

## The Socio-economic Situation of Chin National Falam Township, Chin State, Myanmar

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### Abstract

This research examines the Socio-economic situation of Chin Nationals living in Falam Township, Chin State, Myanmar. The specific objectives of this research are to reveal their socioeconomic situation under the development programs conducted in the research areas, to explore their way of living based on the geographic features and to analyze their needs for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Key Informant Interview, Informal Interview and Focus Group Discussion are applied in this research. There are several outcomes: although the native peoples rely on the Government, UNDP, UNICEF and NGOs' activities, they additionally need enough money for their cultivation, as well as guidance for land restoration, food preservation and methods to increase market demand for their local products in order to respond other economic, social, educational and health needs.

**Key words:** development programs, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, livelihood, Socio-economic situation

### 1. Introduction

Capacity building research for sustainable development and poverty alleviation began to increase in Myanmar after 2010. Myanmar's new government started to practice democracy and planned to invite international investment to build the modernized nation. The international economic, political, social, and educational organizations also have cooperated with Myanmar's economic, political, social, and educational organizations to support the country. This research examines the local socioeconomic situation to consider their needs especially for their sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The study takes place in the Northwest of the country among the Chin people living in Falam Township, in Chin State.

### 2. Aim and Objectives

This research will explore the socio-economic situation of Chin nationals living in Falam Township, Chin State. The specific objectives of this research are to document their economy, education, health and social affairs; how they fulfill the necessities for their livelihood and to analyze and highlight the strong and weak points for their livelihood strategies.

### 3. Literature Review

#### Development

Seiji defined Development to involve more than raising real incomes. Recently there has been a renewed emphasis on factors like the quality of life, on education and health and on general social well-being. This is not to say that we are no longer concerned with economic growth, but rather, social and human development in conjunction with economic growth (Seiji, 1991). This definition is applied to evaluate the research area's development situation. When we consider development, human development, natural resources and environmental management are also considered.

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Gupta writes that development is a highly complex phenomenon, and the complexity gets further compounded as one move onto to the tribal context. The strategies of tribal development have to be area specific and in tune with the peculiar socio-cultural ethos to be effective and meaningful (Gupta, 1998). It is very important to conduct sustainable development program successfully. As development involves variegated components and contexts- human and non-human, economic and non-economic or social and cultural, governmental and non-governmental and spatial and temporal- it is rather hard to define it. Development policy needs to be formulated and designed to search for effective strategies to achieve integrated and harmonious development of tribal life and society (Gupta, 1998). This will be discussed later in more detail.

### **Sustainable development**

This concept relates to the ways in which a country can meet the development of the present generation without compromising the opportunities of future generations with regard to environmental and human consequences. Without proper management and safeguarding the natural and human resources, sustainable development cannot occur (Seiji, 1991). Although the author describes sustainable development at the national level, in this paper I intend to focus on the local level to describe how they try to meet the development of the present generation without compromising the opportunities of future generations in that place.

### **Environmental quality**

This quality affects economic growth by improving the health of the work force and by creating jobs in the environmental sector. The economy is not separate from the environment. Economic management and environmental quality: pollution, conservation, and proper management of renewable and nonrenewable resources are also important (Seiji, 1991). According to these statements, I examine the research area's environmental quality to understand how they manage their economy with the help of development programs, how they produce healthy and skilled workers for development, and how they grow their human resources to improve human development.

Stephen (1991) said that as the roles of government shift from direct management to supportive and facilitative roles, civil service and administrative systems will need to be reoriented and strengthened. This is also true for the role of government in local development programs for Myanmar.

### **Livelihood**

According to Chamber and Conroy, a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for the means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chamber & Conroy, 1991). In this paper, the Sustainable Livelihood framework (SLF) is used to measure the socio-economic situation of Chin people from the research areas (<http://www.oneworld.org/odi/keysheet/>).

Sein (2009) also listed the dimensions of poverty to be: 1) income and assets 2) having no voice or power and 3) vulnerability. To attack poverty, promote opportunity, facilitate empowerment and enhance security all these together are essential. These factors are considerable for the native people's socioeconomic development. On these things depends on the people's future.

#### 4. Research Methodology

##### Research areas

Research villages are located in NW Myanmar in Falam Township, Chin State and include Mangkheng, Laizo, Lungpi, C.zamual, Congheng, C.zamualand Parte, Lumbang Villages. Fieldwork consists of collecting data to analyze their socio-economic situation in order to consider their sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It will be a sample that represents people making their lives in mountainous and hilly regions.

