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## Farmers Changing Role For The Growth And Development Of Entrepreneurship In Manipur

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### Abstract:

Farming populace of the state has remained for so long under the clutches of ignorance and negligence from every spheres of existence. In other words, they have become the forgotten segment of the society. However, more inclusively, they form the backbone of our economy. Many issues kept pressing day in and day out in their daily activities and this hinder them from progressing further. The melancholic cries of the farmers in the agricultural sectors do not occur as a shocking matter as these poor citizens are deprived of needed assistance when they needed the most. Farmers are entrepreneurs, sons of the soil and have been entrepreneurial since time immemorial. Therefore, the core objective of the paper is to deal solely with the roles and the hindrances of farmers towards nurturing entrepreneurship in Manipur.

**Keywords:** Backbone, Clutches, Entrepreneurial, Forgotten, Pressing, Progressing, Etc.

### Theme Overview

Agriculture is one of the principal sources of revenue in the state and plays a pioneering role in strengthening the state's fiscal backbone. Manipur, one of the elite members of the Eight Sisters whose agglomeration forms north-eastern India, is striving to boost its economy. The net cropped area of the State accounts for about 9.41% of the state's total area. Agriculture forms the mainstay of economic subsistence. It is interesting to note that 52% of the total agricultural area lies in the valley and is responsible for the livelihood of more than half the populace of Manipur valley. Paddy rice is the staple food of the State and form the principal agricultural crop for cultivation. The quintessential Manipuri Rice is famed all over the country for its sweet flavor and aromatic fragrance. This sweet rice can be consumed wholly on its own, without any additional gravy or curry. Apart from rice, wheat, maize and pulses, fruits and vegetables are also grown in plenty. In the traditional system of state economy, no one goes hungry or dies of starvation. However, it can be noted that in the past recent decades, Manipur has fallen under the clutches of modernization, for which once a self-reliance economy has now depicted a sorry figure and cares a needful thought by the state Government and the society in general.

It is to be understood that 90% of the total geographical areas i.e. 20,089 sq.kms.is covered by Hills out of the state's total geographical area of 22,327 sq.kms., which constitutes 0.7 percent of the total land surface of India. The remaining area is a small valley covering only 2,238 sq.kms., accounting for only one-tenth of the total area of the state. The hill comprises of five districts namely (i) Senapati, (ii) Tamenglong, (iii) Churachandpur, (iv) Chandel and (v) Ukhrul. Despite the favorable climatic conditions for cropping and availability of varied agricultural crops in the State. Rice crop cultivation forms the principle farming agriculture practice of the hill districts of Manipur. Farm-Entrepreneurship, especially, in the hill districts of Manipur is not an old chapter it is of relatively a new phenomenon. The entrepreneurial spirit of farming amongst the Small-Scale-Farmers and the policy makers remained unaccounted for many past decades. It is only of recent, that underwent a major shift of mindset towards farm entrepreneurship realizing the need of making Manipur a self-reliance economy.

Not surprisingly, small-scale farming in the hills of Manipur has undergone enormous changes in recent decades. Many of these changes have not just been driven by external factors. They have also been inspired by farmers who continuously look for better ways in organizing their farm, for new crops and cultivars, better tools, and alternative technologies to diversify production, increase productivity or reduce risks. Small-Scale-Farmers have used a variety of ways to develop income earning opportunities which are directly or indirectly link to agriculture (such as the marketing or processing of agricultural products), but some are also found outside the direct realm of agriculture. Common examples of this second group include the production of handicrafts, or seasonal migration. This fact clearly exhibits that farmers are and have been "Traditionally entrepreneurial" beyond times. Today, farmer entrepreneurs of the state remain a pioneering and a cornerstone for the State economic development. In the recent decades, it is distinguishing to be noted that, farmers changing role in a free market driven economy like Manipur, despite the varied associated complexities, has made farmer entrepreneurs becoming of more entrepreneurial and competitive in their farming businesses. Apparently, farmer entrepreneurs of the state today are most vibrantly managing their farms in an enterprising way. This fact can be attributable to the most significantly living example of which the Farmer Entrepreneurs has become the biggest job provider of the State and accounts to over 76% of the state total workforce.

