

State Level Seminar
on
**Achieving Sustainable Rural Development in Nagaland:
Challenges, Interventions and Way Forward**

Organized by
Modern College
Piphema

Supported by
NABARD

Date: 3rd August, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM

Venue:

Indoor Stadium

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE NABARD SUPPORTED ONE DAY STATE LEVEL SEMINAR ON
ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NAGALAND:**

CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND WAY FORWARD

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Acknowledgement

National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) is a development financial institution in India that works towards promoting sustainable and equitable agriculture and rural prosperity through effective credit support, related services, institutional development, and other innovative development initiatives. With reference to Nagaland, an agricultural state, NABARD's key focus is to prioritise agriculture sector in the state and thereby strengthening the rural economy. NABARD intends to propel agricultural development in the state by directing bank credits in the agriculture and allied sectors, and the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sectors.

The financial assistance received from the Research and Development Fund of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) towards the printing of the proceedings of the Seminar conducted at Modern College, Piphema on August 3, 2024 is gratefully acknowledged.

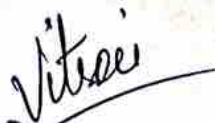
I, on behalf of the Department of Economics and Department of Vocation, express my deepest gratitude to NABARD, the Management and Administration of Modern College, Piphema, the staff and student volunteers for their support and who worked tirelessly to make the Seminar a successful one.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Ms. Nezelu Nyekha, Executive Director, Chakhesang Women Welfare Society (CWWS), Ms Sentimongla Kechuchar, Executive Director, Northeast Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA) and Mr. Paul Lokho, Director, Pro Rural for accepting our request to be the resource persons of the seminar. Their humility and readiness to share their rich knowledge and experience and patiently answering to the queries of students have immensely contributed to their awareness and understanding of the complexities of development in the state.

I thank the faculty and students from other participating colleges to accept our invitation and attend the seminar which shows their genuine interest with regard to development issues in the state.

Lastly, I would like to thank our former HoD, Department of Economics, Late Mr Verahu Nienu, under whose leadership the seminar was planned. Though he could not be with us to witness the successful conduct of the Seminar, we acknowledge his contribution.

Mr. L. Athikho
Convenor
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Preface

Sustainable development is a term which encompasses ecological, economic, social and cultural dimensions; therefore, *Sustainable rural development* implies the development of these dimensions in rural areas. About 65 per cent India's population live in rural areas and 45 per cent is dependent on agriculture for livelihood (MoF, 2023). Sustainable rural development in the context of Nagaland has immense relevance as its overall development is associated with the rural areas and communities. The state of Nagaland is a land of agriculture and about 70 per cent of the state's population depends on agriculture and allied sector. Agriculture, therefore, serves as the backbone of the rural economy of the state. However, the contribution of the sector towards the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is around 30 per cent which implies that the productivity of this sector is lower as compared to other sectors.

As per the Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (2021-22), 27.7 % of rural youths in Nagaland are unemployed. As substantial workforce is engaged in rural areas, if rural unemployment is to be addressed then adequate attention needs to be given to the agriculture and allied sector. Agriculture and allied activities, also known as traditional livelihoods, being labour intensive and low yielding, rural youths are reluctant to take them up for living and rather consider other livelihood options. They prefer to move out to adjoining urban towns of Kohima and Dimapur searching for work. A sizeable number even migrate to cities in the mainland for better career prospects. While it may be true for some, but most find it immensely difficult to sustain themselves. Hence it is pertinent to strengthen rural economy in order to address rural unemployment and low productivity. Strengthening rural economy of the state requires a multipronged approach which should emphasize and strive to achieve sustainability.

Over the years, Government agencies, financial institutions as NABARD, and several non-government agencies, have been working towards – enhancing agricultural production by diversifying agriculture and allied sectors (horticulture, floriculture, apiculture, animal husbandry, food processing, and cottage industries such as weaving), promoting rural based micro enterprises, rural entrepreneurship and strengthening the entire value-chain of rural produces and services. However, they come with challenges as the state has limitations mainly in terms of connectivity and accessibility, absence of a robust state policy, limited and delayed infrastructural development undertakings, inadequate capacity from the rural institutions, and skills shortage in rural youths in newer avenues (for potential employment generation in rural areas).

Despite the limitations and challenges, there are interventions undertaken by NGOs which have shown encouraging results. The next logical step would be to scale these successful interventions in the entire state. However, much easier said than done, working for development which leads to growth and sustainability requires a collective shift in the mindset

and concerted collaborative efforts from all stakeholders which includes government, NGOs, institutions, and communities.

