

**Chapter -8**  
**SUMMARY AND**  
**CONCLUSION**

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### **Summary and Conclusion**

The importance of socio-economic studies of a community has been widely recognised and their indicators from the research outcomes are used immensely by planners and policy makers as an important ingredient in the planning process. The development of a society is gauged from their socio-economic conditions as they are the key indicators for the growth and development of any society. Thus, in order to understand and help social mobility of a community, measures of social rank are usually in terms of socio-economic status and indices. It is used as a way to learn about the conditions of various stakeholders. Several studies have shown how socio-economic status influences values and norms of behaviour, social participation, pattern of leadership, motivation for improvement and communication in a community. Researches of laboratory experimental and behavioral studies in the field of education and psychology show how one's socio-economic standing impacts one's behavior and attitudes. Sociologists often use socio-economic status as a means of predicting behavior. A wide range of similar knowledge of this kind of relationship has been utilised in better planning of programmes. The present study was undertaken with an objective to assess the prevailing socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers so as to characterise and identify their development concerned. It has been adopted to stratify the category of the Mao farmers which can be considered as a tool to understand their conditions and evaluate changes resulting from development intervention programmes.

The present study was conducted in Tadubi Sub-Division of Senapati District, Manipur. Out of the total 32 villages of Mao people recognised by the Government of Manipur, 30 villages are situated in Tadubi. For the purpose of the study, 15 villages i.e 50 per cent of the Mao villages in Tadubi were selected with a total number of 300 households where 20 households each from all the selected 15 villages who depend on agriculture as its prime means for support and sustenance were randomly selected as respondents. Therefore, a multi-stage stratified random sampling was adopted for the study. To have an equal representation of small, medium and big villages, five villages which have a household of less than 300, five villages which have a household between 300-600, and five villages which have a household above 600

were randomly selected for the study. Pilot study was undertaken in three villages during October – November 2011. Field work was conducted in four phases. The first phase of data collection was conducted in May 2011 where basic requirements like their number of households, population, etc. were collected from Sub Division Office, Tadubi and other offices. Other data on history and other general features have also been collected. Based on such data, sampling of the present study had been framed. The second phase of data collection was undertaken in August 2011. In the second phase, data on all the government programmes that had been implemented in Senapati District of Manipur during 2007-2012 were collected. This was done by visiting government offices and collecting publications on such programmes. After which a comprehensive list of all such government programmes was used to frame the third objective of the study. The third phase of data collection commenced from June 2012 to September 2012. In the third phase of data collection, extensive fieldwork was undertaken by interviewing 300 respondents comprising of 15 villages. Other data collected were: socio-economic status of the Mao people in context of their traditional life, types of cultivation, traditional practices of agriculture, gennas and taboos, etc. associated with agriculture. And the fourth phase of data collection was done in December 2012 to January 2013 to collect additional information. Interview schedule was adopted as the principal tool to obtain information. Extensive interview with some selected farmers were found to be more useful to get acquainted with the problems of the farmers. Besides, personal observation and informal discussion were used to supplement the need based data required for the study. Quantitative part of the study was analyzed from the results obtained through excel and SPSS and the qualitative data had to be analyzed from the information obtained through discussion, indepth interviews with the farmers of different groups in the villages and field observational notes.

The first objective of the study deals with the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers. It initiated with the highlights on the competent socio-economic life of Mao Naga in the past. And the class of the Mao Naga farmers (respondents) in the present context has been classified by adopting the socio-economic status scale for rural areas primarily developed by Uday Pareek (1964) with subject to preliminary test and slight modification according to the requirement of the study. With a view to explore the means available for their development concerned of the farmers, the second objective of the study attempts to identify and analyze the factors affecting the

socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga Farmers. And the third objective of the study deals with the role of government programmes in improving the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers.

## **Results**

### **I. General Information**

#### **(i) Distribution of the Head of the Household by Sex**

The percentage of male household head is found to be much higher (74%) compared to the female household head (26%). Female headed households comprises of widows, divorced/separated from the husband, unmarried, orphan family with female as the eldest child in the family or whose senior most male member in the family is entirely dependent because of old age or sickness.

#### **(ii) Head of the Household by Age Group**

The highest age group of the head of the households is 41-50 years with 27.3%. Similar trend is also seen where the highest age group of the male head household is found between 41-50 years with 23% but the age group of the highest female headed household is 71 and above. An interesting feature is that the number of male headed household keeps on decreasing with years after 51 years whereas the number of female headed households keeps on increasing with years after 51 years and above.

#### **(iii) Family Size**

The size of Mao family is found to be large. 42.3% have a family size of upto 4 members. Majority of the respondents i.e 52.7% have a family size of 5-9; and 5% have 10 or more members.

