India's Journey of Financial Inclusion: Evidence from Assam Gramin Vikash Bank

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Abstract: *This research explores the journey of India's regional rural banks in promoting financial inclusion, which in turn promotes regional economic growth, with special reference to Assam Gramin Vikash Bank (AGVB), the largest rural bank in the north-eastern region of India. Using secondary data from 2006-07 to 2023-24, the study analyses the trends in AGVB's branch outreach, credit-deposit ratio, microfinance penetration, and participation in various financial inclusion schemes. By employing multivariate regression analysis, it also evaluates the influence of different financial inclusion indicators on the economic growth of Assam. Findings reveal a significant positive impact of AGVB's branch network, credit-deposit ratio, and microfinance penetration on the state's economic growth. It finally highlights how persisting challenges like lack of digital inclusivity and gender disparity necessitate targeted policy intervention to accelerate India's aspirational journey towards becoming a developed and equitable nation by 2047.*

Keywords: *Financial inclusion, Credit, Assam Gramin Vikash Bank, Self-help group, Assam.*

Introduction

India, a developing nation, is home to a vast population of around 1404.91 million, with 68.8% of them residing in semi-urban and rural areas, where agrarian activity is the main source of livelihood. Illiteracy, inadequate knowledge of financial services, poor infrastructure, low income, and exposure to risks have led to the marginalisation of these rural communities (Kumar, 2023). Moreover, financial institutions of the nation are largely located in urban commercial areas, where they basically focus on increasing profitability and earning high-value clients, rather than addressing the needs of the underserved population (Sharma et al., 2014). In this regard, in

2005, the concept of 'financial inclusion' was introduced. Its aim was to achieve universal access to financial services in India, particularly for vulnerable groups (Singh et al., 2014). It has been described as a driver to enable fair access to financial services, such as savings, credit, and insurance, by all individuals and enterprises (Rangarajan, 2008). Eventually, financial inclusion has become essential for attaining sustainable economic growth of the nation, as it involves the marginalised sections to be a part of the economic activities to enhance their living standards and promote equality (Dash & Mohanta, 2024). Both private and public sector banks have been working to enhance financial inclusion in India. This can be witnessed by the sharp increment in the proportion of Indians having bank accounts, which has mounted from 35% to 96% during 2017-2021 (Waghmare, 2025). In this regard, the critical role of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in advancing financial inclusion, particularly in the plethora of rural India, cannot be discarded, where the majority of people remain excluded from formal banking systems. Established in 1975, these banks were designed to connect rural communities with traditional banking services. Among them, the Assam Gramin Vikash Bank (AGVB) stands out as one of the leading RRBs in north-east India, delivering essential banking services to some of the most remote areas of Assam. AGVB, with its localised presence, specialised financial products and government support, is uniquely positioned to capture the extent of financial inclusion in Assam.

Despite an increasingly vast literature on financial inclusion, significant gaps exist in understanding its extent at a regional level. While prior studies have explored the theoretical nexus of economic growth and financial inclusion, a regional-level analysis, particularly pertaining to AGVB, the largest banking network in Assam and the entire north-eastern region of India, remains largely unexplored. Thus, this research seeks to bridge this gap by analysing the role of AGVB in fostering financial inclusion in the state while drawing a brief comparative picture with other RRBs of India. It further tries to investigate the ensuing influence of financial inclusion indicators on the growth of Assam's economy with special reference to AGVB.

Review of Literature

According to World Bank (2022), financial inclusion means 'individuals and businesses have access to and use affordable financial products and services that meet their needs, which are delivered in a responsible and sustainable way.' In the context of India, Rangarajan (2008) describes it as 'the process of ensuring access to financial services and adequate credit where needed by vulnerable groups, such as low-income groups at an affordable cost.' In simple terms, financial inclusion attempts to make economic resources accessible to all. It does so by providing low-cost formal financial services, so that everyone gets an opportunity to address their requisites of inclusive well-being (Demirgüç-Kunt & Klapper, 2012; Markose et al., 2020).

