



UNDER-UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UKHRUL DISTRICT, MANIPUR.

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Abstract:

Natural resources are materials and substances that occur naturally and can be used for economic gain and development. Proper exploitation and utilization of natural resources will help in income generation, economic growth and development. However, under-utilization of Natural resources will retard economy and development. Ukhrul District of Manipur is gifted with many natural resources, but many natural resources remained under-utilized and even unexploited. Optimum exploitation of natural resources is more important than its availability. The objectives of the present paper is to examine i) the under-utilization of natural resources in Ukhrul district ii) factors for under-utilization of natural resources in Ukhrul District and iii) impact of under-utilization of natural resources in the development of Ukhrul district.

Index Terms: Development, Natural Resources, Under-Utilization, Ukhrul District, Manipur.

I. INTRODUCTION:

The state of Manipur is one of the 28 states of India situated in the north-eastern part of the country. As per the 2011 Census of India, the state has a total population of 28, 55,794. The state comprises an area of 22,327 Sq.km.¹ The literacy rate of the state is 76.94 % out of which male literacy is 84.58% and female literacy is 70.26%. Till the year 2016, there are 9 (nine) districts in Manipur. They are 1) Bishnupur District, 2) Chandel District, 3) Churachandpur District, 4) Imphal East District, 5) Imphal West District, 6) Senapati District, 7) Tamenglong District, 8) Thoubal District and 9) Ukhrul District. Out of these, four districts, viz. Bishnupur District, Imphal East District, Imphal West District, and Thoubal District are in the valley and the rest five viz. Chandel District, Churachandpur District, Senapati District, Tamenglong District, and Ukhrul District are in the hills. The Nagas are found mainly in the four districts namely, Chandel District, Senapati District, Tamenglong District and Ukhrul District. The Kuki-Chin-Zomi are found mostly in the Churachandpur District and in some part of Senapati District. The Meeteis inhabited in the four valley districts of Bishnupur District, Imphal East District, Imphal West District and Thoubal District. At present, there are 16 (Sixteen) districts in Manipur after the Government of Manipur bifurcated some of the districts in the year 2017. Ukhrul District, which is the present study area, was also bifurcated into two districts –

namely, Ukhrul District and Kamjong District in the year 2017. The present study is the study in Ukhrul district before bifurcation.

Ukhrul district, the present area of study is situated in the north eastern part of the state and shares its border with Nagaland and Myanmar on the north and north-west and Thoubal and Chandel on the South-West and South. The district is predominantly inhabited by the Tangkhul Naga Tribes. The total area of the district is 4544 sq.km. which is next to Churachanpur District that has an area of 4,570 sq. km.² According to 2011 Census, the population of Ukhrul District is 183,998 of which 94,718 are males and 89,280 are females.³ The district has a sex ratio of 943 per one thousand males. It has a density of only 40 persons per sq.km. The total literacy rate of the district is 81.4 per cent. Female literacy rate is 76.9 per cent and 85.5 per cent for males.

Regarding the topography of the Ukhrul district, the district is a mountainous and hilly area and is about 6,800 ft. above the sea level. It is one of the highest hill stations of Manipur. The mountain ranges in the district are divided into four ranges, namely; 1) Kachouphung 2) Shirui Kashung 3) Chingjui Matha and 4) Khayangphung. The highest peak is the Khayangphung, which is 3114 m, but the most popular peak is the Shirui Kashung which is 2,835 m, where the famous **Shiroy Lily** (*Lillium Macklinae*) grow. Important rivers flowing in the district are the Iril river, Nungshang (Thoubal) river, Challou river, Maklang river, Sanalok river, Rangazak river, Tuyungbi river etc which are useful for fishing and irrigation.

II. METHODOLOGY:

The design of the present study is descriptive and analytical. The study adopted both Qualitative and Quantitative method with a central premise that combination or mixed method approaches proves to be very useful in many situations, and solve many of the problems, which arise from adopting a single methodological approach. An open-ended Questionnaire is used as Open-ended questions yield detailed responses from the respondents. An unstructured interview is adopted in this study, as this type of interview is more informal and any other information can be drawn in course of the interview.

III. DATA AND SOURCE OF DATA:

Simple Random Sampling was used to distribute 150 Questionnaires in the district headquarter Ukhrul Town, of which 110 were answered and returned.

