

NAMONI BORPOMUA
A Socio-Economic Survey of A Mishing Village
in Sibsagar District of Assam



AGRO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE FOR NORTH EAST INDIA
ASSAM AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
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P R E F A C E

The present report on the village, Namoni Borpomua is the 15th in the series of village studies completed so far by the Centre. The report embodies the results of the first point survey of the Mishing village in the river island, Majuli of Sibsagar District, Assam surveyed in May/June, 1975.

Out of 109 households in the village, 104 households belong to the Mishing, a tribal community of the Assam plains and the rest are non-Mishing immigrants. The Mishings hold a predominant position in all the socio-economic spheres in the village and they represent a homogenous society. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the villagers. The literacy rate in the village is satisfactory being 34.35 per cent.

The average land holding per family is 3.74 hectares and 100 households are owner cultivators. Paddy is the principal crop but they mainly depend upon Ahu (Autumn) paddy. Although the method of cultivation is traditional, the yield rate is satisfactory as the land is replenished by floods.

The survey shows that the average per capita income of the villagers was Rs. 840.00 and some families had surplus family budgets. Although, the pattern of land holdings and per capita income of the villagers, by and large, presents a bright picture, the village economy is found to be unstable due to recurring floods in summer. The factor of risk and uncertainty has always acted as hindrance in productive investment.

Like all other reports of the Centre, this one is also a joint product prepared under the general guidance and supervision of the Director. The names of the research staff associated with the project is given elsewhere. Besides them, mention may be made of Sri Manik Chandra Dutta, Stenographer, for typing the stencils, Sri Nogen Chandra Bora, typist, who typed the draft and Sri Noren Deka, Gestetner Operator for mimeographing the report. I am thankful to my colleagues for their cooperation in completing the report.

I am also grateful to two distinguished villagers of Namoni Borpomua, Sri Indreswar Pegu, Principal, Jénraimukh College and Sri Bapukanta Pegu, a social worker for their cooperation and help extended to our research staff during field investigation. I am also thankful to the villagers of Namoni Borpomua for extending their cooperation to our research staff at the time of field investigation.

There is a number of studies relating to the social life of the Mishing Community, but there are very few studies on their socio-economic life. It is hoped that this report will help in giving a glimpse into the socio-economic life of this important tribal community of Assam plains.

August, 1976.

P.D. Saikia,
Director.

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CHAPTER I

Majuli - At a Glance

I. Introduction :

I.1. The village Borpomua is situated in the Brahmaputra river

island Majuli. In this Chapter a brief description of Majuli is given as a background.

1.2. Majuli, the greatest river island of the world

is situated to the northern side of Sibsagar District of Assam.

Being surrounded by the great river Brahmaputra and two other

offshoots of it namely Lohit and Kherkotia, the geographical

situation of Majuli is very significant. During the Monsoons

the river island experiences heavy floods and erosions.

1.3. Uptil now, about 104 km. of dykes or embankments

have been constructed by the State Government in order to

protect the island from the havocs of devastating floods. But

sometimes occurrence of serious breaches of dykes either due

to heavy floods or soil erosion makes the general life of

the people quite miserable. During the rainy season, not only

the Brahmaputra but also all its tributaries become equally

terrible. Along with floods, soil erosion takes place on a

large scale. In the last few years, the problem of soil

erosion became more dangerous for Majuli than the havocs

created by floods.

2. Area and Population :

2.1. Total area of Majuli is 1245 sq.km. or 12555.41

hectares and its total number of villages is 210. But in the

year, 1974, Majuli lost an area of about 40 sq.km. due to

heavy soil erosion of the Brahmaputra.

2.2. According to 1971 Census total population of

Majuli is 102881, of which 37,617 and 11,847 belong to

Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes respectively. Among the Scheduled Tribes, the Mishing Community (also known as Miri) holds a predominant place in Majuli.

3. Soil type and Crops :

3.1. Except four months during the rainy season, the inhabitants of Majuli live in peace and happiness in the rest of the year. Its sandy alluvial soils are very fertile and therefore they do not require any use of fertilizers or manures in cultivation. Only for two months in the year, i. e. December and January, some scarcity of water is felt for agriculture. But the fertility and moisture of soils help the cultivators in successful cultivation of different rabi crops, even without irrigation.

3.2. Main agricultural crops of Majuli are Paddy, Pulses, Mustard and Potato. Wheat cultivation has also been successfully introduced in Majuli since few years back. The island produces abundant fish and milk especially during the winter season.

4. Land Tenure System :

4.1. The land tenure system in Majuli is somewhat different. The prevailing land tenure system although Ryotwari, more than 50 per cent of the settled land area belong to Khiraj - annual ^{OR} Eksona Patta land (land under annual lease). Khiraj-periodic or Myadi Patta land (settlement for 30 years lease) are quite insignificant which is only due to peculiar situation of the island. It is true that regular occurrence of floods have a great impact on the land tenure system of Majuli. After Khiraj-annual, the second and the third important positions are occupied by Lakhiraj (Revenue

and Torjubad¹ land . The pattern of land classification in Majuli is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Land Classification in Majuli.

Classes	Area (In hectares)	P.C. of total land area in Majuli	P.C. of total cultivable lands in Majuli
(a) Land not used in cultivation	84,630.44	67.41	--
(b) Land used in cultivation	40,920.97	32.59	--
<hr/>			
Total land area in Majuli	125,551.41	100.00	--
<hr/>			
1. Classification of cultivable lands			
(i) Khiraj annual	20,684.47	16.48	50.55
(ii) Khiraj periodic	2,039.09	1.62	4.98
(iii) Lakhiraj	11,604.17	9.24	28.36
(iv) Nisfikhiraj	7.92	0.01	0.02
(v) Torjubad	6,584.82	5.24	16.09
<hr/>			
Total :	40,920.97	32.59	100.00

Source : S.D.C.Office, Kamalabari.

4.2. Table 1.1 shows that only 32.59 per cent of the total land area of Majuli are cultivable and the rest

1. Torjubad land are classified as Government lands which are cultivated by paying land revenue by the concerned tenants. Unlike Khiraj-annual, the Government does not confer occupancy right of such lands on the tenants.

67.41 per cent are covered by rivers, dykes, roads and water-logged areas, etc. Out of the total area of 84,630.44 hectares being covered by rivers, dykes roads, etc., about 50 per cent are covered by the river Brahmaputra alone. The annual collection of aland revenue is about Rs.2 lakhs.

4.3. The Lakhiraj lands which are mainly possessed by the Satras (Religious Institutions) and are rent free. But in the year, 1970, all such surplus lands occupied by the Satras had been acquired by the State Government through legislation. Now, these lands would yield a satisfactory amount of revenue to the State Exchequer.

5. Flood and Its Protection Measures :

5.1. During the last two decades Majuli has been more or less in the continuous grip of floods. But the damages caused by floods in the year 1974 were the highest during the last two decades. In the year 1974, within three months of Monsoons, seven waves of devastating floods affected the island causing heavy material losses. A serious breach occurred in one of the main dykes of the Brahmaputra (from Haldibari to Bessamara) and as a result to that the major parts of Majuli was submerged in floods. Hundreds of residential houses were damaged and thousand heads of cattle were lost. The road transport and communication system of Majuli was totally cut off for ser several months. Small wooden boats are used as the means of transport for the island during the rainy season. An area of 358 sq.km. covering about 5000 families were made partly or fully homeless by floods in that year.

5.2. From the available data collected from the local Block Development Office, it is known that a crop area of

4983.81 hectares was submerged and crops worth Rs.8,041,720.00 were damaged. Total number of cattle head lost was 1966 and their value was estimated at Rs.9,58,000.00. Residential houses and Public Institutions worth Rs.1,686,500.00 were washed away by flood waters. Heavy soil erosion of the Brahmaputra had made hundreds of families fully homeless. In short, in that year, floods caused immense loss to crops and properties of Majuli presenting untold sufferings to the people.

5.3. To protect the island from floods, more than 100 km. of dykes have been constructed by the concerned department of the State Government but sometimes such protection proved to be futile in the face of heavy floods. The number of dykes and bunds which have been constructed in Majuli and the number of breaches occurred in them in the year 1974 are presented in Table 1.2 and 1.3 respectively.

Table 1.2
Number of Dykes and Bunds in Majuli.

Name of the Dyke or Bund	Total length (in km.)	Total benefited area (in sq.km.)
(A) Brahmaputra Dyke		
(i) From Sisi to Tekeliphuta	3.0	3.9
(ii) From Tekeliphuta to Haldibari	7.2	3.9
(iii) From Haldibari to Bessamara	25.0	312.0
(iv) From Bessamara to Dakhinpat	7.0	15.6
(v) From Burakolita to Kakorikota	3.0	5.2
(B) Subanshri Dyke :		
(i) From Malapadha to Molual	11.0	9.1
(ii) From Baghaon to Ghuriagaon	11.0	3.1
(iii) Along the abandoned P.G.J.H. P.W.D.Road	18.0	31.2
(C) Tuni Bund from Kamalabari to Burakolita		
(D) Kherkotia Dyke	5.5	5.7
(E) Dam across Kherkotia Suty	11.2	4.7
	1.6	--
	103.5	394.42

Source : S.D.O., E. & D. Division, Kamalabari as collected on 31.5.75.

Table 1.3

No. of breaches of different Dykes and Bunds
Occured in 1974.

Name of the Dykes or Bunds	No. of breaches occured	Total area affected (in sq. km)
1. Brahmaputra dyke from Tekeliphuta to Haldibari	1	3.9
2. Brahmaputra dykes from Haldibari to Bessamara	1	312.0
3. Subanshri dyke along the abandoned P.G.J.H.P.W.D. Road	1	31.2
4. Tuni Bund from Kamalabari to Burakolita	6	10.9
Total	9	358.0

Source : S.D.O., E. & D. Division, Kamalabari
as collected on 31.5.75.

5.4. It may be noted in this connection that all the breaches of dykes occurred in that year were sudden and uncontrollable. But afterwards, almost all the breaches have been repaired.

6. Cropping Pattern :

6.1. Paddy is the main Kharif Crop of Majuli. But the cultivators seldom take resort to transplantation system of cultivation of paddy crop, as such crops are quite liable to be easily damaged by floods due to their dwarfish nature. Bao (Broadcast Winter Paddy) and Ahu (Summer Paddy) are the two main varieties of paddy grown in Majuli. Usually in the months of January and February both Ahu and Bao seeds are broadcasted in the same plot of land and before onset of rainy season in the months of May and June, the Ahu crop is harvested leaving out the Bao seedlings in the field to be

harvested in the months of December and January. The main advantage of Bao paddy cultivation is that it is a deep-water paddy and hence it cannot be easily damaged by floods. The Bao seedlings of some varieties such as Amona, Khalihoi, Rongadoria etc., creep up along with the rise of flood waters.

6.2. Besides paddy, other field crops cultivated in Majuli are Mustard, Wheat, Potato and Pulses which are mainly cultivated in the winter season, when there is no flood. Almost all these crops are of traditional varieties and are cultivated through traditional method.

7. Measures for Economic Development :

7.1. After immense damages caused by the devastating floods in the year, 1974, important measures are being taken by the State Government to strengthen the economic condition of the inhabitants of Majuli. Hundreds of homeless families have been rehabilitated out side Majuli, in different Government Reserved lands of the district. They are given lands for cultivation and money for construction of dwelling houses. On the other hand, an Emergency Rabi Crop Programme was launched by the State Agriculture Department in the winter season of the year, 1974-75. Under the Programme, extensive cultivation of Wheat, Mustard seeds, Pulses and Potatoes was introduced. The area (in hectares) covered by Wheat, Mustard, Pulses and Potatoes under this Programme was 1041.68, 8799.54, 712.94 and 236.34 respectively. As gathered from the local B.D.O.'s Office, the average per hectare production (in quintals) of Wheat, Pulses, Mustard seeds and Potato was 27.67, 25.90, 11.00 and 67.17 respectively. The State Agricultural Department provided all necessary assistance, financial or otherwise, to the cultivators under this Programme.

8. Religious Institutions of Majuli :

8.1. Majuli can be said to be the greatest centre of Vaishnavism in Assam. With the help of Vishnavism, Srimanta Sankardeva was able to bring about unprecedented upsurge in the socio-cultural life of Assam and organised the divergent communities into a composite entity. There are several Satras (Religious Institutions) in Majuli to propagate the religion of Bhakti and these Satras could get sufficient patronage and help from the Ahom kings and nobles at the initial stage. Due to such patronage from the Ahom kings and nobles, five satras in Majuli became most renowned all over Assam and these five Satras are Dakshin Kamalabari, Auniati, Benganati and Garamur. These Satras are famous for indigenous classical music and dance too.

9. Production of Fish and Milk :

9.1. Majuli produces enough of milk and fish every year particularly during the winter season. There are hundreds of big and small beels (natural fisheries) in Majuli which produce sufficient quantities of big and small fish. The entire demand for fish of the Jorhat Sub-Division is met by the island. Big beels are being controlled by Fishery Department of the State Government and these beels are sold annually by public auction. Thus these beels have been contributing a large amount of revenue to the State Exchequer. Small beels are generally left for the use of the local people and fishes of these beels are used by the local people both for consumption and trade. Sometimes fishes from the island are sent to Nagaland too.

9.2. Like fish, milk is also produced in abundance in Majuli particularly during the winter season. The demand for milk of the Jorhat Sub-Division is met by Majuli to a great

extent. But the wholesale trade of milk in Majuli is done by the outsiders. There are several big businessmen locally known as Mahalders from outside, who daily collect the milk from the individual producers and send it to outside markets.

9.3. Due to lack of local entrepreneur the wholesale trade of fish and milk in Majuli is generally done by outsiders. Of course, its critical transport and communication facilities are the main hindrances for the easy and successful transportation of these products to outside markets. The Brahmaputra, stands as a great barrier for easy trade of these products in outside markets.

10. Secondary Occupations :

10.1. Handloom weaving and Pot-making (clay) are the two main part time occupations of the people of Majuli particularly to the womenfolk. Almost, all the women in Majuli are expert in weaving and they try to keep atleast one shuttle loom at their home for preparing the necessary dresses by themselves. Almost all the women in Majuli especially the tribal women rear Endiworms at their homes and can prepare very fine Endi cloths at their looms. These articles can easily fetch reasonable prices in the market for their decency and durability. Tribal women are expert in weaving.

