

Chapter – 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter – 3

Methodology

We have seen in the review of literature in the preceding chapter that the picture of agricultural sector remains grim as majority of the farmers constitute the bottom rung of the poverty ladder. According to the Eleventh Five Year Plan, half of those engaged in agriculture are still illiterate; 80% of farmers are small and marginal. The fate of their economy is inseparably linked with the development of agricultural sector. Since majority of them have a small operational holding of land, most of them live below or near the subsistence level. For them stagnation has become traditional. Growth of the population has increased extensively where the growth in agricultural production has remained stagnant. Therefore, generally farmers are not in a position to earn enough for their living by depending on the agriculture alone. This presents formidable obstacles to development and socio-economic progress of the farming community in the country.

3.1: Rationale

The development need of each society, region and tribe varies. If any worthwhile result is to be achieved, unique approach rather than uniform approach is needed to study each one at micro level. It may also be noted that any development plan must begin by concentrating on the socio-economic condition which is the key indicator for the growth and development of any backward society. For an agrarian society like the Mao Naga tribe, with 90% of the total population sustaining on agriculture, any kind of development for them is inseparably linked with the development of farmers and agricultural sector, and no strategy that neglects these sectors can be successful. Agriculture for the farmers of the Mao Naga tribe is not only the main source of livelihood, but it is a tradition and a way of life that moulds their socio-economic status. Therefore, it is also necessary to identify and analyze their problems and factors affecting them so as to explore possibilities for improvement.

The reason to examine the role of government for Mao farmers is that true development needs to reach even such lowermost rungs of the society concerned. It is just not enough that the government takes up programmes for the development and welfare of those residing in hills and remote areas but also the responsiveness and

participation by the deserved beneficiaries to achieve the intended target, which is the basic idea and models behind the programmes. Implementation of government programmes can be said to be successful only when its effects are seen in all sections of population. Also the growth of technology should result in its accessibility to wider population thereby growth in the economy and its distribution effects are seen in all sections of population including the small and marginal farmers. This necessarily includes even in tribal societies found in remote parts of the country as in the case of the Mao Naga farmers, because living in an era of globalisation no society can remain isolated. In the light of the above considerations, the present study also intended to examine the support system received by Mao farmers from the government.

The Mao tribe has been particularly chosen for the study because Mao being the aboriginal tribe of the Nagas where the Nagas are believed to have originated, settled and migrated, this basic and distinctive aspect of Mao make them different from the rest of other Nagas and their roles considered crucial and studying about them will have a significant bearing not only to the Mao tribe, but also to the Nagas as a whole. Therefore, though the study has been done looking at a new insight of the changing situation by considering the unique features of Mao tribe, the study need not be confined only to the Mao Naga farmers but can be used as the generalised study of all hilly tribal farmers of North-East India because all the hilly tribal farmers share most of the recent history and their socio-economic conditions remain more or less the same. Incidentally, the researcher herself comes from a Mao Naga family.

Moreover, it can be seen from the survey of literature that a lot of general studies on the socio-economic conditions of the farmers in India including North-East and Manipur have been done. There are also studies done on the socio-economic conditions of the farmers of some individual tribe or community. But one does not come across any study on the socio-economic conditions of the Mao Naga farmers in particular. Many scholarly works on the Mao Naga tribe available are those of its origin, history, culture, religion, demography and ethnography, etc., which does not go much beyond to study the socio-economic conditions of the Mao Naga farmers. There is, therefore, a gap in the previous studies and the present study is an attempt to fill those gaps to some extent. It is also believed that the findings on the role of government can bring about certain level of awareness amongst the common masses of their entitled benefits and will be helpful for the planners and policy makers to wisely devise and adopt appropriate strategies by considering the ground realities and

other socio-cultural factors. Therefore, considering the importance on the role of government for development, it is quite relevant to examine their contributions, so that beneficiaries may be better served.

3.2: Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga farmers.
2. To identify and analyze factors affecting the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga Farmers.
3. To examine the role of government programmes in improving the socio-economic conditions of Mao Naga Farmers.

