

CHAPTER – V

IMPORTANCE OF LAND AND LIVELIHOODS OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Tribals have a bond with their land and a sense of belonging. So the land possesses regenerative qualities necessary for tribal existence and well-being. The tribal residents benefit from the employment opportunities and economy provided by the land, improving their quality of life. Land includes all of its forms, has consequences for tribals whose livelihoods are directly dependent on land. Nearly every rural livelihood in rural villages or areas is reliant on land. So, this chapter is connected to an understanding of livelihood-related issues. The tribal people have varying socio-economic positions and need much attention to solve concerns about the availability of basic services.

5.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The socio-economic status of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in Assam, India, is characterized by an undeveloped, complex interplay of ethnic diversity, economic challenges, and historical conflicts. BTR established under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, is home to a significant population of the Bodo ethnic group, and other tribes Rabha and Garo are living alongside other communities such as Assamese, Bengali, and Adivasis (Baruah, 2020). These communities have a distinct cultural heritage and have historically depended on agriculture as their primary livelihood. However, the region has a lot of potential for economic growth and development because of its resources, geographical advantages, popular sentiment, and state and central government support (Goyari, 2021).

The economy of the Bodoland area may be classified as agricultural or non-agricultural. Agricultural operations such as cultivation, cropping, and raising livestock are all part of the agricultural economy. Economically, BTR remains largely agrarian with agriculture being the primary occupation. Paddy, jute, and tea are the main crops, though the region's agricultural

productivity is hampered by frequent floods and inadequate irrigation facilities (Saikia & Deka, 2019). Different sectors in the non-agricultural economy support the well-being of both tribal and other communities. Key activities include forestry, sericulture, handicrafts, and small-scale industries like food processing and textiles (Sharma, 2021). Tourism, particularly eco-tourism and cultural tourism, plays a significant role, leveraging the region's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage (Singh, 2020). Additionally, government jobs and schemes provide essential employment opportunities (Borah, 2019). Trade and commerce through local markets and small businesses cater to the daily needs of the population, enhancing economic activities (Das, 2018). Furthermore, employment in education and healthcare services is vital for community development (Gogoi, 2022). Understanding these sectors is crucial for creating policies that support sustainable economic growth and improve living standards for tribal populations in BTR (Hazarika, 2023).

While considering the economic status of tribal society, the first thing that comes to mind is the prevailing circumstances of the Bodos (Kachari & Maity, 2015), Rabhas, and Garos in the region. The complex relationship between historical, cultural, and political factors is reflected in the socio-economic status of tribal groups like the Bodo, Rabha, and Garo in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The Bodo community, being the largest tribal group in the region, has historically faced marginalization but has made significant strides in political representation and socio-economic development since the creation of the BTR under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (Sarma, 2020). Despite these advancements, challenges persist in terms of education, healthcare, and employment, which are crucial for their socio-economic upliftment (Boro, 2021). The Rabha and Garo tribes, while smaller in population compared to the Bodos, also experience similar socio-economic challenges. The Rabhas, primarily agrarian, face issues related to land ownership and agricultural productivity (Baruah, 2019). The Garos, traditionally known for their matrilineal society, encounter obstacles in terms of access to quality education and healthcare facilities (Choudhury, 2018). These communities have been putting in a lot of effort to improve their socio-economic status by participating in various government initiatives and local programmes aimed at raising literacy rates, enhancing healthcare access, and creating more economic opportunities.

Overall the agriculture is main source of income in the region. Tribals are mainly agricultural tribes whose socio-economic lives focus on agriculture, crop production, and raising livestock. However, tribals inhabit mainly in rural areas and live on forest land also in the region. They live in the centre of nature, and forest-based economy is also their primary sources of income.

Despite their abundance of cultural heritage, the BTR has encountered substantial socio-economic difficulties. Limited availability of education, healthcare, and job options are compounded by political turmoil and ethnic tensions. Educational attainment in BTR is relatively low compared to the state average, with limited access to quality educational institutions. This has impacted the region's human capital development and perpetuated cycles of poverty (Sarmah, 2019). Health infrastructure is also underdeveloped, with many areas lacking basic medical facilities and healthcare services (Borah, 2018). Industrial development is limited, with few small-scale industries and a nascent tourism sector. The lack of significant industrial infrastructure has constrained job opportunities, leading to high levels of unemployment and underemployment (Goswami, 2018). That is the socio-economic disparities continue to be a significant issue, exacerbated by ethnic conflicts and political instability in the region. The implementation of development programmes often falls short due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption (Goswami, 2017). Efforts from government and local leaders are needed to address the root causes of marginalisation and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for tribal groups to enhance their socio-economic representation and development.

5.2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEM

The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in Assam, India, is home to diverse ethnic communities, with tribals constituting a significant portion of the population. Despite its rich cultural heritage and natural resources, the BTR faces numerous socio-economic challenges. These issues are deeply rooted in historical, political, and socio-economic factors, profoundly affecting the lives of the tribal population. In light of the rapid increase in the population, which is primarily due to the high population, birth rate of immigrants and fresh influx, socio-economic problems such as poverty, illiteracy, a lack of proper healthcare facilities and

sanitation, a lack of basic amenities, degradation of the environment, and pollution become worse instead of being resolved (Das, 2018).

Land access and ownership are critical issues in BTR, significantly impacting the livelihood of tribal communities. Historical injustices and ongoing encroachments have led to substantial displacement and deprivation of land rights. A significant portion of the population faces issues related to fresh encroachments and ethnic conflicts, exacerbating the struggle for land (Brahma & Mushahary, 2022). The BTR experiences high levels of poverty and unemployment. The lack of industrial development and limited employment opportunities compel many tribals to depend on traditional agriculture, which is often not sufficient for a sustainable livelihood (Nath & Nath, 2020). The educational infrastructure also remains underdeveloped, limiting access to quality education and further hindering socio-economic mobility in the region (Borgohain, 2021).

Health infrastructure in BTR is another critical area of concern. Inadequate healthcare facilities and poor access to medical services contribute to high mortality and morbidity rates among the tribal population (Saikia & Das, 2019). These health issues are compounded by malnutrition and lack of clean drinking water, further exacerbating the socio-economic plight of the region (Sarma, 2018).

Furthermore, ethnic conflicts and political instability have historically plagued BTR, disrupting the socio-economic fabric and perpetuating a cycle of violence and insecurity (Baruah, 2020). These conflicts often stem from competition over resources and political representation, affecting the daily lives and economic activities of tribal communities (Singh, 2021).

The tribal uprising to safeguard their homeland with a distinct tribal identity is also the because of the land alienation by the immigrants. There has been a long history of encouraging the entry of immigrants as peasants for wetland farming. They were encouraged to come here because the indigenous peasants lacked experience in wetland farming, especially the jute production process. These immigrants put significant strain on tribal land, causing tribals to be relocated from their land. Some immigrants have infiltrated tribal belts and blocks in northern and southern foothill areas. Indigenous non-tribal people have been selling their lands to land-hungry people, moving increasingly north and south to the reserved forest areas.

Native tribal people are currently becoming a minority in previously dominant areas. The land economy is the primary driver of extensive immigration. As a result, a dreadful psychosis grips the psyche of tribal/indigenous people who fear being reduced to a minority population. Economic development has been far from satisfying due to a lack of industrialisation and modernisation in agriculture, aggravated by a lack of capital and infrastructure facilities. Furthermore, pervasive corruption, criminality, and other activities have produced a noxious social setting.