Financial inclusion is influenced by various socio-economic factors in India. Among these, income is widely recognised as the most significant one (Raichoudhury, 2020). Additionally, Dar & Ahmed (2020) marked education, age, income, and employment of individuals as the key factors. Govindapuram et al. (2022) emphasise the importance of household wealth, gender, and rural-urban location, particularly in the context of financial inclusion of women in India. Furthermore, factors like financial awareness and literacy, coupled with online banking, fintech innovations, digitalisation, infrastructure, and employment opportunities, also play a prominent part in helping individuals to maximise benefits of these services (Rastogi & Ragabiruntha, 2018; Kumar & Pathak, 2022; Asif et al., 2023).

Financial inclusion initiatives, particularly when offered by public sector banks, can especially be beneficial for low-income earners, as they make it easier for them to access banking services, which in turn can help in alleviating poverty by enhancing earnings (Swamy, 2014; Inoue, 2019).

On this note, the nationalisation of banks in the 1970s and 1980s, he establishment rural banks in 1975, and the overhaul of the banking sector in the 1990s can be regarded as some of the prime milestones (Dwibedi & Mishra, 2023). In recent years, the Indian government, in collaboration with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has stepped-up its efforts by implementing various initiatives to simplify banking for everyone. These initiatives have been presented thoroughly in Table-1.

Table 1: An overview of financial inclusion initiatives in India

Year	Initiative	Overview
2005	Relaxation on 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) Norms	RBI has streamlined the KYC documents requirements, making the account opening process accessible (Mondal & Today, 2014).
	No-Frills accounts	Accounts that require minimal balance are introduced to extend banking services for the underprivileged to promote financial inclusion (RBI, 2005).
2006	Liberalisation of business correspondents' model	Banks were allowed to use banking correspondence (BC) to act as intermediaries to offer banking services (RBI, 2010).
	Business facilitators	Similar to the BC model, it allowed the banks to use intermediaries such as self -help groups (SHG) to refer customers for banking services (RBI, 2010).
2010	Financial Inclusion Plan (FIP) for banks	It required banks to have structured plans to expand coverage, especially in unbanked rural areas, through branch networks and digital services (Chakrabarty, 2011).
2011	Branch outlets in unbanked rural centres	Expanding access to physical banking locations in underbanked regions (Chakrabarty, 2011).
2012	Basic Savings Bank Deposit Account (BSSDA)	It replaced no-frills account, further standardising features, such as the absence of minimum balance requirementsand inclusion of basic transaction facilities (RBI, 2014).
2014	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)	Sought to provide universal banking access through debit cards, savings accounts, and insurance (MoF, 2024b).
2015	Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)	To support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through credit provisions (MoF, 2024c).
	Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)	Aims at low -priced accidental insurance covers up to Rs.2 lakh (MoF, 2023a).
	Atal Pension Yojana (APY)	Provides a monthly assured pension to individuals, employed in the unorganised sector, on retirement (National Portal of India, 2023).
	Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)	Provides 1 year life insurance coverage for death due to any reason (MoF, 2022).
2016	Stand-Up Loan India Scheme	Focuses on promoting entrepreneurship for women and other marginalised sections of society by offering loans for enterprise development (MoF, 2023b).
	Unified Payments Interface (UPI)	It has revolutionised the face of digital payments with instant fund transfer capabilities and made financial services available on smartphones (MoF, 2024d).
2020	National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI)	NSFI prioritised universal financial access, essential financial services, financial literacy, consumer protection, and inter -agency coordination to empower individuals and businesses, especially those from marginalised sections of society (RBI, 2020).
2023	Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)	Provides financial security to senior citizens against potential declines in interest income due to market fluctuations (MoF, 2023c).

Source: *Authors' compilation*

At a time when financial inclusion has become the centre point of any economic discussion, RRB's significance in connecting unbanked rural areas with their profound banking services cannot be disregarded. Data indicates that RRBs have established over 21000 branches across India, with approximately 70% located in rural areas (The Economic Times, 2022). Rural banks' operational efficiency further enables them to offer financial services at more affordable rates while maintaining financial sustainability (Sharma et al., 2019). In the context of Assam, AGVB has been instrumental in promoting financial inclusion among the rural population through various initiatives, like PMJDY, PMSBY, APY etc., along with organising financial literacy camps, mobile banking services, and business correspondent networks. In the last five years, AGVB has organised more than 11500 financial literacy camps throughout the state. The bank also has played a crucial part in empowering women through its extensive engagement with SHGs by linking over 362000 SHGs, predominantly comprising women members, and providing them with credit facilities and financial training (AGVB, 2024b).