### **II. Socio-Economic Conditions of Mao Naga Farmers Obtained from SES**

To classify the socio-economic class of the respondents, socio-economic status scale for rural areas primarily developed by Uday Pareek (1964) has been adopted with subject to preliminary test and slight modification. This scale calls for information about the respondents on important aspects of socio-economic status of the family and consists of 9 main items such as (1) The general nature of the family; (2) Education; (3) Occupation; (4) Class of cultivators the family belongs;

(5) Their land; (6) Farm power; (7) Material possessions; (8) House; and (9) Social participation of the head of the family. The items are of graded scale type with sub-items representing a point on the scale. Accordingly, each collected item has been scaled from the lowest to the highest in which, each sub-item represents a point on the scale. After all the information about the respondents on the different nine categories has been collected and scored, the total score received of each of the family has been calculated and the class of respondents classified according to this basis after a brief highlight on the findings of each nine.

**(i) Family Type**

89% of the respondents live in a nuclear family and only 11% live in a joint family. The type of family does not deter the size of Mao family as it is found that majority of the joint family have a small size family of upto 4 members where as majority of the nuclear family members have above 5 members. The biggest family size of the respondents which is found to be 15 is a nuclear family.

**(ii) Educational Attainment**

49 % of the households' heads are illiterate; 16% studied upto primary level; 31.7% read upto high school; and only 3.3% studied upto graduation. There is no household head with Post Graduate among the Mao farmers. However, the educational attainment of the whole household members indicates a better level with a literacy rate of 75% (with a male literacy rate of 85.6% and female literacy rate of 66%). It is lower than the State's literacy rate of 79.9% but slightly higher than the national literacy rate of 74% according to 2011 Census. The rate of children enrolment in school is good as almost everyone is in school except few children i.e 2 boys and 5 girls who are still left out of free and compulsory education. It is also noticed that in recent years there has been a significant rise in the rate of literacy especially female literacy and the pace of education is seen gradually increasing. Looking at the increasing trend of education, it can also be understood that within few decades all the Mao farmers will be literate.

**(iii) Occupation**

Majority of the head of the households i.e 69.4% are farmers. 27.3% work as wage labourers most of the time as agriculture alone is not sufficient to

maintain the family. It is also observed that the skills which every Mao farmer used to possess to weave their own baskets, weave own clothes, make tools for agricultural work such as plough-heads, spades, etc. has begun to defunct. Only 2% performs the work of artisan particularly bamboo baskets and mat-making. Only 0.3 is a trader and 1% is a petty employee.

**(iv) Class of Cultivators**

Classifying the class of cultivators of the respondents, it is found that 13.7% belong to the category of agricultural labourers, 79.3% belong to marginal farmers and 7% belong to the small farmers.

**(v) Land**

Mao Naga people by culture have a communal ownership of land because of which no Mao household is without land. But not every Mao/household owns an individual land. The percentage of respondents without individual household land is found to be 13.7%. 78.3% of the respondents are marginal land holders of upto 2 acres; only 8% owns land of 2-3 acres and no respondent owns a land of above 3 acres.

**(vi) Farm Power (animals for ploughing)**

Draught animals which are the main source of farm power are not owned by most of the respondents (i.e 75.3%). 16.7% own 1-2 draught animals; and 8% own 3 or more draught animals.

**(vii) Material Possessions**

The possessions of materials reflect the economic status of a household as the better off family can afford to have better amenities. All the respondents possess basic traditional and agricultural implements for production of food. 79% of the respondents possess modern household necessities such as improved agricultural implements/ sewing machine/ mobile phone/ LPG, etc. And more than 80% of the respondents do not possess any luxurious items such as television/ computer/ laptop/ generator/ any four wheeler, etc. The use of washing machine and refrigerator by any household is nil.

**(viii) Housing**

Housing is an important indicator to assess the position of a household. Depending on the quality of materials used for construction, the types of

houses of the respondents has been characterised. 1.3% of the respondents have pukka house. 96.4% own and live in their own kutchha houses. And 2% do not have their own house. It indicates the emergence of housing crisis amongst the farmers. House renting system or landlord system which was non-existent in the past has begun to emerge.

**(ix) Social Participation**

Considering the social participation of the respondents according to the standardised SES, 17.7% of the households' head are engaged in either one social or political or voluntary organization; 0.6% of them are members in more than one organisation; 0.7% of them hold office in one or more organizations like village or church Chairman/Secretary; and only 1.3% of them are involved in wider leadership beyond his own village. The rest 79.7% are neither member of any organisation nor holding any office. But, by religion they are all attached to their religious institutions and by customary they all belong to a clan group.

Measuring the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers from the above SES, it is found that 5 % belong to middle class, 77% belong to lower middle class and 18% belong to lower class. Similar to the findings of this class classification of the Mao farmers have also been classified by Aier. Thus, we get a general idea that farmers not only among the Mao but in the whole Naga society mostly occupy the lowest rung of the society unlike farmers in other parts of India like Punjab, Haryana, etc. who are well to do economically.

**II (A) Other Related Parameters to Assess the Socio-Economic Conditions of Mao Farmers**

**(i) Income of the Respondents**

Income of the household is an important indicator to study socio-economic conditions. In Manipur (rural) BPL families are identified to those who have the monthly income of all sources of the families' income of below ₹ 2,890.55/- (Planning Commission, Government of India, Report November 2009). Considering the income of the Mao farmers according to this definition, we find that 42% of Mao farmers belong to BPL.

