



POLICY BRIEF

Systematic and Integrated Jhumming along with Community Based Land and Ecosystem Management

IN KAMJONG DISTRICT, MANIPUR



Ministry of Environment,
Forest and Climate Change
Government of India



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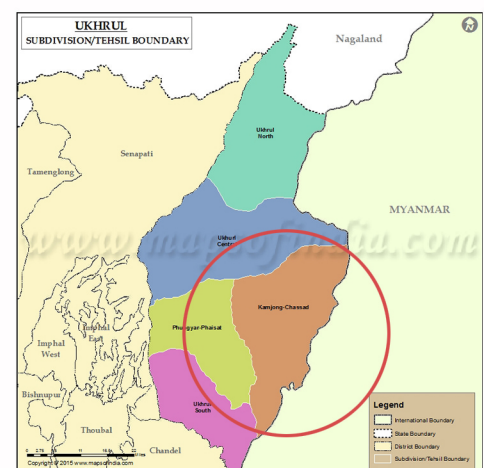
BACKGROUND



Shifting cultivation is a farming method still widely practiced in huge parts of hill districts in Manipur. Kamjong being one of the districts, six villages were taken as representative villages for the case study they are- Shungri/Sorde, East Tasom, Punge, Bungpa Khullen, Ningchou and Grihang with a total population of 5100 approximately (see Table 1). These villages are located in the eastern part of Ukhrul district in Manipur. The terrain is hilly with average height varying from 900m-3100m. Also, the villages are solely an agrarian community with majority of the families still dependent on shifting cultivation as their main source of livelihood (Marchang, 2017). Very few families are engaged in services other than agriculture in these villages. In the crucial discourse of climate change and its impacts of the recent times, the continual practice of shifting cultivation remains highly debated with divided opinions on its sustainability in long term. But it is not only a method of farming but is a way of life which deeply connects the community culturally to its ecology and nature (Sharma, 2017). Moreover there are many good traditional agricultural practices associated with shifting cultivation which can be revived or invigorated (AIPP, 2014) .

VILLAGE	POPULATION	NO.OF HOUSEHOLD
Shungri/Sorde (2018)	458	97
East Tasom (2018)	431	80
Punge (2011)	220	33
Bungpa Khullen (2011)	2716	422
Ningchou (2018)	520	91
Grihang (2018)	782	133

Table 1. Village Profile (source : Census 2011)



APPROACH

The case study was done with Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) under the NMHS project to identify good agricultural practices in mountainous regions through the multiple stakeholder consultation approach. The community engaged belonged to the Tangkhul Naga tribe. The study time period was from February to May, 2018 which included field visits, interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with relevant stakeholders such as subsistence farmers, Village authority members, line departments such as the Forest Department and Directorate of Climate Change. Non-governmental organisations such as the Volunteers for Village Development (VVD) and North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) were also involved and consulted during field work and field observation processes. The documentation is based on secondary literature review and analysis and findings of primary data collected from the field visits.



< Jhum site after slashing

Jhum site after burning >



FINDINGS

1. More than 60 crop types (foodgrains, vegetables, pulses, herbs etc.) are grown in a single farmland which provides nutritional balance and uphold food security in addition to small incentives from the surplus products. Therefore, shifting cultivation sites also serves as in-situ biodiversity bank for preserving indigenous food crops. Pest and extreme weather tolerant crops are also grown in the jhum land thus can be looked into as a good means of coping mechanism to climate change.
2. Shifting cultivation as a means of integrated ecosystem management in community level- All of the villages have community conserved area locally known as green belt around the vicinity of the village with varying sizes (1-5sqkm). These patches of conserved forest are under strict regulation of the village apex body that is the Village Authority (VA) and huge positive correlation between strong local institutions and effective resource management were observed.

3. The fallow cycle of shifting cultivation in all the six villages are still maintaining at 10 years and for villages like Shungri and East Tasom it has been increasing.

Village	Fallow Cycle (years)
East/South Tasom	12-13
Shungri/Sorde	16-18
Bungpa Khullen	15
Grihang	10-13
Ningchou	12
Punge	10

4. The population or number of families depending on shifting cultivation for livelihood has been decreasing in the last decade due to outmigration of younger generations to towns and cities for education or other alternative ways of living. The young population lack the skills required for shifting cultivation and huge gap on knowledge transmission has been visibly recorded. Therefore the sizes of land under Jhum have also been reduced.
5. Through the intervention of different government schemes and NGO initiatives, communities have tried shifting from subsistence to market-oriented farming such as agroforestry and mono-cropping as an alternative. But in many instances the non-indigenous crops have shown very poor yield and the remunerative returns from these initiatives are not sufficient to meet the ends need. The issue of market vulnerability and market uncertainty coupled with lack of skills and technological were also cited by many farmers.



RECOMMENDATIONS



- Linking shifting cultivation to the biosocial-cultural establishment of many indigenous communities, instead of explicitly targeting at measures to replace or eradicate this system of farming it would be more meaningful to focus on efficient management and improvement of traditional Jhum.
- The management and rejuvenation of fallow land and degraded forests through afforestation and reforestation programmes at the community level with the support of concerned government departments would reduce the pressure on Jhumland and increase the carbon sink.
- To ensure overall sustainability the concept of dual economy or combined means of livelihood must be encouraged where subsistence farming for meeting daily nutritional security is coupled with market oriented farming for better generation of income
- Coming to the better understanding of hill agriculture and ecosystem, separate qualitative research with subject matter specialist in agriculture, forest and allied research institutes must be taken forward to have deeper understanding for bringing sustainable agriculture in the mountains.
- Most importantly, the recognition and inclusion of traditional institution as a major stakeholder in the policy and legal regime of the State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC) would lead to decentralization in policy making.



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