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Cultivating Cardamom

Culture, Economy & Social Structure in Sikkim

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CULTIVATING CARDAMOM

***Culture, Economy and Social
Structure in Sikkim***

***Damber Kumari Giri
Dr. Swati A. Sachdeva
Shib Shankar Jena***

Preface

The culture of agriculture is closely related to the environment. The agricultural practices of different region vary according to the specific ecological context, and thus it shapes the cultural and regional identity.

Sikkim is a small hilly state in the western part of the Eastern Himalayas. It is a land locked state bounded by Tibet in the North, Bhutan in the East, Nepal in the West and West Bengal in the South. Sikkim is a good example of cultivating Large Cardamom as a cash crop which contributes to the livelihood of the people.

In this book we have, given a broad view on the interrelations between the culture, economy and the social structure in relation to the cardamom cultivation in Sikkim. People do not cultivate cardamom for only market economy but they also attach an emotional sentiment socio-cultural meaning towards the forest and cardamom field.

The aim of this book is to fill the existing gaps in literatures on the relationship between economy, culture and society with relation to the agro-forestry in general and the cardamom agro-forestry in particular. This has been done with the aim to give maximum material under one cover to academicians, researchers, students, policy makers and the Government.

We are deeply indebted to our respondents for all their cooperation, love and trust they reposed in us.

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INTRODUCTION

"The word agriculture, after all, does not mean "agri-science," much less "agribusiness." It means "cultivation of land." And cultivation is at the root of the sense both of culture and of cult. The ideas of tillage and worship are thus joined in culture. And these words all come from an Indo-European root meaning both "to revolve" and "to dwell." To live, to survive on the earth, to care for the soil, and to worship, all are bound at the root to the idea of a cycle. (*Wendell Berry, The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*)

Introduction

Traditional cultivation of large cardamom (*Amomum Subulatum*) in the Eastern Himalaya is one example of harnessing the local mountain niche. Large cardamom native plant of Sikkim Himalaya, is a perennial low volume, high value, non-perishable cash crop grown beneath the forest cover on marginal and barren lands. Sikkim's experience is unique, unlike the experience of Himachal Pradesh, Ningnan Country in China, and Ilam district of Nepal where high value cash crops were introduced from the outside (Sharma and Sharma 1997).

It is a unique example of the ecological and economic viability of a traditional farming system based on indigenously evolved agro-forestry practices. In this instance, the cash crop is domesticated and then developed commercially by the local farming community (Sharma 1996). The adoption of high value cash crop based farming systems compatible with local niche has helped mountain regions in two ways; first, by converting abundant marginal and barren lands into more productive lands and harnessing local niches. Secondly, by maintaining and improving the ecosystem and the environment of

the region through promoting soil conservations and soil fertility. These areas has increasingly demonstrated the feasibility of minimizing the environment and development trade-off and the possibility of breaking the cumulative causation between poverty and the environmental degradation cycle, leading to an increase in growth and sustainability linkages (Pratap 1995).

In this context, this study deals with the sociological understanding of Large cardamom cultivation in Sikkim. There are large numbers of literatures available on the agro-forestry and the sustainable livelihood, large cardamom cultivation and the traditional knowledge system. But there is a serious lack of literatures on the relationship between market, society and the cardamom cultivation, the social structure and gender relation and the cultural perception of agro-forestry and the cardamom farming.

The Problem:

The social structure of agricultural production influences who does what, where and in what ways. By looking at who has access and control over the key productive resources – natural capital, human capital, and financial capital – we can see how key social resources – cultural capital, social capital and political capital are created within a definite geographical territory. In this context, geography, ethnicity, caste, gender and class are all plays key elements in the social structure of production and consumption process. Through this process it creates Socio-Cultural practices (traditional knowledge systems, religious attitude towards land and environment), institutional linkages (the interaction between social institution, market institution and the political institution) and gender division of labour, controlling the resources, decision making process within the household.

In this context, many literature have been produced by different scholars from different field emphasizing on the traditional knowledge systems, environment and ecological specificity of cardamom cultivation in the eastern Himalayas, but the cultural specificity of land, the influence of social structure in cardamom cultivation, and the inter-linkages of market, society (on the basis of gender, caste and ethnicity) and cardamom cultivation has largely been ignored by these scholars.