10.2. There is a special caste for making earthen pots, popularly known as Kumar (Pot-Maker). Both men and women are engaged in this occupation. Digging of clay and burning of pots are generally done by men and the making of pots is done by both men and women.

10.3. Thatch and cane are two important materials for constructing residential houses of simple type and these are largely used in construction of houses all over Assam. These materials are naturally grown in Majuli on the river banks and some people collect them regularly for sale. Thus they could get some income by selling them in the market.

11. Trade in Surplus Agricultural Products :

11.1. Like fish and milk, the business of surplus agricultural products in Majuli is done by private businessmen most of whom are from outside. Now-a-days, the Cooperative Marketing Societies, sponsored by the State Government are procuring surplus Paddy and Wheat from the producers. The business of some other surplus agricultural products such as Mustard, Potato and Pulses, is entirely controlled by private businessmen. They provide credits to the cultivators at the time of cultivation on condition that the cultivators would have to sell the surplus agricultural products to them at a rate cheaper than the prevailing market rate. In anticipation of higher production as well as profit, sometimes such businessmen purchase the crops in the fields at a lot before harvesting. Mustard is an important crop of Majuli. The Khasi Gramodyug Board proposes to establish about 100 Ghanis in different parts of Majuli for preparing mustard oil locally. It would help the local cultivators to fetch a reasonable price for their products and would minimise the influence of private businessmen.

CHAPTER II

SOME SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE MISHINGS

I. Introducing the Village :

1.1. Namani Borpomua, a Miri or Mishing village, is situated in the North eastern part of Majuli in Jorhat Sub-Division of Sibsagar district of Assam. The village is located at a distance of 75 km, from Jorhat town. An Administrative headquarter with some important Civil Departments is being set up the Kamalabari, a small town of Majuli, located at a distance of 38 km. from the village in the southern side. Kamalabari, the only town in Majuli, is an important marketing Centre. Another tiny marketing place at Jenraimukh, Tinali, lying at a distance of 2½ km. from the village also offers some facilities to the villagers in meeting some, daily household needs.

1.2. To arrive at the Sub-Divisional and District headquarters at Jorhat by crossing the great river Brahmaputra, there are two important Ghats (river ports) at Salmara and Kamalabari with regular Ferry services. Subanshri Ghat, another important river port in the river Subanshri, situated at the eastern end of the village help the villagers to communicate with the Lakhimpur District. Generally, trade in all important surplus agricultural products of the village is made through this adjacent port. The villagers can go to Lakhimpur District through the Badati Ghat, a distant river port in the offshoot of Lohit.

1.3. There is no approach road to the village. A small dyke constructed by the villagers themselves through the village is used by the pedestrians to reach from one end to another end of the village. The nearest P.W.D. road of the village is Pohumora-Garmur, Jenrai-Haldibari road where private buses ply between Haldibari and Kamalabari via Jenrai and Garmur twice a day. As there is no road in the village leading to the P.W.D. road, the villagers have to come across a char (barren lands on river banks) to reach it. During the rainy season when floods occur, the villagers use small wooden boats to reach it. The Subanshri dyke constructed along the abandoned P.W.D. Road lying at the southern side of the village also helps the villagers to reach the main P.W.D. road. For availing the air or rail transport facilities, the inhabitants of Namani Borpomua have to go either to Jorhat or to Lakhimpur towns.

1.4. The name, "Namani Borpomua" itself signifies as a village of immigrants ('Namani' means Lower, 'Bor' means Big and 'Pormua' means Immigrant). The village Borpomua as a whole is big village containing about 250 households. The eastern part of the village "Borpomua" is known as Ujani, the upper Borpomua and the southern part as "Namani" means lower Borpomua. The village Ujani Borpomua is larger than Namani Borpomua. It is believed that the village was established several decades ago by the people coming from different places. The Mishings possess a traditional habit of residing on the river banks. Long ago the Mishings or Miris had a system of shifting cultivation. They used to change their village sites from place to place along with cultivable field in

the river banks. This was possible because abundant land was available. Now things have changed and this shifting habit of the Miris have considerably died down. Now, they follow a systematic cultivation of crops as is done in any plain village¹.

2. The People :

2.1. The word 'Mishing' has a literal meaning in their dialect. "Mi" means man and "Yashing" means white or good, i.e., Mishing means white or good men. The Mishings regard themselves as good men and that is why all other non-tribals are regarded as "Mikipag" (Mi-means man, "Kipag" means ordinary) or non-Mishings.

2.2. Among the tribal population in Assam Plains, the Mishings hold a very prominent position. According to 1961 Census of India, out of 9,53,310 tribal population of Assam, 1,33,453 were Mishings and their percentage to total number of tribal population was 17.15. The Mishing people are scattered in different parts of the districts of Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Darrang and Goalpara, with the highest concentration in Lakhimpur district and then in Sibsagar district. Total number of Mishing people in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts is 85,035 and 54,877 respectively and their respective percentages to total are 5.21 and 3.36. Ethically "the Mishings or Miris belong to the Tibeto Burmese group of Mongloid stock."

1. Economic Consequence of a Traditional Habit - A Case Study of Miri Society in Assam by U.Phukan - Socio-Economic Research In Tribal Areas = Agro-Economic Research Centre for N.E.India, Jorhat, 1970, pp. 43.

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2.3. 'Miri', Daphla and Abor are names which have been given by the Assamese to these sections of one and the same race inhabiting the mountains between the Assam valley and Tibet'.² In fact, the Miris of the Brahmaputra valley and Daphlas and Abors of Arunachal Pradesh possess more or less identical religious beliefs, socio-cultural systems and speak the same dialect. It is said that the Miris prior to their migration to the plains of Assam about eight centuries ago used to inhabit the range of hills known as the Miri Hills lying in the western part of Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh.³ Now-a-days, some Mishing people are found in Siang and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh. To-day the Mishings of Assam Plains form an integral part of the indigenous Assamese population. But, still they maintain their distinctive socio-cultural system and speak their own dialect.⁴

2.5. The Mishings are divided into several clans such as Bomi, Miyopakong, Chungasurang, Kandor, etc., which are again divided into several sub-clans such as Payang, Paye, Partin, Doley, Pegu, Sinte, etc. These Mishing clans and sub-clans are exogamous. Marriage is not possible between boys and girls of the same clan.

3. Rainfall, Temperature and Soil :

3.1. The climate of Namani Borpomua is by and large, similar to the rest of the Brahmaputra valley which is

2. Census of India, 1961, Vol. III, Part V-A, pp. 25.

3. Doley D. - The Socio-Economic Life on the Miri Tribe - The North Eastern Research Bulletin - Dibrugarh University, Vol. IV, 1973, pp. 49.

4. Ibid - pp. 50.

Table 2.1

Monthly Rainfall in mm. as Recorded at Sub-Divisional Office, E. & D. Department, Kamalabari.

Years	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1970	23	13	135	189	1472	1258	1003	956	1137	648	Nil	Nil
1971	Nil	220	138	461	980	840	1471	1989	739	569	207	26
1972	790	335	248	1907	1683	69	1464	1572	929	562	Nil	203
1973	74	102	167	960	1387	1681	540	1710	729	193	146	111
1974	267	31	359	1634	1265	998	1448	2173	1576	465	106	Nil

characterised by a highly humid atmosphere and abundant rains. Within the year temperature is generally high in the month of July and low in the month of January. In the month of January, the mean daily minimum temperature of Sibsagar district came lower 8 degrees centigrade and in the month of July it reaches the maximum of 33 degrees centigrade and sometimes above. According to Census Report of 1961, the mean daily maximum temperature of Sibsagar district varies from 31.3 degrees to 33.3 degrees centigrade. The monsoon season is the period of highest temperature.

3.2. The monsoon sets in the month of May bringing heavy rains throughout Sibsagar district. The average rainfall in Sibsagar district, as collected from the District Census Handbook of 1961, is 2197 mm. or 85.49 inches. A monthly precipitation rate in the district during the last 5 years is shown in Table 2.1. The precipitation rate varies from month to month and becomes heavy in the months of June and July and low in the months of December and January. The lack of uniformity in rainfall, however, affects agricultural economy of the village to some extent.

3.3. The soil of the village is alluvial and composed of varying degrees of clay, loam and sand. Its soils are very fertile and suitable for cultivation of various field crops such as Paddy, Wheat, Pulses, Mustard and Potato. Due to deposition of alluvium every year by flood waters, the farmers grow their crops successfully without the use of manures or fertilizers.

4. Socio-Religious Activities

4.1. Namani Borpomua is inhabited by a section of Hinduised people and most of the people follow their traditional tribal socio-religious ceremonies. They believe in a

number of Gods and Spirits and worship them according to traditional methods. The Sun and the Moon (Doyee-Polo) top the list of all Gods and Goddesses and those Mishing people who are following the traditional pattern of worship regard them as Supreme Powers. Besides the Sun and Moon, they worship air, water, fire etc. Apong (rice beer) fowls, pigs etc. are the main items used in worship and sacrifices. Sometimes they take the help of various sacrifices of pigs and fowls in order to cure some acute diseases and this is done according to the suggestions of the medicine man and priest called Myibo.

4.2. The 'Myibo' holds a significant position in the religious life of the Mishings. At the time of Sickness they call on the 'Myibo' who diagnoses the disease and prescribes the necessary sacrifices for the cure of the illness. The 'Myibo' is generally supposed to possess some supernatural powers and with the help of such powers he determines the cause and offers sacrifices to various spirits and deities. The villagers possess a common prayer hall known as 'Namghar' for worshipping various Gods and Spirits.

4.3. But a decade ago, a religious reformation movement took place in the village and 12 households accepted Vaisnabism. These Vaisnabism have have got separate Nambhar (Prayer hall) for prayer. There is no social restriction for the Vaisnabs and non-Vaisnabs in attending religious functions of either group in their respective 'Nambhars' as observers.

4.4. Agriculture is the main occupation of the Mishings and some of the various festivals celebrated by them are mainly related to agriculture. "Ali-aye-Ligang" and 'Porag'

or a 'Narasiga Bihu' are two important festivals of the Mishings and both are related to agriculture.

4.5. 'Ali-aye Ligang' is generally celebrated in the month of March, after harvesting of Sali paddy and before beginning of Ahu paddy cultivation. This festival is mainly meant for the well-being of agricultural crops. Subscription in cash and kind is collected from every family of the village and with it they take a feast with rice beer and me. The young boys and girls use traditional dresses (Rebigasen) while singing and dancing in this festival.

4.6. 'Porag' is another important festival of the Mishings which is performed during the winter season. It is also associated with cultivation and hence it is celebrated at a time when the cultivators become free after sowing or harvesting paddy cultivation. This festival of the Mishings is very costly and elaborate and therefore it is performed at the interval of 3 or 4 years. It lasts for 4 or 5 days and during all these days the villagers take feasts with rice beer. Singing and dancing are done in all the days of the festival and various musical instruments are used in such occasions. Over and above the funds collected from the villagers and relatives, the Mishings spend some amounts from the village public funds if any, for smooth performance of the festival.

4.7. For performance of the festival 'Porag' the villagers construct one or more big temporary houses (Murong-Ghar) with bamboo and thatch in the open place or on the bank of the river. The interested villagers and the invited guests reside in these houses for all the days of the festival. For smooth running of the different functions of the festivals, the villagers select some supervisors of

both male and female from among themselves and the villagers in no case can disobey these supervisors.

4.8. Besides these two festivals of their own, the Mishings observe the Bihu festival thrice a year in the same time and same manner like the non-tribal Assamese. In Bohag Bihu the young boys and girls sing and dance in a body from door to door and thus they collect some money with which they arrange an elaborate feast afterwards. Towards the end of the month (Assamese) of Bohag (Middle of the month of May), every family of the village - especially the enlightened ones observe a simple ceremony in which the Satola or the Senior-most Bhakat (Pious man) of the village is invited to light a sacred lamp in the house. After lighting the lamp, the Satola with some other old men and women of the village perform "Nankritans" and the owner offer them indigenous cakes, rice-beer as refreshment.

4.9. They Mishing have the traditional of living in joint families which are patrilineal and patrilocal. The eldest male member in the family becomes its head and he takes the sole responsibility in smooth running of all domestic affairs. The Mishings practise both monogamy and polygyny but now-d-days monogamy is becoming more popular.

4.10. There are four main systems of marriage among the Mishing including marriage by capture. Child marriage is not allowed. Widow marriage is also prevalent. Divorce is allowed but rare. The main cause that leads to divorce is adultery in case of both man and woman. The system of bride-price is also prevalent among the Mishing and therefore, the question of compensation sometimes occurs at the time of divorce.

4.11. The Mishings bury their dead. The dead body is enclosed in a wooden box (Rungkuk) when it is buried. On the third day a simple ceremony is performed, followed by two elaborate ceremonies on the 10th and 20th or 30th day, when a feast is given to the villagers and relatives. The performance of death ceremony depends on the financial condition of the bereaved family. The poor families generally perform the ceremony in a simple manner. The neighbours also help the poor families in all possible ways. The priest who performs the death ceremonies in the Mishing society is known as 'Ado'. The head of the bereaved family has to donate some cash and kind to the invited guests especially to the Bhakats (Pious men) of his own village.

5. Food Habits :

5.1. Rice is the staple food for the Mishing. The adults generally take rice twice and the children three or four times a day. The Mishings usually do not use any substitute refreshment for rice except Apong (rice beer). Rice-beer or Apong is a popular drink of the Mishing and it is taken on all occasions by all age groups without any social restriction. A major portion of rice produced by themselves are used in preparation of beer. Milk is not popularly used by the Mishing.

5.2. The Mishings are habituated to taking both boiled and fried diet. They take enough of wild and home produced vegetables with rice. Black gram (Matikalai) which is produced by themselves during the winter season is preferred by the Mishing than other pulses. The use of fish with rice is regular particularly during the winter season. Meat is considered as a special item of their diet. As they reside on the river banks, they hardly face the scarcity of fish in

year. For meat, they keep pigs and fowls etc., at their homes. Purchase of these things for domestic consumption is very occasional among the Mishings.

