CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

Land is an important factor of production. It has always been so and it will remain so. Land provides the space for life existence, survival, activities and what not. Other things remaining the same, the size of land remains the same and, ipso facto, there is fundamentality to be careful in allocating land to the various purposes of human use. Land in the geographic sense has many implications as follows:

“- space - and thus also land use - is the medium (or physical market) for environmental externalities in a broad sense; this applies to global environmental change, but also to local issues like noise annoyance or soil pollution
- space (including land) is of a heterogeneous nature; this means that environmental externalities have geographically discriminating distributive impacts (e.g. water pollution) in a river basin delta area-
- space - and consequently also land - has both a productive and consumptive nature, so that any space consumption has welfare
implications of a broader nature (including externalities); examples can be found in recreational land use and infrastructural facilities.”¹

With the rise of sustainability issues, the question of land use has come to the centre stage of the debate; alternative land use issues are now taken as the mainstay of sustainability issues.²

Agriculture happens to be the sector where the use of land as a factor of production is relatively more intensive and with multiple options. This being so the discussion of land use in agriculture has acquired significance.³ With the rising challenge of food security, this discussion has acquired new urgency.⁴

In Manipur before 1939, the importance of agriculture was not realized in its perspective and agricultural sector did not receive due attention from the British Government. Land ownership

¹ Finco, Adele and Peter Nijkamp, (1997), Sustainable Land Use: Methodology and Application, Serie Research Memoranda 64, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, pp. 1-2.
system and agricultural practices drew the attention of governance when the Agriculture Department was established in 1946. Modern scientific system of cultivation and agricultural development started emerging with this. Agriculture being the main contributing factor for improving the social and economic conditions of the people of the State, any improvement in agriculture is closely linked with the welfare of the people of the State. Land being the gift of nature, is limited in size and therefore, any improper utilization of it, may lead to slow progress of development of humankind. The utilization of these limited land resources is to be optimized in conjunction with other inputs like labour, capital and technology for attaining the require production level and for improving the economy of the rural poor.

Increasing population and changing needs of the time require revision of land utilization. Thus the study on land has become important because even today majority of the people have close relationship with the primary activities which concern with land.

The present study seeks to examine the various aspects of
agricultural scenario in the valley of Manipur. In order to understand the real problem, it is of great relevance to describe and interrupt the land utilization and assess whether the land is being judiciously utilized.

Manipur started conducting land utilization survey from the year 1963-64 only for cereal crops and continued up to 1979-80. After the discontinuation of this programme for some time the state government continued the same programme from 1980-81 by adding the non cereal crops but excluded programme on seed used and type of cultivation etc. The peculiar characteristic of land utilization in Manipur is that intensive cultivation is practiced in the valley areas where cadastral surveys have been done and permanent settlement is made. On the contrary, shifting cultivation is widely practiced in hill areas. The area under permanent terrace cultivation where intensive cultivation can be introduced is very limited or rather negligible.

Moreover, there is traditional land ownership system among tribals which differs from one tribe to another tribe. Though there

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5 The focus on the valley is dictated by the prevalence of private property rights regime here and the application of modern land governance system. In the rest of the State, community or chieftain ownership systems are in existence and hence modern governance systems do not apply.
are certain differences in the system amongst the different tribes the common feature is that most of the cultivable land belongs to the chief of the village who controls the land system. As Jhum cultivation is widely practised in all the hill areas, intensive cultivation is not practicable and most of land once used for jhuming cultivation remains unused for years together until normal fertility comes back.

According to tribal believes, land once used for jhuming/shifting cultivation cannot be used consecutively because the fertility of land is totally lost if it is once used. So due to wide practice of shifting cultivation, the productivity of food grains particularly rice remains quite low and insufficient to meet the needs of growing mouths. If the production of food grains is to be made sufficient in the state, the whole land utilization system is to be reorganized and intensive cultivation is to be introduced extensively in the valley areas. Simultaneously permanent terrace cultivation should be developed in the Hill areas. Jhuming cultivation should be restricted at the maximum possible level.

While this is and should be the normal practice, due to pressures of population and other economic reasons, the Jhum cycle is now highly shortened adversely affecting the land productivity.
The problem is further aggravated by increasing the uses of cultivable land for non-agricultural purposes such as construction of houses, buildings, schools, colleges, roads, oil pumps, bridges etc. The previously available area under cultivation has considerably decreased. Hence time has come now to give a serious thought to the sustainability of agricultural production and development so that the output generated from the limited cultivable land may be able to feed the ever increasing demand for foods by introducing modern techniques of production.

A look into the physical set up of Manipur will definitely bring forth the importance of the study of land utilization in Manipur. Manipur is a small state of the Indian union having an area of 22,356sq kms of which 9/10(nine-tenth) constitutes the Hill areas and only 383 sq kms constitutes the valley area. The state of Manipur lies between longitudes 93°3 to 94°-78’E and from 23°-83’ to 25°-68’N latitude located in the north-eastern hill ranges of India. Manipur has a border line of about 584 kms of which 352 kms are international border with upper Burma on the east and chill hills of Burma on the south east, the remaining 232kms long
border separates her from the neighbouring sister states. Both the valley and hills have slopes towards the south.