#### **(ii) Sanitation**

A huge chunk of households lacks access to appropriate sanitation facilities. 53.3% have kutchha toilet and 33.9 % of the respondents have a pukka toilet. And the percentage of respondents without toilet is 12.7% which reflects the poor quality life of farmers.

#### **(iii) Cooking Fuel**

Firewood is commonly and highly used as cooking fuel by Mao farmers. Every respondent uses firewood for cooking purpose. 78.3% use only firewood for cooking. L.P. gas with firewood is used by 19.7% of the respondents and only 2% use electricity along with L.P gas and firewood for cooking. No household uses kerosene

#### **(iv) Power Supply**

6.7% of the respondents (Robve Solephe village) have no electricity connection. Only 13.3% (i.e respondents from Mao Karong and Taphou Pudunamei villages) have a regular supply of power (95-100%) if not affected by the wind/rain. For the rest of the villages (80%), they have electricity connection but they get power supply of only for 25-30% of the time.

#### **(v) Source of Drinking Water**

Pipe borne water brought to the villages from the fountains is major household source of drinking water. During winter due to insufficient supply, villagers also have to fetch water from the natural spring and pond. Every village enjoys the availability of spring water which is naturally discharged underground water. Brine-springs are found in some villages of Mao and are fetched for cooking purpose.

### **III. Factors Affecting the Socio-Economic Conditions of Mao Naga Farmers**

Physical factors as well as human factors have been identified to be affecting the socio-economic conditions of Mao farmers. Most of the identified factors affecting their socio-economic conditions are related to their agricultural practices. This is because, their economic life revolves around agriculture and their social and cultural life is also organised in relation to agricultural activities. Therefore, the study also brings to a close analysis that, any



improvement in agricultural production can improve the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers. Major factors affecting Mao farmers are:

**(i) Natural Setting of Agriculture**

Geographically, the area of residents and agricultural fields of the Mao are generally located on the top of the mountains or on the hill-slopes of the mountains. Therefore, they have to survive through rugged natural setting which is distinctive. Water supply for household use as well irrigation also face a setback as the settlement areas are often much higher than the water sources. They have to undertake a long and tedious distance on walk between the residential areas and the field areas through very difficult route, crossing creeks and ranges of hills with dense jungle. That is why the exhaustive labour a Mao farmer puts in to produce agriculture especially paddy does not commensurate with the output. Due to difficult mountainous region, fairly a large part of cultivation is done manually only as draught animals or power tiller cannot be brought to the agricultural fields that are located in a steep and far off places.

**(ii) Hardships of Mao Farmers**

The extent of their agricultural lifestyle is tedious. Agricultural plots are scattered and far off. One way distance on walk between the house and the field itself takes around an hour or in some cases around 3 hours walking distance. Some farmers cultivate in “Kashii” nearby Maram (another land inhabited by Maram Naga tribe) which is 50-55 kms far away from the village in distance and climatically different from the village. Tedious distance between the residential areas and the field areas for cultivation was one of the main reasons behind the conversion of some agricultural plots into a village like *Robve Solephe* where farmers in order to save time, energy and complete their plantation in seasonal time had to stay back in the thatch huts constructed nearby their fields. In course of time population increased and more farmers started staying and for even longer period. Gradually people started constructing better huts or small houses and even started settling which subsequently turned into a village.

**(iii) Fragmented Land Holding**

Ownership/ holdings of land in Mao are scarce and fragmented that a household owning a land of upto 1 acre of land or producing a barn of

paddy (equivalent to 50 tins or 600 Kg of paddy) have three or more different plots scattered over a distance of about 1 to 20 kms from the villages and between the fields. A household owning land of upto 3 acres of land have as much scattered plots of 15. Farming is more labourious when the agricultural plots are fragmented and it rules out big farming practices. Community ownership of land helps the poor farmers to have food security and supplement income from the crops. There have been instances of where communal ownership of land tends to disappear and become permanent when the household occupy or cultivate the land for a very long period.

#### **(iv) Cultivation Practices**

In olden days Mao, people used to practice forest cultivation of millets and oats for substitution of rice. Till today, jhum cultivation of crops is still in practice. Besides, other types of cultivation practices are dry terraced rice cultivation; wet terraced rice cultivation and permanent garden cultivation. All these cultivation practices of the Mao farmers are by and large primitive and dependent on rain only. Therefore, though maximum year round input is put into the production of crops, harvest remains poor which affect the economic growth of the farmers. Yet, such practices have been the source of livelihood for Mao farmers.

#### **(v) Agricultural Pattern and Farm Techniques**

Poor agricultural pattern and farm techniques affect the production of the farmers. More than 90% of the cultivation is rain-fed. Therefore, farmers are without sufficient production of crops whenever there is scanty rainfall. 24.7% of the respondents use only labour force for agriculture. 97.3% of the respondents still use mostly planting materials of traditional varieties by carrying over year after year. There is only one respondent who practice single cropping system for the sole purpose of commercialization. This is done by replacing the old seeds/planting material every year. 46.3% of the respondents have not used any kind of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides or weed killers which results in low production of crops. With no other means of survival, 93.4% of the respondents produce paddy knowing that harvesting is once in a year with a year round input which is highly insufficient. And due to the lack of

external support and risks factors, majority of the farmers end up producing less profitable crops. Professional rearing of animals for commercial purpose has not been developed.

