

## **IS RURAL NON-FARM GROWTH, FACTOR DEPENDENT? A CASE STUDY OF A VILLAGE IN INDIA.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to assess the changing rural structural transformation and its implication on the emergence of rural non-farm sector. Rural non-farm sector is no longer a residual sector, but has become indispensable for income and employment generation particularly in the rural economy. How far such occupational diversification can bring about desirable changes and transformation to rural economy is of research interest. It is important to study the push and pull factors along with the role of urban spill over effects on the emergence of non-farm sector either formally or informally in the rural areas. This is so especially for an economy which has normally been characterised as an agrarian egalitarian society, which now shows the emergence of new economic activities and opportunities. This paper attempts to trace the growth of non-farm sector especially in the North-eastern states of India. The sector in this region is factor dependent and is not homogeneous in nature. The present study enumerates the role of different factors that have led to the growth of non-farm sector and to what extends rural transformation by taking a case study of a village in the state of Nagaland.

Keywords: Rural structural transformation, non-farm sector, Factor dependent.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of rural non-farm (RNF) employment is an important and fast growing source of rural employment and income generation in India in the last few decades. Future possibility for the persistence of this feature, makes it more necessary and interesting to analyse the phenomenon comprehensively in all its dimensions such as the nature of diversification in the rural employment structure, diversity of emerging activities, shifts in 'pluriactive' or multi-occupation, levels of productivity and earnings, and sustainability. RNF employment is a complex phenomenon, and in the context of vast diversity of rural India in terms of agro-climatic, socio-economic and institutional conditions there is a need for detailed analysis of the various dimensions of the phenomenon with a focus on situation analysis based on micro-level studies (Reddy, 2014). The emergence of rural non-farm sector as the highest employment and income generating sector has been considered as one form of rural structural transformation by many scholars (Eswaran et al., 2009). Thus, diversification of workforce engaged in the agriculture to other non-farm sector has been the fundamental target of many policies initiated by the government over the past three decades. In rural areas of developing countries like India, occupational diversification becomes very important where the average farm size and income is small and continues to shrink with demographic pressure, and where wage employment in a wide range of activities is casual and seasonal. It is obvious that any single source of income is not sufficient to meet rural individual or household needs. Perhaps, diversification of activities of an individual as well as household is likely to be more common. A self-employed farmer may be pursuing multiple employment activities in other rural non-farm sector or he may be seasonally employed in the informal sector in urban areas as wage-worker. Thus, rural households or individuals tend to pursue a number of different economic activities, resulting in 'pluri-active' or 'multi-occupational households or individuals'. RNF employment provided mostly casual work and very little regular work, and the bulk of seasonal fluctuations in RNF employment are due to casual labour shifting from agriculture to non-agriculture (Reddy et al,

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2014). The incidence of non-agricultural work as secondary source among casual agricultural labour was on the rise in 1980s, which also indicated that poor rural labour was into multiple occupations and much of the increase in RNF employment was in the case of male workers than female. Men in RNF employment are more with education and are in the younger age group while older men are left behind in agriculture. But there are diverse findings on the relationship between assets (land holdings) and emergence of RNF employment (Unni, 1996). Some reported that participation in RNF employment is inversely related to the size of the household land holding, but others found that men in households with significant assets (including land) specialize in non-farm activities (Visaria and Basant, 1994).

In the Indian context the nature of the expansion of the non-farm sector and its implication on the decision making of the household in the farm sector are important for the long-term growth of the farm sector. Again the nature of transformation is not similar across time and space in the Indian context, different regions have different socio-economic and institutional set up that plays an important role in the decision making of every household. So given the different variation in the rate of growth of farm and non-farm sector in the Indian states, this study will attempt to focus on the emergence of non-farm sector in a remote rural village of Nagaland and how occupational diversification has taken place. This paper tries to identify who are diversifying from the agriculture to the non-farm sector and what are the major factors that play an important role in the diversification.

The content of the paper is organised in the following way. Data, methodology will be discussed in the second section. Third sections will deal with the analysis of the field data. Some of the major findings will be presented in this section followed by Conclusion in the fourth section.

### **Introduction to institutional set-up and economy of Nagaland:**

Nagaland is a state of communitised tribal society (Jamir, 2001) with seventeen different Naga schedule tribes and 11 districts. Each district has a predominant concentration of one of the major/ minor tribes of the State, making those region/districts distinct in their socio-economics and political, traditional, cultural and linguistic characteristics. Every district has their own customary laws and certain institutional norms which are not in written form but socially acceptable and followed by all households in the village.

