

# Changes of Economic Activities: Case Study in Chaing Village Tract, Pakokku Township, Magway Region

Yin Yin Aye<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The aim of research paper is to analyze the changes of economic activities and the causes of these changes. The local people have mainly engaged in agricultural works, *Ya* works, in the previous time. Nowadays, the economic activities are changing to other activities such as weaving industries, palm activities, betel leaf gardening, etc... Only 15% of the total households work in agriculture. Moreover, the local youths, both male and female (80 persons per 100 persons) have migrated to oversea and urban area for good income and jobs. The women, about 30 years old and above, (84 women per 100 women) work in small weaving industries. What are the controlling factors to change the economic activities? The production in agricultural sector always decreases year by year due to the climate change and the other factors including soil degradation, the availability of water, the price of crops, etc... Besides, as the development of manufacturing industries, some are engaging in these industries, especially textile industries, aluminum industries. These changes cause the both of positive and negative effects. The socio- economic conditions of this study area are changing according to the changes of economic activities. This research will provide to find out the better economic activities based on the pro and con of the changes in economic activities.

Key words; local people, economic activities, agricultural sector

## Introduction

Economy is the key to the development of the livelihood. Economic activity is the activity that makes to get the profits. Any activities involved money or the exchange of the products or services are economic activities. The economic activities play a major role in the development of every sector. It can help to improve living standard and make society a better place. In analyzing the changes in economic activities, I will consider the changes from agricultural activities to others.

## Study Area

Chaing village tract comprised with five villages is located in Pakokku Township, Pakokku District, Magway Region. It is astronomically located north latitude 21°18' 51" N and east longitude 94°50'36" E. The total area is 16.91 square kilometer (6.53 square miles). It is bounded on the north by *Ku* and *Kyatoe* village tracts, on the east by *Pha Lan Oh* village tract, on the south by *Tha Yet Taw* village tract and on the west by *Sa Bay* village tract. The *Yaekyi* stream, intermittent stream, passes through this village tract from north to south.

The total population is 4896 persons and the number of household is 886 at present. According to 2014 census data, the total population was 3503 persons and 5152 persons at 2017. The population density of the study area is 290 persons per square kilometers. The local people are Burmese and they believe in Buddhism.

The soil found in the study area is red brown savanna soil, eroded red brown savanna soil and primitive crushed stone soil. According to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, Pakokku Township, the total rainfall is 27.64 inches, the average maximum temperature is 91.7°F, the minimum temperature is 69.13°F and the mean temperature is 80.42°F (2018 data). Main cultivated crops are sesame, groundnut, beans (green bean, paragon pea, etc...), and maize. Nowadays, the betel gardening, weaving industries and plum activities also play in special role of the local economy.

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<sup>1</sup>MA Student, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Mandalay

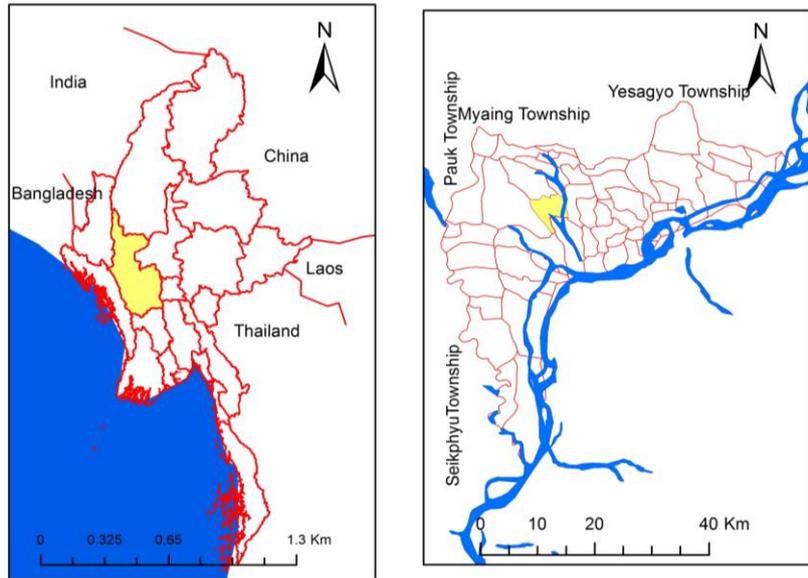


Figure 1 Location Map of Chaing Village Tract, Pakokku Township, Magway Region

### Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to analyze the changes of economic activities and the causes of these changes. The objectives are

- to analyze the economic activities of local people
- to examine the driving factors of the changes in economic activities
- to analyze the pro and con of these changes
- to suggest the better economic opportunities for local people.

### Methodology

In selecting the sample for interviewing and focus group discussion, random sampling method was used. In doing research, qualitative interviews, quantitative survey and focus group discussion have used to get the data. The 138 person was interviewed by using qualitative interview methods (interviewing and phone interviewing), focus group discussion with local people, 30, (especially raw workers and wavers), surveying at the head of village

tract and the head of each village. And then, the data were calculated by using the appropriate methods.

