

BALIPARA FOUNDATION
Assam • India

MANIPUR

Teinem Village, Ukhrul



EASTERN HIMALAYAN
NATURENOMICS™ FORUM

INTELLIGENCE DOCUMENT





Understanding Teinem

Geography

Teinem village, ealier named as Tuinem is located in the west of Ukhurul District in the state of Manipur. The village falls under the Sub-division of Lungchong Meiphai community development and its constituency under 45 Chingai (ST) Ukhurul District, Manipur, 795144. According to the census taken by Teinem Village Authority 2022, the population is 5096 with 2558 male and 2538 female with 926 households. The village is located 21 km towards the west from Ukhurul District headquarter, and 74 km towards the east-north from the capital Imphal. The village area comprises of only 22.3 sq. km.

Biodiversity

Teinem village is gifted with rich flora and fauna. Some of the known species of plants and trees are : Alder (*Alnus nepalensis*), *Prunus cirosirdes*, *Symingtonia*, *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Parkia javanica*, *Paraserrianthes falcotaria*, *Michelia oblonga*, *Cmilina arborea*, *pinus kerya*, *robinea pseduoacacia*, besides various iris species, wild roses, red and white rhododendrons etc. This tropical forest is also the habitat of many valued species of birds and animals. Many threatened species like, the tragopan blythii, pangolin (ant eater), salamander, tiger, porcupine, hooting monkey, leopard, big-small and medium size black bears, elephant, wild buffalo, wild boars, deers and stags, wild goats and many unidentified species are found in this region. Birds of various colours and sizes are also found here including some migratory birds.

Indigenous Communities

Teinem village is predominantly inhabited by the indigenous Tangkhul Nagas. There are 140 government employees and village dweller depend on multiple skills for living, where agriculture is the primary occupation. The Tangkhul Naga communities live mostly in the Indo-Myanmar- belt occupying the Ukhurul District of Manipur. Tangkhuls are the village loving communities. Right from the beginning, every Tangkhul village had been a well organized and has an independent political unit.

The villages were guided by their customary and traditional laws. Most of the Tangkhul villages are located near the spring or streams, that ensures them with dependable supply of drinking water. The Tangkhul Nagas are agriculturist by profession and practiced two kinds of agriculture methods. Shifting cultivation was the first and foremost agricultural practices by the Tangkhul Nagas before the introduction of terraced cultivation in the region. It was also called slash-and-burn or swidden agriculture, and the main crop was rice, although, millet, taro, maize, ginger, chillies, cotton and other plants are also grown in their farmlands.

Rural Economy

Agricultural crops: Agriculture is the most important source of livelihood for the indigenous communities of the Ukhurul. More then 70 per cent of the total population of the district is directly or indirectly depended on agricultural activities. Rice, Maize, Potato, Pulse, Cabbage, Leafy vegetable, chillies, groundnuts etc. are the main agricultural products. The indigenous communities mainly practices terrace farming in the hill landscapes to do both wet rice and dry rice cultivation.

Rice, Maize, Potato, Pulse, Cabbage, Leafy vegetable, chillies, groundnuts etc. are the main agricultural products. Banana, sugarcane, fruits like lemon and orange are also planted.



Land Use Change

Teinem Village has existed in the structure of tribal society with shared relationships and possessions. However, the global social and economic process has brought changes in the structure of each society and Teinem is no exception. This village is thickly populated with diminutive land. It turns out difficult for the people to expand the crops that commonly have market demand such as potato and chilli which requires them fertile virgin soil that needs a lot of jhum cultivation. In this sense, marijuana produces a large amount of profit within a few acres of land so they have a long history of this illegal farming. After the pandemic in 2020, the demand

for marijuana in the market reduced drastically. This worsened the scenario, as farmers are trying to bring an alternative with poppy plantation. The consequences of this farming that causes environmental degradation and holistic health issue is beyond imagination.

As an impact of low economic resources, indiscriminate cutting and destruction of forest and habitats for shifting cultivation caused denudation of forests and biodiversity in the district. Adding to it, the absence of soil conservation measures augmented with high rainfall results in increased run off, erosion of topsoil, decline of soil fertility and low crop yields across the village.