Nagaland economy still confronts many developmental constraints, even after 62 years of its statehood. Foremost among them is the geographically isolated, difficult hilly terrain, relatively inaccessible to the rest of the world coupled with continuous political conflict. Remoteness and inaccessibility within the state are also the main causes for the regional disparities in the state. One of the major conundrums of the state is tackling the ever increasing number of educated unemployed. According to census 2011, the state literacy rate was 80.11% and there has always been an increasing number of under-employment as well as disguised-unemployment in the state.

Naga society being predominantly an agrarian economy. Agriculture is the main occupation for their source of livelihood, where agriculture production is mostly for self-sustenance/consumption and not much for commercialisation. The contribution of agricultural sector in the state is very significant. The major land use pattern is locally known as jhum or shifting cultivation and area under jhum cultivation is about 1, 01,400 hectare. The remarkable feature of the economy is that there are no landless peasants in the state. In spite of the agriculture being the main occupation of the population, state still has to import food items from other neighbouring states to fulfil the total consumption. This has happened because though agriculture produces a small marketable surplus there is a lack of proper agro-marketing and agro-business structure and also with the fact that people followed unsustainable agricultural practices such as the jhumming method which give less productivity and less reliable unstable. Terrace land and wetland are considered to be more productive and

permanent than jhum land cultivation. Land holdings and labour market are not so formalised in the rural economy. Property rights entitlement documents are yet to be systematized by the government and held widely by land owning households because of strong tribal institutional norms and set up, so also exchange of community based reciprocal labour still prevails in the rural villages along with employment of farm wage labourers.

Out of total area of 165,783 hectares, covered by the state, 1, 008,23 hectares comes under government control, that accounts for 11.7% of the total area of the state. Community, clan recognized traditional rights based land holdings as well as more modern and formalized private property entitlements over land holdings held by two or more families are common. Of these types of ownerships, modern property rights based private individual ownership entitlements has the largest share and traditional rights based, clan recognized ownership rights the least. Customary law has a very strong hold in the society and quite effectively determines the ownership of land, the individual's right to use it, and is involved in settling disputes etc. Officially, 17 tribes inhabit the state each having its own customs and traditions. The laws governing the ownership of land, inheritance, use of land etc. differ from one tribe to the other (Renbeni, 2015).

### **Introduction of Mekokla village:-**

Mekokla village falls under Wokha district having 295 households and a population of 2165 with literacy rate of 89.36% which is higher than the state literacy rate of 79.55% according to census 2011. Mekokla is a large village located in Aitepyong block of Wokha district and is inhabited by the Lotha tribe of Nagaland. The village is a communitized agrarian society with a strong tribal institutional set up. Agriculture is considered as the main source of livelihood and innate all over the land. The village is geographically located at a point where there is not much easy accessibility towards nearby towns and markets, given the poor infrastructure (roads and transportation facilities) and lack of development. The distance to the nearest towns is in a radius of 30-35 kms. But due to lack of connectivity, its time consuming and expensive to travel often for the villagers. The only convenient connection is through government bus to the only district headquarter town, that has made conveyance a bit easier. If transportation facilities are improved in this village, it could have serve the purpose of exploring and penetrating potential markets in and around the village which could improve the village economy to a large extend. Nevertheless, the informal network and sources in the village has slowly emerged, and has started to involve in extrapolating the agriculture market by diversifying into more productive income generating activities in the village.

### ***Mekokla agriculture Economy:***

Agriculture production in Mekokla village follows primitive/traditional methods of production, where mostly labour intensive man power is required for agricultural production and no modern techniques of agriculture production has been used. Agriculture production is mostly for self-sustenance or self-consumption and not for commercialisation. Wetland and jhum land (shifting cultivation) are the most popular method of cultivation in the village. Where wetland gives more productivity than jhum land, even though wetland cultivation is comparably expensive and need more labour time. In within the farm sector, there is an emerging trend, where there is expansion of plantation of commercial crops like rubber, ginger, orange, tree beans, sugarcane etc. Some of these commercial crops are undertaken under government scheme to encourage the villagers to make farm sector more profitable in near future.

### **DATA AND METHODOLOGY:-**

Field survey was conducted with a structured questionnaire personal interview, and it was on intensive household survey, where the head of the family or anyone member of the family is the respondent to collect information for the whole family (household members). Total 60 rural household has been surveyed out of more than 295 households in Mekokla village under

Wokha district. The village has no documented property right system so most of the respondents were unable to give standard measurement for their landholdings, as in the village the land holdings are measured by its land harvest during Kharif season.