## Review of Literature

David Kahan, (2012) Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations Rome 2012, Entrepreneurship in farming, succinctly focuses on his guide to provide a better understanding of the concept and practice of entrepreneurship. And the residual impact on the extension workers to help farmers develop the skills and spirit of an entrepreneur. B N Singh, et. al., Towards Rice Self-sufficiency in North Eastern India, emphasis on the spectacular improvement in rice production due to adoption of high-yielding varieties (HYVs), utilization of irrigation facilities, application of fertilizer, plant protection measures and use of improved farm implements has not been realized in North-eastern states. Also stress upon States like Assam, Manipur and Tripura as can easily produce surplus rice. Others can improve their production potential and productivity with suitable interventions. Dr. Christine Rudman, Understanding entrepreneurial skills in the farm context, highlights the economic, social and cultural factors hindering or stimulating the development of entrepreneurial skills of farmers in association with the ESoF project. Peter F. Korsching and Carly Jacobs, Rural research report, winter 2006-2007 volume 18, issue I., Farm-Based Entrepreneurship for Farm and Community Economic Viability, exhibits the challenges of rural communities in maintaining economic and social vitality. Further states, few are growing, some remain stable, and many are losing population. Dr. S.

V. Ngachan Dr. A. K. Mohanty & Dr. A. Pattanayak, Status Paper on Rice in North East India, discussed the predominance of Rice and its household food and nutritional security in the north eastern region.

## Methodology

The following discusses in detail the research methodology that has been adopted in this study of “Farmers Changing role for the Development and Growth of Entrepreneurship in Manipur” with special reference to the Five Hill Districts of Manipur. The method that has been adopted in this research was so carefully designed as to go well with the area of inquiry. The nature of the study area being a rural, where villagers’ cooperation and information were important to us to avail the desired information in bringing the research study to light so as to throw significant impact on the farming community of the state. The villagers’ valuable participation and cooperation is in the topmost priority of the study as it will be very much helpful in arriving at the findings that will ultimately led to a meaningful conclusion and suggestions of the study. Hence, basic statistical and advanced analytical tools have been employed to evaluate villagers’ sentiment towards their farming life and their entrepreneurial outlook in today’s competitive era of business world. The key area of the research was the deciding factors that motivated villagers to take up farm entrepreneurship as their source of living and their role and contributions towards entrepreneurial development in Manipur. The literature reviews have assisted the researcher to focus on the type of research method that will be most suitable for this area of study. The present study was carried out extensively in the Hill Districts of Manipur in the sample size of 72 (72 x 5 = 360) each from each district to serve the desired objectives. The data so collected comprises both Jhum and Terrace for rice cultivation adopted in these districts. The data thus collected basically meant from those farmers who have been under the farming business continually for not less than 10 years of cultivation.

## Roles of Farmer Entrepreneurs in Manipur

The farmer entrepreneur has been a fundamental agent in most production, distribution and growth theories. The role of farm entrepreneurship as the driving force of economic growth found its most explicit foundation in Joseph Schumpeter's theory of long waves. According to Schumpeter, "Everyone is an entrepreneur when he actually carries out new combinations". Finding new combinations of factors of production is a process of entrepreneurial discovery that will become the engine that drives economic development. These "new combinations" constitute better ways to meet existing demand of the market or supply new products. Farm business cycles in the state are seen as the result of innovation, which consists of the generation of a new idea and its implementation in farming activities, process or service, leading to the dynamic growth of the state economy, the increase productivity, the increase of employment avenues and creation of pure profit for the innovative farmer entrepreneurs.

The hypothesis that farm-entrepreneurship is linked to economic growth finds its most immediate foundation in simple intuition, common sense and pure economic observation. Activities to convert ideas into economic opportunities lie at the very heart of farm entrepreneurship. Farm entrepreneurship is a source of innovation and change, and as such spurs improvements in agriculture productivity and economic competitiveness. Farm entrepreneurship is closely associated with knowledge, practice and flexibility, three factors that have gained new significance as a source of competitiveness in an increasingly globalized world economy. With technological change and the intensified global competition brought about by globalization and economic liberalization, the assumption that fostering farm entrepreneurship among the farmer entrepreneurs of the state means fostering state's competitiveness today appears more valid than ever.

**Table No. 1: Role of Famers towards entrepreneurship development**

Contributing Elements		No. of respondents	Percent
There is high scope of employment generation in farm-based entrepreneurship	Neutral	16	4.4
	Agree	151	41.9
	Strongly Agree	193	53.6
Farmers cultivate most Innovatively while assuming high risk	Disagree	5	1.4
	Neutral	73	20.3
	Agree	147	40.8
Successful farmer entrepreneurs motivate and encourages young farmers	Strongly Agree	135	37.5
	Neutral	92	25.6
	Agree	139	38.6
Most Farmers manages their farm business efficiently	Strongly Agree	129	35.8
	Disagree	32	8.9
	Neutral	92	25.6
<b>Level of Contributing elements</b>	Agree	164	45.6
	Strongly Agree	72	20.0
	<b>Medium</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9.2</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>90.8</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>100</b>

The above illustrated table clearly exhibits the level of farmers towards entrepreneurship development in the state. Wherein, 90.8% of the respondents believe that farm entrepreneurship has the potentials and is contributing towards entrepreneurship development in the state.