5.3. Tea is being popular and most of the villagers of Namani Borpomua take tea and sweets in Tea-stalls at Janrainukh Tinali. As intoxicant tobacco is both chewed and smoked in pipes. Tobacco is locally grown and sometimes it is purchased from the local market. The use of opium was once very popular among the Mishings. But it is now restrictly prohibited by the Administration. The Mishings are very fond of chewing betel-nuts and betel leaves.

6. Dress :

6.1. Now-a-days the Mishings use modern dress. The dress pattern is similar to other non-tribal people of the plains. Some old women still use "Methoni" in which they cover both the upper and lower part of the body with one piece of cloth which they themselves prepare at home. The educated young boys and girls use modern costly dresses made of synthetic fibres. The young men and women of Namani Borpomua village spend considerable amount in ironing their cloths in a nearby laundry.

7. Educational Facilities :

7.1. Educational facilities upto college level are available in and around the village Namani Borpomua. There is one Junior Basic School within the village which was established in 1933. At the time of bench-mark survey in June, 1975, there were 263 pupils in the school with 6 teachers of which 5 males and 1 female. The medium of teaching in this school is Assamese.

7.2. Besides this Junior Basic School in the village, there is one Govt. Aided H.E. School at Jenrainukh Tinali, lying at a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ k.m. from the village. Total enrolment in this school in the year 1974-75, was 550, of whom 431 were Mishings and 69 were of non-Mishing community. The enrolment and staff position in this H.E. School for the last 5 years is given in Table 2.2.

7.3. The condition of the school buildings of both the Junior Basic and H.E. Schools are satisfactory. Both the school buildings were C.I. Sheet roofed. The H.E. School is being administered under Deficit Grant Scheme of the State Education Department and the Junior Basic School is controlled by the Basic Education Board.

7.4. A college with some Arts subjects was established at Jenrainukh Tinali in 1973. The College has got its own pucca building and at the time of investigation in June, 1974 total enrolment in the college was 119 and the total number of teaching staff was 8 including the Principal. For availing college level science education the desiring students of the village have to go to either Jorhat or Lakhimpur town.

7.5. The area itself being flood-affected the educational institutions sometimes suffer from floods. In the year 1974, the Junior Basic School was closed for long months and the H.E. School for 12 days for floods.

8. House Type :

8.1. The Mishings have a tradition of and preference for living along the river banks and thus exposing themselves to floods and erosion which are annual phenomena in Assam. As they live on the river banks the Mishings generally construct temporary type of dwelling houses. The dwelling houses of the Mishings are very long like a hall and there

Table 2.2

No. of Pupils and Teachers in Jenrainmukh Govt. Aided H.E. School During the Years 1970-71 to 1974-75.

Year	Pupils				Teachers				
	Mishing		Non-Mishing		Graduate & Above		Under Graduate and Others		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Mishing	Non-Mishing	Mishing	Non-Mishing	
1970-71	330	86	31	5	4	7	2	3	16
1971-72	326	152	37	10	5	6	2	3	16
1972-73	331	133	41	24	8	5	1	4	18
1973-74	292	152	81	5	8	6	1	5	20
1974-75	311	170	65	4	7	7	1	4	19

Source : Office of the Headmaster, Jenrainmukh Govt. Aided H.E. School, Jenrainmukh, Majuli.

is no partition inside it. Usually one residential house built for several joint families and therefore, in some cases it is even long upto 200 or 250 fts. The houses have bamboo platform raised on wooden pillars, split bamboo or reed walls and roofs are covered with thatch. Housing materials such as thatch, cane etc. are locally collected and bamboo wood etc. have to be purchased. In every house, two entrances are generally kept at the both ends of the house approached by two wooden ladders. As there is no partition inside, the mosquito net or curtain used signified partition.

8.2. The main fire place usually exists in the middle of the house and all household affairs like cooking, sitting and sleeping, etc. centre round this main fire place. Some joint families with large number of population keeps one additional fire place.

8.3. The Mishings construct their ganaries very near their dwelling houses. Pigsties are constructed below the platforms of dwelling houses and pigs kept in these pens generally clears the refuses dropped from inside. Cattle and poultry birds are also kept below the platform.

9. Land Tenancy System and Land Revenue :

9.1. As stated in the Chapter I, land in Majuli is held under five systems - viz., Khiraj-periodic, Khiraj-annual, Nisfikhiraj, Lakhiraj and Torjubad. Under Khiraj-periodic, land is held as full revenue paying permanent heritable and transferable land. In Khiraj-annual, there is no permanent right and the land cannot be transferred. Nisfikhiraj is half-revenue paying and Lakhiraj is revenue free land. Both Nisfikhiraj and Lakhiraj were revenue free estates created during the Ahom rules and in Majuli these lands are mainly possessed by the Vaisnavite Satras. The

nature of Torjubad lands is like that of Khiraj-annual to a great extent, but unlike Khiraj-annual Torjubad lands are purely Govt. lands and sometimes Govt. allows the concerned cultivators to cultivate a particular crop in such lands by paying the land revenue. The Government can evict the cultivators from such land at any time without any prior notice. Like Khiraj-annual, Torjubad land cannot be sub-let to others.

9.2. In the village Namani Borpomua, land is held under one system Khiraj-annual. Out of 405.23 hectares of total land owned by the villagers at the time of bench-mark survey in May/June, 1975, only 1.14 hectares are of Khiraj periodic lands and this land was converted from Khiraj annual to Khiraj-periodic by the owner only facilitate himself to take loans from the Bank by mortgaging it. Besides the villagers have used some Government lands for cultivation and these lands are classed as Torjubad lands. The land revenue rate per bigha of land prevailed in Majuli is shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Land Revenue Rate Per Bigha (In Rs.)

1. Marketing Place	7.00
2. Basti No.1	1.40
3. Basti No.2	1.20
4. Rupit	0.85
5. Bisesh Faringati	0.70
6. Faringati	0.60
7. Bao Tali	0.50
8. Do Jalatake	0.40

Source : S.D.C.'s Office, Kamalabari.

10. Cropping Pattern and Agricultural Method :

10.1. The general cropping pattern of Namani Borpomua is traditional and no improved methods are being practised by the villagers. Mixed cropping is the general pattern in the village. The villagers cultivate both Bao and Ahu paddy in mixture and its pattern is described in the Chapter I. The villagers seldom cultivate winter paddy by transplant method for fear of damages by flood. Vegetables of some inferior varieties are grown by all the villagers for home consumption only. Mustard, another important field crop is grown by the villagers both for sale and home consumption.

11. Other Public Institutions :

11.1. There is no library in the village but the young boys and girls of neighbouring villages have established a Public Library at Jenraimukh Tinali. Besides, the youths of Namani Borpomua have opened a youth club at Jenraimukh Tinali for cultural and recreational facilities. Theatrical performance is also occasionally held in this club. Now, a permanent pucca building for the Club is being constructed at Jenraimukh Tinali by collecting donations from among themselves. One "Moina Parijat" an organisation for enlightening the little boys and girls of the area is being organised by the Youth Club.

11.2. The villagers of Borpomua established a "Gaon Unnayan Committee" (Village Development Committee) in 1948 for taking up various development activities of the village. Formerly it was known as Village Organisation Committee. For collecting funds of the Committee, the beels and ghats which are under the control of the villagers are sold by public auction and the amount thus

collected annually is quite considerable one, being not less than Rs.40 thousand. The Committee offers financial help for construction and improvement of School and College buildings, Namghar building, construction and development of roads and dykes, development of agriculture, etc. in the village and also other monetary help to the poor at the time of distress. In 1973-74, and 1974-75, the Gaon Unnayan Committee offered Rs.26,000.00 and Rs.13,000.00 respectively to the newly established Jenraimukh College for construction of its building. Besides it donated a large amount to the Junior Basic School and to the Namghar in the village for construction of their permanent buildings. In the year, 1974-75, the Committee spent Rs.1,300.00 from its fund as flood relief among different affected people of adjoining villages.

11.3. A Cooperative Weaving Society under the sponsorship of the State Government was established in the village few years ago. Now, this society is known as "Mishing Konang Sipini Sangha" and it has got 5 shuttle looms from the Government free of cost. Necessary mill-made yarns for preparation of clothes are supplied by the Government to the society at subsidied rate. Annual financial grant received from the Government by the society varies from Rs.200 - 300. No Cooperative Marketing Society for purchasing the surplus paddy in the village has been formed by the Government till the time of survey.

12. Village Sanitation and Public Health :

12.1. The general condition of health in the village Namani Borpomua seems to be satisfactory. Due to situation of the village on the bank of the river, the natural drainage

system of the village is satisfactory. The incidence of epidemic disease like Cholera, Malaria, Small-pox etc. is quite negligible but few cases of T.B. patients were reported in the village at the time of investigation. The State Dispensary at Jenrainukh Tinali has been providing all necessary medical cares to the villagers at the time of needs.

12.2. The villagers try to cure diseases by adopting traditional religious practices. Evil Spirits are supposed to cause diseases and they are propitiated by sacrifices. now-a-days the enlightened families prefer modern medical treatment more to traditional methods for curing diseases. The villagers are given medical treatment at the State Dispensary free of cost.

12.3. Although the village stands on the bank of the river the villagers donot take drinking water from the river. There are 35 tube wells in the village providing necessary drinking water to the villagers. These tube wells were installed by the Gaon Panchayat to the villagers.

13. Veterinary Facilities :

13.1. Necessary veterinary facilities are not available in and around the village and hence from availing required veterinary facilities, the villagers have to go to Kamalab Development Block at a distance of 38 k.m. from the village. Due to absence of veterinary facilities at easy reach the villagers have to suffer much at the time of epidemics of livestock population or poultry birds. It is reported that severe epidemic of livestock and poultry birds had occurred in the village during the year 1974 and a large number of pigs and poultry birds of the village died of epidemic. Du

frequent occurrence of epidemics of livestock population and poultry birds, the villagers desire a veterinary hospital to be established at Jenrainukh Tinali. "Foot and Mouth" is the main disease of the cattle population in the village which occurred regularly every year after floods. In 1974, this disease broke out in epidemic form as a result of which many valuable cattle heads were lost.

14. Other Enterprises :

14.1. In a Mishing Society both men and women are equally active and the women are habituated in doing hard manual works. In agricultural works both men and women take equal parts. In agriculture, ploughing and sowing are done by men and weeding and harvesting are done by women. The Mishing women are expert in preparing country liquors and rice beer. The preparation of rice beer regularly for the family is a must for the women. Over and above, general engagement in household agricultural works, the young girls and women cultivate separately (Rikseng) to earn additional income during their leisure time, Besides they rear pigs and fowls for earning additional income and weave different varieties of clothes for sale.

14.2. There are 13 beels (fisheries) in and around the village, of which 10 are natural and 3 are artificial (man-made) from which the villagers can have enough fish both for home consumption and for sale. The surrounding rivers help the villagers to make small business with different places through waterways both in summer and in winter.

15. Village leadership and Village Administration :

15.1. Village leaders generally have immense influence in a tribal society. The village headman or "Gaonbura" (formerly known as Gam) has got immense power to negotiate

village disputes with the help of village elders and offer necessary guidance in case of social tensions. Now the Panchayat administration has become an accepted factor and the Panchayat can settle even some major disputes. Only those disputes beyond the scope of the Panchayat to settle, are sent to the Court.

15.2. The village Namani Borpomua falls within the jurisdiction of Jenraimukh Gaon Panchayat and Kamalabari Development Block. One member from this village represents the Gaon Panchayat. The Gaon Panchayat and the Development Block have been providing necessary helps to the villagers in socio-economic development.

16. Marketing Facilities :

16.1. Jenraimukh Tinali is the only nearest marketing place of the village. Besides one weekly market (hat) at Phulani, lying at a distance of 5 km. from the village offer some marketing facilities to the villagers. Paddy, Mustard, Vegetables, Fish, Milk and Poultry Birds, Eggs etc., are some of the important products which the villagers offer for sale. There are two small grocery shops in the village providing some facilities to the villagers for meeting some urgent day-to-day needs. The price of some consumer goods which are not locally produced are very high due to difficult communication and transport system. The price of some essential commodities prevalent in the village in May/June, 1975 is given in Table.

Table 2.4

Prices of Certain Essential Commodities in Namani
Borpomua, June, 1975.

Commodities	Standard Unit	Prices (Rs.)
1. Paddy	Per quintal	125.00
2. Rice	- do -	225.00 - 240.00
3. Arhar	Per Kg.	4.00
4. Mosur	- do -	3.50
5. Matikalai	- do -	2.25
6. Mustard Oil	Per Litre	10.00
7. Kerosine	- do -	1.20
8. Salt	Per Kg.	0.75
9. Sugar	- do -	5.00
10. Milk	Per Litre	2.00 - 2.50
11. Potato	Per Kg.	1.50
12. Onion	- do -	1.50 - 2.00
13. Soap	- do -	3.00
14. Tea	- do -	12.00
15. Match Box	Each	0.15

CHAPTER III

Demographic Features

I. Population by Family Type :

1.1. Namani Bropomua, consists of 109 households with a total population of 1156 (305 male and 551 female) at the time of investigation in May/June, 1975. Of the 109 households in the village 104 households belong to Mishing Community and out of the rest of 5 households 4 households belong to Scheduled Caste (Kaivarta) and 1 to Nepali Community. These 5 households belonging to other than Mishing Community are inhabiting in the village temporarily for business purposes. For socio-economic analysis, these non-Mishing households are also taken into account. The average size of the household is 10.6.

1.2. Out of 109 families in the village, 53 belong to Joint families. Of the rest 56 families, 49 are of nuclear type and only 7 families belong to special type. In a Joint family the husband, wife and married children reside together whereas a nuclear family consists of husband, wife and their unmarried children. A special family generally conforms to a Joint family but unlike a Joint family, a special family consists of relatives who live together as members of the family.