3.3: Types of Data Required

- In order to fulfill the first objective, primary data on socio-economic conditions of the sample respondents were most essential. Moreover, secondary data from the knowledgeable senior citizens/village headmen in the villages were required to study the socio-economic life of Mao Naga in the context of its tradition which exists till today.
- Like the first objective, primary data i.e. responses from the sample respondents were most essential to fulfill the second objective. Besides, available secondary sources of data like books, government reports, etc. were collected during fieldwork to supplement the primary data.
- For the third objective, the type of data required at the first place was secondary data i.e. a comprehensive list of all the state and central government programmes that have been implemented in Senapati District of Manipur during 2007-2012. Subsequently the most important data required for this objective was the primary data obtained from the selected respondents/farmers on the role of government programmes in improving their socio-economic conditions.

3.4: Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The primary data were collected mainly from the respondents (i.e. Mao farmers); senior and knowledgeable persons/village headmen in the villages, government officials and

secondary data were collected from various sources such as records/materials available from various offices like the Village Council, Churches, SDO, BDO, DIO, DC, DRDA and other government offices. It also includes census reports, publications, unpublished works, souvenir, manuscripts, individual records and other literature.

- Keeping in view the first objective, the main sources of primary data were collected from the 300 sample respondents.
- Second part of the data had also been collected mostly from the sample respondents. Observational notes of the fieldwork and general inferences drawn from the farmers during informal group discussion also formed an important source for the study of this objective. Besides, primary sources, age old traditional practices of cultivation; unique agricultural technologies; taboos; gennas, etc. associated with the Mao farmers were collected from the senior and knowledgeable persons like village headmen. Part of the secondary data had also to be interpreted from Mao language into Mao.
- The third part of data has been collected from both secondary (publication, report on government programmes from DRDA, Social Welfare Department, District Information Office) and primary data were collected from the respondents. Some village chairman and secretary also provided some general information with regard to the implementation of government programmes in the villages.

3.5: Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

The principal tools adopted for collecting primary data in this study were the interview schedules used for interviews where the head or an adult member of each of the sample respondent/household was interviewed. The interview schedule comprised of both closed and open-ended questions i.e. semi-structured. It contained four parts. The first part of the questions was about the general information of the respondents; the second part asked about the socio-economic conditions; the third part asked about the factors affecting farmers; and the fourth part asked about the role of government programmes for the respondents. In addition to the interview schedule, personal observation, informal discussion, and informal group discussion were used to supplement the need based data required for the study.

- In order to collect data of the first objective, Socio-Economic Status (SES) Scale Analysis for Rural Areas developed by Uday Pareek, was adopted and modified as per the needs of the study. The other tools used to collect data for this objective was interview, and informal discussion.
- For collecting data on the second objective, an interview schedule was used for the sample respondents. Though interview schedule was used to obtain statistical data, extensive interview with some selected farmers were found to be more useful to get acquainted with the problems of the farmers. Informal interviews were also conducted with senior and knowledgeable persons/village headmen to study Mao traditions, taboos, gennas associated with farmers.
- For collecting data on the third objective, the same interview schedule (part-4) for the respondents was used. Besides, informal interviews were held with some government officials, village chairmen, secretaries and agents with regard to the implementation of government programmes in the villages.

3.6: Phases of Data Collection

The process of data collection of the present study has been completed in four phases which are as follows:

- The first phase of data collection was conducted in May 2011. In the first phase of data collection, data with regard to the number of Mao villages and other basic requirements like their number of households, population, etc. were collected from Sub Division Office, Tadubi. 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 have been implemented in Senapati District of Manipur since 2007, onwards 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.
- After preparing the interview schedule, pilot study was undertaken in three villages (Punanamei, Mao Karong and Robve Solephe) during October –

November, 2011 with the aim to test the authenticity and deficiencies of the research tools and methods; to familiarise with the research environment; to estimate the level of response and duration of the study; to find suitable time for contacting the respondents; and find out the problems likely to be faced for the study. Based on the feedback obtained, the preliminary interview schedule was appropriately modified and finalised. Field visit during pilot study also provided an opportunity to establish rapport with the concerned persons including government officials.

- 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.
- The fourth phase of data collection was conducted in 2013, during January, October and November to collect some additional information.