**POPULATION:**

The population of Manipur was 25.7 lakhs according to Census 2011\(^7\). A larger section of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. The valley, which is known as the rice bowl of the State, occupies about 2238 sq. kms constituting about 10% of the total geographical area, whereas about 63 percent of the State population is concentrated on it. Consequently, the valley is one of the most thickly populated areas in the State, where the pressure on agricultural land is very high.

**OCCUPATION:**

The main occupation of the people of Manipur is engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood and also a traditional way of life of the people of Manipur. About 52.19 percent of the workers in Manipur are engaged as cultivators and agricultural labours. It is the most important sector which contributes a major share to the total state

\(^7\) Economic Survey of Manipur 2012-13,. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Manipur. page no.3
domestic product. In fact the state domestic product fluctuates depending on the success or failure of the agricultural sector. Though agriculture is the key sector of the economy; since as it depends on uncertain monsoon, it cannot provide full time employment to the people of the state, there is still the problem of seasonal and disguised unemployment in the state. In order to avoid such an occupational gap, it is highly important to utilize the existing available resources, particularly the land resource as much fully and economically as possible.

**RESOURCE BASE:**

Resource from the agricultural sector constitutes the most important resource of the state; out of the total geographical area of 22.3 lakhs hectares, an area of about 2.1 lakhs hectares is under cultivation by small and marginal farmers. The Net State Domestic Product (SDP) is also a good indicator of the state of the economy. The contribution of agricultural sector is predominant and it contributes about 30% on average of the Net State Domestic Product during 2000-11. Thus, from the view point of employment and income and other economic parameters agriculture plays a very crucial role in the state economy.
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:

Before independence and merger to the Indian union, the conditions of transport and communications particularly in the hill regions of the state were in deplorable conditions. Most of the villagers in the valley areas and inhabited areas in the hill regions were hardly connected or rather disconnected. However, certain development started in this realism as soon as the state merged into Indian union and the pace of development becomes quite faster since the launchment of Five year plans in the country.

The transport and communication system in the state has improved to a great extent after independence. Even though, the transport and communication system in the state is very poor, particularly in the hills, road transport is the only important means in the state. There is still no rail—head in the state. On account of very poor transport facilities, the farmers living in the interior villages and remote areas are facing great difficulties in transporting their farm products to the main marketing centres. This adversely affects the pattern of land utilization in the state.

Even after more than fifty years of its enactment the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act 1960 is yet to be extended in
all hill areas of the state. There is still the system of community ownership system of land in these areas under the control of the hill chiefs. This creates a lot of problems in the process of better utilization of land. According to the existing customary laws of Hill people the valley dwellers are not allowed to settle permanently by acquiring lands in the hill areas whereas, there is no any barrier or restriction on permanent settlement by the hill people in the mainland of the state i.e. the valley areas. Hence, there arises the importance and magnificence of a prudent study on land-based and crop based planning in the context of the valley areas of Manipur. Till now, no other systematic study has been taken up about such a very vital aspect of the economy. The present study is a humble attempt towards the problems of agricultural land utilization in the state during the last many years.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The thesis purports

1. To make a critical review of the present system of land utilization in the state.

2. To study the impact of the present pattern of land utilization on the production of agriculture.

3. To analyse the effectiveness of the policies and programmes formulated from time to time by the government in connection with land utilization.

4. To make necessary suggestions for better land utilization—thereof.

HYPOTHESIS:

The present study attempts to examine the validity of the hypothesis that—

*The land in Manipur has not been intensively and effectively utilized.*
METHODOLOGY:

The present analysis will be primarily based on the secondary data published by the State and Central organization such as Department of Economics and Statistics, Department of Agriculture, Manipur, Reserve Bank of India, Ministry of Agriculture etc. and also the published information by Organizations, Institutions and other Agencies: unpublished Thesis and any relevant information. Primary data may also be used wherever necessary by conducting sample surveys. The validity of the conclusions drawn by the empirical studies will be verified by deductive reasoning. Appropriate statistical tools and techniques will be employed wherever necessary to draw conclusions and verified its validity.
CHAPTERISATION:

The present study will make a systematic analysis of the problem by dividing the whole analysis into seven chapters which are stated as follows:

Chapter – I  Introduction
Chapter – II  Review of literature
Chapter – III Problems and prospects in the better utilization of land in Manipur (specifically Valley Areas)
Chapter – IV  Cropping Pattern and cropping intensity
Chapter – V  Land Reform Measures
Chapter – VI  Impact of the existing land use pattern in the Valley of Manipur on the socio-economic life of the people
Chapter – VII  Future outlook

The introductory part of the study has been presented as above. The discussion next follows on Review of literature.