The secondary data has been collected from Employment and Unemployment survey of different National Sample Survey (NSS) Rounds of Govt. of India. Four rounds of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) data (50<sup>th</sup>, 61<sup>st</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup>, and 68<sup>th</sup>) have been used. For classifying the household into farm and non-farm, National Industrial Classification of Government of India has been used.

### FIELD WORK DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:-

The sample household of the rural village in Nagaland is categorised into Farm and Non-farm household based on the larger share of income. Table 1 below shows that 37% of the sample households earn their major share of income from the farm sector and 63% are from the non-farm activities. There are households who earn income both from farm and non-farm sectors. Those households are categorised as mixed income households. 85% of the sample household are reported as mixed income household, which shows the multi-occupation strategy of the household. It would be interesting to look at what are the factors that determine the decision to be in the farm or non-farm sector. What necessitates a household to diversify the portfolio in the farm and in the non-farm sector?

**TABLE 1: SHARE OF FARM AND NON-FARM HOUSEHOLD**

Share of farm and Non-farm Household			
HH type	No of HH	Share of HH	Share of Income
Farm	22	36.67	34.02
Non-farm	38	63.33	65.98
Total	60	100	100

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

It has been observed in India, that the nature of non-farm activities is not homogenous all over the country. The role that the non-farm sector plays also varies across regions and over time depending upon the intensity of the emergence of the non-farm sector and the nature of non-farm activities. It has also been argued by many scholars that income from non-farm sector alone is not sufficient and not sustainable. In such situation household adopt multi-occupation strategy and diversify their portfolio among different activities. Considering the differences in growth and nature of non-farm activities, the field survey data of Mekokla village has tried to capture multiple occupation strategy of the households. Data on the first five occupations are collected where the first occupation contributes maximum share of the household income.

**TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF THE HOUSEHOLD**

Occupation	No of Household	Share of Household
Cultivation	22	36.67
Forestry and Logging	5	8.33
Casual Labour	3	5
Fishing	1	1.67
Govt. Servant	12	20
Grocery Shop	3	5
Rentier (Coal mining)	6	10
Rice Mill	2	3.33
Carpentry	2	3.33
Handicraft	1	1.67
Church Pastor	2	3.33
Others (Pensioner)	1	1.67
Total	60	100

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

Table 2 show the distribution of households based on the first occupation. 37% of the households reported cultivation as their first occupation followed by Govt. Servant (20%). Based on the distribution of the first occupation of the household farm sector activities (cultivation, forestry and logging, casual labour and fishing) employ around 52% of the households. Next to cultivation, households depend upon the forest resources for their livelihood which comprises 8.33% of the sample households. The non-farm activities are mostly informal in nature. Employment in the public sector is the only formal non-farm job. This could be the reason for the high inequality in the distribution of income in the non-farm job, as the very criteria to enter government employment requires access to education. Given education as the constraint for entering into the formal non-farm employment, household tends to divert towards informal non-farm activities which are insecure and does not fetch sufficient income for livelihood. So to be on the safer side, household tries to diversify their portfolio (labour as well as physical assets like land) between different activities. Table 3 shows the intensity of the multi-occupation in the sample village. It shows that 68% of the households are engaged at least in three occupations for their livelihood. The survey also found that there is diversification within the farm sector, towards plantation of commercial crops. In the study village, cultivation of eight commercial crops has been identified (see Table 4). These include rubber, pineapple, orange, tree beans (yongjak in local dialect), banana, ginger, sugarcane, betel nut. Among the plantation crops diversification towards the plantation of rubber and tree beans are the emerging trends in the rural villages of Nagaland.

**TABLE 3: INTENSITY OF THE MULTI-OCCUPATION**

	No of Household reported	Share to total HH
First Occupation	60	100
Second Occupation	52	86.67
Third Occupation	41	68.33
Fourth Occupation	27	45.00
Fifth Occupation	11	18.33

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

**TABLE 4: PLANTATION OF COMMERCIAL CROPS**

Commercial Crops	No of Household	Year of Starting
Rubber	39	2000
Pineapple	6	1985
Orange	17	2005
Treebeans	32	2004
Banana	10	1993
Ginger	3	2008
Sugarcane	9	2009
Betel nut	4	2004

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

The above observation on the farm and non-farm activities of the rural village of Nagaland depicts the coexistence of Farm and Non-farm sector and the interrelationship in providing the livelihood of the households. So it would be interesting to study on those factors that influence a household to move towards non-farm sector and plantation of commercial crops.