Agriculture in Manipur has a significant history. Agriculture is one of the principal sources of revenue in the state and plays a pioneering role in strengthening the state's fiscal backbone. Manipur, one of the elite members of the seven sisters whose agglomeration forms northeastern India, is striving to boost its economy. Although, the net cropped area accounts for about 9.41% of the state's total area, agriculture is the main mean of economic subsistence of over 76% of the workforce. It is interesting to note that 52% of the total agricultural area lies in the valley and is responsible for the livelihood of more than half the populace of Manipur valley.

### Factors influencing Entrepreneurial Development

The emergence of free market economy has inflicted the Small-Scale-Farmer Entrepreneurs more likely in a Continual Basis. Lack of supportive policies and access to funds has marked the Farmer Entrepreneurs with slow growth rate, meager turnovers, technologically suppressed and even closure of business to some extremes. Entrepreneurship development is understood as the promotion and development of activities and processes that foster and support productive entrepreneurship in the society. In the light of the above statements, Farmers' has played and being playing in stimulating growth and employment opportunity in Manipur. Entrepreneurship can be supported and uplifted by the farmers and be used in the development and implementation of the "Growth and Employment" prior to the adverse situation of underdevelopment and unemployment crisis in the State. In short, farmer entrepreneurs are the core nexus for economic development and prosperity in the state.

**Table No. 2: Economic connectivity of entrepreneurial development**

Economic Connectivity		No. of respondent	Percent
Effective Manpower utilization help increases productivity	Disagree	84	23.3
	Neutral	120	33.3
	Agree	110	30.6
	Strongly Agree	46	12.8
Harvest and storage facilities assist in crops management	Strongly Disagree	1	.3
	Disagree	6	1.7
	Neutral	126	35.0
	Agree	149	41.4
	Strongly Agree	78	21.7
Demand & supply management help in business transaction	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8
	Disagree	84	23.3
	Neutral	138	38.3
	Agree	98	27.2
	Strongly Agree	30	8.3
Cost effective for agricultural products assist in product pricing	Strongly Disagree	77	21.4
	Disagree	141	39.2
	Neutral	133	36.9
	Agree	9	2.5
<b>Level of Economic Connectivity</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.3</b>
	<b>Medium</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>83.6</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13.1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Economic connectivity of the farmers plays a crucial role for the development of entrepreneurship in the state. Factors such as Effective Manpower utilization, Harvest and storage facilities, Demand & supply management, Cost effectiveness, etc, remains the core importance for growth and development of entrepreneurship. The above table shows that 83.6 % of the total respondents affirm that economic connectivity is of equal importance while 13.1% of the respondents have a strong believe that proper economic connectivity can lead to entrepreneurship development in the state.

**Table No. 3: Physical connectivity for entrepreneurial development**

Physical Connectivity		No. of respondents	Percent
Road connectivity assist in farming business	Disagree	6	1.7
	Neutral	117	32.5
	Agree	167	46.4
	Strongly Agree	70	19.4
Health Care services assist in farming business	Disagree	52	14.4
	Neutral	119	33.1
	Agree	107	29.7
	Strongly Agree	82	22.8
Irrigation assist in better farming business	Disagree	98	27.2
	Neutral	123	34.2
	Agree	87	24.2
	Strongly Agree	52	14.4
Electricity connection assist in farming business	Strongly Disagree	62	17.2
	Disagree	112	31.1
	Neutral	91	25.3
	Agree	52	14.4
	Strongly Agree	43	11.9
<b>Level of Physical Connectivity</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.4</b>
	<b>Medium</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>70.3</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>28.3</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>100</b>

Physical connectivity such as Road connectivity, Health Care, Irrigation, Electricity, etc was considered in this study to measure the level of entrepreneurship development in the state. Wherein, 70.3% of the total respondents believe that it is equally important for the development of entrepreneurship and out of the total respondents 28.3% believes to be highly necessary for the growth and development of entrepreneurship in the state.

**Table No. 4: Livelihood factors for entrepreneurial development**

Livelihood Factors		No. of respondents	Percent
Rice cultivation/Agriculture is the chief source of livelihood	Neutral	33	9.2
	Agree	141	39.2
	Strongly Agree	186	51.7
Annual yields produces surplus for the local market	Neutral	36	10.0
	Agree	116	32.2
	Strongly Agree	208	57.8
Annual yields is not sufficient to sustain yearlong	Strongly Disagree	324	90.0
	Disagree	11	3.1
	Neutral	25	6.9
Surpluses are retained for the preceding year consumptions	Disagree	32	8.9
	Neutral	106	29.4
	Agree	109	30.3
	Strongly Agree	113	31.4
<b>level of Livelihood Factors</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>64.2</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>35.8</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table illustrated above it can be considered that 64.2% of the respondent's cling to the fact that livelihood factors and entrepreneurship development are equally important whereas 35.8% of the respondents strongly opined that development and growth of entrepreneurship in the state is solely attributed towards the livelihood factors of the farming populace of the state.

