

**PROCEEDINGS OF
NORTH EAST INDIA
HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

ELEVENTH SESSION

IMPHAL : 1990

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Department of History
North-Eastern Hill University
Shillong - 793014

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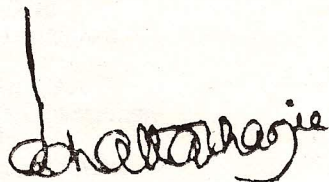
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P R E F A C E

The Eleventh Session of the North East India History Association was held at the Manipur University, Imphal, amidst great enthusiasm and gay. This was for the second time that we were invited by the Manipur University and Professor Gangmumei Kabui, Head, Department of History, Manipur University, created a history for the Association being the Local Secretary for the second time. The delegates will cherish the fond memory of the session for a long time due to the warm hospitality and colourful entertainment programmes, besides the high standard of the academic sessions in keeping with the tradition of the Association.

Shri Chintamani Panigrahi, the Governor of Manipur, inaugurated the session and Shri R. K. Ranbir Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur, graced the inaugural function as a Guest of Honour. Professor V. K. Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor of Manipur University, did the Association a great honour as the Chairman of the Organising Committee and by his welcome address. Shri Kh. Amutombi Singh, Deputy Chief Minister of Manipur, released the publications. About one hundred and seventy delegates attended the session in which more than eighty papers were presented in nine panels. The First H. K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures by Professor B. N. Mukherjee, Carmichael Professor, Calcutta University, was an added feature of the session. Professor Tarasankar Banerjee, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Viswa-Bharati University, presided over the session.

The volume is the proceedings of the eleventh session of the North East India History Association held at the Manipur University on October 25-27, 1990. I am thankful to my colleagues Professor J. P. Singh, Prof. M. S. Sangma, Dr. D. R. Syiemlieh and Shri Atul Dev Sarmah for their help in selecting and editing the papers and publishing the volume. We are thankful to the Indian Council of Historical Research for generous financial assistance to the Association for the session and for publication of the proceedings.



(J. B. Bhattacharjee)
General Secretary

Shillong,
The 15th June 1991

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Agriculture Situation in Arunachal Pradesh

M. C. Pandey

Agriculture constitutes a key sector in the economy of Arunachal Pradesh. Approximately 94 percent of the population thrive on agriculture for their livelihood. About 90 percent of the area is hilly and less than three (3) percent of the area is available for cultivation. Traditionally there are three types of agriculture land owners in India :

1. Agriculture land owners who hire or give their land for cultivation.
2. The cultivators or share croppers.
3. The farmers or cultivators who own and cultivate their land.

In Arunachal Pradesh the first two category of farmers are absent and only 1.23 percent constitute agricultural labourers. Due to lesser pressure of population on cultivated land the man-cultivable land ratio was low in 1970-71 (359 persons per square kilometer of cultivated land) but its fast rising population (decennial growth rate 1971-81, 35.15 percent) has narrowed this gap to 424 persons per square kilometer of cultivated land as compared to all India density of 396 persons per square kilometer of cultivated land though the man-land ratio in Arunachal Pradesh is high and density of population per square kilometer is only eight(8) but the pressure of population on cultivated land is gradually increasing. The level of literacy (20.79 percent), scientific management of land and modern technology is still at a very low level.

During the last decades in the field of agriculture the technical know how and training in the new methods of agriculture practices has made steady progress.

In spite of 90 percent of the area in Arunachal Pradesh being hilly and having rough terrain it has been able to produce sufficient foodgrain to meet the demand of its people mainly through (i) increased cropping intensity, (ii) utilisation of less fertile land for cultivation, and (iii) opening up of new land for cultivation. The overall economic development will only be evident if the population is stabilised, otherwise, the increase in population and subsequent demand for food and pressure on land will neutralise the economic development. Agriculture in Arunachal Pradesh has been at subsistence level and very little commercialization has taken place. With the development of horticulture the agriculture scenario may change.