5.2.2 BASIC AMENITIES, EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND POVERTY

For more than seven decades following independence, many stalwart economists and politicians in India have publicly campaigned on poverty as a national concern. Poverty reduction remains one of the most difficult tasks for state officials. In Indian history, poverty has been classified as either rural poverty or urban poverty. The main reasons for poverty in rural areas are the lack of access to social infrastructure and economic opportunities. However, urban poverty is an issue caused by the migration of unskilled rural inhabitants, which creates insecurity of livelihood, shelter, and sanitation.

5.2.2.1 STANDARD OF LIVING AND BASIC AMENITIES

The aggregate economic position of an average tribal household looks comparable to that of an ordinary household. During the 2011 Census of India, in Assam tribals reported just 18.6% of tribals reported any household durable assets, which is 5% less compare the average for the nation. Unfortunately, access to financial services and grid energy is significantly limited (Socio-Economic and Caste Census, 2011). Moreover, the survey indicated that the Bodo people are less comfortable maintaining their household income than others in the Bodoland region.

The type and quality of the house and the facilities provided to residents indicate the living level. It stands for the standard of living of people in general. Housing conditions require to improve across the four districts in the region. Udalguri has the largest kutchha dwellings at 58.7%, followed by Baksa at 55.3%, Kokrajhar at 37%, and Chirang at 34.1%. Udalguri has the greatest percentage of pucca houses, which is 14.5%, followed by Chirang, second at 12.8%, Kokrajhar at 12%, and Baksa, which has 6.7% (HDR Survey, 2013).

Table 5.1: Status of Housing Condition and Basic Amenities of BTR

Districts	Status of Housing Condition		Basic Amenities		
	Katcha House	Pucca House	HHWE	HHWT	HHWDW
Kokrajhar	55.3	6.7	34.4	72.1	23.2
Chirang	34.1	12.8	26.4	84.4	0.8
Baksa	37	12	44	72.2	14.8
Udalguri	58.7	14.5	0.6	78.1	7.4

Source: HDR Survey, 2013,

Note: HHWE means Household Without Electricity, HHWT means Household Without Toilet, and HHWDW means Household Without Drinking Water.

The Basic amenities like Household Without Electricity (HHWE) in Kokrajhar are at 44.0%, followed by Baksa at 34.4%, Chirang at 26.4%, and Udalguri at 0.6%. Household Without Toilet (HHWT) in Chirang is 84.4%, Udalguri 78.1%, Kokrajhar 72.2%, and Baksa 72.1%; and Household Without Drinking Water (HHWDW) in Baksa are 23.2%, Kokrajhar 14.8%, Udalguri 7.4%, and Chirang 0.8%, which show a terrible performance (HDR Survey, 2013).

Necessities like healthcare, education, and sanitation are frequently inadequate in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), especially within tribal communities. The government has introduced numerous programmes to tackle these problems. The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has introduced schemes to improve infrastructure, including the establishment of schools and healthcare centers, as well as providing clean drinking water and sanitation facilities (Das, 2021). Additionally, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana aims to provide affordable housing for the underprivileged (Singh, 2020). Efforts are also being made to enhance agricultural productivity and provide skill development programmes (Sharma, 2022).

However, there is a significant lack in terms of possession, use, ability to obtain assets, and various other aspects of daily life. The deprivation is alarmingly substantial in particular circumstances, not just from a relative sense but also from a whole perspective. The various obstacles to human development and enhancing the general quality of life for the local populace are emphasised by these deprivations. Government initiatives like the collaboration with the Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation (BRLF) aim to improve socio-economic conditions and governance at the grassroots level. Despite these efforts, many initiatives have

fallen short due to poor implementation and persistent socio-economic inequalities (Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation, 2024).

5.2.2.2 EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The region is concerned about the absence of productive and remunerative employment opportunities. Unemployment rises when the workforce expands in the face of limited employment opportunities. In the region, unemployment rates among females and educated young people are particularly concerning (HDR Survey, 2013). The employment rate in the Bodoland area government sector is relatively low. According to the 2009 Government Employee Census Report, BTC workers comprised around 0.97% of the entire population. In the social category, the Scheduled Tribes have around 0.76% of the total, the Other Backward Classes have 0.39%, the Scheduled Castes have 0.09%, and others have 0.50%. Assamese has 0.45%, Bodo has 0.38%, Bengali has 0.06%, and other languages comprise 0.06%. Hindus comprise 0.77% of the population; Islam comprises 0.08%, while Christians and others comprise 0.04% and 0.002%, respectively (Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2016-17). Based on the HDR Survey 2013, the employment and livelihood indexes in BTR are similar. Udalguri was rated 18th in the state with only 0.2%, Baksa and Chirang were placed 20th and 24th in the state with only 0.15% and 0.1%, respectively, while Kokrajhar was ranked 27th. BTR has a general population participation rate of 32%, which is below the 32.19% state average. The work participation percentage for men is 55.05%, whilst the percentage for women is 7.50%. Regarding labour force participations, the region is higher at 36.50% than the State average of 35.97%, which does not include the region. In Bodoland, the male labour force is substantially larger at 59.20%, whereas the female workforce is 12.40% (HDR Survey, 2013).

The Bodoland Territorial Region has a partially lower unemployment rate of 2.30% than the State average of 14.09%, which does not exclude BTR. Female unemployment is 39.75%, whereas male unemployment is 6.98%. Kokrajhar has a higher percentage than the rest of the districts with 14.4%, Baksa has 13.2%, Chirang has 11.5%, and Udalguri has 10.1% (HDR Survey, 2013).

Employment and unemployment among tribals in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) remain significant challenges. The region experiences high unemployment rates due to limited access to quality education, vocational training, and employment opportunities (Bose et

al., 2019). Government initiatives like the Skill India Mission aim to enhance employability by providing skill development programmes (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2020). Despite these efforts, the implementation often falls short due to inadequate infrastructure and bureaucratic delays (Sharma & Singh, 2021). The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) also attempts to provide employment but faces challenges like fund misallocation and corruption (Mishra, 2018). Additionally, initiatives specific to BTR, such as the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) schemes, have been criticized for poor execution and lack of transparency (Goswami, 2020). Thus, while government efforts are in place, their effectiveness is hampered by systemic issues and implementation failures.

5.2.2.3 INCOME AND SOURCE

The BTR relies primarily on agriculture, forestry, government schemes, and emerging sectors like tourism for income. Agriculture, especially paddy cultivation, remains the backbone, while forestry and non-timber forest products, such as bamboo, supplement livelihoods (Saikia, 2020; Kashyap, 2021). Government initiatives, including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), provide essential support (Government of India, 2021). Emerging sectors like eco-tourism and handloom crafts are gaining traction, contributing to economic diversification (Sarma, 2019; Roy, 2020).

The standard of living and lifestyle of a family is determined by the per capita income of the households. Sustaining an adequate wage is necessary for raising individuals' standard of living and increasing their quality of life, which shows increased capabilities. The average per capita income of households in the State is Rs. 2098.00 is higher than the BTR average of Rs. 1628.00. The Chirang has highest per capita income at Rs. 1792.00 and Udalguri at Rs. 1703.00 than in Baksa at Rs. 1516.00 and Kokrajhar at Rs. 1504.00 for all districts (HDR Survey, 2013).