Rural Futures Index Survey: In-depth socio-economic profiling of Teinem Village

Balipara Foundation experts team conducted the RuFu Index survey as a primary data collection method to collect field data creating a sample from a controlled group study. The RuFu index envisions to track down the indices which highlight the way in which nature plays an intimate role in economic and cultural survival, resilience and continuity of indigenous and rural communities.

The survey conducted through Focus Group Discussions with two participant groups of Women SHGs and Teinem Village Council attempted to track down the changes in community- nature relationships, changes in attitude, and well being of the resident communities indices over the years. It further explored the overlaps between social, economic and cultural wellbeing in relation to ecology and overall human wellbeing & satisfaction of Tinem village.

Socio-political context: Teinem Village which was earlier known as Tuinem is located in the west of Ukhrul District, Manipur state in India. The village falls under the Sub-division of Lungchong Meiphai community development and its constituency under 45 Chingai (ST) Ukhrul District, Manipur, 795144. According to the census taken by Teinem Village Authority 2022, the population is 5096 with 2558 male and 2538 female with 926 households. The village is located 21 km towards the west from Ukhrul District headquarter, and 74 km towards the east-north from the capital Imphal. Like any other

traditional and customary governance systems in Northeast India, Teinem village council is the basis for governance and is represented through clan system under the village chief or headman. The system of representation is hereditary in nature following permanent membership. Till today it is still practiced and remains relevant in most of the neighbouring villages inhabited by the Tangkhul Nagas. It is generally believed that the system is democratic and accountable. On the other hand, the resident communities are witnessing the entry and working of democratic political institution through various laws and legislations like; Manipur village authorities (hill areas) Act, 1956 and Manipur (hill areas) district council Act, 1971. However, this structure is external and sometimes viewed by the communities as an imposition by state to produce some homogenous concept of a nation state.

Language and Dialect: A majority of the population in Teinem village speaks Tangkhul, and it is reported as mother tongue by approximately 95.7 percent of the total households, while 4 percent reported Shokavo as the mother tongue. Meitei, Hindi and English was reported as the language mostly spoken by the resident communities for trade and commerce.



Discussant Topics & Key Findings

Topics/ Thematics	Key findings
Income and Livelihood	<p>It has been reflected that approximately 80 % of the village workforce are dependent on agricultural and allied activities for their livelihoods and income.</p> <p>About 10% of the resident communities are employed in various government jobs. While a minor percentage of the workforce are engaged in production and related works, sales/business work, professional, technical & related work, clerical & related work, administrative and managerial work.</p> <p>Gender wise women constitutes approximately 40 % of the village workforce and are engaged in agricultural and animal husbandry, handloom and crafts.</p>
Relationship with Nature	<p>The indigenous communities of Tienem village shares an intricate relationship with their immediate nature and natural assets. They are dependent on multiple resources of nature to sustain their life and daily needs. Categorically to be mentioned they source firewood and timber; wild fruits and mushrooms; medicinal plants & herb from the forest, channelizing the spring water to their cultivable lands, amongst others.</p> <p>The villagers also nurture a social belief of worshipping a mountain/hill in their close vicinity. They belief that this particular hill blessing them with good health and prosperity.</p>
Deforestation Patterns	<p>The villagers of Teinem traditionally practices the slash and burn/shifting cultivation for agricultural and allied activities and this has led to destruction of major portion natural forested lands.</p> <p>However, the deforestation rate exaggerated in 2013 & 2014 when few households from the village cleared a large area of the natural forests for marijuana and poppy cultivation. Marijuana produces a large amount of profit within a few acres of land so they have a long history of this illegal farming. The consequences of this farming is clearly visible on the ground with soil nutrient degradation, groundwater depletion, biodiversity loss and holistic health issue of communities that is beyond words. Notably after the pandemic in 2020, the marijuana demand in the market reduced drastically that worsened the income sources of the poppy cultivators.</p>



