Chapter I

Approach and methodology.

1.1 Approach

Since the First Five Year Plan of India launched by the Government of India in 1951, the Indian agriculture has been receiving substantial help and encouragement in terms of various resources. Much has been written on Indian agriculture over the years and yet, many of the views expressed are often contradictory. The reason is that India has pronounced regional differences in respect of soil, rainfall, irrigation water, size of holding etc., along with the different outlook and culture of the people, which have a crucial impact on agricultural production and productivity. What is true of one region, is therefore, not necessarily true of others.¹

There has been a substantial inflow of resources in the forms of inputs and infrastructures like irrigation, power, road, education, marketing etc. Different financial institutions like Cooperative Societies, Cooperative banks, Commercial Banks, Small Farmers Development Agency and State Agriculture Department etc. offer credit and other inputs to this sector. In the successive Five Year Plans of India as a whole, as well as for the State of Assam, there has been an increasing trend of development outlay for agriculture, community development, irrigation and power and other heads. (See Appendices 1 and 2).

This study, however, is basically limited to the discussion of the following problems:

(1) Whether the quantum, system and agencies of resource allocation flowing into the agricultural sector can be said to be adequate. If not, what other measures or modifications in the structure of systems and agencies are necessary?

(2) Whether there is a suboptimal use of the resources.

(3) The relation between the resources flown into the villages and the surpluses (if any) generated into different households.

(4) The magnitude of surpluses—marketed and marketable—surpluses in case of food crops and non-food crops.

(5) To what extent have gains from a surplus accrued to agriculturists?

(6) Whether surplus generated led to the capitalistic production, that is to say, to examine changes in the techniques of production.

(7) What is the attitude of the farmers towards the resources so mobilised? Could it be judged in terms of liking or disliking, convenience or inconvenience, profit or loss etc. generated by the use of modern inputs like fertilisers offered by the different financial and Government institutions and voluntary organisations like Cooperative Societies etc.?

It is assumed that the agricultural growth and development are dependent on the resource mobilisation in the agricultural sector. Unless there is a sufficient and proper resource mobilisation, a significant development cannot be expected of this sector. There is an emergent dualism—coexistence of modern (prosperous) and traditional (stagnant) farming
system in the vast countryside of India. So it has been quite relevant to inquire into the reasons for the persistence of traditional agricultural practice even in small communities and villages when (on the other hand) the advantages of agricultural modernisation have been sufficiently demonstrated. Therefore, an investigation is necessary to locate the weaknesses and drawbacks of resource mobilisation, so that a proper plan can be drawn for the development of agriculture, which has still a large proportional share in net domestic production at factor cost in the Indian economy as shown in the following Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current price</th>
<th>Constant price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The study is limited to Goalpara— the largest of the districts of Assam. This district was under the Zamindary system till 1956, although in fact, the system continued till 1962, the year in which the Government of Assam could complete the survey works of land and took over land administration in all capacities. At the same time, the district being on the

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Westernmost part of the State and the frontiers of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, an influx of population continued unabated, at least till 1971, resulting in a fall in the land-man ratio.

1.2 Survey methodology.

This study relates to the period 1951 to 1971. For the purpose of survey, the names of villages have been collected and arranged according to Community Development Blocks. The villages have been divided into developed and underdeveloped ones as per certain development indices. These indices are mainly the availabilities of infrastructural facilities such as market place, electricity, motorable road, post office, Cooperative Society, Veterinary and Public Health Centres and school. The villages which have at least market places, motorable roads and schools are termed 'developed' and rest, 'underdeveloped'. Two villages from each Community Development Block (one developed and the other underdeveloped) are selected on the basis of random sampling. Besides, twenty villages (where the Block Offices are located) have also been taken for survey.

The list of households has been prepared from those selected villages. Then five categories of households— an agricultural labourer having 0.4 hectare or less cultivated land, a marginal farmer having above 0.4 and maximum 1.07 hectares of cultivated land, a small farmer having between 1.07 and 2 hectares of cultivated land, a medium farmer having cultivated land between 2 and 3 hectares, and a big farmer having
above 3 hectares of cultivated land are selected at random for investigation.*

There are twenty Community Development Blocks in the district. So (20 x 3) = 60 villages are selected and (60 x 5) = 300 households of five categories of farmers are surveyed. 20 urban-fringed villages near the towns in the district are also surveyed. So (20 x 5) = 100 households have been added to 300 households totalling 400 households for the socio-economic survey. The investigations have been carried on and the relevant data collected through the responses of the farmers of the different categories by means of questionnaire. The responses of the farmers interviewed have been recorded by the present writer or by his agents. (A copy of the questionnaire is given in Appendix 17).