IV. DISCUSSION:

Along with physical and human capital, the availability of natural resources is another important economic asset. The proper and sustainable utilization of natural resources will help in income and employment generation in which Ukhrul district is lacking in this area. Ukhrul district is gifted with many natural resources that can be exploited in a sustainable way. The district is rich in land, forest, minerals, rivers, flora and fauna etc. The district has 77.6 percent forest cover of the total geographical areas.⁴ Forest provides important economic resources and help in generating income. In Ukhrul District from 1997-1998 onwards, income generated from forest has drastically reduce due to Supreme Court's ban on fell of timber.⁵ The deposits of many minerals are also found in the district. It can be noted that the Geographical Survey of India (GSI) together with State Geology and Mining Divisional Development had carried out a detailed exploration of limestone deposits in Ukhrul, Hundung (North), Hundung (South), Khangkhui, New Paoyi, part of Phungyar. The State Geology and Mining Division has also taken up prospecting and exploration of limestone at Phungyar and Meiring village of Ukhrul district. Prospecting of Chromites has taken up at Nungbi, Kuirei, Shingcha-Gamnon, Pushing, Lunghar, Apong, Hangkou villages of Ukhrul district. Nickle, Platinum, also can be exploit in some of the areas of the district. Recently, potential zone of soapstone/steatite was located by the State Geology and Mining Division at Nungbi in Ukhrul district.

In addition, the district is gifted with lots of flora and fauna. It is a home to many wild animals and birds. Wild animals like Elephant, Leopard, Tiger, Black Bear, Deer, Crested Porcupine, Jungle cat, Stag, Monkey etc. are found in the district. Notable birds found in this district are hornbills of various types like Necked Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, etc. and also wing wood duck, cuckoo and various other birds. Rare and beautiful Birds like Tragopan Bythii are found in the Shirui and Khayangphung hills. Varieties of Bees like locally named as *Khuirei*, *Mazam*, *Khuipi*, *Kaha* etc. are also found in the district. Along the Kamjong areas, bordering International boundary, various timbers like Oak, Pine, Teak, *Leihao* etc are found. Different species of Canes and Bamboos are also found. Plants and flowers of various kinds including

varieties of Orchids are found in the district. The famous Shiroy Lily is found in the Shirui Peak. It can be mentioned here that Shiroy Lily was discovered by the British Botanist named Dr. Frank Kingdom Ward in 1948 when he came to Manipur Hills for botanical collection on behalf of the New York Botanical Garden. The botanical name of this lily is **Lillium Macklinae**, a name that was given after Jean Macklin, the wife of Dr. Frank Kingdom Ward. The rareness and the uniqueness of this lily is that, it has seven colours when examined through a microscope. Later, Frank won the prestigious Prize of the Royal Horticulture Society Award in 1948 in London at its Flower Show. Shiroy Lily was declared as “State Flower” on March 21, 1989 and the Government of India has declared an area of 100 Sq.Km. around Shirui Peak as the National Park in 1998. Shiroy Lily blooms in the month of May-June and attracts many tourists into the district. The hills and the mountains provided the precious resources for the people of the district.

In addition to varieties of flowers, the district also has many medicinal plants and species. As much as 30 species of spice plants are found in the Ukhrul District.⁶ In recent year, a team of scientists and researchers from Manipur University has found the thriving of a medicinal plant known as “Platyodon grandiflorous” in Meizailung Village, which is three (3) kms away from Ukhrul town.⁷

The district is also rich in beautiful naturally gifted tourist places and destinations. Some of the important tourist destinations of the district are Shiroy Peak where the rare Shiroy Lily blooms, Khangkhui Cave, Phangrei which is a beautiful mountain range next to Shiroy Hills. The Nillai Tea garden, Khayang peak where Khayang waterfall could be seen, Kachouphung Lake, Ango Ching, Azao Jenephiu Magi Lake, Saline Spring, Longpi Village where the famous Longpi pottery was made. The district is a good destination for the lovers of mountaineering and trekking as well.

