



Issues in socio-economic development of the farmers with special reference in Mawkyrwat, the South-West Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya in India.

Ms. Anima Mazumder, Ph.D Research Scholar William Carey University Shillong, Meghalaya, India

Objectives of the study:

- a) To identify and analyse the various issues of socio-economic development of the farmers in Mawkyrwat village in South West Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.
- b) To make suggestions towards the enhancement of socio-economic development of the farmers in that agricultural belt.

ABSTRACT

Agriculture plays a significant role in Indian economy because of three focal reasons; firstly- for Indian Economy, secondly- the food security of the country and lastly- the people who are directly or indirectly depends on it for their livelihood. Agriculture is an important sector of Indian economy and its contribution to GDP is also plays a vital role, moreover, it provides employment opportunities to the rural people in our country. Therefore, Agriculture is the governing factor for the growth and development of our country. Green Revolution created socio-economic imbalance in many regions of the country. The marginal farmers and landless farmers had not sufficiently empowered and gained from the Green Revolution. Many Indian farmers committed suicide in last 16 years due to the socio-economic diversification generated among farmers during Green Revolution. The latest wave of recorded suicide in human history is one farmer commits suicide in 30 minutes. Agriculture sector seemingly moving in the right direction, although there are huge socio-economic issues faced by the farmers with respect to Growth and Economic development of the country. This paper attempts to discuss the related issues in socio-economic development of the farmers and the cultivation practices in Mawkyrwat, South west Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya in India. It is based on available, primary and secondary data collection.

Keywords: Agriculture, Development, GDP, Green Revolution, marginal farmer

Word Count Abstract: 216

Word Count this Page: 316

Introduction

Meghalaya is a little hilly state with a fascinating scene, one of a kind cultures, neighborhood custom and convention. At the point when India accomplished freedom the British guideline on the 15th August 1947, the territory of Meghalaya was a piece of the province of the Assam and initially involved the two locals viz, Joined Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. On 21st January 1972, Meghalaya, the 'Dwelling place Clouds' turned into the 21st State of India. It is fundamentally a tribal State. Indeed, even after completion of the Eleventh Five-year plan (2007-2012) of the nation, the State is suffering from a moderate pace of advancement. The economic advancement of a territory depends mainly on its geographical characteristics, resource base, financial and political- cultural factors which normally shift after sometime and space. As these factors describe the initial dimension of economic advancement, this sector attempts to analyse, the financial characteristics of the improvement of the State. About 81 percent of the people of Meghalaya depend on agriculture for their income, livelihood and land is the basic of agriculture. Thus, land plays the key role in the development of the State. As the State of Meghalaya is inhabited by the tribal people having their time-honoured customs and traditions relating to ownership, management and use of land, there has been not uniform land tenure system in the State of Meghalaya. The South West Khasi Hills district is one of the resourceful regions in Meghalaya. Its land, mineral resources, water are plenty. The only need is to utilize these resources in a scientific manner. Agriculture occupies an important role in the economy of the district. Till date, it is a traditional agriculture-based economy and it is the major occupation of the people. The people of the district depend nearly on agriculture sector for their livelihood. More than 80 percent people depends on agriculture for their livelihood. It is relatively non-mechanised and hence requires manual labor. Moreover, with the increase in population, the average size of holdings is generally reducing over the years. The average plot size is too small for mechanization of agriculture and adoption of modern farming practices. Subsistence farming, therefore, is pre-dominant in the district and there is hardly any commercial surplus. Jhum/Shifting cultivation is the primitive type of farming in some area on the hill slop. Hill sides are prepared for cultivation by slash and burn of bush for a short period. Family labors and hand tools are the inputs. Tribal have their traditionally practiced this type of cultivation on the hills for their subsistence. Human beings without support of animal or plough make the hill sites arable and produced for their limited needs with the support of natural rain. Such cultivation, therefore, by nature produce no surplus as the slope of the hill suffers erosion and deletion of fertility after sometime, Jhumias then move to other slope and repeat the same process. The Socio-economic position of the farmers in South West Khasi Hills District is very poor. The farmers are suffering too much in this region. The region is deprived of proper agricultural infrastructure.