**(vi) Marketing, Storage and Processing of Farmers' Produce**

Proper marketing channel, storage and processing facilities which can boost the income of the farmers remain out of reach for farmers. 90.3% of the crop sellers sell their crops through middlemen without really knowing the market price. 98.7% sell immediately after harvest with no means of prolonging the freshness. It is also due to lack of storage or processing facilities, 71% of the respondents who sell their crops have to buy the same crops during off season at a much higher rate as all the crops produced by Mao farmers are seasonal.

**(vii) Labour and Working Condition**

Labour and working condition affect the socio-economic conditions of farmers as labour is inseparably linked with agriculture. Irrespective of the size of family, 63.7% of the respondents have only 2 members who are fully engaged in agriculture that is usually the mother and the father of the family. Mao farmers work for 20-26 days in a month. 60% work for around 13 hours and 40% work for around 6 hours in a day. During paddy plantation season, they work for at least 13 hours in a day. To help themselves while helping others 86.6% get engaged in a reciprocal social system of helping each other called *ava* while 3% practice co-operative cultivation. Other working system includes inter-village labour exchange and *Chokhroh Kasa*. Thus, Mao farmers constantly work for subsistence. Social practices involved in cultivation are very eventful for farmers which also enliven their working spirit. It is also a source of great help especially for widows or small family members who cannot carry out the difficult task without the help of many people.

**(viii) Natural Factor**

Natural factors affect the production of the farmers which have an impact on socio-economic conditions of the farmers. As more than 90% of the agriculture is rain-fed, paddy fields are sometimes left to remain fallow whenever the monsoon comes late or rainfall is deficit as monsoon is the only lifeline of agriculture. Insufficient rainfall leading to a deficit of soil

moisture also reduces yields and quality of other crops or leads to crops failure. 42.9% of paddy cultivators have reported to have kept part of their paddy fields fallowed during the last 5 years (2008-2012) largely due to insufficient water. Mao area as a whole has a susceptibility to landslides. Because of landslides and mudslides, few reportedly could not cultivate their paddy fields.

**(ix) Cultural Factors**

Cultural genna taboos and festivals which were very deeply rooted in Mao culture is still found to be having importance to the farmers. Announcement of genna taboos help the farmers understand the commencing of agricultural season. From celebration of festivals, farmers also get to know the timing operation of agriculture. Festival like *Chijjiini* is celebrated to maintain good health for successful paddy seedlings transplantation. And from *Saleni* festival, all the farmers get enthusiastic spirit to complete plantation in time as it is a taboo to harvest paddy that is sown after *Saleni*. Therefore, festivals continue to remain the most awaited social moments for farmers and are celebrated with full vigor. However, there are cultural practice and belief that hamper the economic conditions of farmers. The practice of *opra* during the death of a person was costly. And due to the belief and practice of the Mao people that a corpse must be buried with all the personal possessions can be taken as an indication as to why the traditional ornaments of the Mao could not be preserved. Till today, the same practice is followed and by fulfilling such belief, a lot of output is gone. Whatever a person might have earned in a life time is also wasted in that manner.

**(x) Other Social Factor**

Education has been identified as an important factor affecting the progress and development of individual as well as Mao society. A very good number of Mao educated people are well settled in the cities with prosperous job normally out of their parents' occupation in farming. With education came the value of knowing and preserving their own identity, culture, history and so on. The impact of literacy on the Mao farmers can be seen in the light of their participation in social life and other economic activities.

Due to lack of promotion and improvement in traditional items, today, the need to procure surpasses their capacity to produce. Kitchen items, clothes, music, sports materials have all being replaced with imported items which have to be procured in addition to the need to defray the cost of education, medical, mobile phone, etc. which add up additional economic burden.

Mao farmers are not spared from the civil disturbances like Naga-Kuki war. The ban and blockade in the state affect the public service delivery systems of the poor and other normal life of the farmers because anything that is exported from Mao is the sole product of the farmers.

**(xi) Government Policy**

A large part to the solution highlighted above lies in the appropriate formulation of government policy. But there is disconnection between the government policies and actual needs of the farmers. Government resources for the farmers have been very limited. Even if they are available, due to improper implementation, they fall short of expectations. Hence, farmers have almost been left alone to improve their socio-economic conditions which have not been possible without sufficient external support.

**IV. Role of Government Programmes in Improving the Socio-Economic Conditions of Mao Farmers**

An attempt has been made to study the role of government programmes in improving the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers. This was done by finding out all the government programmes that had been implemented in Senapati District of Manipur during 2007-2012. It also tried to examine the effectiveness and the extent of benefits received by the targeted group while identifying unforeseen problems. The benefits received by the respondents from different departments are:

**(i) Department of Agriculture**

Centrally sponsored schemes as well as state sponsored schemes have been implemented in Senapati district during the reported period. From this department, only one respondent (0.3%) had received seeds of more

than 02 kgs and 6% received just a single handful of vegetables seeds (1-3) times during the reported period. The rest 93.7% did not receive anything from the department.

