CHAPTER - 4

SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Ninety homegardens were selected for detailed analysis of tree species diversity and growth characteristics in Bontarapur village. Of these homegardens the majority were small holders (66.30%) having size of homegardens less than 0.25 ha, followed by 28.26% with 0.25 to 0.5 ha and 5.43% had larger size of homegardens with 0.5 to 0.75 ha. Eighty percent of the villagers had smaller land (<1 ha) for paddy cultivation, 14.13% had 1-1.5 ha, and 5.43% of the villagers had larger paddy land with 1.5 - 2 ha. The ninety families (homegarden owners) contained a total of 690 individuals with an average of 7 members per family. The main occupation of this village is farming (56.52%) followed by service (28.26%) and others (15.22%) include carpenter, and those worked outside the village for their livelihood. As the main occupation of the village is farming, 84.78% of the villagers had cattle which ranged from 1-5. Sixty four percent of the households had five educated members in the family and the most important is that those family having less no of family members had higher education level than those with more family members.

Ponds are also an important component of many homegardens in the study village. Forty four of the selected ninety homegardens have ponds. These ponds served as habitat for fishes and edible plants like Ipomea aquatica and Neptunia oleracea, which is generally used for the preparation for “Singju” (Salads), an important traditional food item for Meiteis. Besides fishery during winter season,
the villagers used the pond water for bathing and washing. The pond could form an important source of economic activity if proper care is taken to strengthen the fishery component in the homegarden (Figure 4.1, Appendix I).
Fig. 4.1 Socioeconomic characteristics of Meitei homegarden owners