Agriculture and farming are the two most important sources of income. Agriculture and farming account for around 21.12% of the earnings of households. Besides being a reliable source of income, the farming of livestock contributes between 5.15% and 26.80% of the overall revenue. Self-employment income accounts for around 17.45% of all earnings. At 24.80%, the salary is a significant amount of household income. All districts in the region have

an estimated share of income from agriculture ranging from >15% to >26%, livestock ranging from >2% to >12%, self-employment ranging from >13% to >22%, and casual jobs and wages ranging from >23% to <31% (HDR Survey, 2013). While most people work in agriculture and casual labour, their earnings are pitiful. Despite accounting for more than three-fourths of total employment, the proportional income shares from these two sources could be much higher.

The main sources of income and livelihood for tribal people in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) are mainly related to agriculture, forestry, and allied activities. Agriculture remains the dominant occupation, with many tribal families engaged in rice cultivation and shifting cultivation practices. Besides farming, some tribal communities rely on forest products, livestock rearing, and wage labor. However, economic development in the region is hindered by limited access to markets and infrastructure (Roy & Borah, 2018; Kalita, 2019; Saikia & Barua, 2020; Sharma, 2021).

5.2.2.4 POVERTY

As per the official poverty line classification, Assam had a poverty rate of 30% in 2011-12, with rural areas experiencing 33.9% poverty and urban areas having a poverty rate of 20.5%. Data for the HDR study was gathered on household spending for both food and non-food goods. Given this consumer spending pattern, the HDR study calculates the state's poverty headcount ratio to be 37%. With estimates, rural poverty is 40.5% greater than urban poverty, which is just 17%. Poverty is considerably greater in Scheduled Tribes households than in general caste households.

Poverty is not an exception in the Bodoland area, which has been classified as one of the most backwards in Assam state. According to the HRD Survey (2013), the Bodoland area Below Poverty Line (BPL) population was 37.8% in 2009-10, 26.4% of individuals live in urban regions while 39.7% reside in rural areas. Under the official poverty level, the state's population was assessed to be 30% poor in 2011-12. More than 33.9% of the population lives in rural regions, whereas 20.5% lives in urban areas. Scheduled Tribes had the highest poverty rate of 40.5%, greater than all other categories in the state. The Scheduled Castes had 37.5%, Other Backward Classes had 36.5%, and General held 36%. Surprisingly, the level of poverty in BTC differs by social group. The Scheduled Tribes have a lower poverty rate of 39.50%. In

contrast, other groups, such as Scheduled Castes have a 43% poverty rate, Other Backward Classes have a 41.50% poverty rate, and Generals have a 40.30% poverty rate in the region.

In Assam, as per religion, Christianity has a higher poverty rate of 44% in the state, followed by Muslims at 39.7%, Hindus at 33.4%, and others at 26.5%. District-wise, there are differences, with three districts in the Bodoland area ranking at the top: Udalguri at 43%, Chirang at 41.5%, and Baksa at 41%, all of which are at the top listed. Kokrajhar's rate of 38% is slightly lower than that of several other districts. Regarding asset poverty in the Bodoland area, a high of 33.98% of households lack financial assets, 21.93% lack household appliances, and 13.80% lack transportation assets. While as many as 59.88% and 85.78%, respectively, do not own any agricultural or non-agricultural assets. The combined asset poverty rate in the area is 43.07%, lower than the state average of 47.32% excluding the study area. Chirang has a lower asset poverty ratio of 37.74% relative to other districts, whereas Udalguri has a substantially higher rate of 48.62% than the rest of the Bodoland area and the whole state level (HDR Survey, 2013).

Limited access to resources, lack of adequate infrastructure, and low levels of education continue to be major issues for poverty in tribal communities in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Tribal populations often face barriers to economic opportunities and social services, exacerbating poverty levels (Bora, 2019; Singh & Kumar, 2020). Government initiatives and targeted development programmes aim to alleviate these issues, but challenges persist (Bodoland Territorial Council, 2020). Addressing these needs requires a thorough plan to improve the availability of education, healthcare, and economic prospects for these groups.

5.3 AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

The Bodoland region is rural and agrarian (Goyari, 2021), as the region is predominantly agrarian, where agriculture is the primary economy of the people. More than 80% of the population in the area rely on agriculture as their primary means of livelihood, either through direct involvement or indirectly. The agriculture sector contributes a major share to the annual growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the region (Das, 2018; Information and Public Relations Department, 2016).

In the region, the rural economy is based not only on agriculture but also on livestock farming, pisciculture, rural industries, trading, and rural products transportation. Therefore, the

only way to support rural livelihood and development is to increase agriculture and allied activities, which would improve rural employment-generating potential. However, the development of each of these sectors is dependent on the provision of infrastructure facilities such as irrigation, power supply, technologically advanced, modern inputs, credit supply, and development of rural roads for the transportation of rural products, marketing for agriculture, food processing units, and other agro-based small-scale industries. Despite such infrastructure, it may be impossible to build the rural economy unless human resources are developed through education, training, and incentives. Both the primary and secondary sectors in the economy have the potential for productivity. The primary sector comprises agriculture, animal husbandry, forest resource exploitation, pisciculture, horticulture, poultry farming, pig raising, floriculture, fruit gardening, and other related activities. In contrast, industry, construction, and power generation are considered to be in the secondary sector (Information and Public Relations Department, 2016).

The main sources of income for the majority of households in the area are agriculture and raising livestock. In the area, the principal crops farmed are rice, cereals, pulses, and oil seeds like mustard and rape. Other important crops include fibre species such as jute and roselle, condiments, and spices such as tea, chillies, turmeric, areca nut, and sugarcane. Rabbi crops and other vegetables, like potato, cabbage, brinjal, cauliflower, tomato, onion, papaya, and others, are also farmed on a huge scale. Mango, jackfruit, oranges, guava, pineapples, litchi, lemon, and banana are among the fruits cultivated in the area. Cattle, goat, pig, duck, and poultry farming are also common in the region among rural communities (Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2016-17).

Among agriculture cultivation in the region, more than 69% is rice, jute 6.33%, sugarcane, cabbage, and pulses are >3% to <5%, potato 11%, master oil <1%, and wheat >2%. Among livestock farming, cattle, goat, and fowls are >21% to <37%, and pigs and duck is >5% to <8% farming is popular among households. The economic survey report suggests that the agricultural land area is more than 3.44 lakh hector. More than 75 thousand hectares are net irrigated area, and more than 87 thousand hectares are gross irrigated (Department of Economic and Statistics BTC, 2017).

Table 5.2: Distribution of the Population of BTR in Percentage

Population distribution	Kokrajhar	Chirang	Baksa	Udalguri	Average
Rural Population	93.81	92.67	98.71	95.48	95.17
Urban Population	61.9	7.33	1.29	4.52	18.76
Literacy Rate	65.22	63.55	69.25	65.41	65.86
Schedule Caste	33.3	7.29	7.69	4.55	13.21
Scheduled Tribe	31.41	37.06	34.48	32.15	33.78
Workers (Main & Marginal)	38.45	40.21	42.18	41.49	40.58
Main Workers	28.53	28.83	29.29	30.44	29.27
Marginal Workers	9.92	11.38	13.52	11.04	11.47
Non- Workers	61.55	59.79	57.19	58.51	59.26
Cultivators	45.95	41.43	36.7	36.18	40.07
Agricultural Labourers	16.51	18.17	23.55	21.08	19.83
Workers in household industry	3.64	3.96	4.99	3.42	4.00
Other Workers	33.89	36.45	35.05	39.32	36.18

Source: HDR Survey 2013, Census Report of India, 2011

There are around 30% main workers, of which 14% are cultivators, 1% are agriculture labourers, a very marginal 1% of households are engaged in the household industry, and 11% of households are engaged in other activities. Again, less than 12% of households are marginal workers, of which 3% are marginal cultivators, just over 4% are agricultural labourers, 1% are engaged in the household industry, and just over 4% are engaged in other activities (HDR Survey, 2013; Basumatary & Panda, 2019). The data show that the region has directly involved cultivators at 40.07%, whereas agricultural labourers overall are at 19.83%, mainly wage labourers. The other allied workers, which involve very much daily wage labour, are also higher in the research areas at 36.18%.