**(ii) Department of Horticulture & Soil Conservation**

From this department, only 01 respondent (i.e 0.3%) had received assistance for construction of high tech poly green house. 17.7% reported to have received 02 tree saplings for 1-3 time/s during 2007-2012 and 23.7% received a single handful of mixed vegetables seeds for 1-3 time/s.

**(iii) Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry**

From this department, 0.3% respondent received treatment for its livestock free of cost; 7% of the respondents received treatment by paying; 0.3% of the respondents received training to take care of its own livestock; 92.1% responded of not required the service; and 0.3% of the respondents reported to have been refused to attend to help by the department.

**(iv) Department of Sericulture**

From this department, 1.7% reported to have received employment by getting financial assistance for raising mulberry/eri food plant with supply of rearing appliance and construction of a silkworm rearing house.

**(v) Department of ST/SC**

The department implements economic development programme, infrastructure development programme and welfare programme like award of post-matric scholarship. Out of the 77 entitled members for post-matric scholarship, 91% had responded to have received scholarship and 9% had also applied and responded to likely receive. From this department, 0.6% of the respondents had also reported to have received financial assistance for medical treatment of about ₹ 10,000/- each.

**(vi) Social Welfare Department**

The District Social Welfare Office Senapati was set up in 1982. Different types of welfare programmes are implemented by this department.

- (a) Under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), 64 entitled members had been found to be eligible for the pension. Out of which 23.4% were covered under the pension and 76.6% were not covered under the pension.

- (b) Under Manipur Old Age Pension (MOAP) scheme, 106 members were entitled to be covered. Out of which 17% were covered and 83% were not covered under the pension scheme.
- (c) From the sample respondents, a total of 33 widows were eligible to get Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS). However, only 6.1% of the eligible widows were covered under the pension scheme and 93.9% were never covered under the pension.
- (d) Indira Gandhi National Disabled Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) and other disability programmes had been implemented in order to benefit persons with disability. It is found that 21.4% of the entitled members were covered and 78.6% did not receive any assistance.

**(vii) District Rural Development Agency (DRDA)**

Different schemes/programmes have been implemented by DRDA. Benefits received by the respondents from this department are:

- (a) From Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 25% responded of having received wages upto 10 days; 7.7% for 11-20 days; 25% for 21-30 days; 21.3% for 31-40 days; 12.7% for 41-50 days; and 0.3% for 51 days and above. The remaining 8% did not receive any benefit due to lack of interest to work or difficulty to work due to old age or health problems.
- (b) Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) which was designed to provide shelter to house-less people living in rural areas has been availed by 3.7% of the respondents for either construction or repairing of the house.

**(viii) Department of Food and Civil Supplies**

Only 7 % of the respondents have ration cards and 93% did not have ration cards. 85% reported to have received 1-4 times of rice with 01 or 02 times distribution of kerosene and sugar in a year; 13% responded to have received such items more than 9 times in a year and 2% responded that they had been denied of the items.

**(ix) Public Health Engineering Department (PHED)**

The main responsibility of this division is to set up basic and improved infrastructure to general public of the district. Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) is implemented under this department. 5% reported to have received one incomplete set of materials for toilet construction

such as only 01 small/big plastic squatting plate while some received a small plastic squatting plate together with tin/plastic for roof/wall; 1.3% responded of having received 01 complete set of materials for toilet construction for individual household use such as a small plastic squatting plate and a pipe with tin for the roof and plastic for the wall; 1 % responded to have received 01 complete set of materials for toilet construction for the common neighborhood use; 0.3% received the same by paying; and 92.4% did not receive anything under TSC.

**(x) Department of Women and Child Development**

From the total sample of 300 respondents, 137 respondents had an entitled member/s to be covered under ICDS. And all the entitled beneficiaries i.e 98.6% except 1.4% respondents were covered under such benefits of ICDS. Remaining 1.4% respondents did not receive as most of the time they lived nearby the agricultural fields far off from the villages.

**(xi) Education Department**

All the children under sample study except 5 children have been covered under free and compulsory education. 57 respondents have their children enrolled in government school and all of them responded that mid day meals of 2-3 days in a week and some sort of free books and uniforms had been provided to their children under SSA and MDM.

**(xii) Autonomous District Council ADC ( North Autonomous District Council, Senapati)**

The sole reason for the establishment of separate administration for the hills since the British colonial period was to give autonomy to the tribals to administer for themselves. However, it is understood from the data gathered during the interview with ADC members that more than 90% of the financial control rests with the government. Lack of financial autonomy has rendered it ineffective. ADC does not enjoy popular mandate too. Coupled with ambiguity in its function results in ADC not being able to function for the intent it was created. In view of this, their roles have been dysfunctional.



It is found that schemes like MGNREGA, TPDS, ICDS, etc. cover all the villages. All the entitled beneficiaries under educational programmes such as SSA, MDM and post matric scholarships have also been covered in all the villages. In addition, other programmes like IAY, MOAPS, IGNOAPS, IGNWPS, IGND, TSC, Sericulture, Agriculture & Horticulture, Veterinary & Husbandry are being implemented by reaching only few beneficiaries and does not at all reach in the far off villages. Other approaches of government programmes such as SGSY, Annapurna, NFBS, AAY and other programmes from DIC, KVK, Forestry, Fishery, ITI, etc. remain unknown to the respondents in meeting any needs in all the villages under study. Besides, other entitled facilities available in the country like cooperatives, credit and insurance remain non-existent to them.

