

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

P. D. SAIKIA  
U. PHUKAN



1989

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Rural Development is an important part of the overall Economic Development plan of the country as majority of the people of India live in the villages. The concept and operational aspect of rural development had undergone considerable changes since the beginning of Community Development Projects launched in 1952. Currently, the rural development programme has important components of poverty alleviation.

North-East India is basically rural in character, economically backward and as such rural development in the region has special significance. This region has diverse socio-economic situations and calls for modification of the general pattern of rural development of the country.

The book contains 22 papers contributed by eminent scholars on various aspects of rural development to a seminar organised by the Agro-Economic Research Centre for N.E. India, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat. The papers, by and large, deal with conceptual as well as operational aspects of rural development in North-East India with reference to the experiences gained during the recent past. This is an inter-disciplinary attempt of Economists, Sociologists, Political Scientists, Anthropologists and Administrators to understand the problems of rural development in North-East India. The book fills up the gap in the literature on rural development in N.E. India and it is important for all concerned and interested in rural development in general and North-East India, in particular.

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## P R E F A C E

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The Seminar on Problems of Rural Development in North-East India was organised by the Agro-Economic Research Centre for North-East India, Assam Agricultural University in March, 1986, as a part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Centre (1960-1985). This volume contains all the papers contributed by scholars to the Seminar. The Seminar was an attempt to understand progress and problems of Rural Development through multi-disciplinary approach. Scholars did not confine to the geographical boundary of North-East India alone, they tried to analyse the problems of rural development from the point of historical development of policy, strategy and programmes in the all-India context.

North-East India consists of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. All these political units have now attained statehood. The region has diverse socio-economic and geophysical situations and the scholars have amply discussed the need for adjusting the general pattern of the rural development programmes to specific local situations. It appears that social scientists have so far not studied rural development problems of North-East India adequately. Empirical studies are essential to guide policy makers and implementing agencies. Shortcomings of the IRDP and poverty alleviation schemes have been pointed out by several scholars. A summary of the Seminar is given in the last chapter of this volume. The main recommendations of the Seminar are included therein.

Before finalising the manuscript, we requested the Scholars to revise the papers if they so desire. Most of the Scholars responded to our request. For those who did not respond or send the revised papers before July, 1987, the original papers submitted to the Seminar have been included. We have also taken the liberty to edit some of the papers to

accommodate them in this volume. We apologize to the Scholars for this. We are grateful to all of them.

We take the opportunity to express our gratefulness to the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, North-Eastern Council, Shillong; Government of Assam North-Eastern Regional Centre of the ICSSR, Shillong and the NABARD for their financial as well as other assistances in organising the Silver Jubilee Celebrations and the Seminar. We are also thankful to the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India for their help and encouragement. Thanks are due to our colleagues in the Centre for their active cooperation in bringing out this volume. Sri M.C. Dutta, Sri B.C. Bhuyan and Miss Monju Dutta typed the Manuscript. We also offer our thanks to them.

P.D. Saikia  
U. Phukan

August, 1987

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