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HISTORY ASSOCIATION



EIGHTH SESSION

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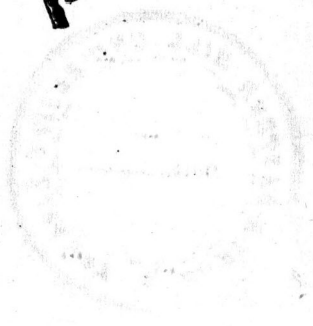
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PREFACE

The eighth session of the North East India History Association at the Kohima College, Kohima was indeed a milestone in the history of the Association. With this we have been able to hold at least one session in all the seven states of the region within eight years of the existence of our association. The session was attended by about one hundred and fifty delegates and sixty research papers were presented and discussed in the three-day session. It is for the first time that an academic gathering of this magnitude was organised in Nagaland. An additional feature of this session was a symposium on "Indian History Congress and Historical Research in the North-East" organised by the Association to mark the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Indian History Congress in which the key paper was presented by Dr. O.P. Kejariwal of the North-Eastern Hill University.

The present volume is the proceedings of the Seventh Annual Session of the North East India History Association held at the Kohima College, Kohima on October 27-29, 1987. Professor Gangmumei Kabui of Manipur University presided over the session which was inaugurated by Shri Shikiho Sema, Minister of Education, Government of Nagaland. Shri H. Gupta, Principal, Kohima College did us a great honour as Local Secretary of the session. Principal Gupta, his colleagues and the students made excellent arrangements for the conference and stay of the delegates. Besides its high academic contents, the delegates shall cherish the fond memory of the session for warmth of the reception extended by the organisers. Our thanks are due to the authorities of the Kohima College and the Government of Nagaland.

I am personally thankful to my colleagues Dr. O.P. Kejariwal, Dr. J.P. Singh, Dr. Milton S. Sangma, Dr. Gautam Sengupta and Dr. D.R. Syiemlieh for the help in editing and publishing the volume.

We are also thankful to the Indian Council of Historical Research for the generous financial assistance extended to the Association.

(J.B. Bhattacharjee)

Shillong General Secretary
The 1 July 1988 North East India History Association

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AGRICULTURE SITUATION IN NAGALAND

M.C. Pandey

Nagaland is one of the seven states in the North Eastern Region covering a geographical area of 16,579 square kilometres, constituting approximately 4.97 percent of the total area of the North Eastern Region, and 1.34 percent of the countries total area. The State of Nagaland stretches from 25.6°N - 27.4°N Latitude and 93.20°E - 95.15°E Longitude. It was given statehood on December 1, 1963. Prior to its recognition as a state it was a part of the State of Assam as autonomous district. On February 18, 1961, it was renamed as Nagaland. The State has its boundary with Assam in the north and west, with Burma and Arunachal Pradesh in the east and with Manipur in the south.

According to the 1981 Census, the population of Nagaland is 774,930 (estimated to be 8 lakhs in 1987), 84.48 percent of the population are rural, and 53.67 percent of the population are male. Average density of the population is 47 persons per square kilometre. Cultivators constitute 34.36 percent of the total population. 42.47 percent of the population are literate. The number of illiterates in the age group 15 to 35 have been estimated to be about 88 thousand. Scheduled cast population constitutes 83.99 percent of the total population.

Agriculture is the most important livelihood of the people which constitutes about 70 percent of the total working force. Of the total area 13.9 percent is under cultivation. Major portion of the cultivated land is under foodgrains. Among the foodgrains rice is the major crops of the state occupying more than 90 percent of the total cropped area. Pulses, oil seed, potato, sugar cane, chillies and other miscellaneous crops account for a small proportion of the cultivated land.

The distribution of land for agriculture is given below. Land utilisation statistic for the year 1977-78 and 1980-81 is presented in Table-1 while comparative land utilisation statistic is presented in Table-2.

The statistical information on shifting cultivation does not indicate on which land/area shifting cultivation is practised. Pandey and Singh² are of the opinion that area under shifting cultivation is utilised partly from cultivable waste and partly from forest land. It may be pointed out that reliable statistical data about Nagaland is lacking. Statistical data available show considerable variation. The present study is based on census data, information collected from visits made to villages in Nagaland and through discussions.