Sampling

3.7: Universe of the Study

Senapati, one of the nine Districts of Manipur was the universe of study. Senapati District came into existence on 14th November, 1969. It was earlier called as the Manipur North District with its Head Quarters at Karong. Later, the District Head Quarters was shifted to Senapati on 13th December, 1976. In Manipur, each District is named after its District Headquarters then and so, the name Manipur North District was also changed to Senapati District on 15th July, 1983. The district is divided into two Autonomous Councils; namely, North Autonomous District Council, Senapati and Sardar Hills Autonomous District Council, Kangpokpi. It is further divided into 6 subdivisions; namely, Tadubi, Paomata, Purul, Kangpokpi, Saikul and Saitu Gamphazol. Altogether there are 32 Departments of State Government and Six Branch Offices of Central Government in Senapati District. More details of the district have been given in Chapter-4 of the study.

3.8: Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Out of the six sub-divisions in Senapati district, the study was conducted in Tadubi sub-division. There are total 32 villages of Mao recognised by the Government of Manipur. Out of which according to the House Tax Assessment 2010-11, SDO, Tadubi, 30 Mao villages are situated in Tadubi. The total number of households in these 30 villages is 12,533 with a population of 96,995. For the purpose of the study, 15 villages i.e. 50% of the Mao villages in Tadubi were selected with a total number of 300 respondents at the rate 20 respondents each from all the selected 15 villages who depend on agriculture as its prime means for support and subsistence were randomly selected as respondents. Therefore, a multi-stage stratified random sampling was adopted for the study.

It may be noted that the number of households of each village varies starting from 100 households to a maximum of around 900 households with an exception of one village which has above 1000 households. Therefore, to have an equal representation of small, medium and big villages, five villages which have households of less than 300, five villages which have households of between 300-600, and five villages which have households of above 600 were randomly selected for the study. The details of the above three categories of village is given in Box -3.1.

Box -3.1: Villages Selected for the Study with the Number of Households and Population

Sl. No.	Village and villagers			No. of households	No. of population
	Official name of the village	In Mao			
		Village name	People are known as		
SMALL VILLAGES WITH LESS THAN 300 HOUSEHOLDS					
1.	Chakumai	<i>Eshofii inu</i>	<i>Eshofiime</i>	248	2993
2.	Mao Karong	<i>Karong inu</i>	<i>Karongmei</i>	280	1448
3.	New Makhan	<i>Ekhra inu kothu</i>	<i>Ekhramei inu kothumei</i>	131	1516
4.	Robve Solephe	<i>Robve Solphe inu</i>	<i>Robve Solephemei</i>	132	835
5.	Taphou Pudunamei	<i>Pfosemei Taphuo</i>	<i>Pfosemei Taphuomei</i>	114	851
MEDIUM SIZE VILLAGES HAVING HOUSEHOLDS OF BETWEEN 300-600					
1.	Chowainu	<i>Chobongho inu</i>	<i>Chobonghomei</i>	363	1887
2.	Makhan Khullen	<i>Ekhra inu kajiii</i>	<i>Ekhramei inu kajii</i>	351	3446
3.	Mao Pungdung	<i>Ajiiche inu</i>	<i>Ajiichemei</i>	550	5003
4.	Pudunamei	<i>Pfose inu</i>	<i>Pfosemei</i>	442	5077
5.	Rabunamei	<i>Ebve inu</i>	<i>Ibvemei</i>	410	2449
BIG VILLAGES WITH MORE THAN 600 HOUSEHOLDS					
1.	Kalinamei	<i>Kahre inu</i>	<i>Kahreime</i>	707	7345
2.	Punanamei	<i>Robve inu</i>	<i>Robvemei</i>	919	5810
3.	Sajouba	<i>Charangho inu</i>	<i>Charanghomei</i>	1439	8380
4.	Song Song	<i>Chakre Chovo inu</i>	<i>Chakre Chovomei</i>	799	5190
5.	Tadubi	<i>Ethufii inu</i>	<i>Ethufiime</i>	879	9614

3.9: Processing of Data

Processing of data collection was done manually and mechanically which includes editing, coding and then later fed into the computer for analysis through a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Tabulation was done and graphs and charts prepared according to the requirement.

3.10: Analysis of Data

The present study has relied on both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data. In addition to the data collected through interview schedule, other field notes and personal observations have been used in the analysis of data. To study the first objective, quantitative analysis was made by using Socio-Economic Status (SES) Scale. An interview schedule comprising of all the information about a farmer household on different (nine) categories was prepared. Nine categories are occupation, education of head of the household, social participation of head of the

household, category of farmers, land, housing, farm power, material possessions and family type. Each category has sub-title score as code numbers. After the information was obtained, tabulation was prepared with code numbers to show all the sub-title score of the respondents, after which the total score of all the sub-titles score of the respondents, were calculated and interpreted indicating their overall socio-economic status.