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the landscape of financial inclusion in Assam with special reference to AGVB.

2. To analyse the impact of AGVB's financial inclusion indicators on Assam's economic growth.

Research Methodology

Employing secondary data, the study explores the current landscape of financial inclusion in Assam as well as the influence of its indicators in facilitating the state's economic growth, with a special focus on the role of AGVB in facilitating it. It assesses the landscape of financial inclusion by examining AGVB's branch outreach, trends in credit-deposit ratio (CDR), and the distribution of credit among various sections of the society. It also evaluates AGVB's participation in the government's financial inclusion schemes, such as PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSBY, and APY, along with its efforts in promoting financial literacy through dedicated camps. Here, secondary data is collected from RBI bulletins and reports and AGVB annual reports; along with relevant research articles and working papers.

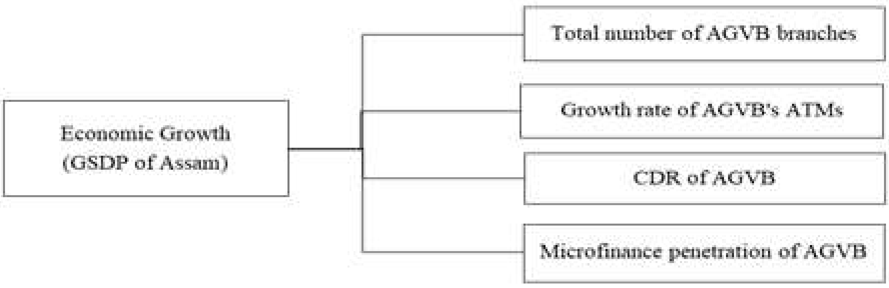

Figure 1: Conceptual framework to present the relationship between economic growth and financial inclusion

Source: *Authors' computation*

Figure-1 depicts the conceptual framework, which showcases the relationship between the considered dependent and independent variables in the study. In our study, gross state domestic product (GSDP) of Assam (in Rs. million) is used as the dependent variable to gauge the relationship between economic growth and financial inclusion in Assam (Chithra & Selvam, 2013). On the other hand, the independent variables include four indicators of financial inclusion, viz. the total number of AGVB branches (in numbers), the growth rate of its ATMs (in percent), the CDR (in percent), and the bank's microfinance penetration (in Rs. million). Here, the SHG-linked bank credit amount is used as a proxy for microfinance penetration (RBI, 2021). The study period spans 18 years, from the establishment of AGVB in 2006-07 to the financial year 2023-24. Accordingly, the following regression equation is constructed:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + u_i$$

Here,

Y = GSDP of Assam
X_1 = Total number of AGVB branches

X_2 = Growth rate of AGVB's ATMs
X_3 = CDR of AGVB

X_4 = Microfinance penetration of AGVB
u = Disturbance term

To determine how different indicators of financial inclusion affect Assam's economic growth (measured by GSDP), multiple linear regression has been carried out using STATA. The presence of multicollinearity is detected through the variance inflation factor (VIF). VIF staying close to zero confirms the absence of multicollinearity, while exceeding 10 confirms the presence of it. Again, the presence of autocorrelation is detected by using the Durbin-Watson d-statistic, where the d-statistic value ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 denotes the absence of autocorrelation. The Breusch-Godfrey LM test and the Portmanteau test have also been performed to solidify the absence of autocorrelation in the model. Additionally, the Breusch-Pagan test and White test are employed to detect the presence of heteroskedasticity, to ensure that the assumption of constant error variance is upheld in the model (Gujarati & Potter, 2009).

Results and Discussion

The area-wise distribution of AGVB branches across rural, semi-urban, and urban areas from 2010 to 2023 is presented through Figure-2.