Ukhrul district is gifted with many natural resources that can boost the economy and development of the district if sufficient exploitation of the natural resources is initiated. But the irony is that in spite of the availability of many natural resources, its proper utilization and exploitation to boost economy and sustaining the economic life of the people is not initiated. Even with the confirmation by the GSI about the presence of many minerals, the government is yet to take up any initiatives to exploit in a sustainable way. It is irony that the state government tries to exploit the limestone presence in Hundung by building Hundung Cement Factory in 1989 at the cost of Rs. 5 crores with the production target of 1000 cement bags but the factory was closed down in the year 2003 after only 14 years of operation. The people at the individual level tried to engage in making use of the available resource for their sustenance. In Kuirei and Kalhang village, the villagers used to make indigenous salt from the natural spring water available in their village and supply to Ukhrul town and other places without any government assistance. The people in Hundung village till today are engaged in limestone exploitation at the individual level without any technology. Tourism growth remains negligible and no steady income can be generated from this sector till today. Thus, in Ukhrul district, the government has failed to sustainably exploit the natural resources for the benefit of the people.

II. FINDINGS:

a) Demographic Information:

Out of the 150 Questionnaires that were sent out, 110 Questionnaires were answered and returned back. Out of 110 respondents, 64% of the respondents were male and 36% were female as shown in the table 1 given below.

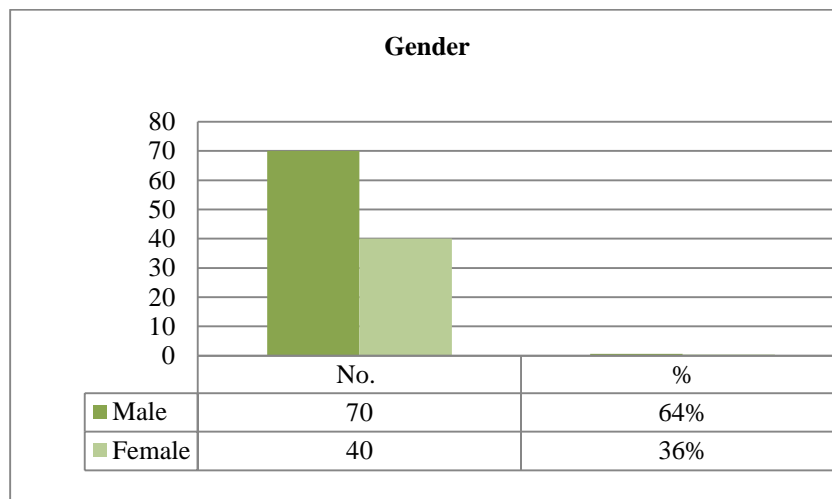


Table 1: Gender of respondents

b) Age group of the respondents:

The age group of the respondents is between 18-65 years. The highest respondents is the age group 46-55 with 36% followed by the age group 36-45 with 28%, and the age group 26-35 with 18%. Respondents with the age group 56-65 are 13% and the least belongs to the respondents with the age group 18-25 with 5%. Table 2 below shows the distribution of age in the research sample.

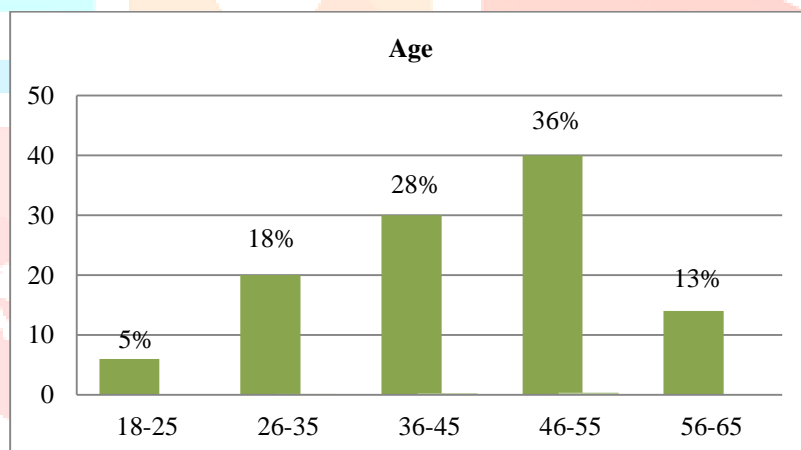


Table 2: Age of respondents

c) Occupation of respondents:

The Questionnaire was answered by people pursuing various occupations and includes students, Farmers, Self employed, Unemployed youth, Government employee, social workers and village chief. The highest respondents are the Cultivators with 32%, followed by self employed with 18%, Students and Government employee with 14% each. Unemployed youth made up 11%, social worker with 9% and the least is the village chief with only 2%. The occupation of the respondents is shown in the table 3 given below.