Observed in research that rural tribal improvement or development in the region is required to raise agricultural production and reduce the burden of many agricultural dependents. It is, therefore, necessary to create employment opportunities in the micro-unit to decrease migration to metropolitan areas. In the current situation, the rural poor and their development necessitate a positive change in rural areas, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and this can only be achieved by providing gainful employment and income, utilising local resources and agricultural raw materials, and instilling modern industrial values in the

rural village. Perhaps the process of rural industrialisation can tackle the pressing problems of tribal, rural challenges in the Bodoland region.

5.3.1 LAND ACCESS AND LIVELIHOODS

Land access is essential for the survival of every agrarian community. Land access, in particular, is essential for rural communities' economic and livelihood security. Landholding and land ownership are also important indicators of socio-economic position. Land has also been a key political issue in the region. In each election, the political platform centres on land grabbing, displacement, lack of land ownership, and landlessness within tribal communities. The land has been one of the most important concerns in the political debate (Das, 2022; Roy & Chakraborty, 2021). Land ownership and landlessness are significant problems to consider and address.

5.3.2 LANDHOLDING SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS

The legacy of pre-British and British colonial authority in India is seen in the unequal distribution of agricultural landholdings among various rural social strata (Chandra, 2016). It was observed that those who did not till the soil owned the land, and those who tilled it did not. Naturally, such a setting was not favourable for advancing agriculture or eradicating widespread peasant poverty, eliminating these barriers to greater agricultural productivity, the exploitative production pattern, and inequality between social groups in the land-based agrarian system (Kumar, 1982; Banerjee & Iyer, 2005). The dispossessing peasants of their traditional rights entrenched socio-economic disparities by concentrating land ownership among a few and creating a class of landless labourers (Blyn, 1966).

The landholding structure in BTR takes the shape of a pyramidal structure, with more than 80% of the total operating holdings being less than 1 hectare and less than 0.30% being smaller than 10 hectares. It is unquestionably a major obstacle to the effective execution of policies and programmes for land distribution, agricultural growth, and lifting the impoverished rural people, the poor peasants, out of the pit of destitution and dissatisfaction in the area (Brahma & Mushahary, n.d.). The landholdings of the tribal peasant households have been progressively separated and fragmented is uncertain to the rising demand of the rural

population, especially tribals, on agricultural land and the unhindered operation of the inheritance laws.

The study area has more landholdings per household than the state average. The average marginal land ownership in the state of Assam is land holding is >7.5 bigha, which is at 85.21% against 73.65% of the BTC. However, the BTR has a greater share of households with small holdings of 7 to 15 bighas, medium holdings of 15 to 21 bighas, and large holdings of more than >21 bighas than the state. Kokrajhar has a larger percentage of households in the small landholding category at 29.8%, medium landholding category at 15.9%, and big landholding category at 3.3%, whereas marginal landholders make up 51% of the districts. The outcomes are almost the same in Baksa and Udalguri- marginal represents 81.9% and 84.4%, small remains 14.6% and 12.2%, medium remains 2.2% and 2.1%, and large holdings represent 1.3% in both districts. The Chirang district includes 77.3% marginal, 18.5% small, 2.6% medium, and 1.6% represents large landholdings (HDR Survey, 2014).

Table 5.3: Households' Land Size Class Distribution of Operational Holding in Percent

Districts	Marginal (< 7.5 bigha)	Small (7 to 15 bigha)	Medium (15 to 21 bigha)	Large (> 21 bigha)
Kokrajhar	51	29.8	15.9	3.3
Chirang	77.3	18.5	2.6	1.6
Baksa	81.9	14.6	2.2	1.3
Udalguri	84.4	12.2	2.1	1.3

Source: HDR Survey, 2013

In contrast to the social category of landholding in the region, the Scheduled Tribes people including the three tribal groups have 1.35 bighas per capita of cultivated landholding in rural areas, above the average compared to other areas in the study region. Other Backward Classes have 0.90 bighas, the General category has 0.73 bighas, and Scheduled Castes have 0.63 bighas. If it is split into four districts based on the distribution of landholdings by district, the Scheduled Tribes have an average of 2.1 bighas, this is somewhat greater than the average of 1.5 bighas for the Other Backward Classes, the Generals have an average of 1.4 bighas, and the Scheduled Castes have 0.7 bighas. In the Kokrajhar district, the Scheduled Tribes have 2.1 bighas, the Scheduled Castes have 0.7 bighas, the Other Backward Classes have 1.5 bighas, and the General category has 1.4 bighas. The Chirang and Udalguri have almost the same pattern of

average landholding among all the social categories of peoples living in, Scheduled Tribes have 1.2 bighas, Other Backward Classes have 0.7 bighas, Generals have 0.5 bighas, and Scheduled Castes have 0.8 bighas and 0.6 bighas, respectively. In Baksa, Scheduled Tribes have 0.9 bighas, Other Backward Classes have 0.7 bighas, Generals have 0.5 bighas, and Scheduled Castes have 0.4 bighas. Also, in terms of per capita irrigated land, the Scheduled Tribes have 0.48 bigha more than the rest in Bodoland region: Other Backward Classes have 0.28 bigha, Generals category of peoples has 0.18 bigha, and Scheduled Castes have 0.15 bigha. Overall, the irrigated land in the State and the region shows poor and underperforming which could be performed (HDR, Survey, 2013).

Table 5.4: Average Landholding in Rural Areas in Bighas

Districts	Per Capita Cultivated Land					Per Capita Irrigated Land				
	ST	SC	OBC	Gen	Total	ST	SC	OBC	Gen	Total
Kokrajhar	2.1	0.7	1.5	1.4	1.7	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.4
Chirang	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.2	0	0.4
Baksa	0.9	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4
Udalguri	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.2	0	0.1	0	0.1

Source: HDR Survey, 2013

Overall, household income and economic stability depend on having access to land, especially in rural villages where tribals are facing livelihood challenges. It functions as a sign of productive capital, security for borrowing, symbolising power and prestige in communities. Furthermore, land ownership also has a significant role in social and economic standing.

5.3.3 LANDLESSNESS

Landlessness refers to not having enough land or access to land to meet basic needs and human rights. Landless is profoundly rooted, pervasive, and vastly overblown. The landless is one of the primary contributors to suffering in tribal society, making land rights crucial to alleviating deprivation. Poverty and the homelessness tribes are inextricably linked to being landless. Regarding the provision of landless people in Assam of the Land Policy, 1989, Section 1.3 states that a landless household in rural areas is entitled to a total of 8 *bighas* of land, of which 7 *bighas* of land for cultivation and 1 *bigha* for housing, while Section 14.1 of

the policy states that a landless household in urban areas are entitled to 1 *kotha* 10 *lessa* in a municipal area and 2 *kothas* in other urban areas (Land Policy, 1989).