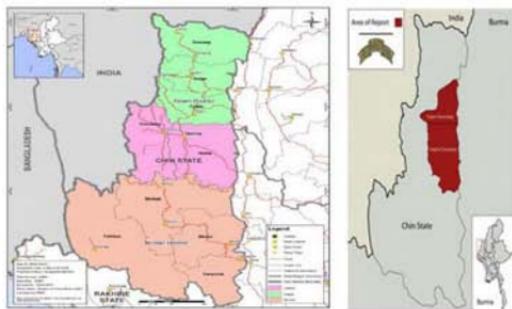


Figure 1. Location of Falam Township.

- Source: joshua project (2015)
- population in Falam is 77.000.
- The largest religion is Christianity and other is Ethnic religion.
- Main language is Falam

##### Research populations

Research subjects are the villagers from the six principal villages, especially village leaders, teachers, health workers, pastors, farmers and researchers who work at UNDP, GRET and villagers who are conducting economic, social and educational and health affairs for the villagers.

##### Study period

The study period is one year, from 1-4-2014 to 31-3-2015.

##### Research methods

Key Informant interviews, Informal Interview and Focus Group Discussion are applied to collect the relevant data.

##### Research design

Descriptive research design is used to describe the data.

#### Socio-economic Situations of Research Areas

##### Historical background

FalamTownship lies in the northern part of Chin with the north border with *Tedim* and northern *Haka*. The east-west length of the township is about 40 miles while the north-south dimension is 26.8 miles (about 40 km). Thus, the area of *Falami*Township measures 990.12 square miles and includes 179 villages. According to the census of 2014, the population is

about 41,395. It includes ten different tribal people. Among these villages, Mangkheng, Laizo, Lungpi, C.zamual, Congheng and Parthe are selected as the research areas. Although they use *Falam* language, some speak the national *Bamar* language when they have relationship outsiders. In the study areas, their main economy is agriculture of crops and gardens. For extra income, they rear animals, hunt and fish. Most villagers who are above 20 years old live abroad in places such as India, Malaysia, Singapore and the USA as refugee and migrant workers.

In Falam Township, there are many development programs. Among them, the work of the UNDP, UNICEF, as well as other NGOs (GRET and the Garunar Foundation) which are regarded as development programs by the local people. The socio-economic situation of Chin nationals living in Falam Township and the interaction of the development programs and the people's livelihood strategies are mentioned in this research. When I conducted the interviews, their education, economy, social affairs and health were focused on to discover how they reduce poverty; how they try to promote their education; how they plan to improve their health; and how to train their villagers to become resourceful persons for improving their livelihood sustainability.

The government's development plans are also examined. The alleviation of poverty and upgrading of the socio-economy of the people are being carried out in Myanmar. In other words, to motivate the regional development and to alleviate poverty within the villages of the regions and within the states, the following developments were carried out: 1) Development of agricultural production, 2) Development of livestock breeding and production of goods within the rural regions, 3) Development of small-scale production of goods within the rural region, 4) Development of small-scale privately owned co-operative credit societies, 5) Development of the socio-economy of the rural areas, 6) Conservation of the natural environment, 7) Development of cooperative enterprises and 8) Development of power energy in the rural regions.

In Myanmar, especially in Chin State, a terrace cultivation system has been supported by the government since 2002 (San Thein, 2012). The government's development programs are also found in my research areas. NGOs' development programs are also allowed to work in these villages.

### **Socio-economic situations in Mangkheng**

Mangkheng is situated 10 miles to the west of Falam City. East of it is Di Phan. West of it is Than Rawm. Its area is 2 square miles. The population is 663. Males are 333 and females are 330. It was founded 500 years ago by the HlaunCe ethnic group which is a sub group of the Chin.

### **Economy**

Their main economy is based on agriculture and the main crops are corn, onion, garlic and ginger. Corn is for animal feed, especially for chickens and pigs. Onion, garlic and ginger are the most important crops for them. As they have good transportation with India, Indian traders come to buy their products. As for animal husbandry, cows, mythun (a kind of bird), chickens, pigs and horses are raised for extra income. Horses are also used for transportation. Some villagers make money by cutting and clearing trees for cultivation (*Taungya*) and for firewood. As their main economy is agriculture, they need to get enough water for their crops. The UNDP provided them water by using pipes from a stream. They want to use solar power for lighting.