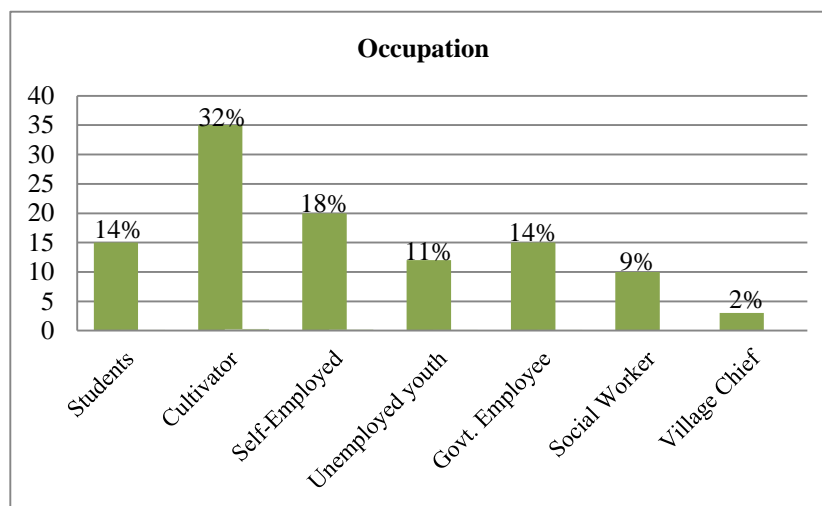


Table 3: Occupation of the respondents.

d) Factors for lack of industries in Ukhrul District, Manipur

The present study shows that many factors are responsible for under-utilization of natural resources in the Ukhrul District of Manipur. As responded by the respondents, the factors for under-utilization of natural resources in Ukhrul District, Manipur are Poor Infrastructures (32%), Poor Technology (22%), Lack of Government Planning and Policy (18%), Lack of proper knowledge, skill and training (14%) and Lack of Industries (14%) which is illustrated in the Table 4 given below:

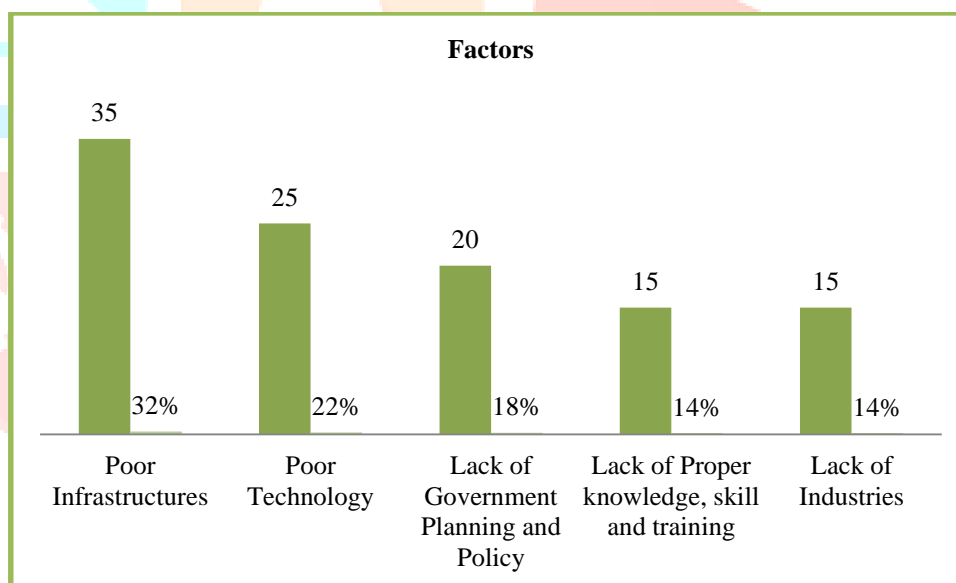


Table 4: Factors for Under-Utilization of Natural Resources in Ukhrul District, Manipur.

e) Impacts of Under-Utilization of Natural Resources in Ukhrul District, Manipur:

The under-utilization of natural resources available in Ukhrul district of Manipur has affected the economic growth and sustainable development of the district in many ways as discuss in the Table 5 given below:

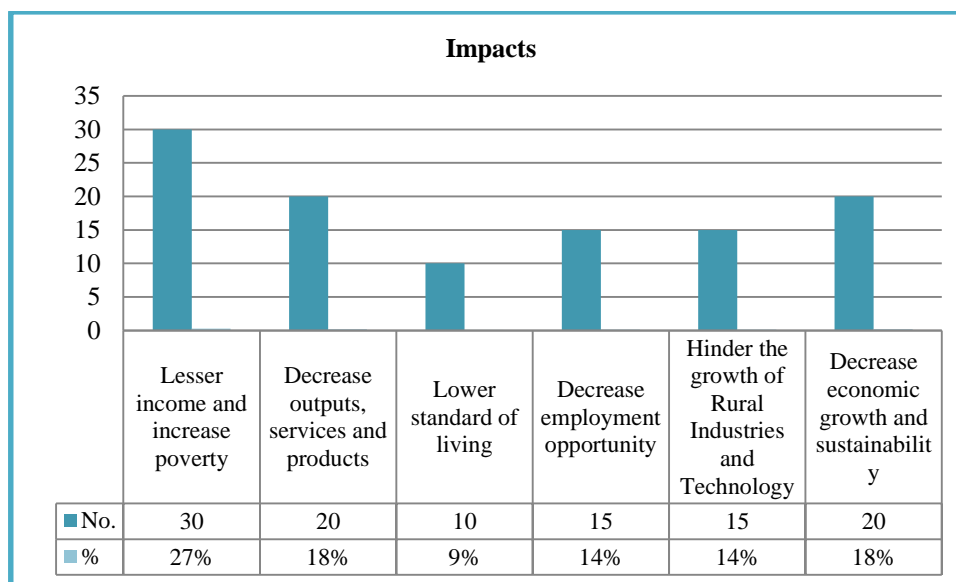


Table 5: Impacts of Under-Utilization of Natural Resources in Ukhrul District.

The data on the under-utilization of natural resource in Ukhrul District as depicted in the above Table 5 revealed that under utilization of natural resources in Ukhrul District of Manipur has adverse impact in the economy and life of the people. It has lead to lesser income and increase poverty (27%), Decrease outputs, services and products (18%), Decrease economic growth and sustainability (18%), Decrease employment opportunity (14%), Hinder the growth of Rural Industries and Technology (14%) and Lower standard of living (9%).

Thus the inferences that can be drawn from here is that under-utilization of natural resources created atmosphere detrimental to economic growth and development in Ukhrul District of Manipur.

VI. SUGGESTIONS:

In every state, the role of both the government and the civil society is important for the smooth functioning and growth of the state and society at large. There are various prospect of economic growth in Ukhrul district if proper and sufficient exploitation of natural resources is initiated. The government, being a main actor has various roles in this connection. Some of the steps that the Government can initiate for sufficient exploitation and utilization of natural resources for economic growth and development in Ukhrul District of Manipur are:

1. The Government should built important infrastructures like roads, transportation and communication, electrification etc so that the forest based natural resources which are inaccessible will be accessible and utilized.
2. Advance Technology should be introduced so that natural resources can be exploited efficiently and can be manage sustainable.
3. There is a strong and urgent need of Government's proper planning and policy formulation and implementation so that the natural resources available can be sufficiently exploited for economic growth and development.
4. Rural Industries should be established at every Block level of the district so that the available natural resources can be exploited sufficiently and many goods and services can be provided.
5. Proper knowledge, training and skill on the exploitation of natural resources through seminars, talks, media etc can be initiated so that the villagers can understand how to make sufficient use of the available natural resources for their benefit without over exploitation.

In addition to the role of the Government, the civil society including the leaders of the villages, the Non-Government Organization (NGO) should also be a partner in the management and exploitation of the natural resources, so that available natural resources can be utilized for boosting economy and development of the district in particular and of the state in general.

VII. CONCLUSION:

There is a need for sufficient exploitation of natural resources in the Ukhrul district of Manipur for boosting the economy and development of the district in particular and of the state in general. Many naturally gifted resources are available in the district, but there seems to be negligence on the part of the government for its sufficient exploitation. The sufficient exploitation of natural resources in the district will help in the solution of many economic problems like poverty, unemployment, low standard of living, low level of income etc. In addition to the major roles that the government can play in this regard, the civil bodies as well as the Non-Governmental organizations can be a co-partner with the government in this endeavour.

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