In this context, the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) has an important role to play as academia they undertake and carry out research in this domain. Further, HEIs engage with student community at large who needs to have awareness of these issues. The seminar shall bring in resource persons from NGOs and academia having rich experience as rural development practitioners and research knowledge respectively to share with the student community.

The aim and objectives of the seminar is to deliberate and focus in the following aspects for a sustainable rural development in Nagaland:

1. Role of agriculture and allied activities vis-à-vis rural employment.
2. Importance of infrastructure development in rural areas.
3. Importance of strengthening rural institutions.
4. Significance of off-farm and non-farm sectors in augmenting rural livelihoods.
5. Importance of finance and credit support in rural areas for livelihood.
6. Skill and Capacity development of rural youths for entrepreneurial opportunities.
7. Adoption of agro-ecological practices for sustainable agricultural livelihoods.
8. Successful Interventions in certain communities/ areas which can be scaled in the state.
9. Explore new avenues for enhancing rural livelihoods.
10. Key challenges in implementation.

The pace of the seminar was set right at the beginning of the seminar with the opening remark made by Mr. Ong Pulam Mounklang, Deputy General Manager, NABARD who was also the Keynote Speaker of the Seminar.

The second session deliberated in detail on all the topics relevant to the objectives of the seminar where rural development practitioners who gained rich experience and expertise of working in the sector with communities came to highlight and share the importance and relevance of sustainable development in the state of Nagaland which has much to do with agriculture and rural development given the landscape and socio-economic nature of the communities living in the state.

This seminar was an eye opener and generated a great deal of interest and Inquiry amongst the student community about their thirst to know more about the rural development sector in the state. This was quite evident from the long Question & Answer Session where students posed numerous questions to the presenters.

All in all, the seminar conducted at Modern College, Piphema on August 3, 2024 achieved in addressing the above stated objectives and the Organising Committee is very pleased to come up with the detailed proceedings of the seminar.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Date : 3rd August, 2024

Venue : Indoor Stadium

10:00 AM to 10:30 AM

Chairperson	:	Ms. Mhabeni Tsopoe, 5th Semester, Dept. of Economics
Welcome Note	:	Dr. Vitsou Yano, Principal, Modern College
Keynote Address	:	Mr. Ong Pulam MOUNGLANG, Deputy General Manager, NABARD
Rapporteurs	:	Mr. Lhuvoto Veswüh, 3rd Semester, Dept. of Economics Mr. Chemjungli S. Sangtam, 5th Semester, Dept. of Vocation

10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Ms. Nezelu Nyekha

Executive Director, CWWS

Visiting the Role of Agriculture, Off & Non Farm, and Rural Institutions

Ms. Sentimongla Kechuchar

Executive Director, NEIDA

Community Development Initiatives: Implementation Challenges and Successful Interventions

Mr. Paul Lokho

Director, Pro Rural

The Way Forward for Sustainable Rural Development in Nagaland

Q & A Session

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Vote of thanks : Mr. L. Athikho, Asst Professor, HOD, Dept. of Economics

Refreshment follows

Keynote Address

Mr. Ong Pulam Mounglang
Deputy General Manager
NABARD

Mr. Ong Pulam Mounglang in his keynote address highlighted the role of NABARD and its mandate catering to the agriculture and rural development in the country. Since its inception, it has been facilitating credit flow for promotion and development of agriculture, cottage and village industries and has extended into Consultancy, Venture Capital funding to Start Ups, Green Financing and many other key areas in the rural ecosystem.

With regard to the Nagaland, he highlighted NABARD's activities in the state since 1985 when the first office was set up at Dimapur. Its focus area in the state to bring about agriculture and rural development has been primarily in:

1. Credit Planning for Rural Areas.
2. Supervision of Banks which are Co-operative Banks and Rural Banks.
3. Refinance to Banks with respect to priority areas (farm sector and off-farm sector activities).
4. Support several rural development projects in collaboration with government and non-government organisations.

In order to support a promote sustainable agriculture and rural development in the state, NABARD supports 13 Farmer Producers Organisations (FPOs), 15 projects under the Tribal Development Fund (TDF) and 21 spring shed projects. It has also supported several farmers under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme since its inception and many farmers have benefited from the scheme.

Regarding the Seminar, he stated that the topic "Achieving Sustainable Rural Development in Nagaland: Challenges, Interventions and Way Forward" holds a huge significance in the present context. This is because everyone is adversely impacted by climate change and when it comes from farmers and their main source of livelihood which is agriculture, it has become pertinent to consider the issue of climate change in order to achieve sustainable development. He said that sustainable development should not be just limited to improvement in socio-economic conditions but it should also include climate change resilience. Hence he hope that the seminar discusses and touch upon the need to move from sustainable agriculture to climate resilient agriculture. He also wished to hear from the practitioners the work done at the ground about climate resilient agriculture.