On the basis of above mentioned background, this study will be looking into the family power structure, caste and ethnicity, market relations and the cultural significance of land and cardamom cultivation in the state of Sikkim.

Literatures on Culture, Agriculture and Society linkages

Land, Culture and Agriculture

Land, especially agricultural land, mirrors and represents the key cultural categories of a society, and the social structure, political and economic forces impacting on it. In the word of Norman Wirzba “Agrarianism is not simply the concern or prerogative of a few remaining farmers, but is rather a comprehensive worldview that holds together in a synoptic vision the health of land, culture and the social structure. In this context, agriculture plays a very significant role in the process of making a unique chain relationship between livelihood sources, division of labour in society and within the family, market relationship and the rural power structure as a whole. (Vasavi 1998).

While the economic, political and even social significance of land in the life of rural agrarian communities has become an accepted axiom in the South Asian scholarship, questions and details pertaining to the cultural dimensions of land, traditional knowledge systems and the continuity between the social structure, local culture and change have largely been ignored (Vasavi 1998: 6).

There are large numbers of literature on the rural agrarian society and as well its transformation from pre-colonial to colonial and the postcolonial society. These literatures¹ basically deals with the social structure and land relationship and the India's agrarian society under the postcolonial development discourse².

Understanding "Culture"

Culture consists of such symbolic vehicles of meaning, including belief, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories and rituals of daily life (Geertz). These symbolic forms are the means through which 'social processes of sharing modes of behavior and outlook within a community take place (Hannerz 1969: 184). Although the analysis of culture is the essence of ethnography, how culture is understood and communicated to a wider audience has been widely debated within the discipline. One of the ongoing debates within cultural anthropology is whether this endeavor should be undertaken from a materialist vantage or rather through a symbolic understanding that stresses interpretation. This tension is epitomized in the divergent understandings culture advocated by Marvin Harris and Clifford Geertz.

The research strategy of cultural materialism was first given its name: *cultural* to denote the associations with anthropology; *materialism* to indicate the priority accorded to the material conditions as identified by Harris in his famous book *Cultural materialism: the struggle for a science of culture* as the

¹ Studies such as those by Bettleille (1994), Gupta (1998), Thorner (1956) and Jodhka (2003) recognize the close links between the structure of agriculture and that of society, but ignore the cultural and altered significance of land in the face of changes induced by modern forces.

² The central argument is that, several literatures are now available on the political and economic characteristics of land and society relationship. These literatures reflects the agrarian social structure in relation to land, the class formation, the dynamics of mode of production (there is a famous debate on the mode of production in the changing scenario of agriculture in Indian society by both the Indian and foreign intellectuals. The debate is basically centered around the basic fundamental question on whether Indian agriculture is marching towards capitalism or still it within the semi-feudal mode of production), the emerging dominant caste and caste politics in relation to land.

Demographic, Technological, Economic and Environmental infrastructure. For Harris, the *emic*³ and *etic*⁴ perception form two distinct, yet convergent, realms of reality. He insisted that while both of these perspectives were valid, anthropology should model itself as a rigorous science and emphasize the *etic* logic of material processes. "Anthropologists regard it as their solemn duty to represent the hopes and fears, values and goals, beliefs and rituals of different groups and communities seen from within, the way people who belong to these groups and communities perceive them to be, and the way they want them seen by others. But that can be only half the job. The other half is to describe and explain what people are actually saying and doing from the standpoint of the objective study of culture and history." (Harris 1979). Because Harris believed that a methodology grounded in the *etic* perspective of culture allowed anthropologist to pursue the objective, cross-cultural study of social practices. Privileging the gravity of observable phenomenon within a society's infrastructure, cultural materialism seeks out demographic, technological and environmental explanation for culture variation that occurs in the structure and superstructure.

In opposition to this theoretical paradigm, a study of culture that accentuates a symbolic understanding of culture can be employed to ameliorate the deficiencies inherent in an ardently materialist perspective. From this view, the realm of the symbolic is the "origin and basis of human behavior" (White 1949: 22-39). Rather than being merely the byproduct of material forces at work, a symbolic approach views culture as intrinsically embedded in public actions through which people engage the outside world of both other people and

³ Emic perspective is the "insider's" or "native's" interpretation of or "reasons" for his or her customs/beliefs. What things mean to the members of a society.