The Food and Civil Supplies department which has been set up to provide food items through TPDS at subsidised rate to its citizens is the only scheme that categorise the poorest under AAY to get the food items at some level of affordable prices. But disbursement of TPDS goods does not differentiate the APL, BPL or AAY that AAY beneficiaries have to pay four times more than the Central Issue Price to get the item. There has never been any programme or scheme exclusively meant for the households whose source of livelihood is only agriculture. Benefits received by the respondents as indicated in chapter 7 (such as MGNREGA, IAY, ICDS, MDM, SSA, TPDS, TSC, Agriculture & Horticulture, etc.) have also been availed by the households whose head of the family is a good salary government job holder/army/police, etc. though part of their family also work as agriculturists. So, for those families, benefits from government programmes become an additional source of benefits/livelihood where as for the farmers it is the only means of benefit.

Implementation of programmes/schemes like MGNREGA and TPDS indicate that programmes/schemes guidelines have not been applied at the grass root level. The study also reveals a very low level of awareness about the government programme amongst the targeted groups. Poor farmers have never been taken into consideration for formulation of any programme/scheme. That is why, there is a sever connection between the government policies and the genuine needs of the farmers. And because of the role of middlemen and other

unforeseen situation in the implementation process, it is believed that only the left over that has not been usurped by the middlemen or unintended persons reach the entitled beneficiaries. Therefore, while the villagers have resigned to the fact that the state had utterly failed to judiciously implement the welfare scheme on the other hand, beneficiaries seemed to have reconciled to the meager benefits and entitlements they have so far received as it is indicative from the general opinion of the respondents that 'something is better than nothing'.

Many solution to problems identified (in chapter 6) to be affecting the socio-economic conditions of farmers lies in the role of government. But one does not come across sufficient important role of government in tackling the problems. Infact, not a single special scheme/programme has been implemented for the farmers in the hills whose difficult terrain make the farming much tedious than the farmers in the valley/plain. All in all, the existing government policies have not significantly improved the conditions of farmers.

### **Implication for Social Work Practice**

Social Work is a profession popularly called as a helping profession, a problem solving profession or an enabling profession. Knowledge, skills, attitude and code of ethics are the characterised qualities determining the professionalism of social work. Important methods of social work are Case Work, Group Work, Community Organisation, Social Action, Social Administration and Social Research. Tools and techniques are important part of social work functions. The fields of social work practices are generally large such as: community development; industrial development; child and family welfare; social defence, insurance and correctional services; health; education; environment; socio-economic development, etc. Of late, tribal development in India has also become an important field of social work. This is because the tribes of India constitute more than 8% of India's population and around 20% of the India's geographical area is occupied by the tribes. The tribals are found to be lowest in all human development indicators when compared with the other social groups of the country. They are conceived as vulnerable and are exploited. They have indiscriminately remained a neglected group of the people. While much of their

development has been left to themselves, they have also remained victims of the bias mindset of the main society who are advantageous of depriving the tribals.

Given the role of a social worker to improve the conditions of the tribal people towards self reliance with social justice perspective, tribals are by and large considered as irrational and traditional with the need to make them rational and modern. In case of a tribal community like Mao, their tradition as those of egalitarian system would require to be retained as it was rather than making them modern. Simultaneously, Mao, being a tribal community, the tendency in portraying the whole community as irrational, traditional, vulnerable and exploited cannot be always seen objectively with existent classes of people in the contemporary context but it unquestionably does not exclude the farmers. Farmers here refer to those who depend on agriculture as its prime means for support and subsistence. Every Mao family is engaged in agriculture in one way or the other. But some are entirely dependent whereas some are partly dependent. Mao farmers are known for their proficiency in farming among the farmers in the hill areas of Manipur. However, Mao farmers who solely depend on agriculture are not in as good socio-economic position as Mao farmers who are also dependent on government job at the same time. It is their relationship to the means of production from marginal land holding and cultivating low value products coupled with some other factors which have resulted them into pervasively and identifiably disadvantaged group. From this perspective, they are seen as marginalised. The present study indicates that to usher development, there is a need to reduce inequalities and empower Mao farmers who occupy the bottom of socio-economic hierarchies. Specific attentions directed at the farmers are necessary.

Government programmes implemented in the Mao area to combat poverty are of crucial importance for the farmers. But, the findings reflect that most of the entitled beneficiaries are actually deprived of benefits due to ignorance, injustice, corruption, nepotism, etc. Such findings of the study indicate that social workers can play a significant role to bring about a certain level of awareness amongst the common masses. Such situation also calls for the need of social action to bring about transparency and accountability that hamper the very foundation of egalitarian social structure. Social work practice is also crucial for inbuilt capacity for the officials concerns as the IAS probationers of Manipur also observed the same that “the officials lack imaginative and innovative ideas” (Ashokvardhan, 2004, p.140).