The Assam Land Policy 2019 has been approved by the Assam government. To reduce the number of landless people, it was also included in the policy. While government land is being distributed and settled for regular agriculture in rural regions, mentioned in Section 1.1 “Land at the disposal of the government for ordinary cultivation may initially be given by way of allotment to indigenous landless cultivators. After 3 years of continuous physical possession by cultivating the same, the land may be settled with the allottees, provided the land is found to have been used for the purpose for which it was allotted...” Section 1.3 “The maximum limit of land for allotment to an individual is fixed at 3 (three) *Bighas* for agriculture and half (½) a *bigha* for homestead purpose.” About the land transfer after the allotment in Section 1.10 “After settlement of land to the landless indigenous persons mentioned above the settlement holders shall have no right to transfer any part of the land for 15 years from the date of settlement. Such conditions shall be incorporated in the patta as well as Record of Right” (Land Policy, 2019). No doubt, the study region, which is not free from landless households, and encompasses all social groups in the Bodoland Territorial Region, constitutes a sizeable portion of the state’s overall population.

Table 5.5: Landlessness District-wise Household in Percent

Districts	No Homestead Land	No Cultivable Land	No Irrigated Land
Kokrajhar	0.5	42.7	83.7
Chirang	0	45.3	75.7
Baksa	0.6	54.5	75.8
Udalguri	1.2	54.7	94.2

Source: HDR Survey, 2013

Based on the Human Development Report 2013, households still identified persons living in landlessness in the region, people living without homestead land being greatest in the Udalguri district accounting for 1.2% of the entire population. People who have lived but have no cultivable land for them are reported at 54.7% in Udalguri, and cultivable land has been identified. The agricultural land still needs to be irrigated at 94.2%, which is the highest among the districts in Udalguri. Chirang had somewhat better results in all categories than the other

two districts: zero percent homestead landlessness, 45.3% cultivable landlessness, and 75.7% irrigated landlessness. Regarding landholding disparity in the four districts, Udalguri has the largest inequality at 75.6%, followed by Baksa and Chirang at 70.8% and 70.5%, respectively. Likewise, the average inequality in these districts' average inequality is higher than the state figure. In contrast, the Kokrajhar districts possess the lowest landholding inequities of any district, lower than the state average (HDR Survey, 2013).

Landless people who do not own land are unable to access land and the majority of them live in rural villages in Assam and BTR. Low-income households usually remain landless and mostly reliant on agricultural land. Landlessness is a crucial characteristic of rural poverty, yet it is not a monolithic or uniform condition. Tribal people work to survive by sacrificing their labour to various individuals, whether they are working in cities or on farms because their survival is not guaranteed. Poverty continues to be a long-lasting issue for rural tribal communities in the BTR, as it is linked to the land through complex relationships and influenced by various factors that contribute to rural poverty. Hence, it is necessary to properly register the rural landless to make policy decisions about how to address the problem over time. The inability to share information among individuals in charge of making sure that the rural landless have access to alternative livelihood substitutes or rural land is hampered by the absence of collected data on landlessness.

Landless people live or operate on land on which they do not have legal protection. People who are landless in rural villages are often low-income members of society who belong to the underprivileged segments of society. Due to their sporadic work schedules and low pay, they are frequently vulnerable to seasonal unemployment. The following shows the percentage of landless households, manual casual labourers and other land-related households. According to the Socio-Economic and Caste Census report (2011), Assam has 1,817,129 (32% of all India's landless households). In the four districts of the region, as per the Assam landless report, Kokrajhar has 27%, Chirang 28%, Baksa 29%, and Udalguri district 32% of landless households of manual casual labour.

Table 5.6: Landless Households and other Related to Land

Name of Identified for Study	Landless HMCL (%)	Household of NA (%)	Household OUIL (%)	Household OIL (%)	Household OOL (%)
All India	38	3	29.6	26	11.9
Assam State	32	3	36	18	12
Kokrajhar District	27	3	41	22	13
Chirang District	28	2	46	24	13
Baksa District	29	3	39	22	14
Udalguri District	32	2	34	16	15

Source: Socio-Economic and Caste Census, 2011 (India)

Note: HMCL- Households manual casual labour, NA-Non-Agricultural, OUIL- owning unirrigated land, OIL- owning irrigated land, OOL- owning other lands.

There has been an ongoing request for land pattas and land allocation certificates for tribal people and other traditional forest residents in the Bodoland area of Assam. Under the Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, tribal people who have been residing on forest land have also made demands for land pattas. Up to 13,290 people of which 11,208 tribal members and 258 non-tribal members who were residing on forest land under Holtugaon Forest Division, in the Kokrajhar district as of 2018 submitted applications for land pattas under the Forest Residents' Act (The Hills Times, 2022). Similarly, the Kachugaon Forest Division has 106 forest villages. However, just three have sought land *pattas*. In the same year, 1216 households in the Chirang district were allotted land pattas out of 5,668 families, including 4,860 tribal and 408 non-tribal households. In the Kokrajhar district, land pattas were granted to 1410 households from 28 villages in 2019. Again in 2020, in Kokrajhar, 1600 forest dweller households received land allotment certificates, which is covered 5081 bighas (Brahma & Mushahary, 2022; The Hills Times, 2022).

Granting land rights to rural poor and landless inhabitants of BTR, and the rest of the land pattas and land allotment certificates distributed to the landless indigenous and other community households to the needy and landless is one step toward improving their livelihood conditions and well-being for the 'House of Change.' Non-tribals, along with the tribal peoples and the forest inhabitants in four districts in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), received land entitlement certificates and land patta from the BTC and the state administration in time to time, along with the rest of the state. Land rights are being granted to indigenous peoples and individuals who have been living for long years. Land use policy must be developed with a

keen interest in the region. In 2021, a total 5,744 tribal and non-tribal landless families received the 'Land Allotment Certificate' and 'Land Patta' in the region. For example, in the district of Kokrajhar, a record of 1,696 households received land certificates, with 1,527 land allotment certificates and 169 receiving land pattas. Meanwhile, out of 1,260 households in the Chirang district, 492 families obtained land allotment certificates, and 768 families received land pattas. Out of 822 households in the Baksa district, 397 got land allotment certificates and 425 received land pattas and in the Udalguri district, 1,523 people obtained land allocation certificates, and 443 families received land pattas out of 1,966 families. Significantly, the Indigenous must be aware of their rights on the land (Basumatary, 2018; Brahma & Mushahary, n.d.; 2022).

In the research field study, it was found that 22.65% of tribal landless do not hold any permanent lands. The finding that tribal people are landless in the region highlights significant issues related to land access and security for this marginalised group. Landlessness can severely affect their socio-economic status, impacting access to resources, agricultural productivity, and overall livelihood (Sharma & Ghosh, 2020). This situation underscores the need for targeted government interventions to ensure equitable land distribution and secure land tenure for tribal communities (Basu, 2018).

Local and state governments should implement comprehensive land reform policies, provide legal aid to secure land rights, and enhance land distribution programmes to address the issue of landlessness (Sarma, 2019). Additionally, promoting community-based land management and agricultural support programmes can improve livelihoods and reduce the disparity (Reddy, 2021). Ensuring robust legal frameworks and effective implementation strategies will be crucial in addressing these challenges (Kumar & Singh, 2022).

5.4 NON-AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

Since a reliable percentage of the local government's income is derived from agriculture and the industry (non-agriculture) sector. Thus, these two producing sectors must grow to raise the gross domestic product in the region. Besides, more important is the fact that more than 85% of the total population of the region derives or involves directly or indirectly, their livelihood from these sectors, mainly the primary sector (Das, 2018; HDR Survey, 2013). Despite recognising that the growth of agriculture is a must-have not only for rural

livelihood and development but also for the general growth of an agrarian region like the Bodoland area, where most individuals work in agriculture and over 95% of the populace resides in rural areas or villages, it would be an unacceptable mistake to ignore the significance of rural industries in rural livelihood and economic growth.