1.3. The distribution of households and population by size and family type of the village Namani Borpomua is shown in Table 3.1. The size of the families varies from 3 to 29. The average size of a family in the village is 10.6, but the average size of a family in the Joint and Special families exceeds the average size of the families in the

Table 3.1

Distribution of Population According to Size of Household and Family Type, Namani Borpoma, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Family Type Size of Household	No. of H.H.	Nuclear			Joint			Special			
		Population		No. of H.H.	Population		No. of H.H.	Population		No. of H.H.	
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13
3	2	2	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	2	4	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	7	20	15	35	1	3	2	5	1	1	4
6	6	19	17	36	1	4	2	6	-	-	-
7	12	43	41	84	3	12	9	21	2	7	14
8	6	27	21	48	3	11	13	24	-	-	-
9	6	23	26	54	4	21	15	36	-	-	-
10	2	11	9	20	5	28	22	50	-	-	-
11	3	17	16	33	5	29	26	55	-	-	-
12	3	11	13	24	4	26	20	48	-	-	-

Table 3.1 (Continued)

-- 2 --

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13	1	7	6	13	2	13	13	26	1	5	8	13	13
14	-	-	-	-	1	8	6	14	1	9	5	5	14
15	-	-	-	-	5	38	37	75	2	17	13	13	30
16	-	-	-	-	4	34	30	64	-	-	-	-	-
17	-	-	-	-	6	51	51	102	-	-	-	-	-
18	-	-	-	-	3	28	26	54	-	-	-	-	-
20	-	-	-	-	1	13	7	20	-	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	-	-	3	31	32	63	-	-	-	-	-
27	-	-	-	-	1	13	14	27	-	-	-	-	-
29	-	-	-	-	1	15	14	29	-	-	-	-	-
Total :	49	189	172	361	53	377	342	719	7	39	37	76	76

village and are 13.6 and 10.9 respectively. The average size for a nuclear families is 7.4.

2. Distribution of Population by Age and Sex :

2.1. The distribution of population by age and sex in the village is shown in Table 3.2 which reveals that 400 persons or 34.60 per cent of the total population in the village are of 10 years or below. In this village the early age and old-age dependency (below 11 years and above 60 years of age) together constitute only 38.41 per cent of the total population and the rest in the age-group 11 to 60 years are considered as labour force. The children of the Mishings after attaining the age of 10 years are generally employed in household works.

2.2. Table 3.2 shows that the sex-ratio in Namani Bor is 91 females per 100 males which is slightly higher than that of Sibsagar District (89) and Assam (90) according to 1971 Census and this ratio can be said to be normal. The number of females is higher than that of males in the age groups between 16 and 30 years which is due to existence of a large number of unmarried girls in the village.

3. Marital Status:

3.1. The distribution of population by age, sex and marital status is shown in Table 3.3. Early marriage is generally disfavoured. It is interesting to note that in this tribal village a large number of grown up boys and girls in the age group of 16 - 30 years have remained unmarried. There is only one married woman below the age of 15 years, which is considered quite exceptional. The number of married males and females is equal in the village. There is only one person in the village with two wives at the time of investigation but the addition of a married male servant from a different

Table 3.2

Age and Sex Distribution of Population, Mamani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Age Groups	Male		Female		Total		No. of females per 100 males
	No.	P.C.	No.	P.C.	No.	P.C.	
Below 5 years	93	13.20	80	14.52	173	15.40	82
5 - 10 "	119	19.67	103	18.63	222	19.20	86
11 - 15 "	86	14.21	69	12.52	155	13.41	80
16 - 20 "	58	9.59	60	10.89	118	10.21	103
21 - 25 "	42	6.94	56	10.16	98	8.48	133
26 - 30 "	42	6.94	50	9.08	92	7.96	119
31 - 40 "	71	11.73	53	9.62	124	10.72	75
41 - 50 "	37	6.12	33	5.99	70	6.05	89
51 - 60 "	23	4.63	27	4.90	50	4.73	96
61 & above	21	3.97	20	3.63	41	3.81	83
Total :	305	100.00	551	100.00	1156	100.00	91

Table 3.3

Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and Marital Status, Namani Barpoma, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Age Groups	Married		Unmarried		Widow/Widower		Divorced		Total of all categories	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Below 10 yrs.	--	--	217	183	--	--	--	--	217	183
11 - 15	--	1	36	68	--	--	--	--	86	69
16 - 20	5	10	53	50	--	--	--	--	53	60
21 - 25	12	28	30	28	--	--	--	--	42	56
26 - 30	25	41	16	9	--	--	1	--	42	50
31 - 40	67	51	3	1	1	1	--	--	71	53
41 - 50	33	32	2	--	2	--	--	1	37	33
51 - 60	28	20	--	--	--	7	--	--	28	27
61 & above	22	9	--	--	2	11	--	--	21	20
Total	192	198	407	330	6	19	1	1	906	693

village who has left his wife in his own village makes the number of married males and females equal in the village at the time of survey. There are 5 widowers, 19 widows in the village mostly in the higher age group. Widowers or widows in the younger age are generally remarried and that is why widowers or widows in the younger age group is almost nil. Divorce cases are rare. There were only two cases of divorce, one of male and the other of female in the village at the time of bench mark survey.

4. Educational Status :

4.1. Table 3.4 shows the distribution of population in the village by age and educational status. As stated earlier there is one Junior Basic School within the village and one Govt. Aided H.E. School and an Arts College are situated at a distance of 2½ km. from the village. The pupils of Namani Borpomua can have education upto College level in and around the village.

Table 3.4

Distribution of Population by Sex and Educational Status, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Educational status	Children below 15 yrs.		Adults		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Illiterate	199	201	130	230	760 (65.75)
Literate	10	5	74	17	106 (9.17)
Primary Standard	83	33	19	5	143 (12.37)
M.E. Standard	8	6	20	16	50 (4.32)
Matric Standard	3	4	39	31	77 (6.66)
Matriculate/ H.S.L.C.	-	-	7	-	7 (0.60)
I.A./P.U.	-	-	9	-	9 (0.78)
Graduate	-	-	3	-	3 (0.26)
Post Graduate	-	-	1	-	1 (0.08)
Total	303	252	302	299	1156 (100.0)

4.2. About 35.75 per cent of the total population in the village are illiterate and the rest 34.25 per cent are literate and educated. The percentage of literacy of the village is much higher than that of Assam as a whole which is 28.72 per cent according to 1971 Census. It is noteworthy to have 3 graduates and 1 post-graduate degree holders in an interior tribal village. The Principal of Jenraimukh College is from this village and one M.B.B.S. doctor from this village is serving in Nagaland. Several students of this village are taking science education in different colleges of the State.

4.3. The number of school going children in the village at the time of survey is shown in Table 3.5. Out of 495 boys and girls in the age-group of 5 to 20 years in the village

Table 3.5.

Distribution of Students According to Age-groups and Educational Status, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Age-groups (Years)	Primary		M.E.		Matric standard		P.U./H.S.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
5 - 10	39	20	2	-	-	-	-	-
11 - 15	29	5	5	3	2	3	-	-
16 - 20	5	1	6	5	19	10	2	-
21 - 25	-	-	1	2	2	4	6	-
26 - 30	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
31 - 35	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	74	26	14	10	23	18	10	-

only 156 were attending school or colleges at the time of survey. Out of total 175 students who were attending schools and colleges, 100 or 57.14 per cent were in the primary

school. It may be noted in this connection that some of the Mishings do not send some of their children to school because they want their help in cultivation.

5. Economic Status :

5.1. The total working force and labour force of the village population are shown in Table 3.6. The economic status of the villagers is divided into three categories viz. - worker, helper and non-worker. A person who participate actively in economically gainful activities as wholetime is considered as worker and who is partly engaged in such activities is termed as helper. Those who are not engaged in economic pursuits are considered as non-workers. Most of the helpers are school-going children. Some minor school going children, incapable and dependent persons are also included in the category of non-workers. The Mishing children are generally strong and stout and they are capable of doing important household works even at the age of 10 years and therefore all persons between the age group of 10 to 60 years are considered as labour force in the village. Every member of the family including the children would have to do daily routine works allotted to them by the Head of the household. Table 3.6 shown that workers together with helpers constitute about 74 per cent of the total population of the village.

5.2. Table 3.3 reveals that the total number of workers and helpers in the village is 605 and 250 respectively and the rest 301 are non-workers. Sex distribution by economic status shows that the number of female workers is about equal to that of male workers which is due to the fact that in a tribal society generally the females take equal part in economic activities like the males.

Table 3.6

Distribution of Population According to Age Groups and Economic Status, Mamani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Age Groups	Worker		Helper		Non-worker		Total of All Types		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Below 10 yrs.	--	--	63	60	151	123	217	183	400
11 - 20	72	72	70	54	2	3	144	129	273
21 - 30	82	106	--	--	2	--	84	106	190
31 - 40	69	53	--	--	2	--	71	53	124
41 - 50	37	32	--	--	--	1	37	33	70
51 - 60	27	27	--	--	1	--	28	27	55
61 and above	18	10	--	--	5	10	24	20	44
Total :	305	300	136	114	164	137	605	551	1156

5.3. The distribution of working force and labour force in the village Namani Borpomua is shown in Table 3.7. Working

Table 3.7

Working Force by Economic Status and Labour Force
Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Category	Distribution of Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
A. Working Force :			
1. Workers :			
(a) Number	305	300	605
(b) P.C. of total working force	35.67	35.09	70.73
2. Helpers :			
(a) Number	136	114	250
(b) P.C. of Working force	15.90	13.34	29.24
3. Total Working Force			
(a) Number	441	414	855
(b) P.C. of total	51.57	48.43	100.00
B. Labour Force :			
(a) Number	334	348	712
(b) P.C. of working to labour force	121.15	118.33	119.94
C. Average working force per family of average size 10.6			
	4.0	3.8	7.8

Labour force includes all persons within the age-group 10 - 60 years.

working force consists of all workers and helpers of the village while labour force includes all the persons within the age-group of 10 to 60 years. The total number of persons in the working force is 855 including 250 persons as helpers as

compared to the total number of labour force which stands at 712. This is because of the fact that there are some helpers below the age of 10 years. The percentage of working for to potential labour force is worked out to be at 119.94. The average size of the working force per household of an average family of 10.6 is 7.3.

6. Occupational Groups :

6.1. The basis of determining the occupation of a household is income sources. In selecting the occupation of a particular household, the source contributing the highest income is considered as primary occupation and others as subsidiary occupations.

6.2. Occupations are broadly divided into two groups (a) Agricultural and (b) Non-Agricultural. Again, agricultural occupation is sub-divided into two occupations such as (a) Owner Cultivator and (b) Agricultural Labour. Non-Agricultural occupation to is divided into sub-groups such as (a) Trade, Commerce and Transport and (b) Salaried Job. The occupational pattern of Namani Borpomua generally conforms to the general occupational pattern of a plain village of Assam which is usually characterised by the dominance of agriculture. Table 3.3 shows that about 96.80 per cent of the total population in the village are engaged directly or indirectly in agricultural occupations while only 3.20 per cent are employed in non-agricultural occupations. Out of 96.80 per cent of the total population in the village, 95.94 per cent are owner cultivators which signifies dominance of agriculture in economic pursuits of the villagers. Only 10 persons in the village are agricultural labourers. All the persons in the occupation of "Trade, Commerce and

Table 3.8

Distribution of Population According to Age Group and Occupational Classes,
 Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	Below 10 yrs.		11 - 20 Yrs.		21 - 30 Yrs.		31 - 40 Yrs.	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Owner Cultivator	100	207	172	142	124	80	100	55	52
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	6	6	1	2	2	5	4	1
Agricultural Labour	2	2	2	-	3	1	-	-	-
Salaried Jobs	1	2	3	1	-	1	1	1	-
Total :	109	217	183	144	129	84	103	71	53

Contd. (2).

Table 3.3 (Continued)

Distribution of Population According to age group and Occupational Classes, Mamani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	41 - 50 yrs.		51 - 60 yrs.		61 & above		Total		Grand Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Owner Cultivator	100	37	33	27	25	24	20	583	526	1109 (95.94)
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	-	-	-	1	-	-	13	15	28 (2.42)
Agricultural Labour	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	4	6	10 (0.86)
Salaried Jobs	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	9 (0.78)
Total :	109	37	33	28	27	24	20	605	551	1153 (100.00)

Figures within brackets are the percentages to the Grand Total.

Transport" belong to non-Mishing community and they are settling in the village only for the business of fish and fishing nets.

3.3. From the economic point of view the association of occupations in a particular village is also important as it indicates the occupational structure of the village. It is to be noted that in addition to the primary occupation, a person may directly or indirectly be associated to one or more other occupations which are considered as subsidiary. A picture relating to the distribution of household according to the number of occupations associated in the village Namani Borpomua is presented in Table 3.9. Only 50 households (45.83%) of the village have single occupation which is agriculture.

Table 3.9

Distribution of Households According to Number of Occupations Associated, Namani Borpomua, Majuli Assam, 1975.

Occupation Combination	No. of households	P.C.
1. Single Occupation	50	45.83
2. Associated with one occupation	44	40.37
3. Associated with two occupations	12	11.00
4. Associated with three occupations	3	2.75
Total	109	100.00

Out of the remaining 59 households 44 households (40.37%) have more than one occupation and only 3 households (2.75%) have three occupations. Most of the subsidiary occupations followed by the villagers are business.

CHAPTER IV

Economic Resources

I. Introduction :

1.1. The quantum and nature of economic resources possessed by the villagers show their economic condition to a great extent. The economy of Namani Borpomua village is primarily based on agriculture and hence all the resources relating to agriculture such as land, livestock, tools and implements, labour, capital, etc. are discussed in this chapter.

2. Village Land Its Ownership and Utilization :

2.1. Ryotwari system of land tenure system is prevailed in Namani Borpomua. Almost all the land in the village are of "Aksona Patta" land (Khiraj-annual - land under annual lease) except 1.41 hectares which are of Myadi Patta land or Khiraj periodic (Settlement of 30 years lease). There is no Nisfi-Khiraj (half revenue paying) or Lakhiraj (Revenue free) land in the village. But the villagers cultivate in some Government land known as Torjubad land. Torjubad land were once cultivable land possessed by the cultivators but they abandoned their ownership of such lands due to their inability to cultivate them for some natural hazards such as floods etc., and thus they were exempted from paying land revenue for such land. But occasionally they are allowed by the Government to cultivate such land for a short time by paying the land revenue.