Agriculture Development

After the formation of the state there has been progressive development in agriculture by improving the quality of inputs, increasing the area under settled cultivation, development of irrigation potential and measures to improve soil conservation. Currently the improved methods of agriculture practice have been adopted by a limited section of farmers but the area under improved agriculture is gradually increasing. The potential developed is not fully and properly utilized by farmers. One of the reasons is due to the lack of proper knowledge on the part of the farmers of improved agriculture practices. This is partly due to the want of proper extension infrastructure and partly due to the strong traditional agricultural customs and beliefs.

Irrigation

The area under irrigation has increased from 12.5 thousand hectares in 1960-61 to 18 thousand

hectares in 1965-66 to 54 thousand hectares in 1977-78 to 62 thousand hectares in 1981-82. At present 40.5 percent of the net cultivated area is irrigated. In a span of 20 years 49.5 thousand hectares of additional land is put under irrigation an increase of 396 percent.

Fertilizer

The consumption of fertilizer in the North Eastern Region is very low. As compared with other states in the region, except Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram where figures of consumption of fertilizer are not available, consumption of fertilizer in Nagaland is lowest among the states in the North Eastern Region. Also there is considerable variation in the rate of consumption from year to year in some areas cowdung is the common manure used. In view of the low application of fertilizer (1.90 Kg/ha 1983-84) the average yield of rice (1114 Kg/ha, 1983-84) in Nagaland is encouraging, when compared with all India average of 1458 Kg/ha with an average fertilizer application of 46.3 Kg/ha. Productivity in terms of yield is certainly meaningful.

Land Tenure System and Landholding

The landownership and individual rights over the land in Nagaland are determined by customary tribal laws. However these laws are not codified and vary from one tribal community to another. Depending on the tribal community land is owned by village community as a whole or by the clan within the village, by individuals and by village chiefs. Individual ownership has been gaining importance where new terraces have been opened for settled cultivation. Land owned by individuals is heritable and transferable. Forest land is owned by the entire village. Forest land when

used for cultivation is distributed by the village chief or village elders.

The average size of landholding in Nagaland has increased from 5.40 ha in 1970-71 to 7.61 ha in 1976-77, it slightly decreased to 7.41 ha in 1980-81. Table-3 gives the percentage of area and number of person possessing operational holding. It is interesting to note that in an area where tribal tradition are followed as much as 68 percent of the operational holdings is owned by about 32 percent of the people while, 26 percent hold only 3.5 percent of the operational holding. The proportion of medium and large size holding is gradually increasing. The lower size class of marginal holding is decreasing. This trend is observed both in operational holding and number of person possessing the land. The ratio of agricultural labour to cultivators is very low. Most of the cultivators cultivate their land. Leasing or renting of land is negligible. From the agriculture point of view the pressure of the population on the agriculture land is very low. Female constitute a sizable proportion of the total agriculture force. Most of the cultivators raise only one crop a year as percentage of area sown more than once is negligible.

Foodgrain Production

The total foodgrain production as per the 1983-84 statistic was 144.5 thousand tonnes. According to the yard stick used by the Ministry of Agriculture the normal foodgrain requirement per person per day is 475 grams or 173.370 Kg per person per year. With a population of about 8 lakhs (approximate figures for 1983-84) the total foodgrain requirement for the state of Nagaland would be 138.6 thousand tonnes. These figures indicate that the state was approaching self sufficiency in foodgrain production. The figures of 1983-84 also show that the state of Nagaland was in a

position to produce 5.8 thousand tonnes of surplus foodgrain (Table-4).

Prior to 1983-84 the State was deficient in foodgrain production. Since 1971-72 Nagaland has made considerable progress in the development of agriculture and particularly in foodgrain production (Table-5).

Discussion

The State of Nagaland possess a tremendous potential and is capable of producing enough foodgrain for the entire state. The yields of crops could be doubled with the adoption of intensive method of cultivation. The increase use of fertilizer could change the agriculture scene in Nagaland, particularly in areas having irrigation facilities.

One of the major limitations of agriculture productivity in terms of per hectare output is the lack of operational assets in the form of either farm implements and machinery or draught animals. Due to hilly terrain and topographical variation, the use of agriculture implements is limited to hoes and daos. To increase cropping intensity the use of draught animals or power tillers needs to be intensified particularly, in areas where irrigation and other inputs are available.