The Bodoland Industrial Policy 2014 was developed by the Council in 2014 with the aim of fostering the growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) within the Bodoland region. The thrust areas identified for enterprise and industrial investments in the region come from the Handloom and Textile Industries, Handicrafts, Bamboo Plantation & Bamboo Based Industry, Sericulture Industry, Mushroom Cultivation and processing, Areca Nut Plantation & Processing Industries, Rubber Plantation & Processing Industries, Bee Farming, Dairy Products & Milk Processing Industries, Tourism Sector, Aromatic & Medicinal Plants, Mineral Based Industry, and Tea Processing Industries, Organic Cultivation & Agro Food Processing Industries. The Value addition of Herbal, IT and other Service Sectors, Construction Material Industries and Forest-based Industries is also essential for the non-timber collection and livelihoods of the tribals in the areas (Industries and Commerce Department, BTC, 2019). To be effective, all rural development sectors require a close connection between agriculture and industry because agriculture primarily provides workers, land, as well as raw materials for industry. As a result, the coordinated approach to the region's development, of which rural industrialization initiatives are essential, must achieve multiple objectives of industrial contributions from agriculture, processing of essential goods, employment opportunities, and income generation.

5.4.1 ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRIAL TRUST AREAS

The entire State, not just the Bodoland Territorial Region, is falling significantly behind in industrial growth. Except for the Bongaigaon Refinery and Petro-Chemicals Ltd. in Chirang District, the region has no medium or large enterprises. However, in the research region, there are about 1500 registered and unregistered small-scale industries (Industries and Commerce Department, BTC, 2016). In addition, commercial plantations of tea, rubber, and horticultural produce contribute significantly to the Bodoland region's economy. The tribal households engage in sericulture as one of their primary sources of livelihood, which includes food plant

cultivation, silkworm breeding, silk reeling, spinning, weaving, and selling. Ecotourism, organic farming, agro-processing industries, and tea-processing enterprises are all potential sources of revenue for the Bodoland area (Industries and Commerce Department, BTC, 2019).

However, there are currently extremely few prospects in the region for employment in non-agricultural businesses and for entrepreneurship. Despite the potential for border trade possibilities with neighbouring Bhutan and Bangladesh, the enterprise and industrial sectors remained undeveloped. While pursuing an employment-oriented industrial policy, the area should encourage the establishment of small-scale and agro-based industries to promote rural industrialization. I believe we should endeavour to build industrial democracy to boost productivity in the industrial sector. Likewise, the livelihood of rural communities with rural industrial use necessitates can be a useful device in preventing the concentration of economic power in a few individuals and translating an atmosphere of disposal of economic strength through a more equitable distribution, thereby ensuring social justice for the common citizens and tribals or weaker segments of society.

5.4.1.1 SERICULTURE SECTOR

In Bodoland region, the main source of income and employment for cocoon growers has been sericulture involving eri, muga, and mulberry. Eri and Muga cultures are widely practised in the region. Since the earliest days, the tribal women have been inextricably linked with the eri silk fabric, an important component of their traditional socio-cultural life and livelihood for many rural people. Over 59,510 farmers work in 1683 sericulture communities across the area. Sericulture operations are carried out in several villages Kokrajhar has 535 villages, Chirang has 295 villages, Baksa has 438 villages, and Udalguri has 415 villages (Directorate of Sericulture, BTC, 2016-17).

The region has sericulture farms and drainage areas. In terms of the eri seed grainage, there is a total of 12.39 hectares of land; out of that, Kokrajhar shares 3.32 hectares, Baksa has 4 hectares, and Udalguri district shares 5.07 hectares. For the mulberry farm, the region shares 181.26 hectares of land, of which Kokrajhar shares 2.50 hectares, Baksa has 3.35 hectares, Udalguri district shares 4.50 hectares, and Chirang district does not have land for the two sectors as mentioned above. With the basic muga seed farm, there are a total of 16.20 hectares

of land in the region, of which Kokrajhar has 12.70 hectares and Baksa shares 3.50, where Udalguri and Chirang do have the facilities for that purpose (Director of Sericulture, BTC, 2016-17).

Today, it is a booming industry with good turnover from annual production of more than 1623 metric tons of cocoons and 721 metric tons annually. Also, the Council has established a Textile Park in Baksa district and many weaving centres. Handloom and textile is the largest cottage industry in the Bodoland area, which is next to Agriculture in terms of employment generation. Out of 13.22 lakh handlooms in Assam, more than 3.5 lakhs are in the Bodoland area, where more than 7 lakh people are engaged in weaving and allied activities (Bodoland Territorial Council: An Achievement, 2016-17). There are now 6 Handloom Production Centres (HPC), 10 Weavers Extension Service Units (WESU), and 12 Handloom Training Centres (HTC) in the area. More than 190817 people are engaged in handloom and weaving activities in the region (Director of Handloom and Textile, BTC, 2014-15).

Sericulture is an agro-based sector that may improve the rural economy. The golden yarn made by muga silkworms is in demand in the world. Additionally, significant yarns for producing goods of an exportable grade include eri, mulberry, and tassar. Sericulture, if seen favourably, may increase output and serve as the study region's main income source.

To support tribal livelihoods in the sericulture sector in BTR, the government should focus on several key areas. Providing training and technical assistance in sericulture practices can enhance productivity and quality (Basu, 2018; Kumar & Singh, 2022). Financial support through subsidies and microloans will enable tribal farmers to invest in infrastructure and resources (Sharma & Ghosh, 2020). Additionally, establishing cooperative societies and market linkages can help in better price realization and reduce exploitation (Reddy, 2021). These measures will strengthen the sericulture industry, improve income stability, and foster sustainable development within tribal communities.

5.4.1.2 FOREST RESOURCES

Assam was previously known for its vibrant and dense forests, which served as a home to a diverse array of important plant and animal species. The forest area covers 26,832 square kilometers, constituting 34.21% of the state's land area. Reserved forests cover 66.58% of the total forest area, while unclassified forests contribute 33.42%. There are a total of 312 reserved

forest areas in the state, which account for most of its forest land area (Principal Chief Conservator of Forest & Head of Forest Force, n.d, <https://forest.assam.gov.in>).

Nature has endowed the Bodoland Territorial Region with a rich potential for the development of forests. The forest coverage level varies widely across districts in the overall forest landscape of Assam state, with significant temporal and spatial differences. The forest covered the highest area of 52.29% in the Kokrajhar district in 1999-2000, which was 57.55% in 1992-93. According to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Head of the Forest Force, Government of Assam, in the 2019 assessment, the BTR has about 28.76% of designated forest land areas. Kokrajhar district still has the greatest forest land area in terms of districts with 35.39%, followed by Chirang at 36.39%, Baksa at 22.78%, and Udalguri at 20.50% (Principal Chief Conservator of Forest & Head of Forest Force, n.d, <https://forest.assam.gov.in>; Statistical Hand Book of BTC, 2016-17).