The explanation of the different socio-economic classes is given below.

Symbol	Category	Scores on the Scale
A	Upper Class	Above 43
B	Upper-middle Class	33-42
C	Middle Class	24-32
D	Lower-middle Class	13-23
E	Lower Class	Below 13

In addition to the SES Scale, few additional questions on socio-economic status of farmers formed an important part of interview schedule which were analyzed with the use of SPSS. Along with quantitative analysis, efforts have also been made to qualitatively analyze the socio-economic life of Mao Naga farmers in greater details in the context of their traditional life which exists till today. This was done mainly by discussing and interviewing with the senior citizens/village headmen in the villages.

For the second objective, quantitative part of the study was analyzed from the results obtained through SPSS and the qualitative data were analyzed from the information obtained through informal group discussion and repeated consultation with the farmers of different groups in the villages. SWOT analysis of the Mao farmer has been made. **Pearson's chi-squared test (χ^2)** has also been adopted for some statistical analysis of this objective.

For the third objective, results obtained from the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) have been set out and analyzed. And finally, concluding analysis has been done from social work perspective.

3.11: Fieldwork

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, fieldwork was mainly undertaken to interview the head or an adult member of the sample households/respondents of 300 from 15 villages. Further, Personal observational notes and opinion drawn during

informal discussion, consultation and informal group discussion during fieldwork formed an important part of the study.

In most of the villages, fieldwork was done from door to door visit. However, in some villages, for the convenience of the researcher, village people had themselves arranged a particular place where they turned up to be interviewed. Such places are village community hall, church, chairman's house and mound. It is also found that some people still have superstitious beliefs even though they have been following Christianity for quite long. In one of such occasion, on ground of customary belief, the researcher was asked not to climb up a mound (*Tokhubvii*) as informed that it is a taboo for women to climb on that particular mound.

Data collection in general and conducting interviews in particular, had not been easy for various reasons. Some people were not very willing to give information about their ownership of land holding and production for lack of it or for fewer possessions, or huge possessions lest it be used against them. Moreover, it was not possible to obtain a precise land holding of the respondents because there has never been any systematic survey of land in the study area but generally the terraced fields land is measured by production of paddy according to a traditional basket/barn. The *jhum* fields and forest land is likewise measured in terms of number of plots and sometimes according to the relative amount of firewood that can be collected from the plot or potato in terms of maunds (40 kgs = 1 maund) that can be produced from the land. Some respondents do not individually own land but shared among the brothers. Therefore, the size of the land holding as mentioned in the thesis is purely on the basis of respondents' reply. It was also difficult to ascertain information on income and expenditure of the respondents because nobody maintains a record and the common respond given by them was that, "we can't say because the more we get the more we spend and the less we get the lesser we spend". Therefore, to get fair degree of accuracy, physical details of the respondents such as consumption and expenditure pattern have been verified through direct and indirect questions. To make it possible, help had to be sought from the neighbours and other people in the village in group who know about the respondents to estimate their average income and expenditure. Then, the calculated estimation about their income was conveyed to the concern respondents and accordingly as per the consent, the data were recorded by the researcher.

Some respondents spoke about similar researches being conducted and their photographs taken by government officials in assurance of some support but with no avail i.e. especially when incidents of their terraced rice fields slide happened or fields left fallowed because of scanty rainfall. So, some villagers presumed the researcher also to be from government department and discouraged the respondents to give information. MGNREGA covers the whole villages of Mao and it is the only and most popular government programme ever known to everyone in the villages. That is why, the food ration which comes from TPDS is also known to them as a part of MGNREGA. There were also others who perceived the researcher to be coming for evaluation for the implementation of MGNREGA and opened up with a whole lot of discussion.