⁴Etic perspective: the external researcher's interpretation of the same customs/beliefs. What things mean from an analytical, anthropological perspective.

things in a meaningful way (White 1959: 235-236). The daily expression of creative action serves as a public meditation on the values that a people hold dear, "a story they tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz 1973: 448).

Such cultural narratives lie outside the realm of positivist science and instead must be approached from an exploration of the social context. "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in the webs of significance he himself has spun, cultures to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning." (Geertz 1973:5) Offering a "thick description" of action that emphasizes these webs of significance, a symbolic approach privileges a holistic understanding of culture in order to provide insight into the unfolding human story. The cultural context within which a social act occurs, a symbolic interpretation of culture breathes life into the ethnographic account and is able to create a meaningful account of for both the scholarly audience as well as to those approaching it from the indigenous.

In order to mediate this tension at the heart of the discipline, an understanding of culture that draws on the strengths of both of these approaches is required. A synthesis of these divergent viewpoints emerges through a grounding of a symbolic construction of culture within tangible observations drawn from the material world. Growing out of this united concept, "culture is not an interpretation superimposed on these material facts, but integrated within them." To believe as Geertz does that culture provides a guide to human action. For Geertz, in a culture, symbols are embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgment and beliefs. Individual through their socialization process internalizes these symbols which is exists in the stock of knowledge of a particular society. And

the cultural symbols acts as “model of”⁵ in guiding and shaping of human action in everyday life.

Farming as a Lens to See Culture

Within peasant societies, farming is more than merely an economic strategy that alienates “work” from other spheres of living. Rather, the farming household functions as a semi-autonomous hub concerned with perpetuating the necessary processes of production and consumption needed to reproduce society. This continual recreation of the most basic social functions imbues farming with significance as a vehicle for the expression of the values that a particular culture holds dear. Farming allows people to engage nature and forge it into culturally significant manifestations of what “the good life” entails. Conversely, this process not only causes nature to be molded to meet human concerns, but in the same action, society is also transformed by the way it makes use of the environment. Marx sheds light on this subtle interplay in *Capital*. According him;

“Labor is in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates and controls

⁵ To understand how these symbols shapes the public behavior, here Geertz distinction between “model of” and “model for” is important. The “model of” refers to the manipulation of symbolic structures so as to bring them, more or less closely in to parallel with pre-established non-symbolic structure. He has given an example that, when we construct a dam, we need flow chart, diagram and through this we construct dam. The “model for” is the manipulation of non-symbolic structure in terms of the relationship expressed in the symbolic, as when we construct a dam through flow chat or through diagram. In the same manner, in a culture, sacred symbols act as “model of” where individual’s social and psychological process is regarded as “model for” and the social-structural and psychology of human beings shapes through the sacred symbols. Here Geertz says, “the sacred symbols shapes individual action by inducing in the worshipper a certain distinctive set of disposition (tendencies, capacities, propositions, skills, habits) which lend a chronic character to the flow of this activity and the quality of his experience”(ibid: 91). Symbols are the vehicle of conception and it consists with meaning. The meaning produces through the process of social interaction. According to Geertz, symbols have the social construction of meaning, only when people agree that a particular symbol is going to be used to refer to a particular thing. Hence, a symbol is something, which stands for something else. The development of culture thus depends upon the development of consensus of meaning for the symbols used. The ability to develop culture (and religion) and to transmit culture (and religion) stems primarily from another human character- man’s ability to manipulate symbols- to engage in symbolic interaction (ibid).

the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, heads and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's production in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature."
(Marx:1976: 177)

Because of its role in shaping culture, studies into the complexities that make up peasant farming systems should be undertaken that emphasize diverse cultural aspects such as economics, peoples' relationship to the land, conceptions of time and how farming works to shape their identity. Though small scale farmers practice a tradition handed down through the generations, their way of life is not static and they continually adapt their methods to the changing times while still holding on to the central values of this way of life. These unique and diverse traditions provide an avenue for understanding the paramount values of a society as illustrated through ethnographic investigations grounded in the material world.

The agrarian system:

Agriculture is approached as a primary economic activity, based on the domestication of plants and animals, and embedded into the culture of rural social groups. According to diverse natural, cultural and historical environment agriculture takes different forms. These forms are hereby referred to as *agrarian systems* (Warren, 2002).