Table 5.7: District-wise Forests Cover

Districts	Assessment in 2019					% of GA	Change wrt. 2017 Assessment	Scrub
	Geographical Area (GA)	Very Dense Forest	Mod. Dense Forest	Open Forest	Total			
Kokrajhar	3.296	438.00	270.19	458.38	1166.57	35.39	8.57	1
Chirang	1.923	402.00	110.45	187.39	699.85	36.39	5.84	3
Baksa	2.457	156.00	130.01	273.66	559.67	22.78	3.67	6
Udalguri	2.012	8.00	86.67	317.85	412.52	20.50	9.52	1

Source: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of the Forest Force, Assam Government-Environment and Forest, <https://forest.assam.gov.in>.

The economy of the study region benefits greatly from the contributions of forest resources. The area has 3450.63 square kilometres of forest and is abundant in plant and animal species. The area has abundant timber, wood, and forest resources such as gravelly sand, stone, and boulders. Culture and eco-tourism have high potential in the region because it has diverse ethnic cultures and various national parks and sanctuaries. The region has considerable national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and varied-sized reserved forests. The region has a total of eight forest divisions in four districts, namely Haltugaon Division, Kachugaon Division, Baksa Forest Division, Dhansiri Forest Division, Parbatjhora Forest Division, Wildlife Division (Kokrajhar), Social Forestry Division (Kokrajhar), and Chirang Forest Division. The Kokrajhar district has Raimona National Park (422 sq. km.) and Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuaries (45.58

sq. km.). The Manas National Park (500 sq. km.) is located in the Chirang and Baksa districts, and the Baranadi Wildlife Sanctuaries (26.22 sq. km.) are in the Udalguri district, which contributes substantially to the economy of the region (Statistical Hand Book of BTC, 2016-17).

The quantity of forest area and forest covered in the BTR is rapidly decreasing due to many issues. It is important to remember that the percentages of the region covered in forests in the above table are only official figures. However, in the real field, a serious depletion of the forest in the region resulted from excessive deforestation caused by the overuse of forest resources by a variety of users, illegal cutting encroachment into forest lands by new settlers, immigration, mismanagement, a lack of reforestation, as well as a lack of authority and protection.

In the research field study, it was found that 22.65% of tribal landless peoples rely on forests as economic or livelihood sources for their households. To enhance these tribal livelihoods in the forest resources sector in BTR, the government should implement supportive measures. Providing training on sustainable forest management and non-timber forest products can improve income while preserving ecosystems (Basu, 2018). Financial support, such as grants and subsidies for eco-friendly practices, will help tribal communities transition to sustainable livelihoods (Sharma & Ghosh, 2020). Additionally, facilitating access to markets and establishing forest cooperatives can ensure fair trade and better income for tribal people (Reddy, 2021). These initiatives will promote sustainable use of forest resources and boost economic stability for tribal communities.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In the BTR, the local government can develop policies to make the most efficient use of the workforce by creating alternate employment prospects for a sustainable livelihood while taking into account the unique circumstances of the area (Swargiary & Mahanta, 2020). Access to land, which could be integrated into the core of a customised approach for promoting sustainable livelihoods, presents a significant opportunity to enhance the sustainability of marginalised groups' livelihoods within society. However, it affects the conditions of their livelihood in the places where the ratio of landless and marginally landholding people is

largest. It might be difficult for tribal groups to accept alternative efforts to diversify their sources of income. It necessitates a thorough investigation of the needs, interests, and relevant situational objectives of all stakeholders. Conversely, the people's socio-economic status, psychological, societal, and communication elements are linked to landholding disparity. To manage risks and uncertainties, people are more inclined to choose a range of livelihoods.

REFERENCES:

- Banerjee, A., & Iyer, L. (2005). History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India. *The American Economic Review*, 95(4), 1190-1213.
- Baruah, S. (2019). Agricultural challenges and the socio-economic status of Rabha tribe in Assam. *Journal of Rural Development*, 38(2), 125-142.
- Baruah, S. (2020). *Ethnonationalism in India: A reader*. Oxford University Press.
- Baruah, S. (2020). Ethnic Conflicts and Political Instability in Bodoland. *Journal of North East Studies*, 15(3), 234-256.
- Basu, P. (2018). Land Rights and Indigenous Communities: A Study of Tribal Displacement in India. *Journal of Tribal Studies*, 14(2), 123-136.
- Basu, P. (2018). Sericulture and Tribal Livelihoods: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Rural Development*, 37(2), 215-230.
- Basu, P. (2018). Sustainable Forest Management and Tribal Livelihoods: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 228, 123-135.
- Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation. (2024). Bodoland Program. Retrieved from [BRLF](<https://www.brlf.in/programs-at-brlf/state-partnership-projects/bodoland-program/>)
- Blyn, G. (1966). *Agricultural Trends in India, 1891-1947: Output, Availability, and Productivity*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bodoland Territorial Council. (2020). *Annual report 2020*. Retrieved from <https://bodoland.gov.in>
- Bora, P. (2019). Socio-economic challenges of tribal communities in BTR. *Journal of Tribal Studies*, 18(1), 45-60.
- Borah, K. (2018). Health infrastructure in rural Assam: An overview. *Journal of Health Management*, 20(2), 186-196.
- Borah, R. (2019). Employment patterns in BTR. *Journal of Regional Studies*, 45(3), 234-256.
- Boro, S. (2021). Political empowerment and socio-economic development of Bodos in Bodoland Territorial Region. *South Asian Studies*, 25(1), 85-98.
- Borgohain, P. (2021). Educational Challenges in Bodoland: A Socio-Economic Perspective. *Indian Journal of Educational Research*, 29(4), 567-589.
- Bose, P., Mukherjee, P., & Roy, S. (2019). Employment and unemployment among tribals in India: A case study of the Bodoland Territorial Region. *Journal of Tribal Studies*, 10(2), 123-145.
- Brahma, A., & Mushahary, J. (2022). The struggle for land: Tribal land issues and debates. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 15(1), 41-57.
- Brahma, A., & Mushahary, J. (2022). The struggle for land: Tribal land issues and debates. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 15(1), 41-57.

- Brahma, A., & Mushahary, J. (n.d.) A Survey on Tribal Land Access and Livelihoods in the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam, India. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4082896> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4082896>
- Basumatary, N., & Panda, B. (2019). A study on governance and development in Bodoland territorial area districts of Assam in India. *Humanities Soc Sci Rev*, 7(6), 206-220.
- Basumatary, R. (2018, October 14). Assam: Eviction drive carried out in Ripu-Chirang Reserve Forest. <https://nenow.in/environment/assam-eviction-drive-carried-out-in-ripu-chirang-reserve-forest.html>
- Chandra, S. (2016). *Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals*. Har-Anand Publications.
- Choudhury, A. (2018). Educational and healthcare challenges of the Garo tribe in North-East India. *Journal of Tribal Studies*, 32(3), 203-217.
- Das, A. (2021). Development in BTR: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of North East India Studies*, 10(2), 45-59.
- Das, M. (2018). *Socio-economic and political issues in Assam*. EPH Publishers.
- Das, P. (2018). Local trade and commerce in tribal regions. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 53(2), 78-85.
- Das, R. (2022). *Electoral Politics and Land Issues in Northeast India*. Sage Publications.
- Department of Economic and Statistics, BTC. (2017). BTC at a Glance 2016-17.
- Director of Sericulture, BTC. (2017). *Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council, 2016-17*. Office of the Joint Directorate of Economic & Statistics, BTC, Kokrajhar.
- Director of Handloom and Textile, BTC. (2016-17). *Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council, 2016-17*. Office of the Joint Directorate of Economic & Statistics, BTC, Kokrajhar.
- Government of India. (2021). *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G)*. Retrieved from <https://pmayg.nic.in/netiayHome/home.aspx>
- Gogoi, A. (2022). Healthcare and education employment in BTR. *Indian Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(4), 112-129.
- Goswami, A. (2018). Economic development in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD): An assessment. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53(12), 35-42.
- Goswami, A. (2020). An evaluation of Bodoland Territorial Council's employment schemes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(4), 52-60.
- Goswami, R. (2017). Ethnic conflicts and development issues in Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 52(25), 45-53.
- Goyari, P. (2021). Economy and livelihood economic development of BTR: Select scopes and potential. *The-BDF-Laisi*, 1 (1), 9-10. <https://borodiaspora.org>
- Hazarika, M. (2023). Policy impacts on tribal economies. *Development Review*, 47(1), 150-167.
- HRD Survey, 2013. (2013). Assam Human Development Report 2013. file:///C:/Users/ASUS/Downloads/FINAL_Assam_HDR_2014_0.pdf