Land Utilisation

The distribution of land in Arunachal Pradesh is given below (in 000 hectares).

	1976-77	1981-82	1985-6
A. (i) Total Geographical area used for land utilisation	5643	5643	5486
(ii) Not available for cultivation	37	19	55
(iii) Un-cultivable land Balance	168	135	82
	5438	5489	5349
B. Distribution of Cultivated Area			
(i) Net sown area	115	112	118
(ii) Area Under Forest	5154	5154	5150
(iii) Fallow land	169	153	81
(iv) Area under shifting cultivation*	—	70	—

*Area under shifting cultivation is either from Forest or Fallow land.

C. Distribution of land for Agriculture

(i) Total Cropped area	130	152	149
(ti) Net sown area	115	112	118
(iii) Area sown more than once	15	40	31
(iv) Cropping intensity (%)	113	135	126

D. Percentage of Area under Different Crops

	1970-71	1976-77	1981-82	1985-86
Rice	59.58	56.63	57.10	57.50
Wheat	1.45	0.70	1.90	2.02
Milletts	14.74	12.84	11.58	11.33
Maize	8.90	14.97	14.80	14.98
Barley	0.68	0.32	—	—
Total Food Crops	86.37	86.31	85.45	89.00
Pulses	1.02	0.85	0.06	0.22
Fruits/orchard	0.06	2.02	3.88	3.56
Vegetable	5.71	1.99	1.95	0.87
Sugar Cane	0.42	0.20	—	—
Spices	—	0.02	0.04	0.06
Oil Seed	2.78	1.96	6.24	6.02
Fiber	0.58	0.07	0.13	0.13
Tobacco	—	0.04	0.13	0.16
Other Food Crops including tuber	2.56	6.68	2.19	3.15
Other non Food Crops	1.52	0.71	—	—
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Based on figures from Basic Statistic of NEC 1980 and 1987.^(3, 4)
 The land tenure system in Arunachal Pradesh is very complex; however, it can broadly be classified into three heads (1 :)

1. Land owned by the Community.
2. Land owned through clan ownership.
3. Land owned by individuals.

Ninety percent of the area being hilly, the topography of Arunachal Pradesh does not provide much scope for opening of new land for cultivation. The figures on land utilisation indicate that during the last ten years cultivated land increased only by 2.6 per cent (less than 3 thousand hectares). During the same period extension of area under double cropping increased by 166 percent. Attainment of self-sufficiency in the production of foodgrain was primarily due to intensive utilisation of available land. Area under food-grain increased by less than 3 percent. Cultivation of cash crops like spices (cardamom black pepper, chilies etc.) citrus fruits, temperate fruits, apple, plum, guava, pineapple, increased significantly. These are encouraging signs of agriculture development in Arunachal Pradesh.

Operational Holding

Area of operation as well as the number of holding decreased from 1970-71 to 1980-81. The average size of holding also declined from 1970-71 to 1985-86⁹.

Area under marginal, small, semi-medium and medium increased. Number of farmers holding these farms also increased during 1970-71 to 1980-81 (Table - 1). These figures indicate that due to increase in population larger size holding are getting smaller as more families are involved in farming as the main occupation in Arunachal Pradesh. The survey on farm size and holding have been conducted during 1985-86. However, these figures are not available to the author.

Fertilizer

The fertilizer consumption (NPK) has increased from 8 tonnes in 1977-78 to 57 tonnes in 1980-81 and further to 358 tonnes in 1988-89 (Table - 2). The consumption of plant nutrient per unit gross cropped area increased from 460 gm. per hectare in 1978-79 to 2.4 kg. per hectare in 1988-89 (Table - 3). Besides fertilizer, other modern inputs like high yielding varieties, improved seed, modern agriculture implements, power tillers and other modern inputs are gradually being introduced to increase productivity. However, the consumption of plant nutrient per hectare of gross cropped area is very low. There is a wide difference in the consumption of fertilizer between different states of the region. Manipur ranks highest among the North-Eastern States, as against the national average of 62.2 kg. per hectare (Table - 3).