Though the researcher comes from the same area of the respondents and speaks the same language, the researcher was frequently being interrogated about her identity and other personal background before disclosing the responses. So many detail questions were raised for conducting such a study. Respondents also expected that by giving information they might get some benefit. A frequent question raised by many of them was “giving the exact information or exaggerate information would be better for us?” Hence there was always a need to constantly reassure the respondents. As a result, interviews took a lot time. Nevertheless, when they were convinced by telling about the purpose and aims of the study, they were willing to answer any question that was posed to them. On the contrary, an interesting part of the fieldwork was that, in some villages, every household wanted to be interviewed. So those households where interview was not conducted became curious and requested the researcher to do so. Besides, there was also a lot of personal difficulty travelling from village to village. The researcher had to even hold back in the villages. Interviews could be conducted only on the restricted working days like Sundays or in the mornings and evenings as farmers work in the field during the day.

3.12: Operational Definitions

Socio-economic conditions: The word ‘socio’ relates to society and social matters where a person lives and her/his interaction with the society and ‘economic’ refers to the economic conditions of a person, such as income, savings and so on. So, basically the term socio-economic is a combination of two words - social and economic. Socio-economic condition of an individual refers to her/his society, culture, environment,

interaction in society and financial status. The free dictionary defines socio-economic as pertaining to, or signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors. It is essentially, income and social position that is used to measure the status of a family or an individual in a community. Social scientists use the term socio-economic to cover a wide variety of interrelated social and economic factors that might tend to explain an observed phenomenon, event or set of events such as health, disease, birth and death rate, war, revolution, political realignment, etc.

Chapin (1933) defines that socio-economic status is the position an individual occupies in a society with respect to the amount of cultural possession, effective income, material possession, prestige and social participation. According to American Psychological Association, Socio-economic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. It is commonly conceptualised as the social standing or class of an individual or group. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power and control are emphasised. Furthermore, an examination of SES as a gradient or continuous variable reveals inequities in access to and distribution of resources. SES is relevant to all realms of behavioral and social science, including research, practice, education and advocacy.

For the purpose of the study, the term socio-economic refers to the conditions of the farmers they live with such as: housing, sanitation, occupation, education, income, ownership of land, farm power, material possessions, family type, participation in social life and other related features of other general significance; their realization and accession of basic privileges and opportunities. To study the socio-economic condition of Mao Naga farmers, Socio-Economic Status (SES) Scale Analysis for Rural Areas developed by Uday Pareek, was adopted and modified as per the needs of the study.

Farmer: For the purpose of the study, a farmer refers to a person (head of the household) who depends on agriculture as its prime means for support and subsistence. He/she may have other means of livelihood and work habits but not as a government employee/ pensioner of government job.

Mao Naga: One of the 39 Scheduled Tribes officially recognised by the Government of Manipur and one of the chief tribes of Naga. They are settled as agriculturists mostly on the hill tops in the Northern part of Manipur under Senapati District neighboring the Southern Angami Naga tribe in Nagaland. The inhabited area of the Mao people is also synonymously known as Mao. It is the border area of Manipur and

Nagaland connecting Manipur to Nagaland and to other parts of the Country through National Highway No.39. It is believed and accepted by the Nagas that the Naga forefathers originated, migrated and settled from a Mao village called “Makhel”.

Nagas: The different Naga tribes of more than 60 are called by the generic term as “Nagas”. The “Nagas” are concentrated in Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Mynmar. Naga is one of the major tribes in India.

Government programmes: All the programmes implemented in Senapati District of Manipur (during 2007-2012) sponsored by either state or national governments for the development and welfare of farmers including poor people.

3.13: Limitations of the Study

- (i) Generally no Mao Naga is without land because of the community ownership of land. The ownership of land of the respondents as mentioned in the study referred only to individually owned land and not community owned land.
- (ii) It was not possible to obtain a precise land holding of the respondents because there has never been any systematic survey of land in the study area but there exists a traditional method of measuring the land. Therefore, the size of the land holding as mentioned in the thesis is purely on the basis of responses given by the respondents.
- (iii) It was also difficult to ascertain information on income and expenditure of the respondents. However, through detail verification of the income and expenditure, the estimation given by the respondents had been calculated and considered only after confirmation by the concern respondents.
- (iv) The study also limited only with the roles of government and did not look into the detail roles of the NGOs, Church bodies, communitization and other organizations.
- (v) The study has considered only those government programmes that have been implemented in Senapati District of Manipur during 2007-2012. It had also not included other programmes which might have been implemented in other districts or states though there are Mao farmers residing outside Senapati District of Manipur.

Therefore, it is important to note that government programmes for the farmers and poor as discussed in the study may not be applicable to all Mao farmers of other District and State as different district or state may have different policy/programmes.