2.2. It is to be noted that the villagers of Namani Borpomua besides possessing land in their own district (Sibsagar district), also possess some land in Lakhimpur district. Out of 408.04 hectares of land owned by the villagers,

Table 4.1

Distribution of Owned Land According to Size Group of Operational Holdings,
Namani Borpomua, Maluli, 1975.

Size Group (Hectares)	No. of H.H.	Total Area Owned	Homestead & Orchard	Current Fallow	Total Cropped Area	Area Sown More Than Once	Mixed Cropped Area	Net Sown Area	(Area in hectares)			
									Leased in Land	Leased out Land	Govt. Land	
Landless	6	0.69 (0.17)	0.69	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1 ha.	3	2.44 (0.60)	0.41	--	2.97 (0.51)	0.54 (0.67)	0.14 (0.11)	1.49 (0.42)	--	0.54	--	--
1 - 2 "	12	22.49 (5.51)	3.31	1.48	31.49 (5.46)	5.00 (3.23)	7.97 (3.12)	17.70 (4.91)	0.81	--	--	--
2 - 4 "	55	181.14 (44.40)	18.97	5.14	263.49 (45.18)	40.14 (50.00)	70.00 (53.73)	157.03 (43.57)	2.70	--	--	9.05
4 - 6 "	20	101.75 (24.94)	9.59	0.54	138.58 (24.01)	13.78 (17.17)	24.05 (13.46)	91.62 (25.42)	2.97	--	--	1.62
6 - 8 "	10	75.34 (18.46)	5.34	0.54	103.24 (17.89)	14.86 (18.52)	18.65 (14.32)	69.46 (19.27)	--	--	--	4.86
8 - 10 "	2	12.30 (3.01)	0.54	--	20.41 (3.54)	3.24 (4.04)	5.41 (4.15)	11.76 (3.26)	--	--	--	--
10 - 12 "	1	11.89 (2.91)	0.54	--	13.92 (2.41)	2.70 (3.36)	4.05 (3.11)	11.35 (3.15)	--	--	--	--
Total :	109	408.04 (100.00)	39.39	7.70	577.10 (100.00)	80.26 (100.00)	130.27 (100.00)	360.41 (100.00)	3.48	0.54	15.53	

Note : Figures in the brackets are the percentages to the total.

by homestead and orchards. It is true that some areas covered by homestead and orchard are cultivable and in such areas generally garden crops are grown. But it is difficult to distinguish such cultivable land from the areas covered by homestead and therefore, are considered as non-cultivable. There is no cultivable waste land in the village but there are 7.70 hectares land in the village which are considered as current fallow. Out of 408.04 hectares of total land owned, the total net area sown in the village is 360.41 hectares. Total area sown more than once is 80.26 hectares.

2.5. Mixed cropping is an usual pattern of agriculture in the village. Out of 360.41 hectares of net area sown in the village, 130.27 hectares are covered by mixed crops which are usually Bao and Ahu paddy. Almost, all the households in the village practise mixed cropping.

2.6. The land ownership by occupational class is shown in Table 4.2. It is seen from the Table that 99 per cent of the total land in the village are owned by the 100 households of owner cultivators. Other occupational classes in the village have got very little economic significance in land ownership. The owner cultivators are dominating the village economy in all aspects.

3. Operational Holdings :

3.1. Operational holdings, here include the land owned by the villagers plus Government lands cultivated by the villagers and land taken on lease, minus land leased out to others. The distribution of operational holding by size group is shown in Table 4.3. Agriculture being the main occupation of the villagers, all the households in the

Table 4.2

Classification of Land Owned by the Villagers by Occupational Class,
Mamani Borpoma, Majuli, 1975.

Occupational Class	Households		Homestead & Orchard		Total culti- vable land owned	Area in hectares		Current fellow
	No.	P.C.				Total land owned	Govt. Land	
Owner cultivator	100	91.74	38.22	364.73	404.12	15.53	7.70	
Agricultural labour	2	1.83	0.34	2.97	2.97	--	--	
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	5.50	0.69	--	--	--	--	
Salaried Job	1	0.93	0.14	0.95	0.95	--	--	
Total :	109	100.00	39.39	368.65	408.04	15.53	7.70	

Table 4.3

Distribution of Operational Holdings by Size Group, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Size Group (Hectares)	Households		Area Under Operation		(Area in Hectares)	
	No.	P.C.	Area	P.C.	Average operational holdings	
Landless	3	5.50	--	--	--	--
Below 1 hectare	3	2.75	1.49	0.38	0.49	
1 - 2 "	12	11.00	18.51	4.84	1.54	
2 - 4 "	55	50.45	138.78	44.13	3.06	
4 - 6 "	20	18.34	96.21	25.15	4.81	
6 - 8 "	10	9.17	74.32	19.43	7.43	
8 - 10 "	2	1.83	11.76	3.03	5.88	
10 - 12 "	1	0.96	11.35	3.00	11.35	
Total :	109	100.00	382.42	100.00	3.50	

village except the landless have operational holdings. Table 4.3 reveals the average size of operational holdings. About 55 per cent of the total households, in the size group of 2-4 hectares have occupied 44.13 per cent of total operational holdings in the village. The average size of operational holding of the village as a whole is 3.50 hectares.

3.2. The distribution of operational holding by occupation is shown in Table 4.4. The operational holding is highest among the owner cultivators with 3.76 hectares as the average size. Leased out land in the village is quite insignificant and only one household of Agricultural Labour class has leased out 0.54 hectares of cultivable land.

3.3. As a whole the land holding pattern in the village is found to be satisfactory. But the crops are affected more or less by floods in the summer and hence the owner cultivators too use the Govt. lands for cultivation.

4. Agricultural Tools and Implements :

4.1. Cultivation in Namani Borpomua is done in the traditional method and hence all the tools and implements used in cultivation are of traditional type. Important agricultural tools and implements possessed by the villagers of Namani Borpomua are wooden ploughs, spades, seed-drill, harrow, sickle, khanti, etc. Boat is also regarded as agricultural implements as it is used in harvesting paddy crops especially during the time of floods. Paddy cultivation in the village is generally done by broadcasting method and therefore, the use of seed-drill and hand spade by all the villagers is essential for weeding the crops. Bullock carts are used for carrying the produce from the fields and for marketing them in nearby markets. The Mishings used only

Table 4.4
Ownership and Operational Holdings by Occupational Classes, Mamani Borpomua,
Maui, 1975.

Occupational Class	No. of H.H.	Cultivable Land					Average operational holdings	
		Total owned land	Owned land under personal cultivation	Leased out in	Leased in	Govt. Land in Mortgaged Total operational holding		
Owner cultivator	100	364.73	357.03	--	4.32	15.53	376.34	3.76
Agricultural labour	2	2.97	2.43	0.54	2.16	--	5.13	2.56
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Salaried Job	1	0.95	0.95	--	--	--	0.95	0.95
Total :	109	368.65	360.41	0.54	6.48	15.53	382.42	3.51

home-processed rice and for processing the rice the mortar and pestle (Ural) is used. Each household in the village has atleast one 'Ural'.

4.2. The distribution in number and value of agricultural tools and implements by occupational classes is shown in Table

4.5. Out of 109 households in the village, 100 households belonging to the occupational class of owner cultivator possess most of the tools and implements.

4.3. It is to be noted that the number and quality of agricultural tools and implements bear a close relationship with the size of holdings. Table 4.6 shows the distribution of tools and implements according to the size group of operational holdings which reveals that the households in the higher size-groups possess higher number of tools and implements. All the households in the size groups of holdings above 2 hectares have more than two ploughs and spades in average. In case of other tools and implements too, these households have possessed more than others.

5. Livestock :

5.1. In rural agricultural economy of Assam plains, where traditional method of cultivation is practised, the role of cattle and buffaloes is quite important. Cattle, buffaloes and pigs are important livestock population of the village. Besides these, one household in the village has possessed one elephant and three horses. Bullocks are used in drawing ploughs and carts but the buffaloes (both he-buffaloes and she-buffaloes) are used only in drawing ploughs. The elephant is also employed in drawing cart and heavy wooden logs. For transporting some heavy materials from one place to other the villagers hire the elephant. The horse is also used in carrying both man and materials from one place to other.

Table 4-5
 Number and Value of Agricultural Tools and Implements by Occupational Classes,
 Namani Borpomna, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Occupational Classes	Owner cultivator		Agricultural labour		Trade, Commerce & Transport		Salaried job		Total	
	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value
Desi Plough	215	3225.00	2	30.00	--	--	--	--	217	3255.00
Improved plough	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Spade	210	3150.00	2	30.00	--	--	1	15.00	213	3195.00
Harrow	160	800.00	2	10.00	--	--	--	--	162	810.00
Seed Drill	88	830.00	1	10.00	--	--	--	--	89	890.00
Sickle	427	854.00	3	60.00	1	2.00	2	4.00	433	866.00
Bullock Cart	4	1300.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	1300.00
Ural	110	3300.00	2	60.00	3	180.00	1	30.00	119	3570.00
Khanti	232	434.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	232	434.00
Boat	50	21570.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	50	21570.00

Table 4.5

Agricultural Tools and Implements by Size Group of Operational Holdings
 Namahi Borpoma, Majuli, Assam, 1975.

Size Groups (Hectares)	No. of H.H.	Desi Plough		Improved Plough		Spade		Harrow		Speed Drill	
		No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value
Landless	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1 ha.	3	--	--	--	--	1	15.00	--	--	--	--
1 - 2 "	12	15	225.00	--	15	225.00	--	--	--	--	--
2 - 4 "	55	103	1590.00	--	123	1845.00	80	60.00	7	70.00	--
4 - 6 "	20	50	750.00	--	44	660.00	38	400.00	46	460.00	--
6 - 8 "	10	32	480.00	--	21	315.00	24	190.00	17	170.00	--
8 - 10 "	2	8	120.00	--	5	75.00	4	120.00	15	150.00	--
10 - 12 "	1	6	90.00	--	4	60.00	4	20.00	2	20.00	--
Total :	109	217	3255.00	--	213	3195.00	162	810.00	89	890.00	--

Contd. (2).

Table 4.6 (Continued)

Agricultural Tools and Implements by Size Group of Operational Holding.

Size Group (Hectares)	No. of H.H.	Sickle		Bullock Cart		Ural		Khanti		Boat	
		No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value
Landless	6	1	2.00	--	--	1	30.00	--	--	--	--
Below 1 ha.	3	7	14.00	--	--	3	90.00	4	8.00	--	--
1 - 2 "	12	35	70.00	--	--	11	330.00	20	40.00	5	1800.00
2 - 4 "	55	214	428.00	1	300.00	53	1740.00	123	246.00	25	10530.00
4 - 6 "	20	106	212.00	--	--	28	840.00	45	90.00	6	1540.00
6 - 8 "	10	53	106.00	--	--	14	420.00	28	56.00	8	2150.00
8 - 10 "	2	9	18.00	2	--	2	60.00	6	12.00	1	2000.00
* 10 - 12 "	1	8	16.00	1	1000.00	2	60.00	6	12.00	5	3500.00
Total :	109	433	866.00	4	1300.00	119	3570.00	232	464.00	50	21570.00

* The household of this group has possessed one Rice Hauler worth Rs.4000.00

5.2. As they do not take milk regularly, the Mishings do not milk the cows. They always try to make the bull-calf born to these cows healthy by feeding sufficient milk so that they can easily draw plough in the field in future. Those families who have possessed sufficient number of milch buffaloes, keep one milkman of other community to milk them and to sell the milk.

5.3. All the livestock animals in the village are of local breed and are small in size. Few households in the village kept few pigs of improved breeds but all of them died of epidemic disease in the year 1974-75. Few households have kept few goats of local breed. The poultry birds of the village are also of indigenous breed. All the households in the village possess poultry birds.

5.4. Table 4.7 shows the distribution of livestock population and poultry birds of the village by occupational classes. Out of 366 Cattle population in the village, the owner cultivators have owned 362 numbers, and they own all other livestock of the village. Except the 2 households in the occupational class of "Agricultural Labourer" who have possessed 4 cattle and 1 pig, all other households in other occupational classes owned no livestock at all.

5.5. The distribution of livestock population and poultry birds in the village according to various size groups of land holding is shown in Table 4.8. Table shows that the landless households and the households belonging to the size group of below 1 hectare in the village possess no livestock population.

Table 4.7

Distribution of Livestock Population According to Occupational Classes.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	Bullock	Cattle Cow	Youngstock Buffalo	He- Buffalo	She- Buffalo	Pig	Goat	Horse	Fowl	Elephant
Owner Cultivator	100	362	210	109	39	81	220	12	3700	1700	1
Agricultural Labour	2	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	7	-
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	-
Salaried Job	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-
Total :	109	366	210	109	39	81	221	12	3	1767	1

Table 4.8

Distribution of Livestock Population According to Size Group of Operational Holdings, Namani Borpomua, Maluli, 1975.

Size Group (Hectares)	No. of H.H.	Cattle		He- Buffalo	She- Buffalo	Pig	Goat	Fowl	Horse	Elephant
		Bullock	Cow							
Landless	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	--	--
Below 1 ha.	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	21	--	--
1 - 2 "	12	25	5	4	--	11	--	153	--	--
2 - 4 "	55	192	92	47	11	63	10	619	--	--
4 - 6 "	20	78	35	26	--	61	--	465	--	--
6 - 8 "	10	53	46	30	30	70	--	457	--	--
8 - 10 "	2	6	3	2	40	12	--	20	--	--
10 - 12 "	1	12	29	--	--	1	2	12	3	1
Total	109	363	210	109	81	221	12	1767	3	1

CHAPTER V

Economic Activities :

I. Introduction :

1.1. In the preceding chapter, a discussion about some of the economic resources possessed by the villagers of Namani Borpomua has been made. In this chapter some economic activities with which the villagers are associated are discussed. Economic activities relate mainly to cultivation and pattern of disposal of crops and some other activities such as handicrafts etc.