He also stated that NABARD encourages educational institutions to take up research in the relevant areas to agriculture and rural development. It lays aside, though not much, but certain funds to conduct research, workshops, seminars and is glad to see the educational institutions avail it to further the cause of NABARD.

**Visiting the role of agriculture, off and non-farm sectors, and rural institutions
with reference to Phek district, Nagaland**

Ms. Nezelu Nyekha
Executive Director
Chakhesang Women Welfare Society (CWWS)
Pfutsero, Phek, Nagaland

Ms. Nezelu Nyekha, Executive Director, CWWS, spoke on the contribution of agriculture, off and non-farm sectors and the intervention done by the rural institutions with the communities especially in the project areas of Phek district. The organization has been associated with NABARD on several programmes working for rural communities in Nagaland since 2000. CWWS has been carrying work in the intervention areas in six blocks of Phek comprising of Phek, Pfutsero, Kikruma, Chizami, Chetheba and Sukruzu.

Over the years, CWWS has been engaging the communities in generation of rural employment as she strongly emphasized on the important and significant role played by agriculture and allied activities amongst the rural communities in the district. The key areas of intervention of CWWS over the years have been in the following areas:

- i. Giving technical trainings to farmers through exposure and quality trainings to implement Integrated Farming and Intercropping.
- ii. Enhancing productivity through Natural Resource Management (NRM) focusing on soil and water conservation.
- iii. Enhancing livelihood through establishment of orchards (persimmon & kiwi); providing animal healthcare services.
- iv. Linking market through farmer collectives.
- v. The role of Community Institutions such as SHGs in engaging in women development through LEDP, leadership, addressing health and hygiene needs of women.

Progressing in her presentation, she elaborated through each of the above mentioned points. She talked about how Phek district, like most other districts in Nagaland state, is still dominantly agriculture and the role it plays a crucial role in generating rural employment. One of the main intervention areas of the CWWS while working with the agricultural communities in the district is the practice of *Integrated Farming and Intercropping* where members of the farming families are employed through the integrated farming programme. Over years of intervention through integrated farming they have been able to see positive impact on the livelihood practices and family income:

- i. On an average each farmland involved in Integrated farming programme has seen a 1.5 acre value addition in the production.
- ii. The household income of those engaged in integrated farming has been able to enhance their overall annual income by Rs 75,000/- to Rs 1,00,000/- per annum.
- iii. Around 500 farming households have benefitted from the Integrated farming programme.
- iv. Most farmers engaged in the Integrated Farming System from the district grow yam, beans and bananas.

The other aspect of farmers in this district taking up new practices has been with the taking up of fruit plantation under the Tribal Development Fund (TDF) of NABARD. Plantation of fruits such as kiwi and persimmon which are so conducive to the region owing to the suitable climate has been a blessing to many farmers. There are many success stories of kiwi farmers who are able to increase their annual income through supply of these fruits which are in great demand not only in Kohima and Dimapur but also outside the state. Under this programme farmers are given technical trainings and exposure visits and also handholding and market linkages through farmers collectives to ensure that their harvest reach the consumer end.

In the recent years, in addition to kiwi plantation, there is also a rise plantation of persimmon with farmers opening to the idea of introducing newer varieties which suit the climate and region.



A Kiwi farmer in Phek



Persimmons plucked and ready for market



An orange orchard in Phek district

An important point to note with respect to facilitating market linkages to the farmers is the establishment of farmer collectives by CWWS. These farmers collectives are managed at three levels viz.,

- 1) as Farmers Group (at compact areas)
- 2) as Farmers Club (at village level)
- 3) as Cluster Federation (at block or cluster level)

Institutionalisation of the farmers collectives have enabled farmers to tackle challenges together which earlier used to be a huge challenge for individual farmers. They have been able to organize *rural haats* and *rural marts* which enable farmers to sell their agricultural produces.



A rural haat at Sankrakba in Phek district



Farmers produce on sale at a rural haat

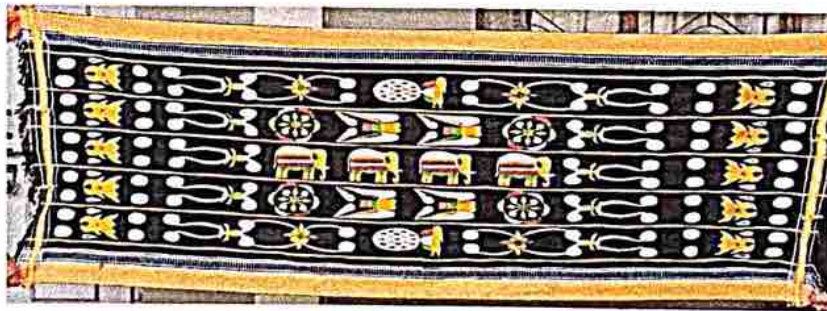
Natural Resource Management



A water harvesting tank constructed on hill slopes Plantation for conservation of top soil nutrients

Another area of intervention of CWWS has been in the Natural Resource Management. They have mainly focused on water recharged of springsheds through construction of ponds and tanks. Also, they are involved in improving the productivity of the land through soil management which is done through plantation along the hill slopes.