### **Social affairs**

There are many religious congregations, mainly Christian. These several congregations help with auspicious and inauspicious matters of the villagers. A group of women from the village save and lend money with 2% interest as a self-help system. They use the loans to buy and raise pigs, chickens and cows, to repair their house and cover the roof of the house with the sheets of zinc, and so on. There is an organization to control animals in this village. This is organized by men from the village. After they have discussed how to maintain and protect the places for animal's feed, they made fences at these places with wire or wood. A committee for road construction is also in this village. The roads in the village are constructed by the villagers. The villagers have to pay the cost for road construction. Although there is also a women's affairs organization in this village, there is no any activity at present.

As for other collaborative activities, they celebrate the harvest festival during the October holidays. When they celebrate this festival, they always invite near villagers. They share snacks made of sticky rice with all visitors. They celebrate this ceremony four or five days. During the festival, football matches, competition for singing, recitation of bible and performance of traditional dance and music are conducted. This festival is organized by Church members and villagers.

Another event is reciprocity for building a house. If someone wants to build a house, other villagers help to build it. When they celebrate the harvest festival, they used to have to kill 3 or 5 pigs to offer to the local spirit. After converting to Christianity, they abandoned animism. When they want to celebrate the harvest festival, they invite the pastor from their respective congregation and other villagers for a blessing.

### **Education**

They built and opened a kindergarten funded through a self-help system in this village in 2000. In 2014, they donated it to the government to maintain. They have social and religious organizations, too. Members of these organizations arrange to give vocational training to the other villagers and some are sent to attend vocational training held in other villages and towns. Vocational training such as handicrafts based on cotton or plastic, and techniques for making snacks and other foods (for women), and how to make natural fertilizer (for men) are taught. This training is important for capacity building; in other words, for the villagers' sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Although there is no Chin literature and cultural association, Chin language and literature are taught as a course in their education programs in Churches.

### **Health**

There is a village health care center in this village, but it was closed three years ago as there is no doctor and health worker to work there. In this village, diarrhea and malaria are common during the early rainy season of April and May. They think that diarrhea occurs because of the drinking water. Malaria is because of migrant workers who come back from India. Some of the people who are over 60 have hypertension, asthma, and strokes. These may relate to their living style. When they feel ill, they go to consult the midwife from other village health center or the doctor at the hospital in Kalay. If they have an emergency case, they go to the hospital in Kalay. Some buy prescription medicine. They would like to be able

to treat their disease with a doctor or health worker in their own village health care center. For maternal health, they rely on the midwife from another village health center.

### **Needs of sustainable development and poverty alleviation**

According to the interviews, the following facts are represented as the villagers' voice and desire for their sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

- 1) To get electricity for the whole day and night. Electricity greatly builds capacity.
- 2) To have good transportation. It is also a main factor for community development and to reduce poverty.
- 3) To change the teacher's transfer system. It is carried out in June or November generally. In Myanmar, the school year begins the first week of June and ends in the second week of March. Summer holiday is from the third week of March to last week of May for basic education.
- 4) To get enough text books for students.

In this village, there are 20 persons with formal education. Some are government salary people and some are migrant laborers. Some are refugees who now live in the USA. They support and donate their income to the church, to the school and for teacher housing. As they can support their families and the community development, younger generations have dreams to go abroad to make money, too. This remittance money is also necessary to consider for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It can be said that it is a kind of brain and labor loss. When we consider sustainable development and poverty alleviation, this outmigration is also an important fact to be considered.

### **Socio-economic situations of Zarlai**

Zarlai or Laizosub-group of Chin lives in Zarlai Village. It is situated 8 miles to the west of Falam city. West of it is Thlanrawn. MangKheng is to the east of it. The total population is 375. Males are 172 and females are 185. Total houses are 92. This is a new village which was established 23th October 2013 as their old village was destroyed by land slide. Their old village was situated 3 miles from Falam city.

### **Economy**

Their economy is based on cultivation. As they were busy building the new village, they cannot spend time to plant vegetables in their gardens. They want to get temporary permission from the government to quarry stone in their neighboring mountains. They try to get permission from the government as it is one way to support their livelihood. In addition, migrant workers support villagers' needs such as building the primary school, providing a teacher's house and maintaining the church in their village. They also help to revitalize Laizo villagers in setting up their new village. They also pay the salary for teachers who are not sent by government appointment.