Study Area:

The study area is Mawkyrwat which lies on South Eastern part of the West Khasi Hills district. Mawkyrwat is 75 km away and two hours' drive from Shillong the capital of Meghalaya in India. The district comprises of two blocks namely, C & RD Block (Mawkyrwat & Ranikor). Mawkyrwat was full-fledged district on 3rd August 2012.

Map of Study Area



Since 3rd August 2011- Full Fledged District South West Khasi Hills District

- Place– Mawkyrwat, (South West Khasi Hills)
- State– Meghalaya
- District Head Quarter– Mawkyrwat
- Total Area– 1,341 km² (518 square mile)
- Population (2011), Total– 1,10,512
- Villages– 216
- C & RD Block– 2 (Mawkyrwat & Ranikor)
- Principal Languages- Khasi, Maram (Dialect of Khasi) & Garo
- Main Markets– 14
- Average rainfall- 12,000 mm.
- Major Crops: Rice, Maize, Potato, Soya-bean, Mustard, Betel Nuts & Betel Vine, Kharif & Rabi Vegetables, Spices, Mandarin Oranges, Plum, Peach, Papaya, Jackfruit, Litchi, Pineapple, Mangos, Tamarin & Banana ²

Statement of the problem:

In Mawkyrwat 80 percent people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Socio-economic factors are responsible for the low agricultural productivity in Mawkyrwat area. Rural poverty is the result of lack of infrastructure facilities and low development of agriculture. Low level of agricultural productivity is caused by the lack of irrigation, erratic rainfall, excessive dependence on native varieties, poor health of the farmers, small holdings, illiteracy, inadequate transport facilities, unfavorable rural atmosphere. Rural poverty is positively co-related with availability of Government credit.

Objective of the Study:

1. To identify various issues in socio-economic development of the farmers in Mawkyrwat area in Meghalaya in India.
2. to analysis the socio-economic development of the farmers and to find out if the Government schemes and programs are beneficial or not for the farmers in Mawkyrwat village.
3. To make suggestion towards the enhancement of Socio-Economic development of the farmers in Mawkyrwat area.

Scope of the Study.

The main scope of the Study carried out on a much larger sample which produced relevant information for future references. The study covered 10 villages and 50 farmers are taken from each village. Then the total numbers of respondents were 500. To study how much are their monthly of the farmer. Is it sufficient for their livelihood? Is it possible for mechanized farming in Mawkyrwat?

Hypothesis

1. Lack of land holdings, entrepreneurial skills and lack of enterprising spirit is the cause of slow socio-economic development of the farmers in Mawkyrwat area.
2. Economic development of the farmers is positively co-related with government active involvement in the on infrastructural development.
3. The over dependence on traditional method, custom and values are hampering of the socio-economic development of the farmers and their families.

Types of Research

The present study is descriptive in nature and based on interview scheduled. Random sampling method has been followed to collect the data socio-economic status of farmers varies from one village to another. The paper is based on the primary data and the secondary data collected for the study. Primary data were collected through interview scheduled prepared by the researcher herself. Primary data were also collected through face to face interview of the farmers, group interview and focus interview. Secondary data was collected from journals, internet, agricultural office in Mawkyrwat and Block Development Office in Mawkyrwat.

Analysis issues in the Socio-economic Development of the farmers in Mawkyrwat, South West Khasi Hills District in Meghalaya.