Moving onto to non-agricultural activities, Ms Nezelu Nyekha spoke on the work done by the CWWS in obtaining the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for the *Chakhesang shawl*. One significant advantage of the Some of the work which CWWS is currently focusing on post GI has been on the branding and marketing aspects of the shawl.



The GI Chakhesang shawl

Finally, she talked on the crucial role played by Community Institutions such as SHGs, Farmers Producers Groups that binds agriculture, horticulture and off farm products to market. Institutional bases such as SHGs, farmers producers' groups are being promoted in order to streamline and link farmers to better market avenues. On maturing of potential producers' groups, conglomeration of PGs is initiated to form Agriculture and allied Cooperative Society to deliver higher level services in the value chain like input supply and collective marketing. Hence the main sustainability means will largely rest on the participation of the farmers collectives.

She also talked about how certain community institutions such as SHGs train their members through Livelihood Enterprise Development Programmes (LEDPs) with under schemes from institutions such as NABARDs, Government Agencies etc.,. They have introduced LEDPs ranging from giving trainings on Weaving, Jewellery Making, Reusable Sanitary Pads to Mushroom Cultivation etc.,.



Conduct of Enterprise Development Programmes through SHGs with the support of NABARD



LEDP on Weaving



LEDP on Jewellery Making

Short Case Study

Ms. Velalu of Sakraba village was a successful beneficiary of LEDP in weaving. She was a traditional weaver and was earning Rs 3000/- to 4000/- per month from her weaving products. After attending the LEDP on weaving she learned the specifications, different sizes and designs. Her monthly income has grown to Rs 15,000/- to Rs 25,000/-. With this she is able to support her mother and two brothers and a nephew. She also serves as an inspiration to her co - weavers. She is also one of those weavers who produces the *GI tagged Chakhesang shawls*.

She concluded her talk by stating that households in agricultural communities do not rely on single source of income like typical salaried and employed households do. These households need more than single sources of income and if communities are properly given the handholding one can see the significant improvement in their lives of these communities. Through interventions in agriculture, non-farm and strengthening rural institutions the following transformation can be seen in the communities:

- i. Ability to access banks/financial institutions.
- ii. Enhancement of skills and confidence building.
- iii. Augmenting employment avenues for farmers and women and increasing the opportunity to be able to work and earn from home.
- iv. Ability to exhibit products through exhibitions in and outside the state.
- v. Improvement in the status of women and children.
- vi. Overall improvement in the economic condition of the households.



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"Community Development Initiatives: Implementation Challenges and Successful Interventions"

Ms. Sentimongla Kechuchar
Executive Director
Northeast Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA)
Kohima, Nagaland

Ms. Sentimongla Kechuchar, speaking on her topic on Community Development Initiatives apprised the audience about the fundamentals of Rural Development, the processes involved in bringing out development interventions involving the community for which she stressed the importance of having a deep understanding of community life. She highlighted the main Community Development Initiatives undertaken by her organization, NEIDA, in the state of Nagaland with two Initiatives i.e.

- i. Piggery Value Chain and
- ii. Agricultural Intensification (Multiple and Double Cropping)

She then talked about the main implementation challenges with respect to achieving rural development goals and objectives in the state of Nagaland.