### **Social affairs**

The Zarlai Youth Peace Association is in this village. This association consists of 15 males and 5 females. They help with their village's needs during times of celebration or mourning. They also are ready to help villagers who are unable to do work by themselves such as house building or repair and so on.

### **Education**

There is a temporary primary school in this new village. There are 15 villagers with formal education. Some are government employees and some are working overseas in Malaysia, Singapore, the USA, and India. There are 40 people who hold a religious degree. They are Christian missionaries. The villagers attend vocational training hold by the Department of Agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the UNDP to learn techniques and methods which improve their livelihood.

There is a Laizo literature and cultural association in this village. They teach Laizo traditional dance, music, language, and literature to the younger generation as their cultural heritage. Laizo language is taught in the primary school. The use of non-Bamar language is allowed by the government. They add in extra time to teach Laizo language in the primary school without disrupting the school's timetable.

### **Health**

There are 20 persons over the age of 60. Some have hypertension, asthma, or stroke. When they feel ill, they consult the midwife from Laizo Village Tract health center or the doctor at the hospital in Kalay. If they have an emergency case, they go to the hospital in Kalay. Some buy prescription medicines. They express a desire to have medical services available in their village health center. For maternal health, they rely on the midwife from another village health center.

### **Needs of sustainable development and poverty alleviation**

The following factors have a bearing on their sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

- 1) To provide the new plots for gardens.
- 2) To construct a village road to reach the Kalay- Falam- Hakhar road, a distance of 2 miles from their village
- 3) To get a reliable water and electricity supply.
- 4) To build primary and secondary schools for their children.

### **Socio-economic situation of Lungpi**

This village is situated in 7 miles west of Falam. Zarlai is to the east and C. Zaimoul is to the west. It is near the Falam – Hakhar road. There are 420 males and 500 females in this village. The total population is 920. It was built by government employees from the Department of Agriculture in 1958. Most villagers are Laizo Chin ethnic group.

### **Economy**

They quarry stone from the mountains, cultivate fields, bake bricks, or work at government offices (Departments of Agriculture, Education, and so on) for their livelihoods. Their main crops are potato, onion and garlic.

**Social affairs**

There is a social organization organized by villagers. Its members help each other's necessities, such as suspicious and inauspicious affairs. Religious festivals, Christmas and the harvest festival are celebrated by respective churches or congregations. People from other villages are also invited to participate in their festivals and entertainment with snacks made from glutinous rice. In this village, there are absent overseas workers but, unlike other villagers working abroad, they cannot send remittances to provide for the village's affairs such as social, health and education.

**Education**

In the 2012-2013 academic years, the government built a primary school in this village. Teaching aids and partitions for classrooms are also necessary in this school. Although Buddhist monastic education also existed in this village, it was closed six years ago.

**Health**

Some of the villagers who go to India to make money by cutting the trees and making timber contract malaria. During the rainy season (June to September), diarrhea occurs in this village. They have no health center. But there is a midwife and three health workers. Red Cross training is given in this village. If they fell ill, they go to see the doctor in Falam hospital and buy prescription medicine. The health workers live in or near the village health center. If they have an emergency, they go to the hospital in Falam. Transportation in the past was not good in this region, so they carried patients holding onto their back to the hospital. Now they can transport patients by car or motorcycle. Medical checkups are taken twice a year in the village primary school. Religious associations from the Myanmar Naingyan Christian Council also make public health presentations about HIV and AIDS once a year in this village.

**Needs for sustainable development and poverty alleviation**

From the focus group discussion with representative villagers of Lungpi these needs were identified.

- 1) To get funds for making classroom partitions in the school house.
- 2) To provide teaching aids for the primary school.
- 3) To appoint a trained midwife for the village.
- 4) To provide a healthcare center and skilled health workers for villagers as they do not want to go to Falam, especially for emergencies.
- 5) To advance their children's education. They want to open middle and high schools in their village.
- 6) To construct roads to their stone quarry.
- 7) To get enough potable water for drinking
- 8) To get electricity for their village as they currently only get electricity two days per week.

As this village is in Falam Township, they cannot get the UNDP's help. Some villagers are government employees. There is a monastery in the village, too. Monks planned monastic education for the villagers. At present they teach only Buddha's teachings or Dhamma to the novices and monks.

