which majority of the entrepreneurs had a medium level of innovativeness.
### Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to the components of Entrepreneurial Behaviour

| Dimension                  | Category      | Lakhimpur (N = 60) |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
|                            | Score range   | Frequency and percentage (%) |
| Innovativeness             | Low           | Below 6.26          | 11 (18.33) |
|                            | Medium        | 6.26 to 11.10       | 43 (71.67) |
|                            | High          | Above 11.10         | 6 (10.00)  |
| Achievement motivation     | Low           | Below 3.50          | 10 (16.67) |
|                            | Medium        | 3.50 to 4.93        | 27 (45.00) |
|                            | High          | Above 4.93          | 23 (38.33) |
| Decision making ability    | Poor          | Below 8.30          | 9 (15.00)  |
|                            | Moderate      | 8.30-11.09          | 45 (75.00) |
|                            | Good          | Above 11.09         | 6 (10.00)  |
| Risk orientation           | Low           | Below 6.30          | 15 (25.00) |
|                            | Medium        | 6.30 to 8.49        | 34 (56.67) |
|                            | High          | Above 8.49          | 11 (18.33) |
| Co-ordinating ability      | Poor          | Below 4.07          | 17 (28.33) |
|                            | Moderate      | 4.07 to 6.86        | 37 (61.67) |
|                            | Good          | Above 6.86          | 6 (10.00)  |
| Planning ability           | Poor          | Below 2.02          | 23 (38.33) |
|                            | Moderate      | 2.02 to 3.44        | 29 (48.33) |
|                            | Good          | Above 3.44          | 8 (13.34)  |
| Information seeking behaviour | Low        | Below 6.18          | 12 (20.00) |
|                            | Medium        | 6.18 to 9.75        | 35 (58.33) |
|                            | High          | Above 9.75          | 13 (21.67) |
| Cosmopoliteness            | Low           | Below 7.13          | 10 (16.67) |
|                            | Medium        | 7.13 to 9.06        | 49 (81.66) |
|                            | High          | Above 9.06          | 1 (1.67)   |
| Self confidence            | Low           | Below 4.11          | 13 (21.67) |
|                            | Medium        | 4.11 to 5.61        | 38 (68.33) |
|                            | High          | Above 5.61          | 9 (15.00)  |

### Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to overall Entrepreneurial Behaviour N=60

| Category | Score range   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Low      | Below 45.52   | 13        | 21.67      |
| Medium   | 45.52 to 53.93| 37        | 61.66      |
| High     | Above 53.93   | 10        | 16.67      |
| Total    |               | 60        | 100.00     |

Mean = 49.73; S.D. = 4.20
Fig. 1 Overall entrepreneurial behaviour

Based on this index, the respondents were classified into three categories as given below:

| Category | Range                |
|----------|----------------------|
| Low      | (  X – SD)           |
| Medium   | (  X ± SD)           |
| High     | (  X + SD)           |

The scale developed by Chaudhari (2006) was used with slight modification.

The findings presented in the Table 1 shows that, 45.00 per cent of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation had medium level of achievement motivation, followed by 38.33 per cent and 16.67 per cent have high and low achievement motivation category respectively. Suresh (2004) reported similar kind of findings in case of achievement motivation of dairy entrepreneurs. It is apparent from the Table 1 that 75.00 per cent of rural youth engaged in vegetable enterprise had moderate decision making ability; whereas 15.00 per cent belonged to poor decision making ability and only 10.00 per cent have good decision making ability.

Chandrapaul (1998) reported similar kind of findings in case of entrepreneurs of Andhra Pradesh in which majority of entrepreneurs (50.90%) had medium decision making ability. From the Table 1 it was found that 56.67 per cent of rural youth engaged in vegetable enterprise had medium risk orientation, whereas 25.00 per cent belonged to low risk orientation and only 18.33 per cent have high risk orientation (Fig. 1).

It could be inferred from Table 1 that 61.67 per cent of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation had moderate co-ordinating ability and 10.00 per cent was found in good and 28.33 per cent poor category of co-ordinating ability.

It is evident from the Table 1 that 48.33 per cent of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation had moderate planning ability, followed by poor (38.33%) and good (13.34%) respectively.
The results from Table 1 revealed that majority (58.33%) of rural youth (vegetable growers) had medium information seeking behaviour, followed by high (21.67%) and low (20.00%) information seeking behaviour.

It could be seen from the Table 1 that more than half (81.66%) of rural youth (vegetable growers) had medium level of cosmopoliteness, followed by low (16.67%) and high (1.67%) level of cosmopoliteness. Similar kinds of findings were observed by Patel et al., [7] where majority (74.00%) of the entrepreneurs had medium level of cosmopoliteness.

It is quite clear from the data presented in the Table 1 that (63.33%) of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation had medium level of self-confidence, followed by low (21.67%) and high (15.00%) level of self-confidence.

Entrepreneurial Behaviour Index (EBI) was used to measure the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation by considering the scores obtained by each respondent and actual total score. The data in this regard have been presented in Table 2. A critical perusal of the data furnished in Table 2 portrays that more than half of the rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation (61.66%) had medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour, followed by (21.67%) of low and (16.67%) of high entrepreneurial behaviour.

It may be concluded that most of the rural youth engaged in vegetable cultivation were found to have a medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour (61.66%). The findings of the present study have a number of implications for the administrators and policy makers. Effective extension intervention may aid the process of intensification for full-scale commercialization of vegetable production by facilitating adoption of recommended package of practices and promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment. It also helps in taking policy measures for identification of thrust areas and in designing new strategies for vegetable production in the country. Concerned departments or agencies like State Horticultural Departments, KVKs, NABARD, NIRD, IIE should organise appropriate training programme for the vegetable grower to inculcate better decision making ability and self-confidence so that they are motivated to accept it as enterprise.

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