The data collection was collected by researcher personally. 500 respondents were taken for final processing and analysis. The raw data was collected through the field survey method. The researcher visited 10 villages, for example (1) Sakwang (2) Pynden-Sakwang (3) NongbahMarshillong (4) Mawranglang-Laikyntoit (5) Mawlangwir (6) Mawlangwir (7) Mawkyrwat (7) Marshillong (8) Nonglang (9) Mawten (10) Jakrem

Socio-economic profile of the 500 hundred respondents:

Income

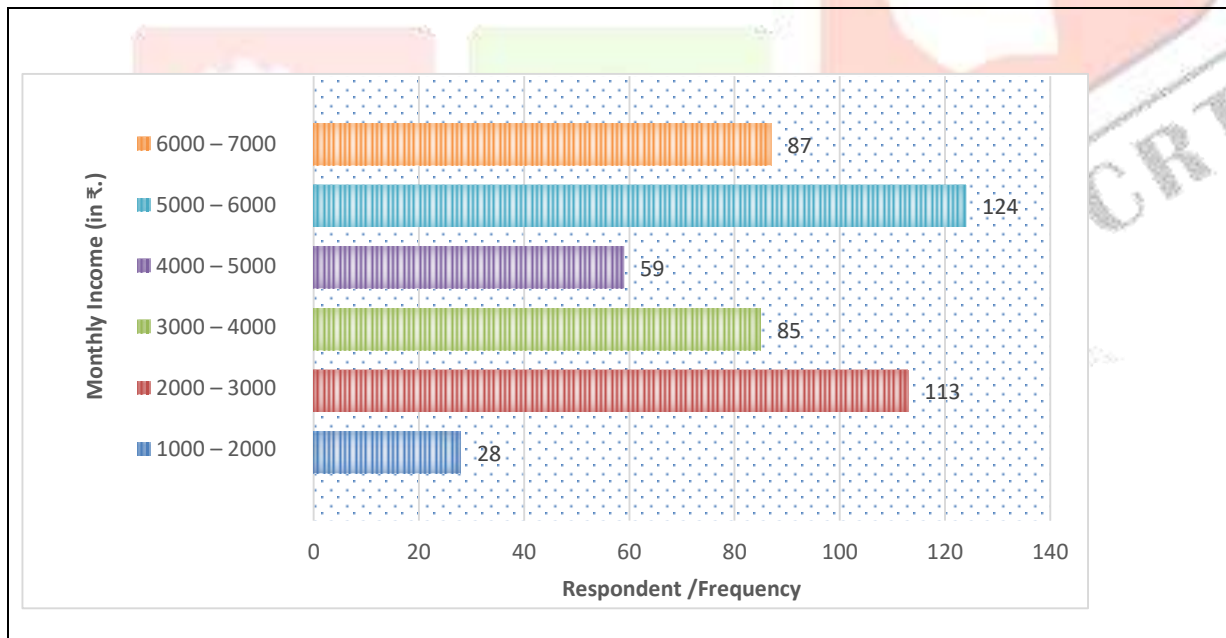
Income plays a significant role for the economic development of the farmers. Incomes of the farmers are very low. Poverty is the main causes for the low income. Table and figure reveal that.

Table. 1.1 Income of the respondents per-month

Sl. No	Monthly Income (in ₹.)	Respondent /Frequency	Percentage [%]	Table shows that income group ₹. 1000 – 2000 are 5.6 percent income group ₹. 2000 – 3000 are 22.6 percent income group ₹. 3000 – 4000 are 17.0 percent income group ₹. 4000 – 5000 are 11.8 percent income group ₹. 5000 – 6000 are 24.8 percent income group ₹. 6000 – 7000 are 17.4 percent
1.	1000 – 2000	28	5.6 %	
2.	2000 – 3000	113	22.6 %	
3.	3000 – 4000	85	17.0 %	
4.	4000 – 5000	59	11.8 %	
5.	5000 – 6000	124	24.8 %	
6.	6000 – 7000	87	17.4 %	
Total		N=500	100 %	

Source: Personal Field Survey data

Data represented with the help of bar-diagram



Literacy:

Literacy plays an important role for the development of human being. Literacy rate of the farmers are very low in this area. All farmers are illiterate, few of them they can read and write.