One of the useful definitions is phrased by Speeding (1996) as follows: "agriculture is an activity of *Man*, carried out primarily to produce food, fiber and fuel, as well as many other materials by the deliberate and controlled use of

mainly terrestrial plants and animals.” The terms “agriculture” and “agricultural system” are used widely to encompass various aspects of the production of plant and animal material of food, fiber, and other uses. In this context, the term *farming* refers to the whole range of variations included between the most traditional “peasantish” forms of farming and modern commercial agriculture, as practiced by small and medium capitalist farmers.

In this prospect an analytical distinction is made between farming and industrial agriculture (Kimbrell 2002). On the other hand, *industrial agriculture* refers to big-scale, hi-tech agrarian systems as enacted by big national or transnational enterprises that are quoted on the stocks and control a major share of the global market of agricultural commodities. Farming and industrial agriculture are different under many aspects (scale of production, technology, management). In particular, they differ in terms of three major factors; *financial capital*: the magnitude and density of capitals invested in industrial agriculture are incommensurable to those of any farming enterprise, no matter how developed and affluent being the latter; *Social capital*: farming agriculture is largely organized by rural social institutions and controlled by people living in the countryside, and, very often, on-farm. Vice versa, industrial agriculture is ruled by people, organizational structures and processes that are primarily located and generated in the city (Warren 2002); *Cultural capital*: also the most modernized forms of farming embed (at least in a residual form) values, know-how, attitudes and patterns of behavior that are part of rural (local) cultural capital. On the other hand, agro-industrial corporations values, know-how, attitudes and behaviors are fed by forms of cultural capital that are primarily generated in urban business schools, bio-tech faculties, national cultures and “global” thinking.

Unlike industrial agriculture, farming is thus connected intimately with *ruralness*, i.e. the economic, social and cultural condition of people living in the countryside. Indeed, for most of the humankind history, farming has materially sustained ruralness and ruralness has made farming socially viable and culturally meaningful (Warren 2002). Though during the second half of the 20th century socio-economic development and the raise of industrial agriculture have created a progressively widening gap between ruralness and farming, this is still true in many areas of the world, including enclaves of developed countries' countryside. Thus any discourse on the cultural capital generated by agriculture is primarily a discourse on the articulation between farming and ruralness. The culture of agriculture also closely related to the environment. Thus, the agricultural practices of different region vary according to the specific ecological context, and thus it shapes a cultural and regional identity.

Gender, Social Structure and the Agriculture

Women have always played an important role in agriculture, undertaking a wide range of activities relating to food production, processing and marketing. Beyond the farm, women play a key role in land and water management in all developing countries. Women are most often the collectors of water, firewood and fodder. They have access to a store of local knowledge on the medicinal use of plants; they have been in the forefront of soil conservation programmes; and it is women who perform most of the household labour devoted to animals (Krishnraj and Shah 2004).

Social and gender relations are a result of a complex array of factors that depend on social, cultural and historical circumstances. Social and gender systems are linked to religion and ethnic identity, but at the same time are strongly influenced by external forces on the communities. Thus, social and,

more particularly, gender relations are frequently reinterpreted and renegotiated as traditional societies are faced with new influences and symbols of change (Gurung 1999).

In any community, gender representations are not uniform; rather, there are discontinuities and contradictions. The lives and activities of individual women express how they selectively embrace, tolerate, oppose or ignore gender ideologies. In addition, individual women and men, depending on the situation, behave differently in different activities and spheres of life. Thus, the individual activities and practices of women and men demonstrate how the wider forces of change are manifested at the local level through individual lives. However, the importance of individual choice and action is frequently overlooked when highly abstracted views of society assume a homogeneous and unchanging social order that forms an idealized situation often informed primarily by male perspectives (Watkins 1996).

Some literatures highlight the role of gender in the agricultural sector. These literatures try to explore the family decision making process gender division of labour in agriculture, the rites, ritual and the cultural meaning of the gender associated with the agricultural land and soil fertility.

Decision Making and Control

Decision-making opportunities and roles of women differ, both within households and within communities. Decision making is a complex process and is influenced by many factors. Women's input ranges from advice to recommendations and, in few cases, to actual decisions depending on her position in the family and household, and, to a certain extent, the community. Gurung (1999) in his study on Gender nature in ginger cultivation in Sikkim and Kalingmpong explores that among the Lepcha and Rai communities,

mothers and older daughters who are knowledgeable participate equally in selecting the site for ginger cultivation, whereas among the Brahmin-Chhetri farmers women are less involved in this task. Only female heads of household make this decision alone. The decision to buy and sell ginger is mostly made by the male head of the family, with women playing only an advisory role. However, differences exist depending on the family, position of the women in the household and individual people involved. Although in general women have a minor role in decision making, there are a few examples where women are equally, if not more, involved in this sphere.