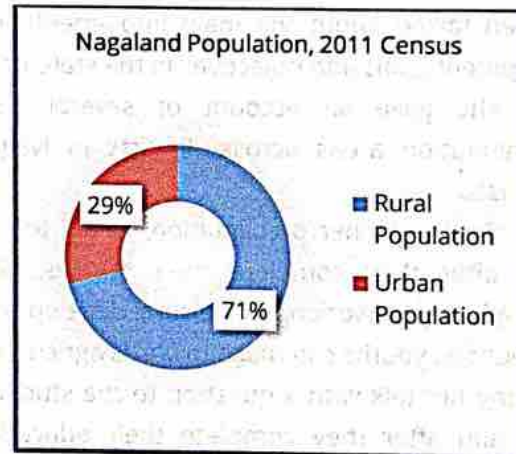
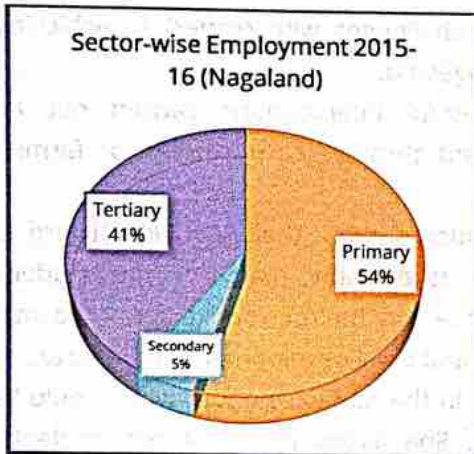
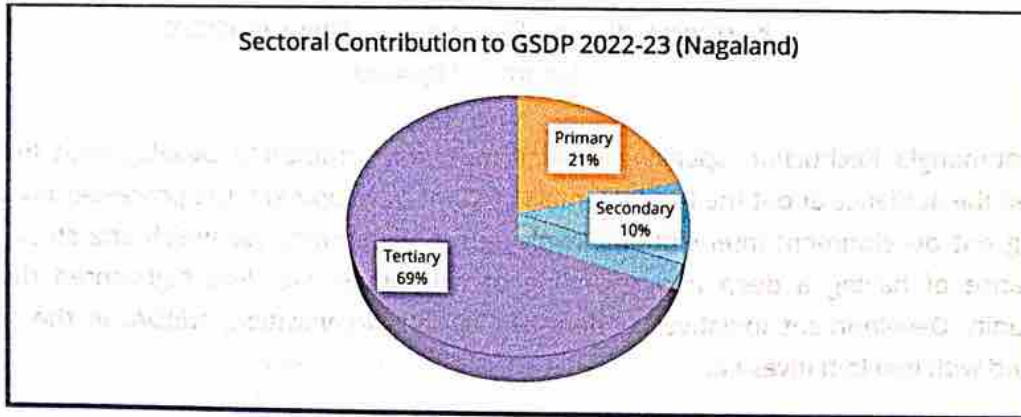
Finally she gave an account of several successful interventions carried out in their implementation areas across districts in Nagaland through case studies of farmers and individuals.

Before she began her presentation, asked the students about their aim with regard to their career after they complete their studies. She asked how many of the students are contemplating on working in the rural development sector. She then spoke about the important contributions youths can make towards agriculture and rural development in the state.

Beginning her talk with a question to the students in the audience about what would be their career aim after they complete their education. She asked if any of the students were contemplating to pursue in their career in the field of rural development in the state. She talked about the importance and the opportunities in the area of agriculture and rural development in the context of making a successful career goal given that the person has the conviction for it.

She then presented the facts and figures on the present status of economy in Nagaland and highlighted the contribution made by each sector to the GSDP with the Primary Sector contributing 21%, the Secondary and Tertiary Sector contributing 10% and 69% respectively. However, when it came to employment, she highlighted that 54% of the employment was coming from the Primary sector, with Secondary and Tertiary sector contributing 41% and 5% respectively.

Nagaland primarily being an agrarian state, 71% of the population still resides in the rural areas and these sections of the people depend largely of agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. Sadly, 27 % of the rural youths are unemployed in Nagaland due to reasons such as the youths having job preferences for the government sector.



Primary sector: Natural resources (agriculture, forestry, mining and quarrying, livestock;
Secondary sector: Manufacturing, construction, electricity, gas and water supply, etc.,
Tertiary sector: Services, trades, transport, education, medical, financial activities, real estate, public administration, etc.,

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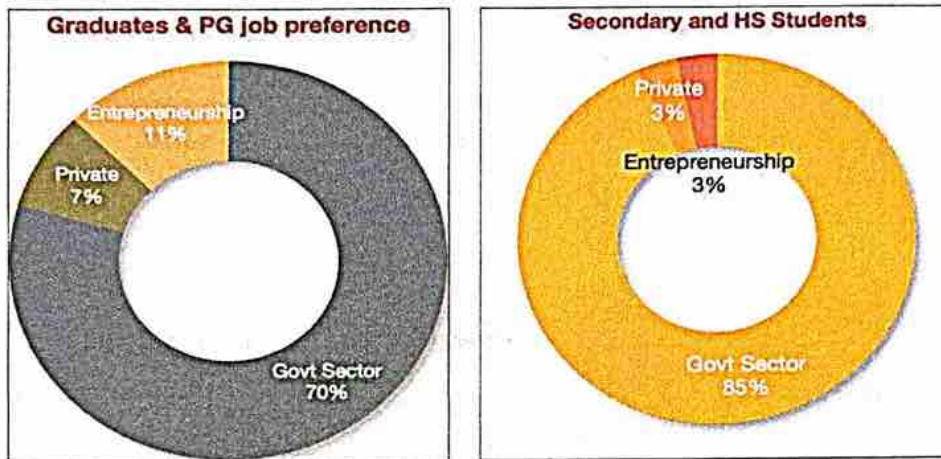
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Modern College, Piphema