- Hussein, K and Nelson, J. (1998). Sustainable Livelihood and Livelihood Diversification. In *IDS Working paper* 69.
- Information and Public Relations Department, BTC. (2016). Bodoland Territorial Council-An Achievement 2014-15: BTC Surging Ahead.
- Industries and Commerce Department, BTC. (2019). *Bodoland Territorial Council: A achievement 2018-19*, Information and Public Relations Department, BTC.
- Industries and Commerce Department, BTC. (2019). *Bodoland Industrial Policy 2019*. Industries and Commerce Department, BTC. <https://industries.assam.gov.in>
- Kachari, S. S. R., & Maity, S. (2015). Socio-economic status of Bodo people: a case study of the Udalguri District, Assam. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 10(3), 351-366.
- Kalita, D. (2019). Economic Development in the Bodoland Territorial Region. *Economic Affairs*, 64(2), 45-52.
- Kashyap, S. (2021). Non-timber forest products and their economic significance in BTR. *Indian Journal of Forestry*, 44(2), 123-134.
- Kumar, D. (1982). *The Cambridge Economic History of India: Volume 2, c.1757-c.1970*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kumar, V., & Singh, R. (2022). Land Tenure Security and Socio-economic Development: Evidence from Tribal Areas. *Land Use Policy*, 113, 105802.
- Kumar, V., & Singh, R. (2022). Promoting Sericulture in Tribal Areas: Policy and Practice. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 35(1), 45-58.
- Policy, 1989 (1989). *Land Policy, 1989*. <https://dlrar.assam.gov.in/documents-detail/land-policy-1989>
- Land Policy, 2019 (2019). *Land Policy, 2019*. https://landrevenue.assam.gov.in/sites/default/files/swf_utility_folder/departments/revenue_com_oid_6/latest/land_policy_2019_.pdf
- Mishra, R. (2018). Challenges in implementing NREGA in tribal areas: A study of BTR. *Social Change Review*, 46(3), 345-367.
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. (2020). *Skill India Mission: Annual Report 2020*. Government of India.
- Nath, H. K., & Nath, S. (2020). Economic Challenges in the Bodoland Territorial Region. *Assam Economic Review*, 12(2), 112-129.
- Principal Chief Conservator of Forest & Head of Forest Force, Assam. (n.d.). Forest types in Assam. <https://forest.assam.gov.in/information-services/forest-types-in-assam>
- Pyakuryal, K. N. (2011). Emerging from landlessness, poverty, and food insecurity circles in Nepal: the legislative approach. *Nepalese Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 1(1), 26-36.
- Reddy, K. (2021). Community-Based Approaches to Land Management: Insights from the Bodoland Territorial Region. *Development Studies Research*, 8(1), 112-127.

- Reddy, K. (2021). Enhancing Sericulture Practices in Tribal Regions: A Policy Perspective. *Development Studies Research*, 8(1), 98-112.
- Reddy, K. (2021). Market Access and Income Enhancement for Tribal Forest Dependent Communities. *Development Studies Research*, 8(2), 134-147.
- Roy, P. (2020). Promoting handloom and handicrafts in BTR. *Handicrafts Quarterly*, 25(3), 45-58.
- Roy, A., & Borah, P. (2018). Livelihood Strategies among the Tribes in BTR: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Rural Development*, 37(4), 667-681.
- Roy, S., & Chakraborty, P. (2021). *Land and Identity in the Bodoland Territorial Region*. Routledge.
- Saikia, A., & Deka, R. (2019). Agrarian challenges in Assam: A case study of Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Development*, 16(1), 45-62.
- Saikia, B., & Barua, K. (2020). Agricultural Practices and Livelihoods of Tribal Communities in BTR. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 33(1), 114-128.
- Saikia, P., & Das, M. (2019). Health Infrastructure and Services in BTR: An Analytical Study. *Journal of Health Management*, 21(1), 56-75.
- Saikia, R. (2020). Crop diversification in the Bodoland Territorial Region. *Agricultural Economics Review*, 35(1), 99-112.
- Sarma, B. (2018). Malnutrition and Public Health in Bodoland. *Health and Nutrition Journal*, 19(2), 78-92.
- Sarma, B. (2019). Policy Responses to Tribal Land Issues in North-East India. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 65(3), 456-470.
- Sarma, H. (2020). Historical marginalization and political resurgence of Bodo tribe in Assam. *Asian Ethnicity*, 21(4), 389-407.
- Sarma, J. (2019). Eco-tourism in Manas National Park: Opportunities and challenges. *Tourism Studies Journal*, 22(2), 150-165.
- Sarmah, P. (2019). Education and development in Bodoland Territorial Area Districts: Issues and perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 64, 20-30.
- Sharma, A., & Ghosh, S. (2020). Assessing the Impact of Landlessness on Tribal Livelihoods in BTR. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(24), 45-52.
- Sharma, A., & Ghosh, S. (2020). Financial Support Mechanisms for Tribal Forest Resources Utilization. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(28), 47-55.
- Sharma, P. (2021). The Socio-Economic Conditions of Tribal People in BTR. *Journal of North East India Studies*, 11(1), 72-88.
- Sharma, K., & Singh, V. (2021). Bureaucratic bottlenecks in employment schemes: The case of Skill India in BTR. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 45(1), 76-92.
- Sharma, R. (2022). Government Initiatives for Tribal Welfare in BTR. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 57(14), 32-38.
- Sharma, T. (2021). Handicrafts and forestry in BTR. *Cultural Economics*, 29(1), 98-115.

- Singh, L. (2020). Tourism in tribal regions. *Tourism Management*, 34(2), 89-103.
- Singh, P. (2020). Housing for All: The Role of PMAY in Rural India. *Housing Studies Review*, 29(3), 75-88.
- Singh, A. (2021). Resource Competition and Ethnic Violence in Bodoland. *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 34(2), 45-67.
- Singh, A., & Kumar, R. (2020). Tribal poverty and development in the Bodoland Territorial Region. *Development Studies Quarterly*, 29(3), 89-102.
- Statistical Hand Book of BTC. (2016-17). Statistical Hand Book of BTC – 2016-17, office of the Joint Director of Economies & Statistics, Kokrajhar.
- Socio-Economic and Caste Census, (2011). Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011. <https://secc.gov.in/>
- Swargiary, P., & Mahanta, A. (2020). Changing pattern of farm and non-farm livelihood among the Bodos: a study in Bodoland territorial areas of Assam, India. *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development*, 10(2), 671-681.
- The Hills Times. (2022). *BTR govt to launch Mission Bwiswmuthi in January 2023*. <https://thehillstimes.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BTR-govt-to-launch-Mission-Bwiswmuthi-in-January-2023.jpg>