2. Crop Pattern :

2.1. Paddy (Ahu, Bao and Sali) as food crop and mustard as cash crop are the main field crops of the village Namani Borpomua. Ahu paddy cultivation is generally done in a mixture with Bao paddy in the village but sometimes it is cultivated as mono-crop. Mustard is usually cultivated as the second crop in the Sali paddy land by most of the villagers. Transplanting of Sali paddy is not regular in the village due to frequent occurrence of floods during the Kharif season. Unlike Sali paddy, Bao paddy cultivation is less liable to flood waters (discussed in details in the first chapter.) Apart from these two important field crops, the villagers produced some other field and garden crops such as Matikalai (Blackgram), Tobacco, Potato, Onion, Vegetables, etc. The relevant data regarding cropped area, production and value of some important crops grown in the village are given in Table 5.1. Table 5.1 shows that the area under paddy viz. Ahu, Bao and Sali, is 472.97 hectares or 81.96 per cent of the total cropped area of the village. Of this, the Ahu paddy cultivation alone covers 272.37 hectares

or 47.20 per cent of the cropped area which are mainly mixed and double cropped area. Next to paddy, the cultivation of

Table 5.1

Area, Production and Value of Crops, Namani
Borpomua, Majuli, 1974-75.

Crops	Area (Hectares)	Output (Quintals)	Value (Rupees)
Sali paddy	26.85	463.51	49680 (5.29)
Bao Paddy	173.75	3299.46	353640 (37.66)
Ahu Paddy	272.37	5097.16	410280 (43.69)
Mustard	97.67	438.14	88050 (9.38)
Matikalai	4.99	30.98	4150 (0.44)
Potato	6.93	107.12	11480 (1.22)
Onion	0.31	1.31	140 (0.02)
Tobacco	1.36	5.38	2765 (0.30)
Vegetables	--	--	18805 (2.00)
Total :	--	--	938990 (100.00)

Mustard covers 97.67 hectares or 16.97 per cent of total cropped area of the village. All the crops grown in the village are of local varieties. H.Y.V. is not yet introduced in the village. Besides the crops as shown in Table 5.1, the villagers also grow some quantity of other garden crops such as betelnuts, mango, papaya, banana, etc. Due to difficulties of

collecting data on this aspect, the area under the garden crops could not be given. Of course, the soil condition of the village is not much suitable for growing such garden crops.

3. Production and Yield of Crops :

3.1. Agriculture in the village is traditional. Bullocks and buffaloes are draught animals used in agriculture.

Agricultural tools and implements used by the cultivators of the village are also traditional. Not a single household in the village has cultivated H.Y.V. of paddy at the time of investigation. The cultivators in the village can produce enough paddy every year by cultivating the local varieties through traditional method and that might be the primary reason for non-adoption of H.Y.V. paddy. Most of the villagers remain fully engaged at the time of cultivation and they may not like to bear the burden of additional works involved by the introduction of H.Y.V. paddy.

3.2. Data relating to area, yield and value of some major crops grown in the village according to size groups of operational holding area given in Table 5.2. Paddy and Mustard are cultivated by all the households in the village except the landless. After paddy and mustard, blackgram and potato cultivation occupy a significant position. Per hectare production of paddy and mustard is shown in Table 5.3 which shows that per hectare production of Sali, Ahu and Bao paddy is almost equal. Soils of the village are made fertile by flood waters every year by depositing alluvium and therefore they are suitable for cultivation of paddy in all seasons of the year. The cultivators of Namani Borpomua prefer the cultivation of Ahu and Bao paddy

Table 5.2

Area, Production, and Value of Crops by Size-group of Operational Holding, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Sibsagar District, Assam, 1974-75.

Size Groups in hectares	No. of H.H.	Sali Paddy			Bao Paddy			Ahu Paddy			Mustard		
		Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Quintal)	Production Value (Rs)	Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Qtl.)	Production Value (Rs.)	Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Qtl.)	Production Value (Rs.)	Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Qtl.)	Production Value (Rs.)
Landless	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1	3	0.54	14.93	1600	0.94	77.46	800	0.67	13.06	1050	0.81	4.85	975
1 - 2	12	1.75	50.75	5440	9.85	246.31	26400	14.70	313.86	25230	5.39	25.71	5167
2 - 4	55	8.51	145.18	15560	82.69	1630.74	173000	123.13	2400.05	192930	47.29	228.66	45953
4 - 6	20	10.79	161.22	17280	42.09	733.35	73600	61.53	1150.20	92460	18.82	69.57	13980
6 - 8	10	3.24	61.58	6600	28.19	478.44	51230	55.04	913.22	73410	17.40	64.19	12900
8 - 10	2	0.67	11.19	1200	5.94	98.52	10560	10.52	187.35	15060	3.24	17.17	3450
10 - 12	1	1.35	13.63	2000	4.05	74.64	8000	3.78	119.42	9600	4.72	27.99	5625
Total :	109	26.85	433.51	49680	173.75	3299.46	353640	272.37	5097.16	409740	97.67	438.14	88050

Contd.

Table 5.2(Continued)

Area, Production and Value of Crops by size-group of Operational Holdings, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Sibsagar District, Assam, 1974-75.

Size Groups in Hectares	No. of H.H.	Matikalai		Potato		Onion		Tobacco		Vegetables Value in Rs.
		Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Rs.)	Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Rs.)	Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Rs.)	Area (Ha.)	Production Value (Rs.)	
Landless	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	350
Below 1	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	100
1 - 2	12	0.20	0.49	0.27	2.80	0.07	300	0.18	20	1540
2 - 4	55	2.97	1.81	3.91	58.41	0.10	3260	0.65	72	9610
4 - 6	20	1.28	6.06	1.96	27.06	0.07	2900	0.18	20	4520
6 - 8	10	0.40	1.87	0.53	8.77	0.07	940	0.30	28	2185
8 - 10	2	--	--	0.13	5.60	--	600	--	--	200
10 - 12	1	0.14	0.75	0.13	4.48	--	480	--	--	300
Total : 109		4.99	30.98	6.93	107.12	1.31	11480	1.31	140	18805

Table 5.3

Per Hectare Output of Paddy by Farm Size, Mamani Borpomua, 1974-75.

Farm Size (Hectares)	Sali paddy (Quintals)	Bao paddy (Quintals)	Ahu paddy (Quintals)	Mustard (Quintals)
Landless	--	--	--	--
Below 1 ha.	27.65	7.94	19.49	5.99
1 - 2 "	29.00	25.00	21.35	4.77
2 - 4 "	17.06	20.08	19.02	4.84
4 - 6 "	14.94	17.42	18.69	3.70
6 - 8 "	19.00	16.97	16.59	3.69
8 - 10 "	16.70	16.58	17.80	5.30
10 - 12 "	13.82	18.42	31.59	5.93
Total :	17.26	18.98	18.71	4.49

rather than Sali paddy cultivation. The disadvantages of Sali paddy cultivation in that area have already been discussed in the first chapter. The per hectare yield of Ahu paddy is higher than Sali paddy in some cases in Majuli, which is only due to favourable soil-climatic conditions for this crop. The per hectare production of mustard is not satisfactory and it is due to damages done by pests and insects that year. In the year, 1974, although whole of Majuli was badly affected by floods of the Brahmaputra river but the village Mamani Borpomua was comparatively free from it. The floods of the river Subansiri generally create havoc to Mamani Borpomua. In the year 1974, paddy crops of 7.70 hectares of land were damaged by floods, of which 3.78 hectares were of Sali paddy and 3.92 hectares were of Ahu paddy.

4. Relative Preference to Crops :

4.1. Rice being the staple food, the villagers invariably prefer to the cultivation of paddy to other crops. Rice-beer (Apong) is a popular drink among the Mishings and they consider it essential like rice. Some of them also believe that rice-beer is an essential item of food for maintaining good health and for performing hand work. For preparing rice-beer, the Mishings use a huge quantity of rice. This is also another cause for putting more stress on paddy cultivation by the Mishings. Next to paddy, the cultivation of Mustard as cash crop occupies an important place in the village which is only due to advantageous soil-climatic conditions. As mustard is used for preparation of mustard oil which is an essential edible oil not only for Assam but for the whole Northern India, it has got a wide market. Other crops such as Matikalai, Potato, Tobacco, Onion, Vegetables, etc., are grown by the villagers partly for home consumption and partly for sale. The Mishings generally use vegetables with rice in large quantity and hence all the families in the village produce some vegetables. They also collect a variety of wild vegetables for home consumption. They hardly purchase vegetables from the market for domestic consumption. Among Pulses, the Mishings prefer Matikalai more to others and they produce it by themselves.

5. Input and Output :

5.1. Precise analysis of input-output ratio of the crops is not possible due to lack of reliable data of some items of input. Input in agriculture means cost of seeds, fertilisers and manures, family labour and bullock labourers,

hired human and bullock labour, charges of irrigation and hired agricultural tools and implements, etc. But inputs in agriculture of the village Namani Borpomua consist mainly the costs of seeds and payment to permanent labour engaged in agriculture. The use of fertilisers and manures in the field crops is nil due to natural fertility of soils. The availability of family labour makes the use of hired casual labours in agriculture almost insignificant in the village. The cost of family labour and the cost of maintenance of owned bullocks are excluded from accounting of inputs in the village due to lack of reliable data.

5.2. Input-output analysis of two major crops of the village by farm sizes viz. paddy and mustard, is given in Table 5.4 which reveals that the total value of input and output of paddy and mustard are Rs.47,348.00, Rs.7,238.00 and 8,13,060.00, Rs.88,050.00 respectively and their productive co-efficient (output divided by input) works out to be 17.17 and 12.16 respectively. In case of paddy the use of input per hectare exceeds Rs.100.00 in the size groups of holdings. 1 to 3.99 hectares which is due to employment of wage labours in farming by some households in that size group of holding. In case of Mustard the per hectare use of input is almost equal in all size groups of holding.

6. Disposal of Crops :

6.1. Although there is no important marketing place for disposal of agricultural products near at the village, the surplus producers can easily dispose them either at their own residence or at Jenraimukh Tinali to the needy poor people of the surrounding villages and to the businessmen.

Table 5.4

Input - Output Analysis of Field Crops, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1974-75.

Size Groups (Hectares)	Paddy						
	Input of seed (Rs.)	Wages of permanent servant (Rs.)	Total Input (Rs.)	Output (Rs.)	Area in hectare	Input per hectare	Output per hectare
Landless	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1	193.00	--	193.00	3450.00	2.15	89.76	1604.65
1 - 2	2521.00	600.00	3121.00	57070.00	23.30	118.67	2139.96
2 - 4	20911.00	1195.00	22106.00	386490.00	217.33	101.72	1773.35
4 - 6	10020.00	--	10920.00	183340.00	114.41	95.45	1646.18
6 - 8	8498.00	--	8498.00	131290.00	83.47	98.27	1518.33
8 - 10	1670.00	--	1670.00	23820.00	17.13	97.49	1565.63
10 - 12	840.00	--	840.00	19600.00	20.18	191.90	2135.07
Total :	45553.00	1795.00	47348.00	813060.00	472.97	100.12	1718.74

Contd.

Table 5.4 (Continued)

Input-Output Analysis of Field Crops, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1974-75.

Size Groups (Hectares)	Mustard					
	Input of seed (Rs.)	Output (Rs.)	Area in hectare	Input per hectare	Output per hectare	
Landless	--	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1	60.00	975.00	0.81	74.07	1203.70	
1 - 2	400.00	5157.00	5.39	74.21	958.63	
2 - 4	3504.00	45953.00	47.29	74.09	971.72	
4 - 6	1394.00	13980.00	13.82	74.03	742.82	
6 - 8	1290.00	12900.00	17.40	74.13	741.37	
8 - 10	240.00	3450.00	3.24	74.07	1064.81	
10 - 12	350.00	5325.00	4.72	74.15	1191.74	
Total	7238.00	88050.00	97.67	74.10	901.50	

Sale of agricultural crops includes Paddy and Mustard, Disposal of crops by size groups of operational holdings in the village is shown in Table 5.5 which reveals that 5.88 per cent of total production of paddy and 77.21 per cent of Mustard were sold in the year 1974-75. Other crops sold by the villagers are Matikalai, Potato and Vegetables.

6.2. It is generally difficult to find out the gross or net income from cultivation precisely on the basis of data collected by interview method. In Table 5.5 an attempt is made to find out the balance available for consumption by deducting from the total production the quantity offered for sale. In case of vegetables due to non-availability of quantum, only the value in rupees has been inserted. The balance quantity available for consumption which is arrived at by deducting the total quantity disposed of from the total production includes seeds also.

7. Handloom Products :

7.1. Almost all the Mishing women are expert in weaving. There were 221 throw shuttle looms in the village at the time of investigation and the average loom per household was more than 2. The maximum number of looms possessed by one household was 8. Another three households in the village possessed more than 4 looms each and 7 households had 4 looms each. Only 11 households in the village i.e. 5 households belonging to Mishing community and 6 households on Non-Mishing community possessed no looms. These households without looms follow the subsidiary occupations such as carpentry, fitter and fishing net making etc. All the households belonging to the Scheduled caste have adopted making of fishing net as a main source of income. In Mishing society the number of looms possessed by a

Table 5.5

Disposal of Crops by Size Group of Operational Holdings, Mamani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1974-75.

Q. - quantity in quintals.
V. - value in rupees.

Size Group of Operational Holdings.	P r o d u c t i o n												Disposal			
	Paddy		Mustard		Vegetables		Potato		Mustard		Paddy		Q.	V.		
	Q.	V.	Q.	V.	Q.	V.	Q.	V.	Q.	V.	Q.	V.				
Landless	--	--	--	--	--	350	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1 ha.	35.45	3450	4.85	975	100	100	--	--	--	--	--	1.49	120	--	--	120
1 - 2	610.92	57070	25.71	5167	1540	1540	2.30	300	0.49	98	98	--	--	--	--	--
2 - 4	4205.97	386490	223.66	45953	9610	9610	53.41	6260	21.81	2390	2390	84.72	8225	8225	8225	8225
4 - 6	2044.77	183340	69.57	13990	4520	4520	27.06	2900	6.06	812	812	58.40	5067	5067	5067	5067
6 - 8	1453.24	131290	34.19	12900	2185	2185	8.77	940	1.87	250	250	189.58	20170	20170	20170	20170
8 - 10	297.06	26320	17.17	3450	200	200	5.50	600	--	--	--	93.30	10000	10000	10000	10000
10 - 12	212.72	19600	27.99	5625	300	300	4.48	430	0.75	100	100	93.30	10000	10000	10000	10000
Total :	8330.13	313060	433.14	83050	13805	13805	107.12	11480	30.98	4150	4150	520.79	53582	53582	53582	53582

Table 5.5 (Continued)

Disposal of Crops by Size Group of Operational Holdings, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, Assam, 1974-75.

