Agriculture plays an important role in Assam. Role of other sector has limited capacity and contributes small portion of income. The problem of growing unemployment in the state continued to be a matter of serious concern and it has brought socio-economic instability. Since independence infrastructural facilities are provided, development of agriculture has been given important by the planning commission since its inception, various schemes and projects were adopted, Extension machinery is developed, science and technology has created a lot for the development of agriculture. In spite of these activities, the progress of agriculture is slow. The condition of rural people in general is not changing. The gross return from practices adopted by different cultivating classes are not at all satisfactory, the condition of small and marginal farmers is worst.

The present study is based into the background of agricultural process in plains area of Assam, the area of field investigation is in the district of Barpeta and Nagaon in the State of Assam. Barpeta district is located in the north Bank of river Brahmaputra and Nagaon is located in the south bank of river Brahmaputra. Most of the persons in these two districts are cultivators. Generally paddy, jute, mustard, mesta, blackgram and various other vegetables are cultivated by these people of these two districts. Land is basic resources but due to flood and erosion in addition to drought also cause great harm in certain years. The occurance of these types of natural calamities in quick succession cause severe setback in the state's agricultural activities.
In order to make the study more practical oriented questionnaire were framed and served to the households. In fact much of the data furnished by the farmers were drawn from their memory and not from any recorded sources. Again some of the farmers seems to have tries to conceal/ exaggerate some information. Therefore to minimise the inaccuracies, care has been adopted to cross check the data with the internal consistency and external evidence.

**Objective of the study:**

Changes of agricultural economy is not affected in almost all the regions equally. Changes also observed in Assam; but not equally among different ethnic groups/regions/villages. To be more specific, the objectives of the study are -

(a) Cropping Pattern in the country side.
(b) Processing of raw crops by the cultivators.
(c) Economic viability of the improved agricultural operation.
(d) Spending habit.

Agricultural practices are different among different groups of people like immigrant Muslim people, ethnic group like Boro-Rabha, Rajbanshi and other mixed population and variation of production, income and spending which are studied between the period of year 1985 and year 1993 with a view to frame up a principle to discuss the problem of agricultural development in Assam and solution.
The area of field investigation is in the district of Barpeta and Nagaon in the state of Assam. For the purpose of the present study, the data have been collected from 600 sample households of 30 villages under six development block of two districts viz. Nagaon and Barpeta with the 300 sample households covered by three blocks in each district with a representation of 5 villages in each block represented by 20 numbers of households in each village.

These two districts are selected for study owing to the following factors.

(a) Cropping Pattern is not similar and factors are not equally responsible to change of cropping pattern in both the district.

(b) Practices of improved implements by peasants of both the districts are not similar.

(c) Processing practices of raw crops by the peasants of both the districts are not similar.

(d) Both the district are placed at Separate Agro climatic zones.

(e) Spending habit, life style among the residents between the districts are not similar.

(f) People and places of both the districts are more or less personally acquainted owing to my nature of job.
Both the districts are not equally affected by natural calamities like flood and erosion.

Occupation, income pattern of both districts are not similar.

Market channels are also not comparatively equal between the districts.

The State of Assam is facing a few problem in the path of economic development. The backwardness of the state is also due to the non adaptability of new technology, sticking to the traditional method of cultivation, non existence of too many industries either big or small, low level of income, limited occupation, low level of consciousness among the rural people. On the otherhand the region has its potentiality in respect of various raw materials, with availability of land, water etc. with the scope of development of pisciculture, dairy farming, livestocks farming like pig or goat farm, horticulture, rural based industries, hydral power project, navigation irrigation etc.

Chapter design:

The present work is designed to cover every possible aspect relating to the agricultural practices and development of peasants of small, marginal and large size group of holding in respect of State of Assam in general and Nagaon and Barpeta district in particular. For this purpose the whole work is divided into six sections comprising seventeen specific chapters excluding with an introduction.
Section I contains two chapters. Chapter I discussed with the different ethnic group and their living villages with economic and cultural life. Chapter II discussed with the occupational structure of Assam along with reference to the study area.

Section II contains five Chapters. Chapter III discussed with use of agricultural inputs in Assam and especially at study area at Nagoan and Barpeta. The use of agriculture inputs like fertilizer, pesticide, machinery, high yielding varieties, irrigation, Agricultural extension machinery, Agricultural credit, crop insurance are discussed. This chapter also discussed the expenditure aspects on inputs which is found very poor except some immigrant Muslim villages of Nagon district. Chapter IV discussed with the cropping pattern of State of Assam particularly to the study area. This chapter discussed cropping pattern is not equal among the Sample villages between the period of 1985 and 1993 and no noticeable change is observed. Chapter V discussed with the processing of raw crops by peasants which are found different among the sample households of mixed populated villages, immigrant villages, Boro-Rabha villages and Rajbansi village and not similar with the recommendation of Agricultural University and department of Agriculture. Chapter VI discussed new agricultural technology awareness among the people of State of Assam and more particularly to the study area. Awareness and adoption of new agricultural technology is poor and underdeveloped except immigrant villages of Nagon district and small section of mixed populated villages of Barpeta district. Application of fertilizers is disproportionate and guided by their own planning. This chapter also discussed relating to the other side effect in respect of application of new agricultural technology on environment. Chapter VII discussed with the farm machinery of entire Assam and more particularly to the
Section III contains four chapters. Chapter VIII discussed with the cost of production of entire Assam and particularly to the study area. This chapter tries to examine the viability of production, net return, residual income. Chapter IX discussed with income pattern of the entire Assam in respect of agriculture and other sector and more particularly to the study area with the period between the year 1985 and the year 1993. This chapter also discussed the gross income and return which is indicated no significant change among the sample households in both the districts. Chapter X discussed with the spending habit in relation of essential, non-essential and productive items more particularly to the study area among the sample households between the period of year 1985 and year 1993 along with gross income, gross expenditure and surplus/deficit to find out the spending. Chapter XI discussed with the capital transaction, indebtedness and new investment more particularly to the study area among the sample households. This chapter also discussed with the problems of the investment and relation with investment with replacement requirement of capital.

Section IV contains two chapters. Chapters XII discussed with the rural co-operation of entire Assam and also problem faced by members of co-operative society in respect of credit at study area. Chapter XIII discussed with the market of the produce of entire Assam and more particularly to the study area. This chapter also discussed with problems faced by the sample households of the study area in respect of sale of their produces.
Section V contains two chapters. Chapter XIV discussed with land reform measures in Assam more particularly to study area which also discussed the inapplicability of land reform measures in study area. Chapter XV discussed with Agriculture in plan period in entire Assam and implementation in the study area.

Section VI contains two chapters. Chapter XVI discussed the summary findings and suggestions and chapter XVII discussed with the conclusion.

The study is based on diverse source of materials which consists mainly of reports of field survey, officials and non-officials, reports of various commission and committees also books and journals.

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Nagaon

Sri Pulini Bihari Nath