Table 1.2 Distribution of farmer in terms of Literacy

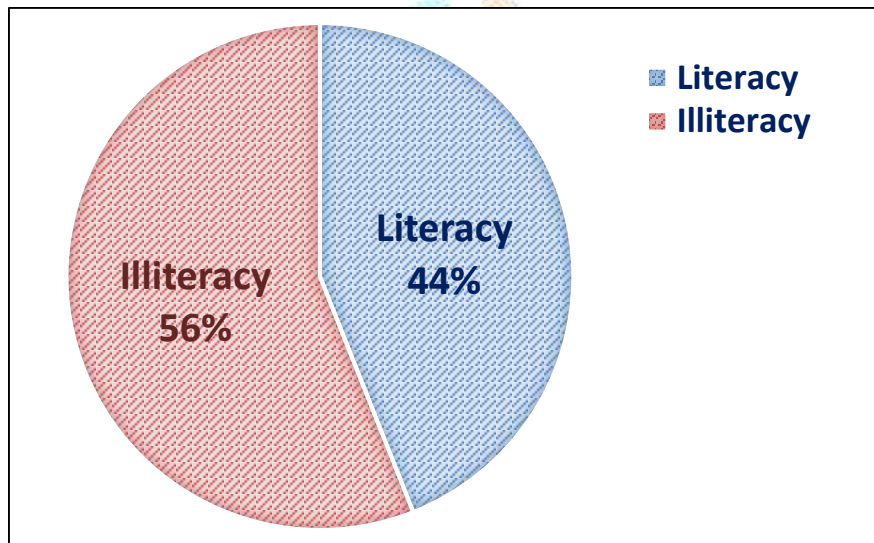
Sl. No.	Education	Respondent/ Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Literacy	220	44 %
2	Illiteracy	280	56 %
Total		N=500	100 %

The Tabulated Data shows that in Mawkyrwat (10 Villages randomly selected)

44 percent farmers are Literate and

56 percent farmers are illiterate.

Source: Personal Field Survey Data

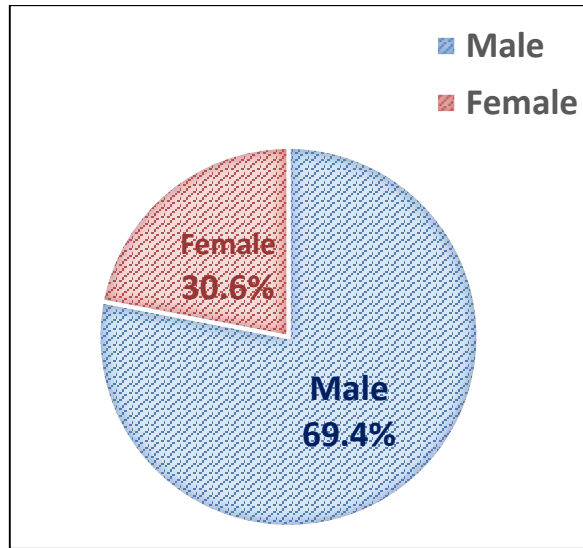


1.3 Gender

Gender classification is the most important factors of the study. The most of the men employed in the paddy field than women because of the difference of structure and activities. Most of the women used to do their household work and busy with their children.

Table 1.3 Distribution of Gender Classification in agricultural sector

Sl. No.	Gender Classification	Respondent/ Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	347	69.4 %
2	Female	153	30.6 %
Total		N=500	100 %



Source: Personal Field Survey Data

Above Pie-Chart Shows in Mawkyrwat (10 Villages randomly selected) 78 percent farmers are Male and 22 percent farmers are Female.

