



## Pratiidhwani the Echo

A Peer-Reviewed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science

ISSN: 2278-5264 (Online) 2321-9319 (Print)

Impact Factor: 6.28 (Index Copernicus International)

Volume-XIV, Issue-I, October 2025, Page No. 74-80

Published by Dept. of Bengali, Karimganj College, Sribhumi, Assam, India

Website: <http://www.thecho.in>

DOI: 10.64031/pratiidhwanitheecho.vol.14.issue.01W.033



## Unemployment Scenario of Assam: A Study

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Received: 03.08.2025; Accepted: 23.09.2025; Available online: 31.10.2025

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### Abstract

Unemployment is a significant issue in the contemporary society. Unemployment is a situation where people want to work at the prevailing wage rate, but they do not get job opportunities. Assam, the gateway to the North East of India, is rich in natural beauty and resources. But still, the state is economically backward with the problem of unemployment. The widespread problem of unemployment has created the problems of unrest and insurgency in the state. The study is carried out to get the present scenario of unemployment in Assam using secondary data collected from websites, official publications, research articles, books, etc.

**Keywords:** Unemployment, Appointments, Employment generation programmes etc

### Introduction:

Unemployment is a serious issue in the present society. It has paralyzed the world economy. Unemployment is a situation where people want to work at the prevailing rate of wage but they do not get job opportunities. According to OECD (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development), Unemployment is the proportion of people above a specified age (usually 15) not being in paid employment or of self-employment, but currently available for work during the reference period. Unemployment is measured by the unemployment rate, which is the number of people who are unemployed as a percentage of the labour force (the total number of people added to those unemployed).

Assam, the gateway to the North East of India, is rich in natural beauty and resources. But still, the state is economically backward. The state is an agrarian economy facing the problem of unemployment. The widespread problem of unemployment has created the problems of unrest and insurgency in the state.

Assam is one of the literate states of India. According to the Census report, the literacy rate of Assam has increased from 63.25% in 2001 to 72.19% in 2011. But the employment scenario of the state is not as bright as the literacy rate.

Objectives of the study:

The study is based on objectives:

1. To know the unemployment scenario of Assam
2. To study the distribution of appointments in the State in recent years

3. To know the causes of unemployment in Assam
4. To study the employment generation programmes undertaken by the government of Assam

### Methodology:

The study is analytical in nature using secondary data collected from websites, official publications, research articles, books, etc.

### Discussion:

#### Unemployment rate:

The unemployment rate gives us the number of unemployed persons in the total labour force. It is calculated as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force. The unemployment rate of Assam among the persons aged 15 years and above who were available for work but could not get work during the period from 2020-21 to 2023-24 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Unemployment rate in Assam and India from 2020-21 to 2023-24 in usual status (PS+SS)

(Age group 15 years and above)		(figure in percentage)
Years	Assam	India
2020-21	4.1	4.2
2021-22	3.9	4.1
2022-23	1.7	3.2
2023-24	3.9	3.2

Source: Economic survey, Assam, 2024-25

Table 1 states that the unemployment rate of Assam has declined from 4.1 percent in 2020-21 to 3.9 percent in 2023-24. At the national level, the unemployment rate of India has declined from 4.2 percent in 2020-21 to 3.2 percent in 2023-24, with some variations in the studied years. In 2022-23 unemployment rate was lowest in Assam. In 2023-24, the rate of unemployment was higher in Assam as compared to India.

#### Female unemployment rate:

Female unemployment rate is the percentage of the female labour force that is without work but able to work and is seeking employment. It is the ratio of the number of unemployed women to the total labour force multiplied by 100. Table 2 shows the female unemployment rate of both Assam and India.

Table 2: female unemployment rate in Assam and India from 2020-21 to 2023-24 in usual status (PS+SS)

(Age group 15 years and above)		(figure in percentage)
Years	Assam	India
2020-21	6.8	3.5
2021-22	5.0	3.3
2022-23	3.4	2.9
2023-24	4.1	3.2

Source: Economic survey, Assam, 2024-25

Table 2 reflects that the female unemployment rate of Assam has decreased from 6.8 percent in 2020-21 to 4.1 percent in 2023-24. Similarly, in the same period female

unemployment rate of India has declined from 3.5 percent to 3.2 percent. Still, the female unemployment rate of the state is above to national level in all the studied years.

### Employment Exchange and Registered job seekers in Assam:

Employment exchanges are established by the Government to offer assistance to job seekers. The job seekers can register their names in the Employment Exchanges for different job vacancies occurring in different sectors of the state. The Labour and Employment Department operates the Employment Exchange in Assam. The state has established 52 Employment Exchanges comprising 47 general, 1(one) special, 1(one) for unskilled applicants, and 3 Employment Information and Guidance Bureaus. Moreover, to guide unemployed youth, it has 29 Employment Information and Assistance Bureaus. Presently, the districts of BTAD, Baksa, Chirang, and new districts have no Employment Exchange.

Table 3 reflects the records of the live registrar of the Employment Exchange.