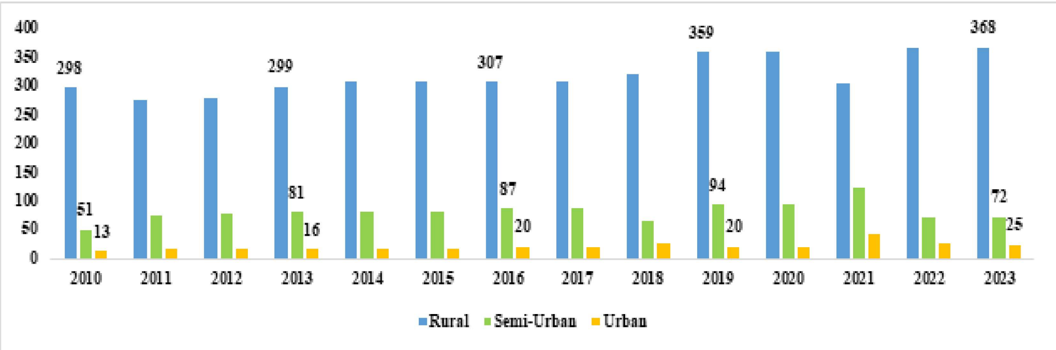

Figure 2: Area-wise distribution of AGVB branches

Source: *Authors' compilation from year-wise Annual Reports of AGVB*

Over the observed period, the total number of AGVB branches has shown a modest compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 1.97%. With a cumulative share of 94.62%, AGVB has the highest share of branch outlets in semi-urban and rural areas in Assam as of 2023. National RRBs, such as Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank (BGVB) and Uttar Bihar Gramin Bank (UBGB), exhibit similar rural engagement, with 96.08% and 95.72% of their branches, respectively, situated in rural and semi-urban locales. Uttarakhand Gramin Bank (UGB), Andhra Pradesh Gramin Vikash Bank (APGVB), and Karnataka Gramin Bank (KGB) maintain significant but slightly lower rural penetration at 89%, 88.34% and 88.15%, respectively, as compared to AGVB.

Figure 3: District-wise distribution of AGVB branches per million population

Source: *Authors' estimation from AGVB Annual Report 2023-24*

AGVB has increased its presence across all districts of Assam, with Karbi-Anglong leading at 48 branches per million population, followed by Dima-Hasao (42), Golaghat (23), and Nalbari (23); exceeding the national RRB average of 18 branches per million population (The Economic Times, 2022). However, districts like Dhubri (7), Baksa (9) and Nagaon (9) remain underserved, each having less than 10 branches per million population.

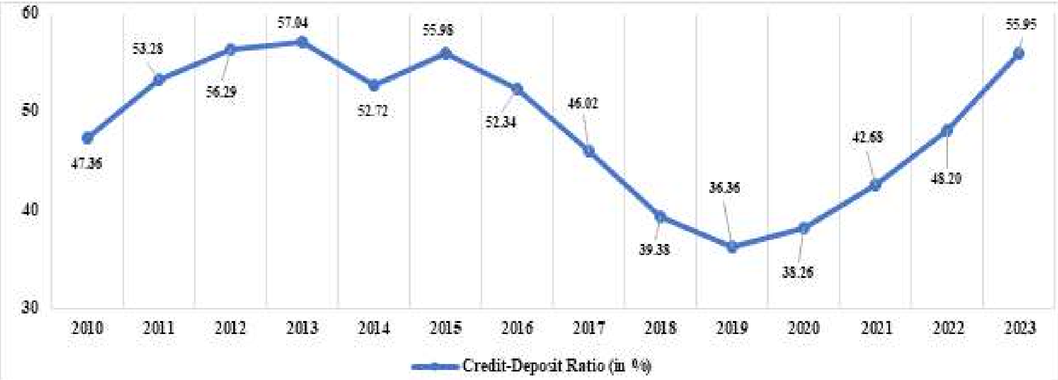

Figure 4: CDR Trend of AGVB (in percent)