Empowerment and advocacy, which is an emancipatory approach of social work practice gives special focus in assisting self-help groups develop so that, members of the group who have the same problem can come together and support one another. The findings of the present study indicates the relevance of forming self-help groups (SHGs), farmers' club or association, co-operative growers' societies, marketing societies/boards to establish market linkage with professional commitment. By forming such groups, farmers can be helped in various ways. They can be helped to relocate and regulate the price of their agricultural products. Such a platform can help the farmers to sell, purchase and capture the lucrative profits of the middle men. Upgradation of the agricultural products in the form of transportation, storage not only for potato but for other crops also food processing and value adding can be also taken as examples. To improve their socio-economic conditions, social workers can also play an important role in channelization, educating the farmers on the need and scope for diversification in their occupation. Role of social worker is also crucial to be mediator and advocate bridging the gap between the external forces and the farmers who are too weak to confront the challenges.

Social work practice with community which has been "particularly concerned with the needs of those who have been disadvantaged or oppressed, whether through poverty or through discrimination" (Mayo, 2002, p.162), can be adopted by social workers to help the farming community. Considering the viewpoint of Mao farmers from social work implication, the study also indicates the relevance of adopting the ideologies of social development. Social development aims to promote people' well being, meeting the needs of the people and providing opportunities for advancement. Social development ideas also focus on the institutional development with proper social policies and programme to meet the needs and aspirations of the people appropriately. Its ideology regards historical, cultural and ethnic differences and other particular need and wishes of communities. Such model can be adopted to look into the obstacles the Mao farmers face, the support system they receive so as to improve their socio-economic conditions. Pandey (1981) offers three suitable methodologies for social development:

- (i) *Distributive strategies* aim for improved social equity between groups nationally.
- (ii) *Participative strategies* aim to make structural and institutional reforms to involve people in development and social change.

(iii) *Human development strategies* aim to increase the skills and capacity for people to act on their own behalf in improving the economy and institutional development in their area (Payne, 1997, pp.207-208)

Thus, the present study can be used as an important source material for social work education to adopt suitable social work methods and ideologies as model to address the development issues of the deprived section of the people who suffer from inequality and injustice in the society as in the case of Mao farmers.

## **Conclusion**

The early life of Mao Naga reveals a classless society. Much of their prosperity can be attributed to their rich and deeply rooted cultures of egalitarianism. In the process of transition, the society has been divided into “haves” and “have nots”. The components of the socio-economic status SES scale according to Uday Pareek (1964) exhibit a low social and economic standard of the Mao farmers with only 5% belonging to middle class; 77% of them belonging to lower middle class; and 18% belonging to lower class. Few do not even own a house and a huge chunk of them lacks access to appropriate sanitation facilities. Their educational level is found to be lower than the state’s literacy rate but higher than the national level. Few children are still found to be out of free and compulsory educational scheme. Attainment of quality education and services for many still causes serious concern. Besides, inadequate health services, transportation and power supply are also a serious matter of concern. Individually owned land or farm power which is considered as a basic necessity for a farmer is not owned by many Mao farmers. More than 80% do not have any luxurious items at home. In recognition of the lowest strata of the Mao farmers whose primary source of livelihood is agriculture, it is worth noted that foremost priority must be given to them in any of the development process. Special attention must be given for improving their socio-economic conditions.

Factors behind the socio-economic backwardness of the Mao farmers have been identified to be closely related with their agricultural practices. This is because, their economic life revolves around agriculture and their social and cultural life is also organised in relation to agricultural activities. Most farmers are marginal land holders. Primitive method of cultivation is pre-dominant with more than 90% of cultivation dependent on rain water. The use of chemical fertilizer remains out of reach for

almost half of the farmers. Hybrid planting materials which can boost the crop production is inaccessible for most of the farmers. Combined with all these is the lack of proper marketing, storage and processing facilities. Often, the need to fulfil social demand in procuring cloths, education, mobile phone bills, food items, etc. surpasses the ability of the farmer to produce only from agriculture. That is how their sole dependency on agriculture cannot take them beyond subsistence level inspite of their maximum input which in cycle affects the overall socio-economic conditions of farmers. Therefore, the study also brings to a close analysis that, any affect in agricultural production can affect the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers. Situation demands a venture. Farmers are to be encouraged to promote indigenous livelihood sources. They are to be made receptive to adopt more profitable agricultural practices and resort to vegetable cultivation rather than paddy especially when there is scanty rainfall. They are also to be encouraged to practice agroforestry. Low profile biasness attached with agriculture which make the educated young generation averse of farming need to be wiped out by creating attractive job opportunities in agriculture. The findings of the present study confirmed the observation of Puni, (2012) who believes that management and utilization of natural resources is an ideal option for many if not for everybody. He writes “Education is just not about employment but it is about employability. Mao people being in constant contact with nature, majority of them have natural talent to utilise, develop and engage themselves profitably by conglomerating their inherent talent with scientific knowledge”. Their socio-economic conditions can be improved if their potentials can be explored. The rich potentials of natural resources as well as human resources in handlooms, handicrafts and artisans need removal of constraints with better road connectivity, infrastructural support by providing skills, awareness, raw materials and accessibility of proper markets. Even horticulture needs to be explored for its high value crops and modernization. In Senapati, the identified potential horticulture area covers only 23.2% i.e 77.8% remaining are to be utilised properly. There is a need to familiarise the young generation with the benefits of such employment and other economic benefits from agriculture. It is important to introduce an additional/optional subject at higher secondary level on economic benefits of utilizing natural resources, production of profitable crops, animal husbandry, swine production and other farming practices as is partly done in St. Joseph’s College, Jakhama, Nagaland.