Table 3: Employment through Employment Exchange

Year	Total Registration	No. on live Register	Vacancy Notified	Placement against vacancies
2021	1,19,358	1,19,358	294	111
2022	10,34,613	11,53,971	2,021	1,373
2023	8,56,546	20,10,517	2,062	2,572

Source: Economic survey, Assam, 2024-25

Table 3 shows that the number of live registered job seekers is very high in Assam. In 2021, the number of live registered job seekers was 119,358 which increased to 20,10,517 in 2023. In 2021, the notified vacancies were 294, where as the placement was given against 111 vacancies.

The number of educated youths is increasing at an alarming rate in the state. The current education system of the state has not established a balance between the educational curriculum and the demands of the job market. The students are earning an educational degree, but they are not getting job opportunities. Table 4 shows the registered job seekers according to the level of education in the Employment Exchanges of Assam from 2021 to 2023.

Table 4: Distribution of Registration of Educated Job Seekers in Assam as per educational Background from 2021 to 2023

Category	Nos. registered in 2021	Nos. registered in 2022	Nos. registered in 2023
Engineering Graduate	634	9003	1815
Medical Graduate	80	1508	263
Agriculture Graduate	27	194	406
Veterinary Graduate	31	235	169
Post Graduate	1375	2765	15298
Graduate	26316	26466	129166
Passed out ITI	1332	69068	1631

Trainees			
Diploma Holders	768	439926	17486
H.S.S.L.C	56527	423787	335299
H.S.L.C	46958	5105	351885
Others	3817	5036	3128
Total	137865	983093	856546

Source: Economic survey, Assam, 2024-25

Table 4 reflects that the total number of registered job seekers was 137865 in 2021, 983093 in 2022, and 856546 in 2023, respectively. Among the registered job seekers, the H.S.S.L.C. passed job seekers were the highest (56,527) in 2021, in 2022, the number of diploma holder job seekers were highest (439926), and in 2023, the H.S.L.C. passed job seekers was highest (351885). Table 4 also makes it clear that the number of Engineering Graduate job seekers has increased from 634 in 2021 to 9003 in 2022, but in 2023 it decreased to 1815. The table shows that the number of agriculture graduates, post graduates and graduates has increased from 2021 to 2023.

To reduce the number of unemployment, the Government of Assam has undertaken some positive initiatives. To capture the actual number of unemployed youths of the state, the Government has launched an online portal for live registration of educated unemployed youth in the District Employment Exchanges.

#### **Distribution of Appointments in the State:**

The Government of Assam has undertaken strong steps to provide employment opportunities. The Government of Assam has undertaken the target of providing employment to 1(one) lakh youths of Assam. Keeping in view the target, on May 14, 2022, the Chief Minister of Assam gave appointments to 22958 successful candidates. On 23 September 2022, an additional 11,202 successful candidates got their appointments, and by this date additional 27,737 candidates got their appointments in different departments. On 29 October 2022, 655 successful candidates got appointments in different departments; a total appointment were given to 39019 candidates. In May 2023, the state government distributed appointments to 44,703 successful candidates in 53 different departments, 111 and 1V grade categories selected by the State Level Recruitment Commission on a merit basis. In 2023, a total of 45000 successful candidates were appointed in different departments of the Government of Assam. Till October 2023, 87,782 candidates got appointments.

#### **Causes of unemployment in Assam:**

Assam is facing the problem of unemployment, the basic reasons for which are mentioned below:

##### **Defective education system:**

The present defective education system of Assam has not been able to meet the needs of the economy. It has produced educated degree holders, only not the skilled ones. It has not been able to create entrepreneurial ability among the youth of the state, which generates employment opportunities.

**Lack of large- scale industries:**

Assam has a few large-scale industries, the unavailability of which creates an unemployment problem in the state. The agriculture sector of the state cannot absorb all the unemployed youth of the state. Moreover, the educated youth of the state don't prefer to work in the agriculture sector.

**Lack of proper career guidance:**

Students of Assam are not conscious about the new career options availed in the modern world because of a lack of proper career guidance. As a result after completion of formal education, they cannot absorb themselves in work.

**Corruption of the Public sector jobs recruitment process:**

Bribing high officials to get a job has created a serious problem in Assam. Moreover, the leakage of question papers in various job recruitment examinations creates frustration among the youth.

**Growth of population:**

High growth of population, along with migration from neighboring countries, has created unemployment problem in the state. The influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh exacerbates the unemployment problem of the state.

**Lack of cottage industries:**

The state lacks of sufficient cottage industries, which hampers the creation of employment opportunities for educated rural youth.

**Lack of access to capital:**

Because of a lack of capital, the youth of the state cannot step forward to start new businesses as they are not considered creditworthy by banks. As a result, they do not get the required amount of capital.

**Lack of infrastructure:**

Lack of improved and sound infrastructure, like roads, power, communication, etc. hinders economic activity, hence job creation process in the state.