#### **Socio-economic situation in C. zamual**

Tashune, Chin ethnic group lives in this village. Falam is 3 miles to the east. Yezine is to the west of it. It is 2 square miles in area. The population is 130. There are 50 males and 80 females. This village was built 400 years ago. It has good transportation, water resources and is near Falam. The UNDP provided a water tank 8 feet x 8 feet x 6 feet for drinking water and a reservoir 8 feet x 14 feet x 4 feet for gardens.

#### **Economy**

Their economy is based on gardening, cultivation, and daily wage labor. They raise tomatoes, onions, garlic, cabbage, corn, Chinese kale, grapes, pigeon peas, long beans, green grain, and lablab beans. The UNDP provided them with terrace cultivation.

#### **Social affairs**

There are religious organizations, mostly Christian. They help each other and celebrate the Christmas festival in their village.

#### **Education**

There is a secondary school in this village with 16 students, 5 teachers and one helper.

#### **Health**

Malaria is the main disease in this village. If they suffer head ache and stomach ache, they buy non-prescription medicine sold in a pharmacy or shop. Although they cure their illness by themselves, sometimes their illnesses do not respond to treatment. At that time, they go to Falam hospital for care. There is one midwife and two health workers in this village, but there is no pharmacy. If they have an emergency, first they contact the hospital to prepare for that patient and then proceed to the hospital. There are 20 people over the age of 60. Hypertension, coughing, and weakness are common complaints among the older people.

#### **Needs for sustainable development and poverty alleviation**

- 1) To obtain support for the teacher's house.
- 2) To build a village health center.
- 3) To have more investment for their livelihood.

#### **Socio-economic situation of Parthe**

Tapong, Chin ethnic group, lives in this village. Lumban lies to the east; Larthi and Kulzam lie to the west. Its area is 4 square miles. The population is 490:230 males and 260 females. It was built 1014 years ago.

#### **Economy**

The total cultivated area is 130 acres in this village. They practice terrace cultivation instead of shifting cultivation. They have 4 water tanks (14 feet x 6 feet x 7 feet) for drinking

water with the help of the UNDP and NGOs. They established plans to guard the tanks: 4 guard men for 4 water tanks among the villagers. They have to check the water reservoirs and the drinking water tanks. When it is necessary to repair the pond or tank, they call the villagers to help. Every house supports them with dry corn seeds. They contribute 17,0456 kg for a year. Onions, garlic and tomatoes are raised as their main crops. Corn is their main food. Formerly they raised chickens, pigs, goats and mynthsun for their livelihood. But now they cannot raise them because of lack of water for them.

They borrow money with 1.5% interest from the Myanmar Agriculture Bank, or 2.5% interest from the GRET foundation. When they borrow money from GRET, they have to agree to the group responsibility for repayment. For this group warranty, 5 persons are necessary to form a group and they have to share the person's responsibility. If someone cannot pay back his or her loan, other group members have to take this responsibility.

In their village, there is a Pan Pwint rice bank. It was set up by the UNDP in 2011. 2,000,000 Kyats (1 \$ = 1000 Kyats) are provided to set it up. The rice bank is for the food shortage season from March to May. It is organized by villagers with a chairman, secretary, and so on. They are selected by the villagers. It is operated at the village government office. They offer rice from Kalay town by phone and sell it to the villagers every Saturday. They sell it with 500 kyats profit per a rice bag (51.1368 Kg). These profits are used for the rice bank's investment. They sell rice for cash. However, they also sell rice in loan to the villagers during the food shortage period (March ~ May). If someone requests rice as a loan, she or he will have to sign a contract to repay the loan to the rice bank. Only 10 households obtain their rice with a loan in this village.

Although their main food is corn, they substitute rice sometimes. Some cook corn with a pressure cooker. Electricity is supplied 24 hours during the rainy and winter seasons. But in summer, electricity is only supplied from 6 am to 8 am, from 10 am to 12 pm, from 7 pm to 9 pm, and 10 pm to 12 am. There are 100 villagers who work in Thailand and Malaysia. They also support the villagers' needs and the church.

### Social affairs

Tapong Literature and Cultural Association is organized in this village. Tapong lives in six villages: Parthe, Kuzam, Larthi, Lonbun, Saimzaw and Pharkhawm. Villagers from all six celebrate the harvest festival altogether in the last week of September. At that time, they hold football matches, award prizes and give cards to honor persons who passed the BEHS examination and finish their respective degrees. A campfire festival is celebrated on the final night. At this festival males and females wear their traditional dresses and dance their traditional dance called the Tapong dance. It is a dance using two long bamboos. Young couples, males and females, dance together by drinking *kaungye* (kind of intoxicating brew). After pounding the millet and make the glutinous rice dough, they entertain their relatives and guests coming to the festival.

