CHAPTER - 3

STUDY AREA
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Location and boundary

The North Eastern region of India is a part of Eastern Himalaya, and our present site of investigation belongs to Cachar District of the state of Assam situated in the same region. Cachar district is situated at Barak valley, one of the major divisions of the state of Assam with two other districts namely Hailakandi and Karimganj. This valley is having a geographical area of 6922 sq km and located between the longitude 92° 15' and 93° 15' E and latitude 24° 8' and 25° 8' N with an altitude of 36 m msl. Though it contains about 9% of the total area of the state but it holds 11.24 per cent of the total state population as per 2001 census. The valley is characterized by undulating topography, wide plain lands and low lying waterlogged areas. The total area occupied by Cachar district is 3786 sq km. which lies approximately between longitude 92°24'E and 93°15'E and latitude 24°22'N and 25°8'N. The valley is surrounded by the North Cachar Hill District of Assam and Jaintia Hill District of Meghalaya in the North, the state of Mizoram and Manipur in the South and East, and by the state of Tripura and the Sylhet District of Bangladesh in the West. The valley is surrounded by the Barail range of Hills in the East and the Hills of Mizoram in the south, which extends as Arakan Yoma in Myanmar.
Fig. Location of study site Bontarapur village (Assam)
Geology

The geology of Barak Valley mostly comprises tertiary formation. The total rocks found within the valley are the sandstones of the Barail series, which are concentrated in a small area. Otherwise, rocks of Surma, Tipam and Dihing series along with older alluvium are predominant. While the Surma and Tipam series mostly comprise sandstones, sandy and clay shales and ferruginous clay. The Dihing series is largely made up of pebble beds of the terriaries containing large number of malvine fossils, but the greater portion of the tertiary is almost barren.

Climate

The climatic condition of the valley is sub-tropical warm and humid. With most of the precipitation during May to September, this is mainly controlled by Southwest monsoon season. The average rainfall of this valley is more than 2500 mm. most of which is received during May to September. Longer spell of rainfall in North-eastern India compared to other part of the country usually contributed by Southwest monsoon.

The study was conducted in a village Bantarapur (24°38'35"N- Lat 92°54'65"E- Long) in Palonghat Block of Cachar district, Assam and situated about 40 km from Assam University Campus. The village is inhabited by the Meitei community situated in the bank of river Sonai. This is the biggest Manipuri inhabited village in Cachar district. The general occupation of the people of this village is farming. The village has one junior college, one high school, two primary school and few private English medium schools. The facilities of water supply, electricity and telephone exchange are available in the village.
The Manipuri’s of the Barak valley have migrated from Manipur during Awa war (Burmese war 1819) which was the darkest chapter in the history of Manipur as “Chahi taret Khuntakpa” (Seven years devastation).