By and large, women do not have much control over important assets like land. In most cases land is inherited by sons, leaving women without this important source of collateral for obtaining credit from formal institutions. Although equal inheritance rights are given to sons and daughters by the law under the 1956 Hindu Succession Act, custom still views men as the breadwinner and head of the family. Women do not seem to have much control over their own labour, as their wages are based on the male-dominated perception of women not being able to do as much work as men. Women's control of the money earned from ginger sales depends on their position in the household. The higher her position, the more control she has over this money, although the control is never complete because she must often spend it not how she pleases, but rather in response to the demands of her husband and family.

“Agriculture” in contemporary social science research

In recent years sociologists have played a crucial role in the development of a new field of study, environmental sociology and in the revitalization of another, the sociology of agriculture. For the reason, and more importantly because agriculture is a major example of the relationship between human and the physical environment and the social construction of agricultural landscape

that contribute the subject matter of environment sociology (Carlson *et al.*, 1981), one might expect to find a good deal of cross-fertilization between the two fields. In particular, it might be seen that the sociology of agriculture would find environmental sociologists' emphasis upon talking the physical environment into account when examining social and cultural phenomena to be an important and useful suggestion.

Sociologist and Anthropologists primarily deal with the interrelationship between rural social structure, land and the institutionalized pattern of cultivation in the context particular environment and the geographical pattern of region. Local agricultural knowledge and practices in farming societies are based on ecological specificity of the region and also culturally derived. Such cultural perception of nature or ecology indicates an ethos in which humans, land and seeds are considered to be integrally linked to each other (Vasavi 1999). This cultural specificity of the region shapes the everyday activities through certain knowledge, practices and institutions which forms the agricultural landscape.

Rural sociologists have long conceived themselves with the intimate relationship between forms of knowledge, systems of meaning and local environment and species. Historical analysis has shown how local and regional identities have been shaped social, cultural and institutional linkages that have tied people to place (Dunlap and Martin 1983). This ideal continuity between nature and society leads to complex questions concerning the internal dynamics of the family, the division of labour on farm, as well as farmers' relationship with work and relationship with nature.

Although, through the various development policies by the state, farmers have adopted modern, effective and industrial ways of farming, they still

consider their work as harmonious and respectful co-operation with nature (Rajasekharan and Warren 1990). Their relationship with nature appears to be strongly mediated through the ideal of continuity through the production and reproduction of local culture of agriculture. Some scholar also have pointed out the hierarchical nature of the Indian agrarian community (Hill 1992) and according to them, the local agricultural knowledge also varies on the basis of caste, gender, wealth and tribe (Hill 1982). The local response to the state development project also varies according to these factors (Sandwell 1993). This unequal and differential response of Indian agrarian community has created the 'peasants among the peasants'⁶ in the postcolonial agriculture of India.

Another important issue in the field of sociology of environment in general and sociology of agriculture in particular is the modern state intervention to reorder the both nature and society relationship through various development policies and programmes (Vasavi 1999, Appadurai 1990, Gupta 1998). Through the lens of the post-World War II discourse of development, India is perceived primarily in terms of what is not, and in, turn, requires interventions designed to transform into what it should be. Among the most prominent of India's development efforts have been schemes to transform its agrarian environments, both the natural world of land, trees and water and the complex of rural social relations that physically and culturally shape it (Springer 1991, Vasavi 1999).

⁶ The local response to the postcolonial development projects differs according to the factors like caste, tribe and wealth. For example, the upper caste are more adaptive in nature towards the scientific knowledge and market oriented farming, than the lower caste, tribes and the low resources farmers who are more interested towards subsistence oriented farming and shifting cultivation (Sandell 1993). This differential nature of local response to the states' development projects creates peasant among the peasant within a same region.