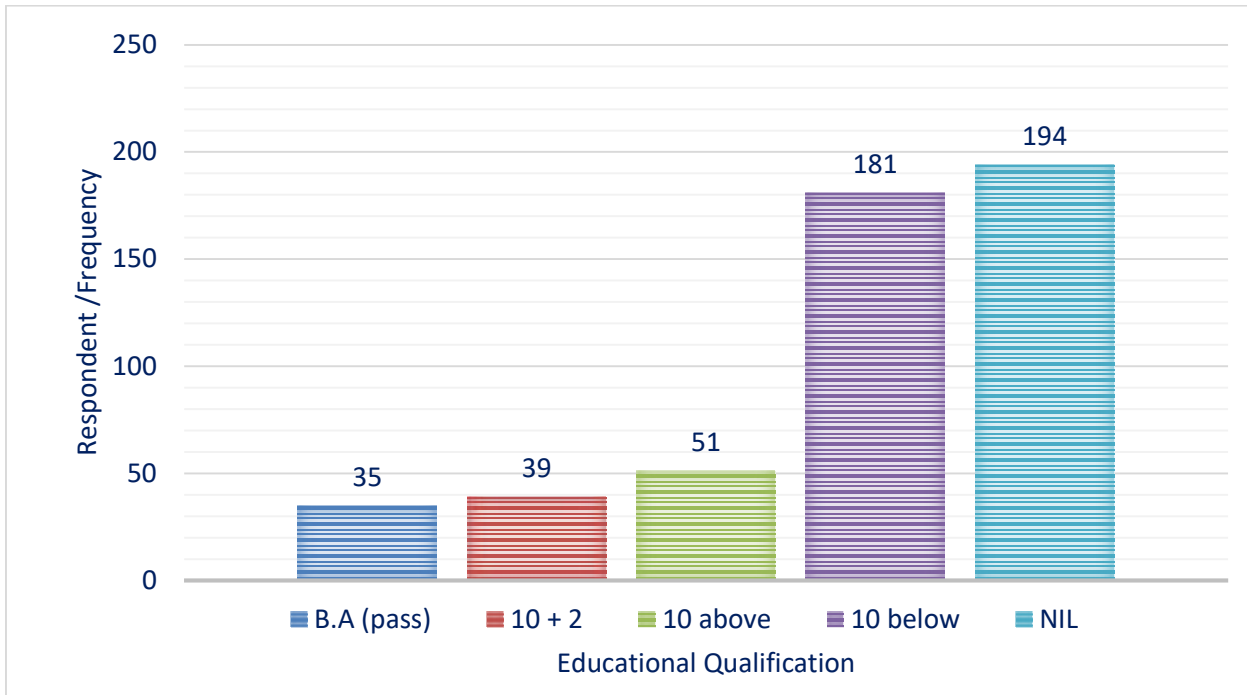
Education

Education plays a significant role for the development of the farmers in this area.

Sl. No	Table. 1.4 Distribution of farmer in term of Educational Qualification	Respondent /Frequency	Percentage [%]	From the above histogram it shown that, 7.0 percent farmers are graduate, 7.8 percent farmers are 10 +2 level, 10.2 percent farmers are above 10th passed, 36.2 percent farmers below 10th level and 38.8 percent farmers are illiterate (Nil).
1.	B.A (pass)	35	7.0 %	
2.	10 + 2	39	7.8 %	
3.	10 above	51	10.2 %	
4.	10 below	181	36.2 %	
5.	NIL	194	38.8 %	
Total		N=500	100 %	