Topics/ Thematics	Key findings
Agricultural and Allied Practices and Patterns	<p>The economy of Teinem village is entirely dependent on agricultural and allied activities. Agriculture is the main occupation for the resident communities. Paddy, maize, potato, pulses, vegetables, chillies, groundnuts, etc. are the major crop produces across the village. In addition to it, the animal husbandry and livestock's are being practiced by the women SHGs of the village.</p> <p>The women SHGs and village farmers are also jointly engaged into poultry farming, piggery, pisciculture, apiculture and cattle rearing.</p> <p>The local farm produces are marketed through Ukhrul Bazar and Yangangpokpi Bazar, while a few vendors collect it from the village. This is a normally how the villagers transact their business and sell away their products.</p> <p>The women SHGs and village farmers are also jointly engaged into poultry farming, piggery, pisciculture, apiculture and cattle rearing.</p> <p>The local farm produces are marketed through Ukhrul Bazar and Yangangpokpi Bazar, while a few vendors collect it from the village. This is a normally how the villagers transact their business and sell away their products.</p>
Land Ownership and Governance	<p>Teinem village, predominantly inhabited by the Tangkhuls is a patriarchal society, wherein the land ownership and governance is vested upon the supreme leaderships of the village chieftain and the council. The village headman/chief is the one who allocates the designated land to each and every households for agricultural and other activities. He also owns and govern the community lands in the village, wherein under his guidance any activities can be undertaken.</p> <p>Interestingly, women has no place in the traditional political institutions like village council, Longphang, TNL etc. This trends has been endorsed and following as a part of the culture and customary practices since time immemorial. The simple fact is that, this traditional political institution has to deal with land, conflicts resolution, certain customary laws and practices where women are being subjected to perform on land issues and customary administration. According to customary law, women are not inherited property in terms of land (inherit only movable property), and moreover they are certain kind of roles and functions they are assigned by the societal norms and culture making them to engaged with domestic chores. However all agreed they indirectly participate and make it strong their political institutions. In olden times, Women play an important role in a situation of conflicts and war between villages. Women play a mediator role between their brothers' village and husband village which every member of the two villages waited her for peaceful negotiation and solution. They were called Harkhonla (Tangkhul Dialect). By culture and law of the land protected her.</p>

Topics/ Thematics	Key findings
Handloom and Handicrafts	<p>The communities of Teinem village are skilled in crafts ad artisan works. Handloom, handicrafts and artisan works provide a sizeable amount of additional income to the village economy.</p> <p>In a number of cases, such activities has been highlighted as the mainstay of the households. Most of the products in this segment are sold in local as well as outside markets. However, marketing of these products and insufficiency of raw materials are found to be a major constraint for majority of the local artisans.</p>
Migration Patterns	<p>It has been revealed that people from Teinem villages move out to places looking for work on daily basis. The survey indicate that 20 percentage of village population daily go outside in neighbouring villages for work. A little more than 5 5 percent goes to block and district HQ for work. The monthly earning of the migrant workers reported to be in the range of Rs. 1550 - Rs. 13000.</p> <p>The survey revealed that casualisation of labour has increased. The distressful situation has forced for migration to other places in search of livelihood. It is found that during last one year, workers from Teinem village migrated outside for a period of 3 to 8 months in search of work. As reported, about 49 percent of these people migrated within the district, about 20 percent outside the district but within the state and the rest had migrated to multiple places in search of work. Majority of the workers were found organised through friends and/or relatives. The monthly earning of the migrant workers reported to be in the range of Rs. 2000 – Rs. 9500.</p> <p>There is evidence of high wage rate differentials prevalent for male and female workers in the rural areas of the district. It is found that on an average, male wage rate is about 18 percent higher than female wage rate for different types of work.</p>
Agro-climatic Conditions	<p>Teinem village witnesses a diverse agroclimatic condition because of its strategic geographical location in the Indo-Myanmar belt, of the Eastern Himalayas. Depending on the changing temperature, elevation the climatic condition varies, and hence the variety of crops, vegetables and fruits that thrives in the villages are diverse.</p> <p>Hence, there is need to develop agricultural intervention models supported by climate and location based research assessments to maximize the yields of agricultural crops.</p>