The implementation of MGNREGA has changed the concept of labour work/General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) work among the Mao farmers who till then believed that wage labour work was meant for the Biharis or the Nepalis. To enhance economic growth, situation still demands a lot change in their concept. Rearing of cows for milking/processing of ghee/butter, producing bakery products, extraction of oil from mill, burning charcoal from the forest, settling in the jungle to rear livestock, apiary, running a tea hotel, etc. which every household require are just not to be considered as the job meant for the Nepalis. They are to be receptive to adapt changes which can make their living better.

The Mao traditional concept on communal ownership of land reveals an element of egalitarianism enabling the poor farmers to sustain through such land. Such potentials can be recognised and exploited to use as an instrument for the larger developmental activities of the society and the poor in particular. Writers about Naga society like Singha, (2011) believes that communitisation can play a very important role in improving the conditions of Naga society. This is because communitisation is very much in line with the communitarian ethos of the Nagas.

Findings on the role of government have been found to be important from view point of policy – it is believed that the findings provide a broader perspective to identify with the real situation at hand. Job opportunities created by the government from MGNREGA, sericulture are indicative that people are all set to work hard if government could provide such economically gainful activities. By children's enrollment in government school, ICDS, etc. we find people's cooperation in government programmes. Distribution of bad seeds/planting materials or in untimely delivery or distribution of tree saplings that did not grow because of different climatic condition are all indicative that government must be more judicious in taking care of the farmers' needs. To improve the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers, what is required is the local and need based approach instead of government universal approach. However small the amount of help may be from the government, equal distribution of resources among them is of utmost importance as far as possible, because it hurts the sentiments of those who are left out. In addition to this, the evils of corruption, nepotism, political interference, etc. made the sufferings of Mao farmers more pathetic. To have a sustainable programme for the people who survive on agriculture, it is important to have programmes that have connection with agriculture. As all the crops produced by Mao farmers are seasonal, simple training on natural

preservation of crops or an introduction of simple storage and processing facilities can be a great help. They can sell at a higher rate in off season or after being processed. They can save money from procuring crops in off season. Public transportation can encourage the farmers especially from far off villages to produce and transport huge amount of crops to sell at a much reasonable rate to maximise their profits. There was a feeling among the respondents from the village of Robve Solephe that there was no need to rear more chickens as they had enough for household where surplus could not be sold.

The study also throws a considerable light that most of the well-meaning programmes and schemes are merely on the paper and remain less known to the people for which those programmes are meant. Certain government programmes do significantly contribute to the development needs of the people but they fall short of expectations. The findings of the impact on the role of government on Mao farmers in reality indicates that in order to better serve the development needs, there is a need to identify specific problems, resources, skills and local need based of the people. Special programmes are required to be introduced exclusively for the farmers in the hills whose difficult terrain make the cultivation much tedious. Even within the hilly farmers, exceptional programmes are required to be formulated for the marginal farmers whose only source of livelihood is agriculture. There is a need for strict monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of any programme. There is also a need for proper integration and coordination of services of all stakeholders. It has been found that farmers have been largely neglected. Hence, it is believed that the study inspite of its limitations have been able to bring out some notable observations on the perspectives and roles of government in meeting the developmental needs of the people as well as their impact on Mao farmers in reality. To usher the development process, it requires institutional reforms and rethinking of the planners and policy makers to wisely devise and adopt appropriate strategies by considering the ground realities and other socio-cultural factors.

The present study indicates that there is a need to initiate further research in the following areas: (a) The role of NGOs, church, women's organizations, students' organizations, youth bodies and other active organizations are very efficient. There is a need to study such roles so that various stakeholders could coordinate in the developmental process. (b) The present study is confined only with the Mao Naga farmers. Agriculture, being the main source of livelihood for the people in the state



especially in the rural areas, there is need for wider studies about the problems and prospects of other such tribal farmers residing even in remotest areas. This is considered important from the view point of effective policy measures. (c) There is regional imbalance between the valley and the hill areas of Manipur. Government reports also indicate that much preference is given to the development of the valley districts (For example, see Table-4.16). Most programmes and benefits are on the paper and remain unknown to the people. Systematic research intervention is required on the strategies of government in the development process. There is a need to develop local based policy programmes. Government should take proper initiatives by incorporating local needs of the tribal farmers to ensure their proper development.

The hypotheses developed from the study are: (i) the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers can be improved if their cultivation practices can be improved; (ii) the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers can be improved if their traditional skills can be revived and alternative sources of employment generated; (iii) factors affecting the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers can be overcome to a great extent if proper channel for marketing and infrastructure can be provided to them; (iv) government programmes if formulated and implemented according to the local needs of the farmers can be of great benefit to the farmers.

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