The income of the farmers has been calculated on the basis of the values of goods produced and services rendered by the individual members or by their productive agents during the year 1978, from January to December. But some items such as fuel brought from the jungles, fish caught in a river or pond are excluded from the income assessment as well as from the expenditure of the households. The income and expenditure so calculated represent gross amounts. The net income and net expenditure are very difficult, if not impossible, to assess due to non-availability of actual data. So, the household data as collected by the author are likely to be vacillating from the actual data.

An attempt has been made to find out the marketable surplus of the farming households of the surveyed villages in respect of crop production during the years of 1951, 1961, 1971, 1975 and 1978. Though the facts as far back as 1951 were difficult to call up, the household farmers have been persuaded to give information to the best of their recollection.

The crops which are surplus over the consumption have been taken as marketable surplus. In order to estimate the marketable surplus of the crops produced by the household farmers, we have considered the surplus producers as constituting groups of particular categories (80 households in each) in view of a very small quantity produced by an individual farmer for the convenience of study and to avoid small fractions expressed in tonne. But income and expenditure of the farmer have been accounted individual householdwise in the respective category, because such an amount in a year is easy to estimate.

Certain items of consumption relate to expenditure in a particular month or season. But for the sake of uniformity the data relating to seasonal and monthly expenditure have been taken into account while computing annual expenditure. It is found that record keeping practice is very rare in case of all categories of farmers.

1.3 District Map with surveyed villages.

The villages surveyed are shown in the Map of Goal-para district as given in the next page:-
The names of surveyed villages (according to serial numbers given in the Map) are as follows:-

Gauripur C.D. Block.
1. Dharmosala.
2. Kochuarkhas.
3. Hararpur.

Bilaspur C.D. Block.
4. Raniganj.
5. Hakama.

Golokganj C.D. Block.
7. Golokganj.
8. Raipur.

Agomoni C.D. Block.
10. Agomoni.
12. Moragodadhar.

Chapar-Salkocha C.D. Block.
15. Phalimari.

Mankachar C.D. Block.
17. Kukurmaria.
18. Phulerchar.

South Salmara C.D. Block.
20. South Salmara.

Dudhnoi C.D. Block.
22. Rongjuli.
23. Dudhnoi.
24. Upartola.

Matia C.D. Block.
27. Kodaldhowa.

Balijana C.D. Block.
29. Bordomal.

Lakhipur C.D. Block.
31. Nidanpur.
32. Sunari.
33. Takimari.

Srijanram C.D. Block.
34. Pakhiriguri.
35. Sidalsati.
36. Bhumkatari.

Boitamari C.D. Block.
37. Moligaon.
38. Mulagaon.
39. Saderalga.

Kokrajjar C.D. Block.
40. Titaguri.
41. Tinali Balajan.
42. Diajhijiri.

Dotma C.D. Block.
43. Dotma.
44. Sakti Ashram.
45. Puthimari.

Gossaigaon C.D. Block.
46. Gossaigaon.
47. Tamarhat.
48. Samguri.

Kochugaon C.D. Block.
49. Goruphela.
50. Kochugaon.
51. Nabinagar.

Manikpur C.D. Block.
52. Manikpur.
53. Jhaoberi.
54. Bhandra.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borobazar C.D. Block</th>
<th>Sidli Sirang C.D. Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55. Borobazar</td>
<td>58. Sidli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Bishnupur</td>
<td>59. Tukrajhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Ladangguri</td>
<td>60. Salbari</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Urbanfringed villages**

| 61. Chandaria       |
| 62. Bakhrapara      |
| 63. Bhakarivita     |
| 64. Batabari        |
| 65. Ambari          |
| 66. Adabari         |
| 67. Duligaon        |
| 68. Rokhakhata      |
| 69. Khudimari       |
| 70. Thakuran Bari   |
| 71. Bhatarmari      |
| 72. Vetagaon        |
| 73. Nehalgaon       |
| 74. Kodomguri       |
| 75. Thorko          |
| 76. Chapar          |
| 77. North Salmara   |
| 78. Jogighopa       |
| 79. Patiladaha      |
| 80. Suksor          |