Employment Scenario of Nagaland

Periodic Labour Survey 2021-22

- 27% of rural youths in Nagaland are unemployed
- Highest unemployment rate in India at 19.2%

Job Preference amongst educated youths in Nagaland¹



Data² on Government Employment Scenario

Govt. Employees per 1 lakh pop. (2017)

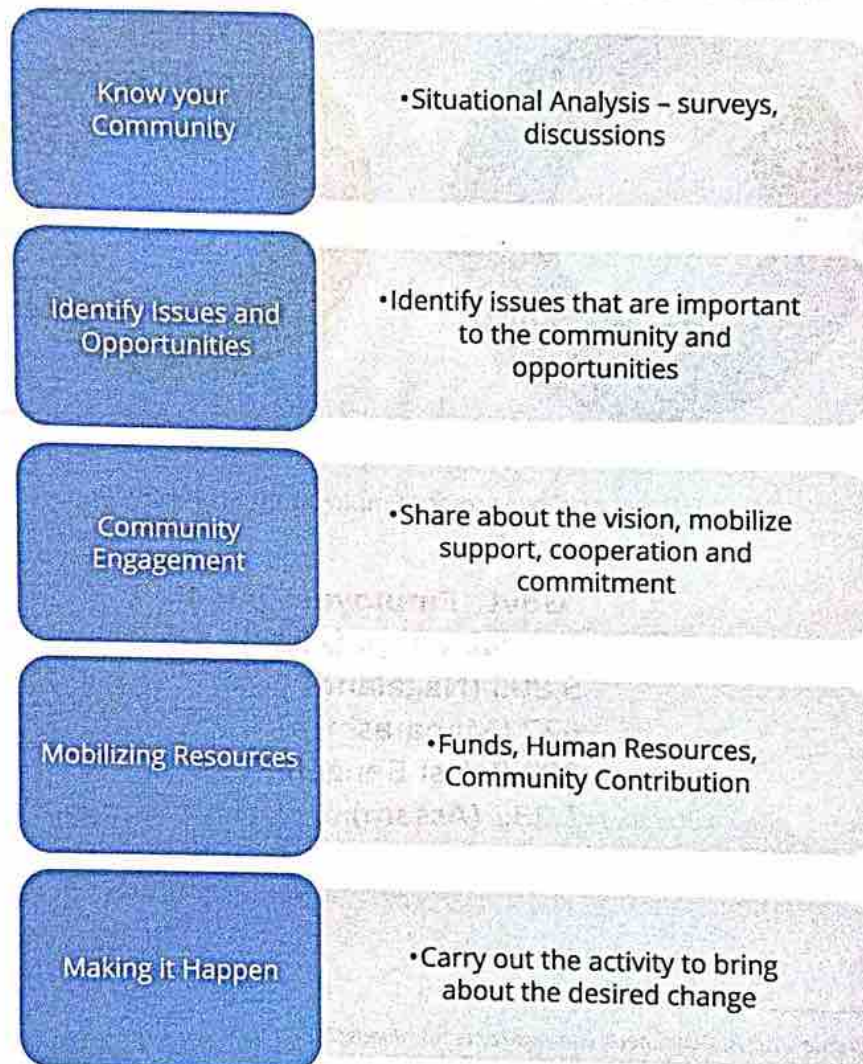
5,805 (Nagaland)
627 (Maharashtra)
309 (West Bengal)
1,232 (Assam)

¹ Source: Nedfi study- <https://www.nedfi.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/73-NAGALAND.pdf>

² Source: https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/database/State_Government_Employees_in_India.pdf / /

She talked about the huge scope and opportunities which agriculture and rural development offers to educated youths in the state. She mentioned that rural development is about **improving the quality of lives of people living in rural areas** which includes economic as well as social transformation. And it is through rural development that people living the rural areas have *better livelihood opportunities, production, better nutrition, improvement of basic services such as education, health, banking, natural resource management, gender equity etc.,.*

She stressed about the importance of understanding and the need to know the communities to bring about rural development. This can be achieved by practicing the following processes:



She then explained how the Northeast Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA) over the years have been working with rural communities across the North East region and have been able to establish Community Development Initiatives and have been successful to certain extent in improving the livelihoods of the rural communities. With special focus on the state of Nagaland, she explained the Piggery Value Chain which has been established through the Community Development Initiatives programme of NEIDA.