Size Group of Operational Holdings (Hectares)	Disposal						Mustard (Qty.)	Mustard Value (Rs.)	Paddy (Qty.)	Mustard (Qty.)	Mustard Value (Rs.)	Vegetables (Qty.)	Vegetables Value (Rs.)	Potato (Qty.)	Potato Value (Rs.)	Matikalal (Qty.)	Matikalal Value (Rs.)	Total (Qty.)	Total Value (Rs.)		
	Mustard		Vegetables		Potato															Matikalal	
	Q.	V.	Q.	V.	Q.	V.														Q.	V.
Landless	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		
Below 1	4.48	960	--	--	--	--	--	33.96	0.37	100.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		
1 - 2	19.97	3410	--	--	--	--	--	610.92	5.74	1540.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.49	--		
2 - 4	173.54	33635	--	255	4.85	400	1.87	4121.25	55.12	9355.00	380	1.87	380	1.87	380	1.87	380	1.87	19.94		
4 - 6	53.37	10035	--	655	5.04	715	1.67	1936.37	16.20	3865.00	330	1.67	330	1.67	330	1.67	330	1.67	4.39		
6 - 8	44.03	8300	--	40	--	--	--	1233.63	20.13	2145.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.87		
8 - 10	15.78	3300	--	--	--	--	--	203.73	0.38	200.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		
10 - 12	23.12	5600	--	--	--	--	--	119.42	1.87	300.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.75		
Total :	338.30	65900	--	950	9.89	1115	3.54	8339.34	99.84	17855.00	710	3.54	710	3.54	710	3.54	710	3.54	27.44		

household depends upon the number of adult women and girls of the family.

7.2. The Mishing women prepare major part of their necessary dresses at their own looms. Some women produce clothes for sale too. Handloom weaving provides regular part-time employment to the womenfolk of the village. In fact the women folk of the Mishing spend their leisure time in the looms. The looms for a number of households are generally located in a central place and under a common shed. This offers the womanfolk an opportunity to assemble together when they can discuss about the village affairs intimately. Mekhela, Chadder, Bed-cover, Dhuti, Gamosa, etc. are the usual products produced by the Mishing women at their looms. Sometimes fancy shirtings and blouse pieces are also produced. Mirijim is a very valuable and durable traditional blanket produced by the Mishing community at their looms. The price of piece of Mirijim varies from Rs. 350.00 to Rs.600.00 depending upon its quantity and size. Mirijim is a very durable product and it lasts upto 20 years or more. Preparation of a piece of Mirijim is also not an easy task. In preparation of it a woman would have to be engaged atleast for 2 months. All the necessary raw materials for preparing a Mirijim are purchased from the market. Every Mishing household rears Endi worms at their homes and can prepare very fine Endi Chadders and Mekhelas at their looms. Endi-Chadders and Mekhelas which are woven in mixture with Muga yarn are very smooth and valuable.

7.3. Distribution of handloom products according to occupational classes is shown in Table 5.6. It shows the quantity and value of handloom products produced by the villagers for one year. Most of the articles thus produced

Table 5.6

Distribution of Production of Handloom Articles According to Occupational Classes, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1974-75.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	Endi Chaddar		Makhela		Chaddar		Jamosha	
		ψ. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	ψ. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	ψ. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	ψ. (No.)	V. (Rs.)
Owner Cultivator	100	204	12,200	718	5,277	715	5,625	439	2,653
Agri.Labour	2	--	--	14	108	11	86	3	50
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Salaried Job	1	2	12	5	35	--	--	--	--
Total :	109	206	12,212	737	5420	726	5711	447	2706

Contd.

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Distribution of Production of Handloom Articles According to Occupational Classes, Namani Borpomna, Majuli, 1974-75.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	Dhuti		Bed Cover		Endi Mekhela		Mirijim		Others	
		Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)
Owner Cultivator	100	252	1,776	52	592	8	505	43	21,100	416	1,825
Agri. Labour	2	74	25	2	25	--	--	--	--	--	--
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Salaried Job	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	109	253	1,801	54	617	8	505	43	21,100	416	1,825

Table 5.7
 Disposal of Handloom Products by Occupational Classes, Namani Borpomma,
 Majuli, 1974-75.

Occupational Classes	Endi Chadder		Bed-cover		Dhuti		Gomosa (Towel)		Mekhola		Chadder		Mirjim		Others	
	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)	Q. (No.)	V. (Rs.)
Owner Cultivator	71	4360.00	15	136.00	2	14.00	21	105.00	12	65.00	18	109.00	3	1200.00	135	630.00
Agri. Labour	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Trade, Commerce & Transport	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Salaried Job	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	71	4360.00	15	136.00	2	14.00	21	105.00	13	65.00	18	100.00	3	1200.00	135	630.00

are meant for domestic use by the members of the family. But in some cases, some families have taken weaving on a commercial basis where surplus female labour is available. Table 5.7 shows the disposal of handloom products of the village by occupational classes. Only the occupational class of 'Owner Cultivators' in the village could sale handloom products produced at home in that year. All the families of this occupational class belong to the Mishing community and these families are financially well-to-do in the village and have got necessary surplus female labours for the purpose.

CHAPTER VI

Income, Expenditure and Level of Living :

I. Introduction :

1.1. The economic activities of the village are discussed in the previous Chapters and this Chapter deals with income, expenditure and level of living of the people of the village Namani Borpomua. Income and expenditure of a particular household for a particular period indicate the economic condition of the household for that period. Similarly, the total village income and expenditure in different items show the standard of living of the people of the village to a great extent.

1.2. But the main problem of depicting a fair picture of annual income and expenditure of a village is the paucity of accurate and reliable data. The data on income and expenditure presented in this chapter are collected from the villagers on interview method. On the other hand, the villagers are not in the habit of keeping accounts of income and expenditure. The respondent might also overestimate or under-estimate the quantum of income and expenditure. Despite such difficulties, attempts have been made to present a fairly reliable picture of income and expenditure of the villagers and their level of living.

2. Village Income :

2.1. The term 'village income' here means the sum total of the value of goods and services produced by the individual villagers or by their agents during a reference period. In calculating the village income, the value of crops grown by the villagers and the remuneration of professions and

services are taken into account. But some items such as firewood collected from the jungle for household consumption, fish caught and domestic or wild animals and birds killed for home consumption, the value of which can hardly be calculated are excluded from the assessment of both income and expenditure. Hence the total annual income assessed is gross income rather than net income. The net income could not be calculated as data on depreciation and other cost items are not available.

2.2. The percentage distribution of village income by sources and occupational classes is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Percentage Distribution of Village Income from Different Sources by Occupational Classes, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Sources of Income	Occupational Classes				Total
	Owner Cultivator	Agri. Labour	Trade, Commerce & Transport	Salaried Job	
No. of H.H.	100	2	6	1	109
<u>1. Agriculture</u>					
(a) Cultivation of crops	81.14	37.57	4.61	22.58	79.09
(b) Horticulture	0.34	--	--	--	0.33
(c) Live-stock & poultry	4.04	--	--	--	3.92
(d) Agri. wages	0.11	58.40	1.90	--	0.58
Sub-Total of Agriculture	85.63	95.97	6.51	22.58	83.92
2. Arts & crafts	6.04	4.03	5.79	4.11	6.01
3. Trade, commerce & transport	4.02	--	87.70	--	5.61
4. Prof. & service	2.41	--	--	--	2.33
5. Salary	1.80	--	--	73.31	2.03
6. Non-Ag. wages	0.10	--	--	--	0.10
Sub-total of non-agriculture	14.37	4.03	93.49	77.42	16.08
Grand Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 6.2

Distribution of Village Income from Different Sources by Occupational Classes, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

(In Rupees)

Sources of Income	Occupational Classes				Total
	Owner cultivator	Ag. labour	Trade, Commerce & Transport	Salaried job	
No. of H.H.	100	2	6	1	109
1. Agriculture					
(a) Cultivation of crops	763700	2740	875	850	768165
(b) Horticulture	3236	--	--	--	3236
(c) Live-stock & poultry	38033	--	--	--	38033
(d) Agri. wages	1015	4260	360	--	5635
Sub-total of Agriculture	805934 (93.33)	7000 (0.35)	1235 (0.15)	850 (0.11)	815069 (100.00)
2. Arts & crafts					
	56825	294	1100	155	58374
3. Trade, commerce & transport					
	37800	--	16650	--	54450
4. Prof. & services					
	22640	--	--	--	22640
5. Salary					
	16925	--	--	2760	19685
6. Non-ag. wages					
	1000	--	--	--	1000
Sub-total of non-ag.	135190 (86.58)	294 (0.19)	17750 (11.37)	2915 (1.86)	156149 (100.00)
Grand total	941174 (96.90)	7294 (0.75)	18985 (1.96)	3765 (0.39)	971218 (100.00)

Table 6.3

Distribution of Village Income, Namani
Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Occupational classes	Annual Income Per		
	Household.	Worker	Capital
Owner cultivator	9411.74	1592.51	848.66
Agriculture labour	3647.00	1458.80	729.40
Trade, Commerce & Transport	3164.16	2712.13	678.03
Salaried job	3765.00	1882.50	418.33
Total	8910.25	1605.32	840.15

highest in the village but the income per worker of this occupational class is slightly lower than that of the non-agricultural occupations which is only due to concentration of more labourers in this occupation. The per capita income of the village as a whole is Rs.840.15.

3. Expenditure :

3.1. The pattern of consumption expenditure is a significant index of standard of living of a particular household or community. Although the data represent annual expenditure on different heads, the data in case of certain items of consumption such as food, fuel and lighting, intoxicants etc. are based on the expenditure in a particular month. On the other hand, expenditures on clothes, education, medical, ceremonials etc. are collected for a year. It is due to the fact that the respondents are not in a position to remember the expenditure of all the items distinctly for the whole year. To work out the annual consumption expenditure,

the monthly data are multiplied by 12, neglecting all seasonal variations. However, in calculating the annual expenditures in this way, attention has been paid to sort out those items which are not commonly used for the whole year and those which are used for the year as a whole.

3.2. From Table 6.4 it is found that food items (both cereals and non-cereals) covers 82.32 per cent of the total

Table 6.4

Annual Expenditure in Different Heads, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Heads of Expenditure	Value in Rupees	Percentages
1. Food		
(a) Cereals	505998.54	67.98
(b) Non-cereals	106739.26	14.34
Sub-total :	612737.80	82.32
2. Intoxicant	28125.40	3.55
3. Fuel & lighting	7768.32	1.04
4. Luxuries & comfort	13872.00	1.86
5. Clothing & footwear	35710.00	4.80
6. Education	25965.00	3.49
7. Medical	8657.00	1.16
8. Entertainment	12965.00	1.74
9. Services	203.00	0.04
Sub-total :	131565.72	17.68
Total :	744303.52	100.00

annual expenditure of the village. Next to food, expenditure on clothing and footwear holds a significant position. The young educated boys and girls in the village has keen preference for modern fashions. Expenditures on intoxicants

Table 6.5

Annual Expenditure in Different Heads According to Occupational Classes,
Mamoni Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	Food		Fuel & Lighting	Intexi- Luxuries & Comfort	Clothing & Footwear	Education Medical	Entertain- ment	Services Total			
		Cereals	Non-Cereals									
Over												
Cultivator	100	485425.93	102399.51	7452.48	25396.10	13303.00	34578.00	25945.00	3217.00	12735.00	197.00	715784.02
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	12253.02	2585.38	133.16	613.20	335.00	530.00	--	250.00	--	3.00	16731.73
Agriculture Labour	2	4377.15	923.35	67.20	219.00	120.00	340.00	--	40.00	--	--	3086.70
Salaried Job	1	3939.44	331.02	60.48	197.10	103.00	152.00	20.00	150.00	200.00	3.00	5571.04
Total :	109	505993.54	103739.26	7768.32	23425.40	13372.00	35710.00	25935.00	8657.00	12935.00	203.00	744303.52

occupies the third important position in volume in the village. It is stated earlier that the Mishing peoples irrespective of age and sex are habituated in taking rice beer. Further, bidi, cigarette, tobacco, betelnuts etc. are also largely used by them. Some of the villagers have to incur a huge expenditures for higher education of their boys and girls in educational institutions in different parts of the State. Compared to other tribal villages of Majuli, the village Namani Borpomua is educationally advanced and the percentage of literacy in this village is higher than that of the State as a whole.

3.3. Table 6.5 shows the annual expenditure under different heads according to occupational classes. It is found that the occupational class of "Owner cultivator" accounts for 96.17 per cent of the total annual expenditure of the village followed by the occupational class of "Trade, commerce & transport" accounting for 2.25 per cent. The owner cultivators have got a major share of income from cultivation and being economically well-to-do, they cover all the major heads of expenditure, which signifies their better standard of living in the village.

3.4. Majority of the Mishing people do not take tea at home. But now-a-days few enlightened families use to prepare tea at home, especially to entertain the guests. Table 6.6 shows the annual expenditure on this account which appears to

Table 6.6

Per Capita Consumption of Tea & Sugar, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

No. of H.H.	No. of persons	(In grams)			
		Per capita consumption of		Per capita consumption of	
		Tea (Annual)	Sugar (Annual)	Tea (Daily)	Sugar (Daily)
5	59	20.34	152.54	0.05	0.42

Table 6.7

Distribution of Annual Expenditure per Household, per worker and Per Capita by Occupational Classes, Naroni Borpomna, Majuli, 1975.

Occupational Classes	Number of		(Expenditure in Rupees)				
	House- hold.	worker	Population	Total Expenditure	Per Household Expenditure	Per Worker Expenditure	Per Capita Expenditure
Owner Cultivator	100	591	1109	715784.02	7157.84	1211.14	345.43
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	7	23	13761.73	2793.62	2394.53	593.63
Agriculture Labour	2	5	10	3083.70	3043.35	1217.34	303.67
Salaried Job	1	2	9	5371.04	5371.04	2335.52	630.11
Total :	109	605	1156	744303.52	6823.47	1230.25	643.86

be quite insignificant in comparison with other items of expenditure. Only five households in the village used tea at the time of investigation.