Irrigation

Annually, Arunachal Pradesh receives good and well distributed rainfall. About 70 percent of the rainfall is received during June to September. 18.6 percent of the area in Arunachal Pradesh

is under irrigation (Table - 4). However, the development of irrigation facilities have remained static during the last 16 years. Irrigation is mostly utilised for foodgrain crops^{3, 4}. Ninety percent of the area being hilly irrigation potential in hilly region is very low ; however, along the Brahmaputra basins irrigation potentials are very high.²

Foodgrain Production

Foodgrain production in Arunachal Pradesh has increased from 52 thousand tonnes in 1972-74 to 187 thousand tonnes in 1987-88 (Table - 5). During the 6th and 7th Plan period Arunachal Pradesh achieved the desired foodgrain production. Rice is the major cereal in the State. Rice production increased to 12.51 lakh tonnes in 1987-88 from the level of 5.2 lakh tonnes in 1972-73, an increase of about 140 percent. During the same period foodgrain production showed an increase of 259.6 percent. Since 1980-81 Arunachal Pradesh is self-sufficient in foodgrain production. Figures below summarises the production and requirement of foodgrain in Arunachal Pradesh since 1972-73 :

	1972-73	1980-81	1983-84	1986-87	1987-88
1. Production	5.2	13.1	15.7	18.7	18.7
2. Population	4.02	6.28	7.0	7.0	8.0
3. Requirement	6.5	10.80	12.1	12.1	14.0
Surplus/ deficit	-0.7	+2.3	+3.5	+6.6	+4.7

Production and Requirement in Lakh Tonnes.

Population in Lakhs.

+ Surplus in Lakh Tonnes.

Arunachal Pradesh is the only State in the North-Eastern Region which has maintained an equilibrium between production of foodgrain and rise in its population. Other State that has achieved self-sufficiency in foodgrain production is Manipur. Besides these two States foodgrain production has not fallen in line with increase in population⁵.

By 2000 A.D. the population of the North-East is likely to cross 4.5 crores, the demand for foodgrain will outgrow the increase in population. Economic gains made will be neutralised. There is no doubt that since 1960-61 foodgrain production in the region have doubled, but the region has not attained self-sufficiency in the production of foodgrain. Share of North-Eastern States in the production of foodgrain is negligible (Table - 6).

A remarkable progress has been made by Arunachal Pradesh in the production of foodgrain and horticulture crops, particularly apple, orange, pine apple, walnuts, big cardamom, black pepper and citronella. The demand in foodgrain will increase with the rise in population. Land being limited and already there are 424 persons per square kilometer of cultivated land the growth of popula-

tion must be checked otherwise rising population will become one of the biggest hindrances in the economic development of Arunachal Pradesh.

Discussion

In view of the importance of agriculture in the economy of the region high priority has been given to it in all the five year plans, yet most states in the region have not attained self-sufficiency in foodgrain production except Arunachal Pradesh. At present less than 10 percent of the land in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, 23.4 percent in Tripura and 34.3 percent in Assam is available for cultivation ⁵, ⁶, ⁷. Land will be a limiting factor in supporting large population.

The per capita per day availability of foodgrain from internal production declined from 450 grams in 1951 to 414 grams in 1961 to 400 grams in 1971. There was a further decline to 393 grams in 1981. In 1987-88 the per capita per day availability of foodgrain has been reduced to 347 grams. For Arunachal Pradesh the figures on the per capita per day availability of foodgrain are encouraging.