A traditional ceremony of eating from the first crop (KaufThitSarPwe) is also celebrated in this village from 26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of December. Before they changed from animism to Christianity, they killed pigs to offer to the spirits and drank *kaungye* with pork. They used to beat the drum and go around the village. After changing to Christianity, they gather with the fellow Christians and celebrate their traditional ceremony of eating first crop. They do not drink *kaungye* or alcohol prohibited by religion. They celebrate a thanksgiving ceremony for water every October. They celebrate this ceremony in someone's house each year. Cost for the ceremony is paid by group members or members of same congregation. First they go to

church to pray in the morning. After they come back to the house from church, they prepare the dishes for dinner. And they eat and drink together happily into the night.

Hunting ceremony is also celebrated in this village. Before they go to the forest for hunting, they offer fried chicken, bags of rice, water and firearms to the spirit outside the village. Even when they go to their fields, they always bring firearms.

In this village, they also celebrate a party to honor their parents. In this party sons and daughters prepare presents for their parents and pay respect to them. They invite their relatives and religious leaders to make a blessing at the party. Their parents also bless their sons and daughters at this time.

### **Education**

There is a primary school that has 4 teachers and 22 students. For the villagers, churchmen begin the classes with Bible teaching, English lessons, and singing. They also make plans for the villagers to attend summer school in Falam. UNICEF, World Food Program and the GarunarFoundation also support children's education.

### **Health**

Gastric problems, kidney, cough, cold, diarrhea and malaria occur in this village. Although there is no village health care center in this village, they can go to one of the hospitals in Lonban, Falam, Kalay or Yangon to cure their diseases. There are 70 who are age 60 or older. Even some 70 year-olds work in the fields.

### **Needs for sustainable development and poverty alleviation**

- 1) To use fertilizer.
- 2) To get enough water for cultivation.
- 3) To have enough money for terrace cultivation.
- 4) To give vocational training for their villagers.
- 5) To appoint enough teachers for students.

### **Socio-economic situation of Congheng**

East of this village is Tar Shwen. West of it is Ye Sein. North of it is Parthe and Lonbar. South of it is C.zamual. The population is 250: 120 males and 130 females. There are 52 houses in this village. They built the village 30 years ago.

### **Economy**

In this village, terrace cultivation was started with the help of the UNDP in 2008. They provided from 3000 Kyats to 5000 kyats per day to the villagers who participate in making terraces. There is a livelihood development committee in this village and its members saved the money provided by UNDP as an investment for terrace cultivation. The Garunar foundation and UNESCO also provided 9 rice bags (1 bag = 51.1368 kg), 20-visses of oil (1 viss= 1.64 kg) and 36-pyi of beans (1 pyi = 2.1307 kg) for 50 persons per acre for terrace workers in 2012. They planned to make terraces during the food shortage period (April, May and June). But terrace making depends on geographical condition. If their digging area is deep and the slope is steep, it is very difficult to dig and dangerous for them to work.

Some cultivators still practice shifting cultivation because terrace making consumes manpower and money. In this village, there is a rice bank and steering committee for the rice bank. They sell rice to their own villagers.

They raise goats and pigs. There is an organization for maintaining the water supply here. Ten household leaders, volunteers for water supply, selected by villagers have to secure and maintain the water pipes. Drinking water can be used by C.zamual villagers from the C.zamual tank. Village elders of C.zamual were asked to send stream water to their village directly. They agreed and send stream water to Congheng.

They depend on the rain water for their fields. Some gardeners store rainwater for plants. Although grapes can be grown in their gardens, water is necessary for grapes. Corn, beans (such as Peyinn, Khwheat, Aunglout),millet are raised as their main crops.

Electricity is available all year. Thank to electricity, they can use rice cookers, pressure cookers, irons, televisions and computers. There are 20 villagers who work in Malaysia and Singapore. They do not have enough earnings to provide their villagers' needs, however.

### **Social affairs**

They believe that economy conditions affect their social standard, including education and health. There are three women's groups. Every member saves 500 Kyats per week. They have a chance to borrow money with 1% interest from their group. As a warranty, they have to sign a contract in front of a witness. There are also religious congregations. They always go to church on Sunday. In the rainy season, the Tar Shwen ethnic groups from seven villages celebrate football matches. They maintain and transmit their traditional dance called *War Hmout Aka* to their young people. They also practice singing their traditional songs and play their traditional music as part of their cultural heritage. They also attend to ceremonies for the Chin National Day.