Source: Personal Field Survey data

Data represented with the help of Histogram

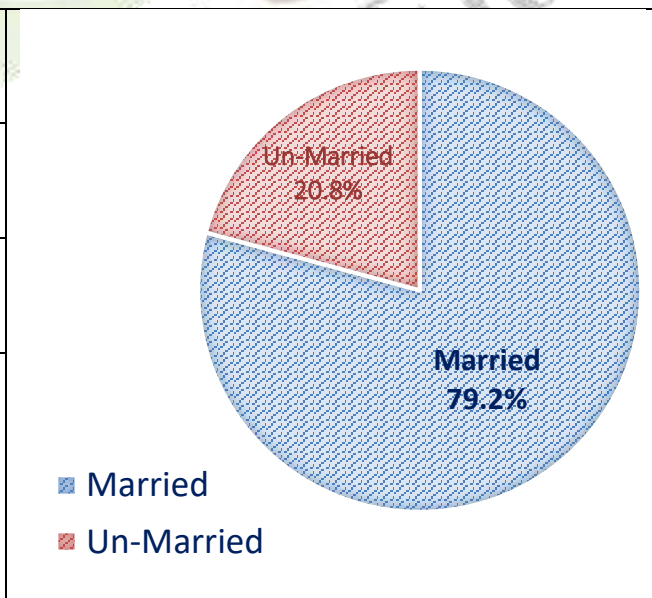


Marital Status

In Khasi Society, marriage, marriage is a considered a social phenomenon. Marriage imposes increased responsibilities of husband and family. Therefore, presentation of marital status is appropriate here.

Table 1.5 Distribution of Farmers in terms of Marital Status

Sl. No	Marital Status	Respondent/Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Married	396	79.2 %
2	Un-Married	104	20.8 %
Total		N=500	100 %



Source: Personal Field Survey Data

Above Pie-Chart Shows in Mawkyrwat (10 Villages randomly selected) 66 percent farmers are Male and 34 percent farmers are Female.

From the above analysis I have to find that in Mawkyrwat area Agriculture is still traditional oriented. Bulk of land is held on Kinship traditional or community basis. Each farmer holds not more than 0.2 hectare on an average. Due to these limited and restriction plot size, these farmers produced only enough for self-consumption. Moreover, with the increased in population, the average size of holding is generally reducing over the years. The average size of land is too small for mechanization of agriculture and adoption of modern farming practices. Farmers in Mawkyrwat area are ignorant, illiterate and untrained which are the main causes for Socio-economic development of the farmers. In study areas more than 50 percent have education up to the primary level, 12 percent farmers are educated up to the graduation level. Another cause for low agricultural productivity of the farmers is poverty. In my study area farmers are very poor. They are unable to fulfill even their basic necessities of life. Their per-month income is not more than Rs. 6000/- approximately. The South West Khasi Hills district suffers from weakness such as poor infrastructure like Roads and marketing facilities and irrigation etc. in my study areas the farmers use rainwater for harvesting and make canal/pond for irrigation. It is not long lasting during the time of raining season. This zone experiences heaviest rainfall in the world. The farmers use to remain idle during the rainy season which one is the most important reasons for the low agricultural productivity in this area. In some of the villages the farmers do not use power-tiller, hence they use to cultivate in traditional methods. Farmers use pesticide very less and encourage the farmers by NGO for organic farming. The farmers in this area are compel to sell their product in the local market at much lower price due to poor infrastructure, marketing facilities and storage facilities. Some farmers are practicing bamboo drip irrigation for irrigation of the crops. The low productivity of food grains exploitation the shortage of foods in the South West Khasi Hills District in Mawkyrwat and is responsible for poverty of agricultural masses. Agricultural productivity is in increase in proportion in this way to the numbers of people engaged in it. There is excessive pressure on land resulting in small uneconomic and fragmented holdings. Such small and selected holding coupled with small defective land tenure system are bound to keep the agricultural productivity very low.

Findings

1. Heavy rainfall destroys the paddy field.
2. Ignorance/illiteracy of the farmers in South West Khasi Hills District.
3. Poverty is the main issue for the socio-economic development of the farmers in this area.
4. Lack of awareness of the farmers regarding Government schemes and policies.
5. Agriculture depends on Rainfall in this area.
6. Farmers use the primitive/ traditional method of cultivation.
7. There are so many schemes and development programme in Agricultural Offices & Blocks but farmers are unaware of these. They don't like to come forward because of ignorance and backwardness.
8. Some villages are benefitted by the Government schemes and programs.
9. Size of land holding is another important variable for agricultural sectoral development. With the increase in population the average size of holdings is gradually reducing over the year.
10. No cooperative basis farming or agriculture practices

Recommendations/ Suggestions:

1. Agricultural sector faces so many problems in South West Khasi Hills district. Traditional or primitive method of agriculture will have to modernize. Jhum cultivation has no romantic appeal. It is simply primitive way of living. Settled agriculture should be encouraged to the farmers which will transform their way of life in a more modern way.
2. Raising income from agricultural sector in South West Khasi Hills District should be the major task of agricultural transformation.
3. Poverty can be unmoved by raising government financial assistance.
4. Make provision for training center for all the district head quarter.
5. To provide micro-finance to the farmers for the development of agricultural productivity. Encourage them to organic farming.
6. Make provision for input testing laboratories in all district head quarter.
7. To provide them adult education programme once in a week, it will be benefitted to them.
8. To provide current information technology and all kinds of advisory services to farmers through the internet system.
9. To provide free seeds/manure/fertilizer by the government for all types of farmers and all villages.

10. The farmers should be aware of the government schemes and programmes. The Headman of all the villages should be informing to the farmers regarding government current scheme and programme time to time.
11. Establish agricultural technology information center with video conferencing facilities.
12. Lack of road communication within the state is a prime constraint. To overcome it, road communication within the State has to be improved.
13. Due to non-existence of basic marketing facilities the cultivators are discourage to grow using innovative technique in agriculture sector therefore, marketing system should be developed within the state.
14. The mindset of the present educated youth has to be change so that they take up a profession of cultivation scientifically specially due to shortage of organised job in the District and for development of agriculture.
15. Promote organic farming among the interested farmers through proper technology and guidance.
16. Agriculture is mostly range based and irrigation facilities are cooperatively limited in the district, bamboo drip irrigation system is a common practice to be seen. The South West Khasi hills district received highest rainfall in the country and yet it suffers scarcity of water in the winter season. Therefore, irrigation facilities should provide by the government to the Farmers.
17. Innovative technique has to be applied to train them and bring them to the market economy from the trap of vicious circle of poverty and malnutrition. Physical and financial infrastructure has to be strengthened.
18. To provide pilot project in selected villages, land reclamation, minor irrigation, land improvement, provision seeds, fertilizer and development of horticulture.
19. To make effort to improve the level of educational attainment among the female section of the people, which will eventually resolve their unidirectional nature of work?

Conclusion:

Agriculture is the, most importance sector of the economy OF Meghalaya. Meghalaya is predominantly an agrarian economy. Agriculture and ailed activities are engaged nearly two-third of the total work force in Meghalaya. Agriculture in the state is characterized by low productivity and unsustainable farm practices, giving rise to a high incidence of rural poverty nearly 10 percent of the total geographical area of Meghalaya is under cultivation. Agriculture in the State is characterized by limited use of modern techniques and low productivity. Most of the people are engaged in agriculture remain poor. Agricultural development is necessity to improve productivity, generate employment and provide a source of income to the people of South West Khasi Hills district in Mawkyrwat. The pace of adoption of modern Technology and method are very haphazard and unscientific. Some of the basic issues for the development of agricultural sector revitalization of cooperative institution, improving rural credit/government schemes/programme, human resource development, land reform and education. The government introduces various agricultural reforms to increase agricultural productivity in the region. But the farmers are not aware regarding the government scheme and programme small and marginal farmers are of able to meet their requirement “Changing in happening in rural place is very slow and still a long way to go”.

References:

1. Agarwal, A. N., *Indian Economy*, Vishwa Prakashan: New Delhi, 2001
2. Bhattacharyya, N. N., *Meghalaya Land, People and Economy*, Rajesh Publication: New Delhi, 2008
3. Deb, J. Bimal and B. Dutta Ray, *Changing Agricultural scenario in North East India*, Concept Publishing Company: New Delhi, 2006
4. Reddy Venkata, K, *Agriculture and Rural Development*, Himalayan Publishing House: New Delhi, 2012
5. Sing, Katar, *Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management*, Sage Publication: New Delhi, 2009