3.5. Per household, per worker and per capita annual expenditure of the village is shown in Table 6.7, which reveals that the per capita expenditure of the occupational class of "owner cultivator" which is Rs.645.43 is higher than the village average of Rs.643.86. Except this occupational class, all other occupational classes have got per capita expenditure below the village average.

3.6. Data presented in Table 6.8 shows the units of per capita consumption of essential commodities per year and per day.

Table 6.8

Per Capita Consumption of Some Important Items,
Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Consumption goods	Per Capita	
	Per Year	Per Day
1. Rice	194.54 kg.	533.00 grams.
2. Pulses (Matikalai)	1.82 kg.	5.00 "
3. Potato	4.38 "	12.00 "
4. Onion	1.82 "	5.00 "
5. Gree Vegetables	0.67 Paise	0.02 paise
6. Fish	18.25 kg.	50.00 grams.
7. Meat	2.43 "	6.67 "
8. Mustard Oil	1.22 litre	3.33 mili-litre
9. Salt	4.86 kg.	13.33 grams
10. Kerosene	4.38 litre	12.00 mili-litre

Rice is the main staple food for the Mishing. The adults usually take rice twice a day but the children take it four times a day. Therefore per capita consumption of rice in the village is 533.00 grams. Next to rice, fish occupies a prominent position. As the Mishing reside on the river banks, fishes are readily available to them all the year round and

therefore they take fish regularly with rice and rice-beer.

4. Housing Condition :

4.1. The residential houses of Namani Borpomua have a common structural pattern as stated in Chapter II. Most of the houses in the village are of simple type and they are made of wood, bamboo and thatch. Distribution of house units by occupational classes in the village is shown in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9

Distribution of House-units by Occupational Classes,
Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Occupational classes	No. of H.H.	Residential	Kit-chen	Granary	Cowshed	Others	Total	No. of units per household
Owner cultivator	100	106	4	101	28	2	241	2.41
Trade, commerce & transport	6	6	--	--	--	--	6	1.00
Ag. labour	2	2	--	1	--	--	3	1.50
Salaried job	1	1	--	1	--	--	2	2.00
Total :	109	115	4	103	28	2	252	2.31

Out of the total number of 252 houses units in the village, residential houses have covered 115 numbers. Next to residential houses, the number of granary in the village was 103 at the time of investigation. All the households having paddy cultivation, try to construct atleast one granary. The Mishings generally do not construct separate cowshed for keeping their cattle and they are kept under the

platform of the residential houses. But at the time of study, 28 separate cowsheds were found in the village. Only those households who possessed large number of cattle have separate cowsheds.

4.2. Table 6.10 shows the nature of residential houses and their distribution by occupation. Out of the total space of 105760 sq.ft. covered by residential houses in the village, 101990 sq.ft. or 96.44 per cent are covered by houses made of bamboo and thatch. Only 750 sq.ft. residential houses in the village have roof covered with C.I. sheet. Few residential houses have got pucca walls with thatched roof. Except the houses with pucca walls, all other houses have got no windows and ventilations. But as they are constructed with bamboo and thatch there remains enough provisions for light and air. The walls of residential houses made of reed and bamboo are not pulstared with mud.

4.3. The floor space per household varies from 1004.20 sq. ft. to 448.33 sq.ft. and the per household floor space covered by the occupational class "owner cultivator" and "salaried job" is higher than that of the village as a whole. Except bamboo, other housing materials such as wood, reed, thatch and cane are collected from the jungles free of cost and that is why the Mishing can construct their residential houses long and wide. The average floor space per household and per capita is 970.27 sq.ft. and 91.48 sq.ft. respectively and it is considered to be above normal.

5. Durable Consumer Goods :

5.1. The number and nature of durable consumer goods possessed by the villagers also indicate their standard of living. Table 6.11 shows the number of durable consumer goods

Table 6.10

Occupationwise Squarefeet Distribution of Residential Units, Namohi Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Occupations	No. of H.H.	Population	Residential Units (Chang-ghar)			Residential Total	Per House-Hold	Per Capita
			Bamboo & Thatch	Pucca & G.I. Sheet	Pucca & Thatch			
Owner Cultivator	100	1109	97270	750	2100	100420	1004.20	90.55
Trade, Commerce & Transport	6	28	2070	--	--	2690	448.33	96.07
Agriculture Labour	2	10	1650	--	--	1650	825.00	165.00
Salaried Job	1	9	1000	--	--	1000	1000.00	111.11
Total :	109	1156	101990	750	2100	105760	970.27	91.48

Table 6.11

Number of Durable Consumer Goods by Occupational Classes, Namani Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Name of articles	Owner cultivator	Trade, commerce & transport	Ag. labour	Salaried job	Total
Radio	14	--	--	--	14
Sewing machine	12	--	--	1	13
Bicycle	47	1	--	--	48
Watch	31	--	--	1	32
Patromax	1	--	--	--	1
Torch Light	65	2	--	--	67
Table	97	1	--	1	99
Chair	104	1	--	1	106
Almirah	13	--	--	--	13
China Crokery	106	--	--	--	106
Brass Utensil	2407	27	40	15	2489
Lantern	148	3	1	1	153
Bucket	163	3	1	2	169
Kettle	184	5	2	2	193
Wooden Box	236	4	4	--	241
Cot	46	3	--	1	50

possessed by the villagers. For a tribal village the possession of radio, sewing machine, watch etc. is considerable. The Mishing people have a tradition of using costly utensils made of bell-metal and therefore 2489 units of such utensils were found in the village at the time of study. The occupationwise distribution of consumer durable goods shows

that the occupational class "owner cultivator" possessed about 95 per cent of the total units of the village. Possession of wooden box by every Mishing family is also a tradition and such wooden boxes are generally big and costly. Depending on the size and quality of the box, the cost of such a box varies from Rs.100/- to Rs.300/-. The unmarried young girls use such wooden boxes to keep their necessary dresses and they are given as dowry to the girls at the time of marriage.

6. Indebtedness :

6.1. Although most of the villager of Namoni Borpomua are economically sound, The small and marginal farmers are facing economic hardship. Such poor families take loans from others. But it is difficult to collect accurate data on indebtedness as the people do not like to disclose their burden of debts for the sake of social prestige.

6.2. Table 6.12 shows the amount of indebtedness by source for the last four years preceeding to the year of first

Table 6.12

Indebtedness in Amount by Years and Sources of Borrowing, Namoni Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Years	Source of Borrowing -				Total
	Villager	Village Mahajan	Village Shopkeeper	Mahajan	
1972	--	1100.00	--	--	1100.00
1973	200.00	500.00	--	--	700.00
1974	300.00	1700.00	200.00	7250.00	9450.00
1975	--	750.00	3625.00	600.00	4975.00
Total :	500.00 (3.08)	4050.00 (24.96)	3825.00 (23.58)	7850.00 (48.38)	16225.00 (100.00)

point study. Out of the total loans of Rs.16,225.00 in the village for four years, Rs.12,900.00 or 73.34 per cent are supplied by both village and Town Mahajans. The rate of interest for such loans is very high varying from 50 per cent to 100 per cent. But sometimes such loans are paid in kind i.e. by giving the crops grown at a price fixed at the time of taking the loan. At the time of investigation no Govt. or Cooperative Agency for providing loans to the villagers. Almost all the loans were used in domestic consumption.

7. Purchase & Sale of Assets and Livestock :

7.1. Table 6.13 shows the extent of purchase and sale of assets and livestock etc. during the year 1974-75 by

Table 6.13

Purchase and Sale of Assets During 1974-75, Namoni Borpomua, Majuli, 1975.

Occupational Classes	Purchase			Sale		
	Land	Livestock	Total	Land	Livestock	Total
Owner cultivator	1200.00	5284.00	6484.00	--	10613.00	10613.00
Trade, commerce & transport	--	--	--	--	--	--
Agriculture labour	--	--	--	2000.00	--	2000.00
Salaried job	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	1200.00	5284.00	6484.00	2000.00	10613.00	12613.00

different occupational classes. Land is the primary asset but purchase and sale of land in the village are quite insignificant in comparison with livestock. Almost all the land in the village are Khiraj-annual and such lands cannot be purchased or sold in the legal sense of the term. But the villagers sometimes have done such transactions privately on mutual agreement. The purchase and sale of livestock cover 81.49 per cent and 84.14 per cent of the total value of purchase and sale of assets and livestock respectively in the year. The owner cultivators hold a significant position in all the transactions.

CHAPTER VII

Summary and Conclusion

1. Namoni Borpomua is a typical Mishing village in the river-island, Majuli of the Sibsagar District of Assam having 109 households with a total population of 1156. Out of 109 households, 104 households belong to the Mishing community, a plain tribe of Assam. They represent a homogeneous society in the village and the rest of the households are non-Mishing immigrants and have insignificant role in the socio-economic life of the village.

2. The average size of family in the village Namoni Borpomua is 10.6 persons. More than 50 per cent of the total households in the village are joint families. The Mishings have a tradition of and preference for living in joint families. The sex-ratio is 91 females per 100 males. Early marriage is generally disfavoured by the Mishings and the common age for marriage appears to be between 25 to 35 years for both male and female. Literacy rate is satisfactory, 34.25 per cent of the total population in the village are literate and educated. Several students from this village are taking higher education in different parts of the State.

3. The working force in the village (855) is higher than labour force (712) due to the existence of some helpers below the age of 10 years in the working force. The number of male and female workers is almost equal in the village and it is a general feature in a tribal society in Assam. About 96.80 per cent of the total population in the village are engaged directly or indirectly in agricultural occupations,

of which 95.94 per cent are owner cultivators. It signifies the dominance of agriculture in the economic pursuits of the villagers. Out of 109 households in the village, 59 households or 54.22 per cent have one or more subsidiary occupations in addition to the primary ones.

4. Almost all the land in the village are Aksona Patta land i. e. Khiraj-annual except 1.41 hectares of Myadi Patta land i.e. Khiraj-periodic. The villagers cultivate some Govt. land which are known as Toriubad land. Out of 109 households in the village, only 6 households (5.50%) are landless and these landless households belong to immigrant non-Mishing community. About 68.81 per cent of the total households in the village possess land between 2 to 6 hectares and 69.34 per cent of the total land is owned by these households. Thirteen households possess land more than 6 hectares each and they are considered as rich cultivators. Out of 408.04 hectares of total land owned by the villagers, the total net area sown is 360.41 hectares. Total area sown more than once is only 80.26 hectares.

5. Although the method of cultivation practised by the villagers is traditional, the yield rate is satisfactory. This is primarily due to the fact that the land is replainedshed by recurring floods. Mixed cropping is favoured by the villagers and out of 360.41 hectares of net area sown in the village, 130 hectares are covered by mixed crops which are usually Bao and Ahu paddy. Almost all the households in the village practise mixed cropping.

6. Paddy (Ahu, Bao and Sali) as food crop and mustard as cash crop are the main field crops dominating the crop-pattern of the village. Paddy cultivation covers 472.97 hectares

or 81.96 per cent of the total cropped area of the village. Of this cropped area, the Ahu paddy cultivation alone covers 272.37 hectares or 47.20 per cent which are mainly mixed and double cropped area. Next to paddy, the cultivation of mustard covers 97.67 hectares or 16.97 per cent of the total cropped area of the village. All the crops grown in the village are of local varieties. Although occurrence of floods is an annual phenomenon in Majuli, only 7.70 hectares of paddy crop land were damaged by floods in the village in 1974. Per hectare yield of paddy is 18.32 quintals.

7. Handloom weaving provides a regular part-time employment to the women-folk of the village and it is associated with their cultural life. The women in the village produce their necessary dresses at their own looms and they seldom purchase their dresses from the market. Some poor families have accepted weaving as a source of income for living. Mirijim (cotton blanket) and Endi Chadder (Assam silk wrapper) and Mekhela (ladies lower garment) and are some important valuable handloom products produced by the Mishing women-folk.

8. The annual per capita income (return to family labour) of the village is Rs.840.00. Some of the families in the village have surplus family budgets. But only a small portion of surplus income of the villagers is invested in business and other productive purposes. Investment in education is considerable. The villagers have to pay higher prices of some essential commodities brought from outside. It happens only for difficult transport and communication system in the island.

Concluding Remarks :

9. The measure for economic development of this flood-affected village is linked with the major economic development projects of the island as a whole. The problem of flood is inevitable in Majuli due to its peculiar geographical situation and therefore any measure for economic development of the island during the rainy season needs proper care and attention. On the other hand, no one can be sure of any flood control measure to be easily successful due to furious nature of the great Brahmaputra during the rainy season. So the winter season is the appropriate time for implementing any developmental scheme in Majuli. The Rabi crop programme taken up by the State Government is proved to be successful in the island. The programme should be intensified with the introduction H.Y.V. crops which can be harvested before the onset of monsoon.

10. The floods of the river Subanshri generally create havoc to Namoni Borpomua. The flood control measures have sometimes proved to be unsuccessful. The economic development in the village can be ushered in by introducing H.Y.V. paddy cultivation especially during the winter season.

11. As subsidiary occupations, the business in fish and milk holds prominent position. The young educated youths of the village should be encouraged to take up such business. For this purpose, some cooperative societies along with the people of neighbouring villages should be formed for collection and distribution of these products at reasonable prices. The beels (natural fish farms) under the control of the Government should be allotted to such cooperatives.

12. Introduction of Dairy and Poultry Farming on commercial ~~line~~ can also be suggested as a potential source of income and employment to the poor cultivators in and around the village. On the other hand, there is much scope for development of handloom weaving to make it a profitable source of income to the people. There is also scope for production of Endi cocoons on a large scale. The concerned Department can guide these tribal people in taking up these occupations by providing necessary incentive.

13. The people of this river-island including the villagers of Borpomua suffer from difficulties of transport and communication. Provision should be made to offer special concessions in ferry charges for all goods which are transported to and from Majuli and it would be much helpful in reducing the price level of essential commodities.