**Employment Generation Programme:**

Assam is a developing economy with problems like poverty, illiteracy, lack of skills, unemployment, etc. The central and state governments have taken different initiatives and implemented many programmes for self- employment and wage employment generation and creation of production assets through various organizations like the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Directorate of Industries and Commerce, Agriculture Department, etc. Some programmes are mentioned below:

**1) Renewed Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment (RE-SVAYEM):**

Government of Assam has launched Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment (SVAYEM) in February, 2017 which was re-launched as Renewed Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment (RE-SVAYEM) 2020 which aimed to generate employment opportunities both rural and urban areas by setting up of new ventures as well as growing existing ventures and to provide financial assistance to micro and small business entities, engaged in manufacturing, trading and service sectors. The scheme includes the activities of manufacturing, processing, the service sector, trading, rural transport service, tourism, shops, repairing centres, handicrafts and cottage industries. The scheme provides financial

assistance to the traditional artisans, ensuring sustainable growth for the enhancement of their income level. The scheme aimed to provide financial assistance of Rs. 50000 each to 2 lakh skilled and talented youth of the state with an age of less than 40 years, permanent residence of Assam, also a member of Self-Help Group or joint liability group, etc, before 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020. Under RE\_SVAYEM, each individual will get Rs. 50000 as seed money. A group with five members will get Rs. 2.5 lakh, Rs. 5 lakhs with 10 members and so on, with maximum members in the group 20. The government has funded Rs. 1000 crore for the scheme.

### **2) Kanaklata Mahila Sabolikiron Yojana (KMSY):**

Kanaklata Mahila Sabolikiron Yojana (KMSY) was launched on the first day of April, 2018, by the Government of Assam to promote sustainable growth of the state and to support Self-Help Groups. It is a flagship programme of the government of Assam to generate sustainable livelihood for the women in Assam. It aims to revamp the rural economy of Assam. It is the progressive and welfare- driven scheme of Assam in recent years. The study aims to reduce poverty and strengthen the SHGs and their activities by providing financial support to meet the credit requirements of the rural poor. The scheme has encouraged the rural women to join SHGs and to set up micro industries for their economic empowerment. Up to March 2023, the scheme has granted Rs. 443.62 crore as a Revolving fund to 2,73,233 SHGs.

### **3) Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission Society (ASRLMS):**

Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission Society (ASRLMS) is a Government of Assam initiative to promote sustainable livelihood in rural areas, social and economic empowerment of rural poor of Assam, implemented by Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission Society. ASRLMS is an independent and autonomous body under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860, and established by the Panchayat & Rural Development Department, Government of Assam on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2011. The Mission has implemented various projects on sustainable livelihood, focusing on handloom and handicraft. The Mission has been designed as a multipronged approach to strengthen the livelihoods of rural poor by promoting SHGs, providing skill development and placement for youth for wage- based occupations in different private/business organizations, and imparting self-employment -oriented training.

The Mission empowers rural women SHGs with capacity building, credit linkage, and market support. "ASOMI" is the brand name of all goods produced by SHGs, signifying Atmo Sohayok Gootar Identity. It evokes the identity of the Assamese people. Till March 2024, the total SHGs under the National Rural Livelihood Mission are about 8427 and the cumulative progress under the state is 361000. The SHGs are further organized into Village Organizations (VO) and Cluster Level Federations (CLF). The Mission has promoted 19152 VOs and 751 CLFs since its inception.

### **4) Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Garmeen Kaushaaya Yojana:**

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Garmeen Kaushaaya Yojana (DDU-GKY) is a Skill Training and placement Programme of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, launched on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2014, on the occasion of the 98<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, with the vision "Transform rural poor youth into an economically independent and globally relevant workforce." It targets the 15-35 age group of rural poor youth. In 2015-16, the programme was started in Assam with a ratio of funds of 90:10 from

the Centre and the State, respectively. It is a part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) to reduce poverty and to promote rural livelihoods by providing the rural poor youths jobs having regular monthly wages emphasis on their sustainable employment. In 2023-24, the scheme has trained 10,416 rural youths, and placement was given to 7276 youths. In 2024-25, till December, 1160 were given placement.

#### **5) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social welfare and wage employment programme introduced during the 11<sup>th</sup> five-year plan that guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled physical labour. Its main objective is to enhance rural livelihood security in rural areas by creating employment and developing the community's infrastructure. It aims to improve the quality of rural people. In 2024-25, MGNREGA has generated 485.13 mandays and has completed 613703 works in Assam.

#### **6) Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme:**

Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a credit-linked subsidy programme launched in 2008, merging Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana and Rural Employment Generation Programme administered by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). The aim of the scheme is to generate employment opportunities through the establishment of micro enterprises in the non-farm sector for the rural and urban sectors. The scheme has been approved for continuation for a five- years period from 2021-22 to 2025-26. At the national level, the scheme is implemented by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), and at the state level, the scheme is implemented through state offices of KVIC, State Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs), District Industries Centres, Coir Boards, and Banks. The Government Subsidy under the scheme is being routed through the KVIC to the identified banks. In 2021-22, Assam engaged 68616 employees through the KVI Board.

#### **Conclusion:**

Unemployment is a major problem in Assam that hampers the overall development of the state. Proper planning, Government initiatives accompanied by sustainable economic growth of the state, can contribute to solving the problem of the state.

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