### **Education**

There is a primary school with 5 teachers and 17 students. There is Sunday school and two pastors who are teaching Bible. One is from Yangon and another one is from Falam.

### **Health**

Colds, coughing, and diarrhea occur in this village. If they fall ill, they go to meet with a doctor from a hospital or buy medicine from a pharmacy. There is no village health center. The UNDP held healthcare training courses in this village in 2008 and 2014. Although they have knowledge of health care, they cannot apply it in their daily life because of lack of medicine. One midwife and one health worker are in this village.

### **Needs for sustainable development and poverty alleviation**

- 1) To get enough water for drinking and cultivation.
- 2) To get financial support to practice terrace cultivation
- 3) To provide cars and motor cycles for transportation

## 5. Discussion

### Economy

According to interviews, the UNDP is advising the residents to practice terrace cultivation instead of shifting cultivation. The villagers agreed to practice this method. They understood the shifting cultivation does not allow their own plots to be planted at the same time. Half of their farm is left to fallow. The residents want to practice terrace cultivation, or permanent cultivation. If they want to practice terrace cultivation, the UNDP gives loans to create the terraces. After they finished building, they have to pay back half of the loan to the UNDP. They can save the rest of the money to use for other things necessary for cultivation.

They organized a Livelihood Development Committee with the villagers to manage their economy in their village. At the end of 2012, UNICEF and the Garunar foundation also supported them with the rice, oil and beans to make terraces during April, May and June which are regarded as a food shortage period (*Pyatlat Karla*) for the villagers.

Another program is supplying water. It comes to the villages using nearby water resources by building tanks and connecting pipes to the village for drinking water and by digging channels for water to the fields. By doing so, the villagers can grow the corn, tomato, grapes and so on. If they produce more crops, they can create more income. This program is excellent for the villagers who live near water resources. Villagers living far from water resources do not benefit, however. So water supply is an obstacle to raising their socio-economic status. As the terrace cultivation and water supply lead to their socio-economic growth, we should consider which are suitable methods and technological supports for them, especially for the farmers far from water.

Furthermore, we should consider that if they grow multiple cash crops by using enough water and terrace cultivation, the market demands become also considerable limiting factor. For example, some villagers can grow grapes successfully, but they need techniques how to make wine, store and preserve the grapes, and a market their products. Having a market is a very important factor for reducing the rate of poverty and hunger. They hope to learn techniques concerned with preservation, producing wine and distributing it. If they build a food industry, they can reduce the unemployment rate by creating job opportunities.

Another program is to set up a rice bank in these villages. Although their traditional meal is corn soup with added salt and chili, they are able to substitute rice and curry instead of their main dish thanks to transportation. Some buy the rice from the village rice bank with the support of the UNDP. The rice bank sells only to their own villagers. Some sell their rice to people from other villages. If they have no money to buy the rice from the rice bank, they can request a loan from the members of their rice bank committee. But then they have to pay back money to the rice bank according to their agreement. Although this program reduces the problem for food gap (during April, through June), when they cannot pay back the loan to the rice bank committee, what will the consequences be. It is also a problem.

GRET also provided loans for their livelihood with 2.5 kyats interest per 100kyats. They used a group warranty system for the loan. If here is a problem with a person who cannot pay back his or her loan, then other members take his or her responsibility. Here, I noticed that their society is formed by kin groups. By forming villages of kin groups, they have unity and are ready to help each other. This is also a reason for success in conducting the development programs in these villages. I met and made interviews with the one group

leader of GRET in Falam. She told me that micro financial support programs are successful all around Chin State.

One finding from interviews is that the people prefer long-term loans. They want to use the loans for their farming or other needs. Some have plans to it to pay migration costs to work overseas, especially to go to Singapore, Malaysia and the USA. Most young people dream about going to make money in foreign countries. This fact is also significant for their sustainable development particularly to protect their brain drain and labor loss. They think that migrating to work overseas is a convenient way for money making. Both the short term and long term migrant workers are faced with difficulty and danger in some countries. Some are facing human trafficking.