There is considerable variation in the potential exhibited by different crops under package of improved agricultural practices versus average yield obtained in the State of Nagaland⁶ indicating that these crops have much higher potential than the present state average yields (Table-5). The level of difference between the yield average and the potential could be bridged through increased technological inputs. Nagaland is in the process of achieving self sufficiency in foodgrain production

(Table-4), once the minimum self sufficiency level of foodgrain production is achieved it should be further improved through package of new agricultural practices. However, in spite of all these developmental efforts the ultimate progress should be the upliftment of the rural masses. The overall developmental efforts can be assessed from the per capita rural income. In Nagaland the per capita rural income is only Rs.445.00 as against the national average of Rs.638.00 (per capita rural income Punjab Rs. 1627, Himachal Pradesh Rs. 519, Tripura Rs. 647.00). If per capita income is used as the measure of economic development, it suggests that the state of Nagaland is backward. This indicator also tends to support the statement that agriculture is the only subsistence in Nagaland.

Table - 1: Land Utilization Statistics of Nagaland

	(In 000 ha)	
	1977-78	1981-82
Total Geographical Area	1653	1658
Reported area for land utilisation	1653	1099
Not available for cultivation	627	28
Uncultivated land	45	267
Fallow land	511	365
Total cropped area	182	164
(a) Net area sown	182	153
(b) Area sown more than once	0	11
Area under Forests	287	288
Area under shifting cultivation	73	19

Source: Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region
NEC 1980 and 1985.

Land Distribution in Nagaland	in 000 ha
A. 1. Total Geographical Area	1099
2. Not available for cultivation	28
3. Balance	1071
B. Distribution of Cultivated Area	
1. Total cropped area	153
2. Area under forest	288
3. Area under cultivable waste, miscellaneous trees, groves etc.	265
4. Fallow Land	365
Total	1071
Area under shifting cultivation	19

Table - 2: Comparative Statement - Land Utilisation Statistics of Nagaland

	(Percentage)		
	In Naga-land	In respect of NER	In respect of India
Total Geographical Area (For Land Utilisation)	10,99,000	4.97	1.34
Area under forest	26.20	2.42	0.39
Total cropped area	13.92	0.69	0.05
Area under shifting cultivation	17.28	4.91	-
Population involved in shifting cultivation	14.97	0.43	-

Based on 1980-81 Statistical Figures.

Table - 3: Number and Area of Operational Holdings

	1970-71		1976-77		1980-81	
	N	A	N	A	N	A
	(Percentage)		(Percentage)		(Percentage)	
Marginal (Less than 1 ha)	8.3	1.1	9.4	0.8	8.8	0.5
Small (1 to 2 ha)	15.4	3.9	14.0	2.8	17.2	3.0
Semi Medium (2 to 4 ha)	27.7	13.7	19.3	7.6	13.4	4.8
Medium (4 to 10 ha)	31.5	34.8	32.5	29.0	28.4	23.5
Large (10 ha or more)	13.5	46.2	23.4	59.6	31.9	68.0

N = Number, A = Area in Hectares

Source: Agriculture Situation in India, March & August 1985.

Table - 4: Foodgrain Statistic of Nagaland 1979-80 - 1983-84

	1971-72	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84
Production (000 tonnes)	53.7	88.0	105.3	113.3	122.6	144.5
Population (Lakhs)	5.16	7	8	8	8	8
Requirement (000 tonnes)	89.46	121.36	138.6	138.6	138.6	138.6
Deficit/ Surplus (000 tonnes)	-35.76	-33.36	-33.3	-25.3	-17.0	+6.9
Procurement (From FCI in (000 tonnes)	22.0	66.0	41.0	49.0	59.0	68.0

Requirement based on the assumption that 475 gm of foodgrain consumed per person per day.

Table - 5: Area Production and Yield of Principal Crops in Nagaland

	AREA			PRODUCTION			YIELD		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Rice	61.0	72.9	114.9	34.7	76.5	128	569	1049	1114
Maize	10.0	11.5	18.5	6.3	9.2	14.6	630	800	789
Cereal	90.0	84.8	133.4	52.5	85.7	142.6	583	1015	1069
Total Pulses	2.5	4.6	3.2	1.2	2.3	1.9	480	-	-
Total	92.5	89.0	136.6	53.7	88.0	144.5	581	989	1058
Foodgrain	1.1	3.1	3.0	39.2	169.8	80.0	280	-	-
Sugarcane									

A = 1972-73, B = 1978-79, C = 1983-84.

Area in 000 hectares; Production in 000 tonnes and Yield in Kg per hectare

Source: Basic Statistic of North Eastern Region 1982 and 1985.

Notes & References

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