**Factor influencing the diversification towards commercial crops:**

Plantation of Rubber needs high level of investment with a gestation period of 10-15 years. It also needs huge labour power. Table 5 shows that the higher income group are the one engaged in the plantation of rubber. The top two category of household who are engage in rubber plantation has about 77% of the total rubber plantation household. In the non-farm income the share of top two category of household is 51%. This 51% of the households are mostly large

landowning household. Table 6 gives the landowning distribution of the household in Non-farm income. It shows that in the top income household category (₹15000 and above), has land holding of 92%, if we add up the top two categories of the land holdings. Similar is the case for the income category 7000 to 15000. In this category the top two land owning class (4.000-10.000 and 10.000 and above) constitutes 85% of the households. So it can be concluded that the large income group with large landowning are the ones that has mostly diversified towards rubber plantation.

**TABLE 5: ENGAGED IN RUBBER CULTIVATION**

Income Group (monthly, in rupees ₹)	No of Household in Total Income		No of Household in Non-farm income	
		Share		Share
Below 500	0	0.00	8	20.51
500-1000	0	0.00	2	5.13
1000-3000	2	5.13	2	5.13
3000-7000	7	17.95	7	17.95
7000-15000	15	38.46	7	17.95
15000 and above	15	38.46	13	33.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

**TABLE 6: INCOME AND LANDOWNING CLASSIFICATION OF RUBBER PLANTATION HOUSEHOLD**

Income Group (monthly non-farm, in rupees ₹)	Classification of land own (in Acres)					
	Below 1.000	1.000- 2.000	2.000- 4.000	4.000- 10.000	10.000 and above	Total
Below 500	0	0	37.5	12.5	50	100
500-1000	0	0	0	0	100	100
1000-3000	0	0	0	100	0	100
3000-7000	14.29	14.29	28.57	28.57	14.29	100
7000-15000	0	0	14.29	42.86	42.86	100
15000 and above	0	0	7.69	30.77	61.54	100

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

The other important commercial crop that is found in the study area is Tree beans (parkai species). The nature of this crop both in terms of production and marketing is more advantageous than rubber. It needs less investment with smaller gestation period and as it is a vegetable crop, it has a day to day demand.

**TABLE 7: ENGAGED IN TREE BEAN CULTIVATION**

Income Group (monthly, in rupees ₹)	No of Household in Total Income		No of Household in Non-farm income	
		Share		Share
Below 500	0	0.00	8	25.00
500-1000	0	0.00	1	3.13
1000-3000	1	3.13	3	9.38
3000-7000	6	18.75	5	15.63
7000-15000	13	40.63	6	18.75
15000 and above	12	37.50	9	28.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

The class analysis of the tree beans cultivating households also follows a similar pattern like that of the rubber cultivating household. The top two categories in total non-farm income group dominate the tree beans cultivation with a share of 78% (40.63+37.50) (see Table 7). But in the non-farm income, both the bottom as well as top income categories are engaged in tree beans cultivation. The landowning classification of the tree beans cultivating households in Table 10 shows that large size landowning class dominates in the cultivation of tree beans.

62.5% of the bottom income category is large landowner. Similar is the case for the top income category where 66.67% are large land owner.

**TABLE 8: INCOME AND LANDOWNING CLASSIFICATION OF TREEBEANS PLANTATION HOUSEHOLD**

Income Group (monthly non-farm, in rupees ₹)	Classification of land own (in Acres)					Share Total	Total No. of Household
	Below1.000 and above	1.000-2.000	2.000-4.000	4.000-10.000	10.000		
Below 500	0	0	25	12.5	62.5	100	8
500-1000	0	0	0	0	100	100	1
1000-3000	0	0	33.33	66.67	0	100	3
3000-7000	20.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	0.00	100	5
7000-15000	0	0	0.00	50.00	50.00	100	6
15000 and above	0	0	11.11	22.22	66.67	100	9

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

**Factor influencing the diversification towards Non-farm sector:**

The structure of the rural Indian economy is undergoing a change in the recent period. One of the important forms of transformation is the emergence of rural non-farm sector which is now indispensable for income and employment generation. But the accessibility to the non-farm sector is not open for all with an entry barrier. The standard literatures dealing with the diversification of the household towards non-farm sector have listed number of entry barriers. The probability of getting non-farm job increases with the increase in education standard (Eswaran et al., 2009). Studies have also talked about the gender and age as the barrier in entering into the non-farm sector. The relationship between access to physical assets and non-farm employment has also been discussed in various literatures. This paper mainly attempts to study those major factors influencing diversification in the non-farm sector. Firstly the nature of non-farm activities in the study village is different from the standard understanding of the non-farm sector at all India level. The non-farm job is primarily informal in the study village. Secondly, it has a strong agrarian base due to the importance that people in this village has towards agriculture. So this is a primary attempt to study the upcoming trends in the Nagaland economy, and comparing between NSSO data and field survey data considering the limitation of sample biased.