### Factors hindering growth and entrepreneurial development

It is not often that an entrepreneur comes along and creates a successful business opportunity out of nothing. An entrepreneur is someone who builds an enterprise or venture, and who produces for or serves the market. The typical entrepreneur is depicted as a determined and creative leader, constantly looking for opportunities to improve and expand his or her business; somebody who takes more or less calculated risks, and who assumes responsibility for both profits and losses. Accordingly, entrepreneurship and innovativeness go hand in hand, in particular when entrepreneurs face strong competition or operate in highly dynamic environments. There is no doubt that small-scale farms face challenges that are unique, even if not totally new. In many countries, farmers face the huge challenge of producing enough food, feed and fiber in a context of rapidly rising urban and rural non-farming populations; and at as low as possible prices, as most of the domestic demand originates from very poor people. At the same time, they are expected to "pull" the country forward as entrepreneurs.

The paper has considered some factors out of the many relevant factors that hamper the Growth and development of entrepreneurship in the state. These factors are like, economic connectivity, physical connectivity, institutional supports, trainings, investment and motivations.

**Table No. 5: Detrimental factors of entrepreneurial development**

Detrimental Factors		No. of respondents	Percent
Inefficient physical connectivity such as; Irrigation, Road, Health Care and Electricity are responsible for the failure of farm entrepreneurial growth	Neutral	47	13.1
	Agree	117	32.5
	Strongly Agree	196	54.4
Economic factors such as; Demand and supply management, Market mechanisms and cost are responsible for the failure of farm entrepreneurial growth	Neutral	119	33.1
	Agree	181	50.3
	Strongly Agree	60	16.7
Lack of initiations and trainings such as; EDP, SBT, Govt. policy and schemes are responsible for the failure of farm entrepreneurial growth	neutral	57	15.8
	Agree	103	28.6
	Strongly Agree	200	55.6
Less investment avenues and Motivation are responsible for the failure of farm entrepreneurial growth	Neutral	106	29.4
	Agree	148	41.1
	Strongly Agree	106	29.4
<b>Level of Detrimental Factors</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.4</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>98.6</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table thus exhibits that lack of trainings and institutional support stands the peak (55.6 %) that hinders for the growth and development of entrepreneurship in the state. Secondly the respondents have opined that physical connectivity (54.4 %) also highly contradicting towards the growth and development of entrepreneurship. Moreover, the economic factors (50.3 %) and investment and motivational factors (41.1%) are also equally high in hindering entrepreneurial growth and development. Therefore, it can be concluded that out of the total respondents, 98.6% opined that the above factors are the core reasons that hamper for the growth and development of entrepreneurial activities in the state.

### **Concluding remarks**

From the study above we can conclude that due to the critical shortage of agricultural output, Manipur has to resort to banning agricultural exports and instead, drive up its import bills from such products coming into the state. There has been so much attention focused on the industrial and services sector that the agricultural side has been largely neglected. The lack of credit loans coupled with improper government intervention had resulted in the livelihood of the farmers to go downhill. However, despite the many reasons of farmer's importance the state government remain a mute spectator till date to the problem of farmers' issues in the state. There should be better banking systems, health care system, transport and communication system and good irrigation facilities established that is accessible and affordable to every person. It is obvious that the benefits of economic growth have not been equally shared among all as the access to such facilities is not granted to all. Economic opportunities ought to be created for the marginalized groups to help in poverty reduction and inequality problems. Further attempts made by the government to expand agricultural infrastructure have ironically resulted in more cases of poverty than ever. The lack of access to such opportunities thus places many constraints on agricultural output and also, the standards of living for the rural population thereby hindering their path to further economic and social development.

Owing to the huge productivity gaps and large market size, agricultural start-ups have one of the biggest potential in the state. It is important to be noted that agriculture is a multiple operation enterprise, where about 10 different operations starting from soil preparation to storage and transport contribute to overall productivity and profit. This makes agriculture a complex system for start-ups to target. So the biggest challenge for start-ups is to target right area of the agricultural operations. Incubators and mentors need to appreciate the complexity and ground reality to help start-ups develop business models considering these aspects critically. Funding is normally not available for team building for early start-ups as it does not match valuation and risk perception. Even if funding is committed, farmer entrepreneurs are left with so little stake in the venture that it becomes non-remunerative for them.



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