PIGGERY VALUE CHAIN

INPUTS AND SERVICES

Pig Breeders, Govt Extension, feed shop owners, feed manufacturers and suppliers, transporters, Vet medicines/health care

ISSUES

- Shortage of Piglets for fattening
- Vaccines in limited supply
- Veterinary care not available
- Extension service inadequate
- Limited availability of pig feed

1. Mini-piglet propagation farms
2. Livestock service providers
3. Weekly animal service camps
4. Pig Nutrition: Mini-feed mills
5. Pig-breeding policy for Govt

PRODUCTION - FARM

Farmers doing breeding, Growing, Fattening operations - small, medium, large-scale farmers

ISSUES

- Care and management
- Poor quality of pig feed
- Sub optimal weight of pigs at time of culling
- Lack of working capital

1. Improved pig sty
2. Capacity Building
3. Revolving funds
4. Increase herd size
5. Reduce fattening period

POST FARM - MARKET

Live pig traders, slaughterers, pork meat butchers, retail shops, processors, restaurants, consumers

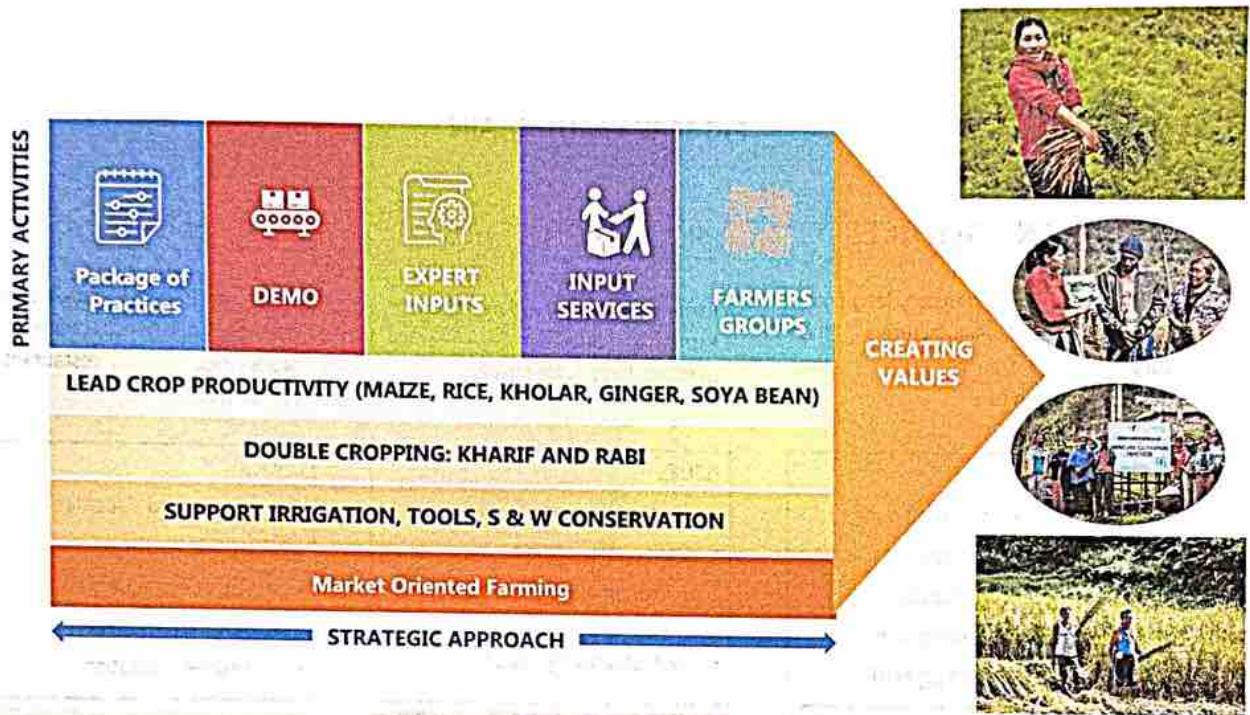
ISSUES

- Unsupervised slaughter
- Roadside butchers
- No meat inspection
- Unorganized Market
- Consumer education

1. Nagamaiki Pig Producer Company - Farmer owned company

The second Community Development Initiative undertaken by NEIDA in Nagaland is in the area of **Agricultural Intensification - Multiple and Double Cropping** which is explained in the process below

AGRICULTURAL INTENSIFICATION - MULTIPLE AND DOUBLE CROPPING



These two Community Development Initiatives has been able to make a positive impact in the lives of those rural households which have been a part of. The successful interventions and positive impact can be seen in the form of case studies of "Successful Farmers" as given in the forthcoming section.