**TABLE 9: SHARE OF FARM AND NON-FARM HOUSEHOLD: ALL INDIA AND NAGALAND**

Year	All India (in %)			All India Rural (in %)			Nagaland (in %)			Nagaland Rural(in %)		
	Farm	Non-farm	Total	Farm	Non-farm	Total	Farm	Non-farm	Total	Farm	Non-farm	Total
1993-94	56.82	43.18	100	73.44	26.56	100	46.62	53.38	100	62.2	37.8	100
2004-05	50.27	49.73	100	66.51	33.49	100	44.84	55.16	100	62.33	37.67	100
2009-10	46.44	53.56	100	62.62	37.38	100	47.91	52.09	100	62.19	37.81	100
2011-12	43.03	56.97	100	59.22	40.78	100	42.85	57.15	100	61.5	38.5	100

Source: Authors' calculation from different NSSO rounds

Table 9 show the economic structure of India and Nagaland. The share of non-farm sector is increasing at all India level as well as in Nagaland. At the aggregate level both the Indian economy as well as Nagaland economy is experiencing rapid increase in the non-farm sector.

But still the rural economy is predominantly an agrarian economy for both India and Nagaland. The share of farm sector for Rural India is around 60% and for Rural Nagaland is 61%. The increase in the share of household under non-farm sector for rural Nagaland is almost consistent. There is less than 1% increase in the last two decades. The field survey data gives a different picture of the share of farm and non-farm sector. The share of non-farm sector in the study village is higher than the NSSO result. The reason could be the nature of non-farm sector which are not covered by the NSSO. The field data also shows that 85% of the household are mixed household. So an attempt has been made to check what determines the decision of the household to be in the non-farm sector.

**TABLE 10: EDUCATIONAL PROFILE OF THE NON-FARM HOUSEHOLD**

Educational status	No of Non-farm		Share of Non-farm to total
	Household	Total Household	
Graduate	3	3	100
12th	8	11	72.73
10th	10	16	62.50
Below 10th	17	30	56.67

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

The educational profile of the non-farm household given in table 10 shows that education is one determining factor in the decision making process of the household. Moving up in the ladder of education increases the share of household in the non-farm sector. In the study village out of 30 household, 17 (56.67%) household are in the below 10<sup>th</sup> standard of education and engaged in non-farm sector. But in the category of graduate, the entire household are in the non-farm sector only. The landowning classification of the non-farm households shows that 84% of the households are in the top two land owning categories (see Table 11). Migration has a positive relationship with the decision of the household to be in the farm sector. Field survey data shows that, out of the 60 households, 18 household has at least one member has migrated to nearby towns/cities and sent remittances back at home. Again among these 18 households, 15 households (83%) are in the non-farm sector (see table 11). The household size information given in table. 12 show that household members of 4 to 6 and above enter into the non-farm sector. These categories of household can easily diversify the labour power between farm and non-farm sector. In the sample households it is found that the large household size has more number of dependent members in a household.

**TABLE 11: LANDOWNING CLASSIFICATION OF THE NON-FARM HH**

Land owned (in acre)	No of non-farm HH	Share
Below 1.000	3	7.89
1.000-2.000	0	0
2.000-4.000	3	7.89
4.000-10.000	14	36.84
10.000 and above	18	47.37
Total	38	100

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data

**TABLE 12: HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

Household Size	No of Non-farm	
	Household	Share
1 to 3	12	31.57
4 to 6	15	39.47
7 and above	11	28.94

Source: Authors' calculation from primary field survey data



## CONCLUSION

The rural agrarian economy of the Nagaland is undergoing a change with the emergence of non-farm economy. As the share of income derived from the non-farm sector is higher than the farm sector, and farm sector alone is not sufficient for sustaining livelihood. Thus, households are diversifying their portfolio between farm and non-farm sector. It has been found in the field surveyed village that the intensity of the multi-occupation is very high among the households. Diversification towards commercial crops within the farm sector in the recent period is seen as another strategy adopted by the household in the study village to earn their livelihood. The class analysis done in this paper shows that it is the high income group with large land ownership are the one diversifying towards both non-farm and plantation of commercial crops. Majority of the non-farm jobs is informal in nature. Education is one of the important barriers to enter into the formal non-farm job. As agricultural income is not sufficient though almost all households are engaged in it, the government should focus on formalizing and exploring non-farm opportunities through various policies and schemes and also introduce various programmes to educate the farmers with sustainable and modern techniques of production. Priority should be given to improve the infrastructure development of the village with proper connectivity to nearby towns, which will encourage the non-farm sector market to expand.

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