In recent years, critique of intellectuals from different disciplines have begun to explore the power of development discourse to provide authoritarian truth about the so called Third World (Escobar 1992 and 1995, Ferguson 1994). Drawing on the work of Foucault on knowledge and power, their analysis interrogates a regime of representation in which certain ways of being and thinking are developed as “underdeveloped” while others are privileged and progressive. In doing so, they help to reveal how dominant agricultural development programmes rest on particular constructions of what it means of natural landscapes and their human inhabitants to provide, and coverage with persistent popular views of these paradigms as environmentally unsustainable and culturally homogenizing.

In India, critiques have argued that state-sponsored development programmes serve to limit diversity and concentrate power in a centralized state apparatus (Nandy 1989) and that the instrumental ideology of modern science adopted by the state leads to ecological destruction and human oppression (Nandy 1989, Shiva 1989). Another important issue in the agricultural development policy is that, it is orthodox in nature which usually involves the dangerous and false belief that all cultivators in any particular community of India are apt to have similar responses (Hill 1982).

On the basis of the above mentioned literatures and conceptual review on a broader perspective of agriculture, culture, social structure and environment linkages, this study tried to explore the sociological and anthropological issues like the role of culture, social structure such as gender, ethnicity and the market relation in the large cardamom cultivation in the Sikkim state of Eastern Himalayas. The second chapter deals with a detailed review of available literatures on agro-forestry and the large cardamom cultivation in Eastern Himalayas in general and Sikkim in particular.

Research questions:

- ▶ What meaning do people give to cardamom?
- ▶ What is the gender role in cardamom cultivation and in decision making process?
- ▶ Which community is mostly related to cardamom cultivation?
- ▶ What are the major factors for declining of cardamom production and what are the alternatives live hood practices of a people?
- ▶ What kind of structural changes has been brought by the declining in cardamom production?
- ▶ What is the relation between market, community and the cardamom cultivator?
- ▶ Who are the major buyers of cardamom?
- ▶ What are the ritualistic practices associated with cardamom cultivation?

Major Objectives:

- ▶ To explore the traditional knowledge system and the various cultural practices in relation to cardamom cultivation.
- ▶ To explore the socio-cultural and economic significance of cardamom among the community.
- ▶ To study the influence of social structure on the basis of gender, caste and ethnicity in the cardamom cultivation and decision making process.

- ▶ Market, social structure and local community linkages

Scope and Significance of the Study

The study looks at how the social and cultural factors like women, their decision making process in the household, ethnic participation and rites and rituals are playing significant role in relation to the large cardamom cultivation in Sikkim. One of the major aims of the study is to explore how sustainable livelihood process is maintaining in the state through the agro-forestry system.

Cardamom is a high cash value in this region which creates unique bond between the local farmers, the middle man and the market system. The study explores the nature of farmer's participation in the market, the sources of information and price mechanism, and the social background of middle man and the role of middlemen in the price regulation process.

The findings of the study can be helpful for the government, policy makers and the researchers to know the gender status, the changing environment and declining of cardamom cultivation, the changing dimensions in the agriculture and agro-forestry systems and the issues relating to the livelihood sustainability in the region.

Organization of the Study

On the basis of the above mentioned objectives and the statement of problems, this study divided into five chapters:

Chapter I provides an overview of the literatures dealing with a broader understanding of the agrarian system, social structure and culture of agriculture, conceptual understanding of peasantry, and statement of the problems and the objectives of the study. The chapter also highlights the significance of the study for the further research, to provide new insight for the policy makers and the government in the region.

Chapter II deals with a detail review of available literatures on agro-forestry and the large cardamom cultivation, ecological sustainability and the livelihood maintenance. The chapter also gives an overview of the Sikkim state. After reviewing the available literatures on agro-forestry and the large cardamom farming in the Eastern Himalayas, the rationality of the study has been discussed.

Chapter III describes the theoretical, conceptual understanding related to the topic and methodological issues related to the study. In this chapter, the area of the study is introduced.

Chapter IV deals with analysis of data, their theoretical representation and analysis of major findings. In this chapter major objectives and statement of the problems of study have been discussed in details with the help of primary data collected from the field. The chapter also provides major challenges and the emerging issues in relation to the agriculture and society in the region.

Chapter V is a concluding chapter in which the basic subject matter of the discussion is the relationship between culture, economy and the social structure in Sikkim in relation to Large cardamom cultivation in particular and the agrarian social structure in general. The chapter also provides some insights for the further research in this field.

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