Source: *Authors' compilation from year-wise Annual Reports of AGVB*

CDR, which serves as an indicator of credit efficiency and lending behaviour, has shown fluctuating trends in the state. Starting at 47.36% in 2010, it hit the highest point at 57.04% in 2013, followed by a steady decline during 2017-2019, when it reached a record low of 36.36% in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic hit hard in 2019-20, and financial institutions were forced to adopt a more conservative approach to protect themselves from potential financial risks and economic instability. This has led to a significant drop in lending due to the pandemic-induced disruption, affecting supply chains and businesses, which is reflected by the declining CDR (Almeida, 2021). From 2020 onwards, CDR has gradually been improving, reaching 55.95% in 2023, signalling a recovery in lending activities. RBI's moratorium on loan repayments, combined with targeted credit support schemes, like the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme, which has helped businesses and MSMEs to cover up their operational liabilities to resume businesses in view of the pandemic crisis, played an authentic role in mitigating economic distress and accelerating the recovery process (The Economic Times, 2020; MSME, 2021). It should be noted that even though AGVB's CDR exceeds that of UGB (47.84%) and BGVB (44.99%), it lags behind APGVB (121.58%), followed by KGB (84.83%) and Maharashtra Gramin Bank (MGB), which has a CDR of 66.99%. This under-performance of AGVB is primarily attributed to its limited credit absorption capacity in Assam's rural economy, which relies heavily on agriculture and micro-industries. Consequently, the demand for formal credit remains lower as compared to industrial states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, where a diversified rural economy, a significant contribution from non-primary sectors to the state's income, and a well-established microfinance ecosystem collectively facilitate higher credit deployment (Muduli & Behera, 2025).

Table 2: Section-wise disbursement of credit by AGVB (Rs. in million)

Year	Minority	Weaker Section	Women Beneficiary	SHG
2019	687.70	7311.07	6211.83	2512.99
2020	987.36	8008.41	6685.79	4945.65
2021	1006.27	14112.16	8162.19	9948.74
2022	1502.75	14336.45	22333.79	17223.76
2023	2724.75	25261.65	25159.69	17611.37

***Source:** Authors' compilation from year-wise Annual Reports of AGVB*

Table-2 shows that credit disbursed to minorities has increased at a CAGR of 31.70% from Rs.687.70 million in 2019 to Rs.2724.75 million in 2023. AGVB's sanctioned amount to minorities is considerably higher than APGVB (Rs.1684.10 million), but falls back by a huge margin against UBGB, which has sanctioned Rs.12280.30 million to the state's minorities. However, RRBs of industrial states, such as KGB (Rs.21786.10 million) and BGVB (Rs.13124.50 million), outperform AGVB in this regard, due to the AGVB's sharp increment in the share of priority sector lending by 76.68% during 2019-2023, which is likely to have diverted the credit flow away from minority communities (AGVB, 2024a). On the other hand, credit to weaker sections has grown impressively in AGVB, with a CAGR of 28.14%, with disbursements increasing from Rs.7311.07 million in 2019 to Rs.25261.65 million in 2023. Even though the figures still substantially lag behind APGVB (Rs.194408 million) and KGB (Rs.174141.20 million), AGVB's high growth in facilitating credit to the weaker section reflects its commitment of allocating the RBI-recommended 10% of their credit portfolio to these marginalised weaker sections of society, which comprise cottage industries, small farmers, and those from historically deprived scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities (Khan & Ritadhi, 2024). Similarly, cumulative credit to women beneficiaries has increased at a CAGR of 32.28% during 2019-2023. This sharp rise highlights AGVB's enhanced focus on empowering women through financial inclusion, aligning well with broader gender equity and development goals, which is evident through a rise in the share of credit to women beneficiaries from 11.07% to 23.77% in the same period. However, this disbursed amount is again modest as compared to APGVB (Rs.89102.20 million), suggesting further potential for scaling gender-inclusive credit initiatives. Finally, the more than seven-fold increment in terms of credits disbursed to SHGs, from Rs.2512.99 million to Rs.17611.37 million during 2019-2023 by AGVB, surpasses the likes of APGVB (Rs.11124.56 million) and BGVB (Rs.3476.7 million). The reason behind this can largely be attributed to participation in Assam's state-sponsored SHG Bank Linkage Programme, driven by the National Rural Livelihood Mission and state-level livelihood missions, which has extended banking services to the unbanked population. This can also be witnessed by the rise in the number of SHGs assisted by AGVB from 14265 to 52190 during the same phase (AGVB, 2024b).