The increase in population of the region is the basic cause in shortage of foodgrain production. Between 1970-71 to 1987-88 (16 years) foodgrain production in the region has increased by 40 percent. During the same period in Arunachal Pradesh the increase was by 259 percent. The decennial growth of population in Arunachal Pradesh has been recorded to be 35.15 percent (1981 Census). By 2000 A.D. its population is likely to touch approximately 12.5 lakh. Increase in foodgrain production will not keep pace with population growth. Dependence of Arunachal Pradesh for additional foodgrain for its population will fall on other states.

One of the measures of population is population density. (Number of persons per square kilometer.) In the North-East as a whole the density of population is only 104 persons ranging from 8 persons in Arunachal Pradesh to 253 persons in Assam. When man-cultivated land ratio is taken into consideration, the population density figures do not reflect the true picture specially for the hilly region where cultivated land is limited. The Table 7 (in page 273) indicate the gravity of population pressure on cultivated land.

Table - I
Area and Number of Operational Holding

	Area		Holding		X Size of holding	
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981
Marginal	3.4	7.6	6.01	12.9	(7.6)	(16.5)
Small	13.5	23.3	9.4	16.2	(11.0)	(20.7)
Semi Medium	56.8	60.3	20.4	22.0	(25.9)	(28.1)
Medium	171.1	131.6	28.7	22.0	(36.4)	(28.1)
Large	243.9	112.7	14.2	5.1	(18.1)	(6.5)
Total	489.0	335.7	78.9	78.5		

Figures in BRACKETS are the percentage of the total

Area in 000 hectares

Number in 000 persons

Agriculture }
Situation } March 1985.
August 1986.

Table - 2**Seasonwise Consumption of Fertilizer in Arunachal Pradesh**
(NPK in Tonnes)

Year	Kharif	Rabi	Total
1977-78	5	3	8
1978-79	47	13	60
1979-80	56	30	86
1980-81	23	34	57
1981-82	23	34	57
1982-83	70	50	120
1984-85	40	20	60
1985-86	50	50	100
1986-87	60	20	80
1987-88	120	82	202
1988-89	258	100	358

TABLE - 3

Consumption of Plant Nutrients per Unit of Gross cropped area
(Kg. per hectare)

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1978-79
Arunachal Pradesh	..	..	..	..	0.46
Assam	102.30	1.90	1.20	1.80	2.33
Manipur	10.80	7.40	9.40	11.90	14.50
Meghalaya	8.50	9.90	9.10	9.90	9.30
Mizoram	..	..	..	..	1.70
Nagaland	0.9	1.10	1.10	1.80	1.40
Tripura	2.70	1.30	1.10	1.07	3.10
All India	15.9	17.10	20.0	25.0	29.7
	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	
Arunachal Pradesh	0.87	..	..	..
Assam	2.80	3.30	3.80	5.6	
Manipur	14.50	15.5	17.5	16.2	
Meghalaya	8.30	9.5	12.8	13.8	
Mizoram	0.70	..	..	..
Nagaland	0.50	2.0	0.8	1.9	
Tripura	5.50	7.0	6.9	9.0	
All India	30.5	34.6	36.2	43.5	
	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Arunachal Pradesh	..	..	..	1.6	2.4
Assam	4.0	4.7	4.70	6.3	6.7
Manipur	15.6	26.6	30.70	34.6	76.2
Meghalaya	14.3	14.8	16.20	17.4	14.5
Mizoram	..	1.4	..	3.6	1.7
Nagaland	1.7	..	1.80	0.8	1.6
Tripura	8.2	13.7	18.20	19.1	21.1
All India	46.3	50.06	80.70	49.0	62.2

Source: Fertilizer Statistics - 1977-78, 1979-80, 1981-82, 1984-85 & 1988-89

TABLE - 4

Cultivated and Irrigated area

	1970-71	1976-77	1981-82	1983-84	1985-86	All India 1985-86
Cultivated Area (000 hectare)						
Net	115	115	112	118	118	141064
Gross	130	130	152	177	149	177334
Percent of Net Cultivated area to total area	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	46.9
Irrigated Area (000 hectare)						
Net	23	23	24	22	22	41760
Gross	24	24	24	23	23	53978
Percent Area Irrigated to Net Cultivated area	20	20.0	21.4	18.6	18.6	29.6
		270				

TABLE - 5.

