CHAPTER 5

**LAND USE AND AGRICULTURE**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF), over the past four decades, was concerned about “how to grow” by establishing various agriculture infrastructures to produce and distribute the inputs. Currently the MoAF established four main Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) research centers.

The MoAF with the accumulated experiences having accomplished one five year plan to the other, maintains the three basic objectives that are to i) conserve the environment, ii) enhance the rural income and iii) attain self-reliance in cereals and essential oil crops. In 2018, Agriculture contributed 10.82 percent to the total economy i.e. as measured by the Gross Domestic Product.

Agricultural practices have changed tremendously over the years. Until a decade ago, agriculture was practiced on a subsistence basis. Whatever was produced on the farm was consumed having little or no marketable surplus. The farm production is supplemented by keeping different kinds of domestic animals such as cattle for draught and milking purpose, chicken for eggs and pigs for meat etc. At higher altitudes, herds of yaks and sheep are also kept for draught and milking.

However, today owing to the improved network of road accessibility and transportation in the country, increasing number of farms are shifting from subsistence based farming to modern agriculture. Strategies to increase livestock and cereal production include the propagation and practice of double cropping of the paddy production and distribution of high yield varieties. In the livestock sector the artificial insemination covers not only for the Jersey breeds that are high yielding but also for the production of Jatsa and Jatsam that are high yielding local breed. As a result, increasing number of farms are getting mechanized with sizable investment on the machinery and other inputs that are subsidized by the government.

In order to fulfill the aspiration of food security and self-sufficiency in the country, it is imperative to use the current RNR statistics that will provide realistic picture of country’s food situation. The availability of RNR statistics also serves as the basis for drawing sound and relevant agricultural policy decisions of the government. Presented in this chapter therefore include statistics on agricultural area, quantity and value of crops and livestock production, export and import of agricultural commodities etc. The major sources of data presented in this chapter are from the RNR Statistics Division, MoAF.