Topics/ Thematics	Key findings
Climate Vulnerabilities	<p>While interacting with the participant groups, it was brought to light that climate is acting fast and evidently in the hill landscapes of Teinem village. The natural springs that is considered to be the lifeline for resident communities, being only source to cultivable lands and drinking purpose are drying up, thereby adding to woes of the villagers with reduced annual yield and farm productivity.</p> <p>While interacting with the participant groups, it was brought to light that climate is acting fast and evidently in the hill landscapes of Teinem village. This will potentially mark the villagers as vulnerable communities.</p> <p>The natural springs that were considered to be the lifeline for resident communities, being only source to their cultivable lands and drinking water purpose are drying up, thereby adding to woes of the villagers with reduced annual yield and farm productivity.</p> <p>The rainfall pattern has been drastically impacted by climate affecting the intensity and frequency of precipitation. The variability and the unpredictability of rainfall has affected the marginal farmers in their crops productivity and directly affecting their annual incomes estimated through farm produces.</p>
Transport and Connectivity	<p>Transport and communication is the basic infrastructure needed for a generation of economic activity. A well-developed transport and communication system plays a vital role in ensuring sustained economic growth. Roads are the life line of the people of Teinem village as as there are practically no other means of transport and communication.</p> <p>Pathetic road condition in the hill district has always been detrimental for the developmental aspirations of the villagers. In most of the scenario the inter village roads are not surfaced.</p>
Wildlife and Biodiversity	<p>Teinem village is bestowed with rich flora and fauna. There are varieties of trees, flowering plants, orchids of enumerable hues and kinds, epiphytic ferns, varied species of plants and shrubs. This tropical forest is also the habitat of many valued species of birds and animals.</p> <p>The Teinem village council has recently passed a resolution penalizing any activities related to wildlife hunting and habitat destruction. This move has positively impacted in conserving the areas within the council's territory to be conserved and remain intact with the natural forests.</p>





Community Case Stories

Paominien Khongsai
Farmer, Molhoi Village, Kangpokpi

Paominien Khongsai, a 43 year old farmer from Molhoi village of Manipur's Kangpokpi district was daily waged worker until he got involved with Balipara Foundation to the **Rural Futures Rewilding – Habitats and Agroforestry project** in Bongmul.

Khongsai, who happens to be a passionate farmer and sees farming as an opportunity to transform the rural economics, thereby establishing a mechanism to secure universal basic assets like food security, education, healthcare, for his native communities, in this crucial time of climate crisis.

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“Climate change is affecting our traditional agricultural patterns, hence we need to transition to a resilient model of farming which is an alternative income source as well sustainable in nature”, khongsai expresses.

In 2021, Khongsai got inducted to the **Rural Futures Rewilding – Habitats and Agroforestry project** of

Balipara Foundation as an agroforestry beneficiary. Since then he have been mobilized towards the agroforestry initiative of the foundation, which is not only a sustainable livelihood alternative, but puts conservation at the forefront by supporting biodiversity of species.

The patch of 2 bigha land where Balipara Foundation is currently implementing its agroforestry model including the six layer canopy crops sequenced as Moringa, Monkey bean, Papaya, Lemon and King Chilli intercropped with rhizomes like ginger and turmeric in the prescribed undergrowth gaps, is expected to provide Khongsai is expecting an approximate annual income turnover of INR 4-5 lakhs, in next 3-5 years.

“This annual income is thrice the benefit that I was receiving from Water Melon and Papaya cultivation in the past years”, he revealed.

Khongsai is planning to utilize this benefit to make a step ahead in fulfilling his dreams of establishing a rural enterprise for his farm produce, as well as to support his family and meeting the near educational expenses of his children.



Community Case Stories

Hokim Guite
Women Farmer, T. Champhai Village, Kangpokpi

55 year old Hokim Guite, a women farmer from T. Champhai village of Manipur's kangpokpi district is a real life example of rural women power for climate action at the grassroots thereby envisioning a Naturenomics™ change.

Guite who was awarded with a prestigious indigenous farmer award in 2019, by the Kangpokpi district administration for her traditional knowledge driven agricultural innovations, is now instrumental in inspiring fellow women folks and youth from her village to practice sustainable agriculture.

In 2021, Guite collaborated to the Rural Futures Rewilding –Agroforestry project of Balipara Foundation and since then she has been contributing traditional interventions in the agroforestry model.

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“I am happy that someone from far can relate my dreams and helping me achieving it. Farming is more of hobby for me than income source”, she said.

At present Guite is implementing the agroforestry model of Balipara Foundation in a patch of 1 bigha land, wherein she is planting Moringa, Monkey bean, Papaya, Lemon and King Chilli intercropped with rhizomes like ginger and turmeric in the prescribed undergrowth gaps.

She believes that this model will be successful and will provide her high income benefit near to about INR 40,000 annually. This income is expected to be twice the benefit she was receiving by cultivating king chilli and bringal in the same patch of land.

Guite plans to set up a nursery of her own with the income benefit she is expecting from the agroforestry plot.



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