(Faint mirrored text)
Principal
Modern College, Piphema

Vitou
Principal
Modern College, Piphema

CASE STUDY 1



Mr Ayenmongba from Tuensang district is able to earn Rs 16.7 Lakhs income within two years of being a part of Agricultural Intensification. He has successfully raised a Vegetable Nursery from September 2022 – March 2024.

CASE STUDY 2



Mr. Weto, a farmer from Pfutseromi is able to earn an additional income of Rs. 85,000/- per month from growing vegetables such a lettuce and mustard leaves in his green house.

CASE STUDY 3



The Saramati Beru, a Producers Group from Kiphire district which produces and packages organic honey and turmeric has been able to have a turn a Rs. 33 lakhs in the last financial year (2023-24)

CASE STUDY 4



Nagamaiki SmallHolder Pig Producer Company Limited gives inputs and services to its members in the form of piglets, distribute pig feeds, conduct weekly animal service camps. The Producer Company Limited business has a turnover of Rs 42 lakhs in the last financial year (2023-24).

CASE STUDY 5



This household in the Dzuleke Eco – village is able to earn approximate Rs 30,000/- every month from Homestay.

Having given an account of successful case studies from different districts across Nagaland, Ms Sentimongla Kechuchar says that working with communities on ground comes with several challenges and she categorized as Internal factors (which basically lies with the communities) and External factors (which lie outside the community).

Internal Factors	External Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is an arena of both turbulence and cohesion, order and disarray, of self-seeking and community-oriented behaviour • Carrying the baggage of Freebies • Lack of entrepreneurial mindset • Flight of talent/manpower from rural to urban areas/ Brain drain • Parents Aspiration: White and blue collated job • High rural to urban migration (education, employment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Communication Infrastructure • Government Policies - Lack of imagination and an innovative ecosystem • Lack of Service Providers • Lack of transfer of technology / Lack of scientific advancements / Research • Locational disadvantage to markets • Working for an NGO / development sector not a career option

Utsavi

However, despite obstacles and challenges, she stated there are certain enabling factors which can take agriculture and rural development in Nagaland on a larger scale and those enablers are:

1. Attitudinal change amongst the people especially the young: dependency to self-reliance and self-motivation.
2. Financial Literacy and Digital Literacy.
3. Access to finance / capital.
4. Skilling rural youth and women.
5. Rural entrepreneurship.
6. Strong Social Behavioural Change through Communication Campaigns.
7. Partnerships involving philanthropies, CSRs, Government along with innovators and grassroots NGOs.
8. Changemakers – internal and external.
9. Peace and Security.


Principal
Modern College, Piphema

The Way Forward for Sustainable Rural Development in Nagaland

Mr. Paul Lokho
Director, Pro Rural
Dimapur, Nagaland

Mr Paul Lokho, Director, Pro Rural, spoke on the topic "The Way Forward for Sustainable Rural Development in Nagaland." Before detailing out his presentation, he thanked the first two speakers for setting the stage for his topic and they have already spoken on the crucial contributions made by agriculture in the livelihood of the Naga communities.

Beginning his presentation, he apprised the audience how Naga communities in their set ups have imbibed the very notion of Gram Swaraj which was Mahatma Gandhi's dream idea of Local Self Governance. That Naga societies were already practicing in their set ups from time immemorial and one of the main reasons behind this was also because Nagas were agriculture communities. Therefore, despite the aspirations of the educated employed and of present generation, one should never take for granted the contribution of the agriculture and farm sector.

Based on the culture of the Naga communities and the topography of the state, there is unlimited possibilities to explore in the area of eco-tourism, cultural tourism, food tourism, and even adventure tourism if one looks if from the employment prospects amongst the local youths.

Once again, reminding the audience about the statistics that 71 per cent of the Households in Nagaland are still dependent on agriculture out of which 91 per cent of the farmers practice Jhum (slash and burn agriculture). And he presented the stark figure that the state GDP is down by 30 per cent which is a worrisome figure when looked at from the development perspective.

He strongly asserted that one of the Way forward for Sustainable Rural development in Nagaland is to focus and give top priority to agriculture. If agriculture is neglected and relegated then there would be no way to sustainability. He opined that for the state to have a thriving economy, we should focus on building the capacity of farmers to be smart, healthy and knowledgeable.

Secondly, he stated that policies adopted by governments should be robust. It must be implementable taking into consideration the context of the state. Doing this will also make the objectives of the agricultural policies achievable.

Thirdly, agriculture developmental work can be augmented with extension workers. There should be one extension worker for each village. Doing this will also alleviate the problem of rural unemployment to a certain degree.