### **Social affairs**

I looked at how they conduct the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. According to the interviews, they have Myanmar maternal and children welfare associations but there are no any activities at these village locations. As they practice a patrilineal kinship system, men take the leadership role. When I conducted interviews, women and men sat together and answered our questions, but men's voices are louder than women's. I could not get detailed or deep information about the promotion of gender equality and empowering women. They told me that they organized the woman groups to save money and lend it with 2 percent interest. When they need money for livestock or repairs for their houses, they borrow it from the mutual aid group. When they save money in this group, they can earn 1 percent interest. When the auspicious and inauspicious events occur in their village, they are ready to lend their hands. Both the men and women take responsibility respectively. It can be said that they speak their minds in public.

### **Education**

There is a primary school in each village. These are built with the help of some villagers working in foreign countries such as the USA, Singapore, Malaysia and India. Some are built by the government. Some villagers want to build a kindergarten in their village. Although formerly there was no primary school in their village, they planned for their children to attend a school near the village. In these villages, they need to provide the teachers' accommodation, such as hostel or house, and the teacher salary as some are appointed by villagers. In particular, the villagers' demands for education are to pay for the school teachers, teacher dormitory and salary, enough text books, and rotating the teacher (transfer system) which is carried out June or November in general.

When I ask "what kinds of support comes from the development programs carried out in their villages, especially in education?" they answered UNICEF and the Garunar Foundation provided children's meals.

To achieve primary education in these villages is the one of the necessities for their development. This is also the native people's expectation for their children because it relates to their children's lives and futures. They explained that when their children finished primary school, they have to send their children to Falam for middle and high school. As it is far from their home, they cannot supervise their education and living situation. These are awfully sorry for them. It can be said that this affects human capital, poverty reduction and ability to improve sustainable development.

The villagers have an opportunity to learn language skills (English and mother language), religious texts, agricultural training courses, and so on in their village or other towns with the help of the UNDP, Christian missionaries, INGOs and NGOs. These also affect their livelihood and life expectations. In these training courses, both boys and girls can participate.

### Health

When I asked them about health, they answered that diarrhea and malaria are common during the early rainy season. They think diarrhea occurs in their community because of the drinking water. Malaria comes from migrant workers who return from work in India. These may be their living style. When they feel ill, they consult the midwife from the village health center or go to the doctor at the hospital in Kalay. If they have an emergency, they go to the hospital in Kalay. Some buy prescription medicine. They would like to have medical care with a doctor or health professional in their village health center. For maternal health, they rely on the village midwife or from another village health center. Although some health educational training courses taught by missionary and trainers from the UNDP, they have no opportunity to apply their medical knowledge because of lack of health center or medicine to cure patients. The matter of healthcare is one part of the human assets as it directly effects on their livelihood.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research is the first step for the review of sustainable development and poverty alleviation for the Chin living in Chin State, Myanmar. In this paper, six villages are chosen to describe the impacts of development programs on the native people and to find ways to improve their living situation. In brief, although government and international development programs have been conducted in these villages, the following factors are needed to consider for their sustainable development.

The universal aims of socio-economic development are 1) improvement in real incomes, 2) growth of employment and opportunities to all who want to work and 3) improvement in the quality of life of people. Here are the steps to achieve these objectives

- 1) Within the agriculture sector, it is necessary to introduce suitable commercial crops to the farmers and teach them methods to raise successful crops. This aid is most important for the farms are far from water sources and which do not receive enough rain.
- 2) It is necessary to expand their cultivated areas and practice terrace, permanent farming, and gardening to raise their incomes and create job opportunity for men and women to improve their livelihood.
  - a) To increase the skills and knowledge of preservation, storing and making ready-made foods and snacks by building factories and workshops.
  - b) To establish reliable markets for their products.
  - c) To create the reliable and safe transportation.
- 3) It is necessary to find ways to improve the water supply for farms far from water resource.
- 4) It is necessary to focus on rich and beautiful Ethnic identity and natural attractions for tourism. It can help the local people and the Chin ethnic groups to sustain and preserve their own cultural heritages: both tangible and intangible cultural heritages and even natural heritage.

- 5) It is necessary to train them to be skillful and knowledgeable for solving their local needs.
- 6) It is necessary to improve their health services to enhance the quality of life.
- 7) It is necessary to increase their education and fulfill their education aspirations especially.



Figure 1. Entrance View of Parthe Village



Figure4. View of Zarlai Village



Figure 2. Terrace cultivation, Parthe Village



Figure 5. Focus group discussion, C.zamaul Village



Figure 3. Geographic situation of research areas



Figure 6. Meal for lunch, Mang Kheng Village

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