Table 3: Advancement of financial inclusion plans in AGVB (enrolment in numbers)

Year	KCC	GCC	PMJDY	PMJJBY	PMSBY	APY	Financial Literacy Camps
2019	123398	7734	43766	27368	47613	20465	2184
2020	20908	806	46540	77637	109374	44814	2184
2021	31275	1684	191208	72180	306948	60672	1255
2022	36730	754	207518	66722	504522	76530	2920
2023	121371	N/A	219201	67265	702096	92388	3041

Source: *Authors' compilation from year-wise Annual Reports of AGVB*

The issuance of KCC peaked at 123398 in 2019 before declining by more than 80% in 2020. This decline resonates with the decline of issued KCC at a national level, where the figure stands at 56%. Farmers' inability to maintain a good credit score and decreased crop productivity in certain areas, coupled with an increasing effectiveness of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and microfinance institutions in the rural areas, may be attributed as the reasons behind this decline (Dey, 2022). General credit cards (GCCs) experienced a significant decline in issuance as well, falling more than ten-folds to 754 between 2019 and 2022. This trend can be attributed to increased regulatory scrutiny from RBI, which raised the risk weight on credit card receivables for both banks, which compelled the lenders to adopt a more cautious approach to credit card issuance (Singh, 2022). In contrast, enrolment under PMJDY and PMJJBY has increased by more than five and two folds during 2019-2023, respectively. With a nationwide opening of over 530 million accounts, PMJDY has definitely been able to penetrate deep into the rural and urban areas at both state and national levels. Moreover, integrating PMJDY accounts with diverse government-sponsored initiatives has further coagulated financial inclusion, safeguarding direct benefit transfer to eligible beneficiaries (MoF, 2024b). Similarly, PMSBY enrolments have surged from 47613 in 2019 to 702096 in 2023, with APY enrolments quadrupling from 20465 to 92388 during the same period. The increased enrolment in these schemes can be attributed to targeted implementation strategies aimed at maximising their reach (MoF, 2023a). It should, however, be noted that even though AGVB has actively implemented these key financial inclusion schemes, they tend to under-perform in terms of enrolment numbers when being compared to RRBs in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, mainly due to the infrastructural challenges, such as inadequate digital literacy, awareness, and sparse availability of banking correspondents in remote regions of Assam, which tend to impede the last-mile delivery of financial products and services (Gumilar et al., 2024).

Table 4: Results of multiple linear regression analysis

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value	VIF
No. of branches	31137.420	5070.960	0.000*	2.420
Growth rate of ATMs	-2391.924	1672.426	0.176	1.190
CDR	6099.994	904.284	0.000*	1.200
Microfinance penetration	55.068	27.098	0.063**	2.710
Model Summary				
R^2	0.897	Adjusted R^2	0.865	
Mean VIF	1.880	Durbin-Watson d-statistic	1.799	
Breusch-Godfrey LM test	0.212# & 0.356##	Portmanteau test	0.279# & 0.402##	
Breusch-Pagan test	0.255	White test	0.545	

Source: *Author's estimation by using STATA*

Note: **, ** indicates 1% and 10% level of significance #, ## indicates p-value at lags 1 and 2 respectively*