Area Production and Field of Foodgrain in Arunachal Pradesh - 1972- to 1988

	1972-73	1975-76	1977-78	1979-80	1981-82	1983-84	1985-86	1987-88
Rice	A 59.3	67.6	78.2	56.7	90.1	101.0	108.0	116.0
	P 52.0	59.9	80.6	78.0	94.2	106.0	117.6	125.1
	Y 877	886	1031	1376	1046	1050	1088	1078
Maize	A ..	19.3	23.0	12.6	23.1	25.0	28.1	30.0
	P ..	22.1	26.2	14.0	25.9	28.2	32.6	35.0
	Y ..	1145	1139	1111	1121	1128	1160	1167
Wheat	A ..	..	1.5	1.8	4.9	4.2	3.8	3.2
	P ..	..	2.7	2.6	4.0	4.2	6.8	4.2
	Y ..	..	1800	1444	a	a	1737	1356
Small Millets	A ..	15.1	15.7	11.9	18.0	18.0	21.7	26.0
	P ..	9.5	10.5	10.3	15.8	17.3	16.2	25.0
	Y ..	629	669	a	878	961	747	741
Total	A 59.3	102.2	118.	83.0	134.1	1482	161.1	175.1
	P 52.0	91.6	120.0	104.9	139.9	155.7	173.0	187.0
	Y 877	896	1013	1264	1043	1051	1071	1068
Percent area under foodgrain	..	78.6	78.6	83.8	82.0	83.7	86.2	85.0

A = Area in 000 hectares P = Production in 000 tonnes Y = yield Kg/hectare a = negligible.

Source : NEC Statistic - 1980 and 1987.

Table - 6

Percentage Share of North-Eastern States in the Production of Foodgrain

	1970-71 to 1972-73	1974-75 to 1976-77	1976-77 to 1978-79	1983-84 to 1985-86
Arunachal Pradesh	a	a	a	NA
Assam	2.1b	2.0	1.9	1.9
Manipur	a	a	a	0.2
Meghalaya	a	a	a	0.1
Mizoram	a	a	a	NA
Nagaland	a	a	a	0.1
Tripura	a	a	a	0.3
Total				
North-East*	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.6
Year BFS	1974	1979	1980	1986

a = Share of States in the production of Foodgrain is negligible

b = Includes Meghalaya

* = SOURCE - Bulletin on Food Statistic (BFS)

NA = Pooled data with other Union Territories (0.3%)

Table—7

Population and Land Resource in North-Eastern States

	Assam	Arunachal Pradesh	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura	All India
1. Population	19.89	6.32	14.21	13.36	4.94	7.75	20.53	68518.50
2. Population Density*	253	8	64	59	23	47	47	216
3. Hill area (%)	20	90	75	80	95	85	60	20
4. Area under cultivation (%)	34.3	2.8	6.2	8.6	3.0	9.9	23.4	46.9
5. Man-cultivated land ratio*	559	424	755	642	633	435	538	396

*Number of persons per square kilometer.
(%) Population in lakhs.

These figures indicate that :

- (i) Man-cultivated land ratio is a better indicator of population pressure on cultivated land than population density.
- (ii) It may not be correct to say that most of the areas in North-Eastern Region are sparsely populated.

The deficiency in foodgrain to the tune of 1.5 to 2 million tonnes that exist in the North-Eastern Region can be met from Buffer Stocks available in the country, but one third of the population of India still lives at the subsistence level. Buffer Stocks in foodgrain are associated with limited purchasing power of people living at subsistence level. If the purchasing power of people living at subsistence level is increased by 5 percent there may not be any Buffer Stock. Worst affected will be states depending on these buffer stock.

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