The regression results reveal that the number of AGVB branches (p=0.000), CDR (p=0.001), and microfinance penetration (p=0.063) significantly and positively influence the GSDP of Assam, while the growth rate of AGVB's ATMs has an insignificant negative impact (p=0.176). The overall model demonstrates a strong fit with an R^2 value of 0.897, inferring that 89.70% of the variation in Assam's GSDP is explained by the selected predictors. The adjusted-R^2 value of 0.865 further affirms the model's fitness after accounting for the number of predictors. The estimated Durbin-Watson d-statistic of 1.799 infers the absence of autocorrelation. The Breusch-Godfrey LM test p-values (0.212, 0.356) and the Portmanteau test p-values (0.279, 0.402) have further solidified the evidence of non-autocorrelation at either lag-1 or lag-2. Again, the Breusch-Pagan test p-value (0.255) and the White test p-value (0.545) confirm that heteroskedasticity is not a concern, ensuring that the model's standard errors are reliable. Additionally, lower VIF values (<10) for each variable confirm that multicollinearity is not a concern in the model. This outcome establishes that there exists a significant association between Assam's economic growth and financial inclusion indicators, viz. number of branches (X_1), CDR (X_3), and microfinance penetration (X_4) of AGVB. It should be noted that the growth rate of AGVB's ATMs (X_2) across Assam has no significant impact on the state's economic growth. These findings resonate well with the findings of Iqbal & Sami (2017) as well as with Dwibedi & Mishra (2023).

Conclusion

The study discusses how extensive rural outreach, proper channelling of credit across different sectors and groups, and successful implementation of government schemes such as PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSBY and APY have boosted AGVB's financial security and inclusion across Assam. This underscores AGVB's vital role in bridging financial disparities, empowering marginalised groups, and driving regional economic integration through financial inclusion. This aligns closely with the objectives of the 'Viksit Bharat' scheme, which aspires to transform India into a developed nation by fostering inclusive and equitable growth. The regression analysis further showcases three significant indicators of financial inclusion, such as the number of AGVB branches, CDR, and microfinance penetration, which have a positive and significant impact on the economic growth of Assam. But the growth rate of ATMs turns out to be insignificant, indicating the need for a more strategic approach in deploying digital infrastructure.

With only 31.1% of rural households in Assam using mobile banking, digital financial inclusion in the state demands immediate investment in improving digital infrastructure, especially in tribal and remote areas. In this regard, targeted digital literacy training via local banking correspondents could also be beneficial. Moreover, simplifying KYC norms and introducing collateral-free credit models (e.g., credit scoring via transaction history) can improve AGVB's credit outreach. A simplified loan application process coupled with dedicated credit officers can provide personalised support in facilitating timely loan approvals for the women, minorities, and weaker sections. In terms of microfinance, despite linking over 0.33 million SHGs, most women in the state face restricted credit access due to low property ownership. Thus, women-centric credit schemes with flexible collateral norms and enhanced financial literacy for women are essential to compete with the other top-performing national-level RRBs. Moreover, although PMJDY has a transformative impact on women's financial inclusion, account dormancy remains a major issue. This is because many rural women use these accounts only to receive direct benefit transfers rather than engaging in regular banking activities. Therefore, to address this, there is a need for educating the masses on the importance of maintaining bank accounts. These interventions further align with Viksit Bharat's mandate of inclusive growth driven by technology and social equity. It must be realised that access to formal banking and institutional services is the most effective way of rescuing rural communities from the clutches of informal moneylenders. In the future, this makes them step foot in the path of sustainable economic growth, as it enables them to save and invest, acquire loans for productive purposes such as agriculture, small businesses, and education. Therefore, a focused and continuous coordination among government, skill training institutes, RRBs, and other stakeholders is the need of the hour. This can remove the existing barriers of financial inclusion by paving way for an inclusive growth of rural Assam and, by extension, India, so that it can move towards the vision of becoming a developed and equitable nation by 2047.

Scope for Future Research

Since AGVB is the sole RRB in the state of Assam, the present study is initially limited to it. Future research could encompass all of India's RRBs to examine the financial inclusion landscape. Additionally, the current study examines how Assam's economic growth is influenced by supply-side indicators of financial inclusion. However, the study was unable to account for demand-side factors, including trust in financial institutions, affordability, behavioural expectations, and administrative hurdles, since state-level secondary data were absent. Therefore, future primary data-based studies may integrate these demand metrics to see their impact on financial inclusion. Furthermore, a policy-specific case study that focuses on improving the 'Access-Usage-Quality' framework to boost financial inclusion may as well be undertaken. Finally, as digital financial services are rapidly evolving, researchers may examine how digital literacy, trust, and other behavioural factors influence the use of digital platforms in rural areas. This would offer an understanding of the inclusion-growth relationship.

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