### Analysis

I interviewed and made focus group discussion with 168 local people. In 2009, among the 678 households, about 50 percent of the total household worked in agriculture. Among the 886 households, only 15 percent of the total households work in agriculture in 2019. The reasons of the changes in their economics activities are described in the following table. Almost all of the local people changed their occupation type from agriculture to others because of low benefitting in agriculture. That is why, although the numbers of household is increasing during these 10 years, the number of people who work in agriculture is decreasing.

Number of Persons	Reasons	Percentage
89	Not enough money for their essential livings factors	52.9
53	Climate Change (Drought)	31.6
17	Instability of Crop price (low price)	10.1
9	Scarcity of labor force	5.4

Table 1- Reasons of Economic Activities Change in Chaing Village Tract

### Findings and Results

The economy of the village tract mainly relied on the agriculture in the previous time. The economic sector of the village tract has poor as the production of agricultural crops becomes low year by year. The agricultural lands are decreasing year by year due to the climate change, soil degradation, the instability of crop prices and other factors. During the period of 10 years (from 2009 to 2019), the agricultural land decreases from 3301 to 3075 acres. The current cultivated area is 3075 acres.

Year	Total Population	Agricultural Land Use (Acres) (Cultivated area)
2009	4744	3301
2014	3503	3105
2017	5152	3095
2019	4896	3075

Table 2- Total Population and Agricultural land use of Chaing Village Tract

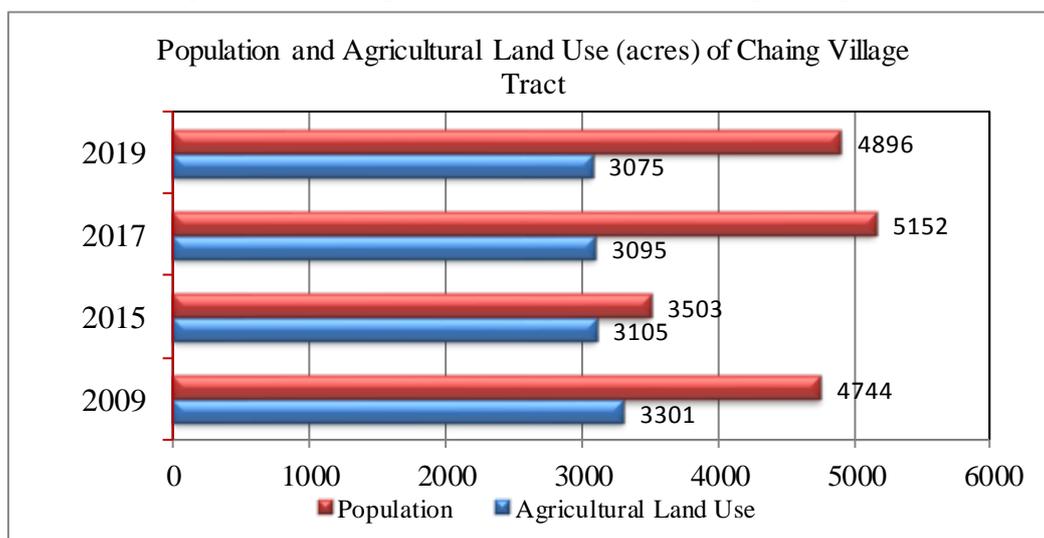


Figure 2- Total population and Agricultural land use (acres) of Chaing Village Tract

Among the 886 households, only 15 percent of the total households work in agriculture. In 2009, over 50 percent of the total household worked in agriculture. The total decreased agricultural land is 226 acres during the 10 years period. Only 31 percent of the decreased agricultural land changed into residential land and 9 percent changed into abandoned land as the soil degradation. The others are unused land but these areas are able to cultivate.

Year	Total Rainfall	Mean Temperature
2009	16.01	82.75
2014	26.1	86.59
2017	26.61	79.43
2019	18.9	82.19

Table 3-Temperature and Rainfall Condition of Chaing Village Tract

The productions of agricultural crops decrease year by year. The agricultural product of the study area is shown in the table 2. The farmers mainly cultivated the green bean and pigeon pea. The production of pigeon pea is 0 viss because this crop takes about nine months to get the products. As the total annual rainfall is decrease, the amount of rainfall for pigeon pea is not enough to grow. The product of sesame increase during the ten years period as this crop makes profit in short term. The product of green bean, groundnut and maize in 2019 mainly decrease as there is not enough amount of rainfall to grow. Besides, some of the farmers (3 persons per 100 persons) do not cultivate the maize, pigeon pea and groundnut because these crops are less profit crops compared to green bean and sesame as the climate change and instability of crop prices. The temperature and rainfall condition of Chaing village tract is shown table 3, referenced from the Meteorology and Hydrology Department, Pakokku.

Year	Green bean	Pigeon pea	Sesame	Groundnut	Maize
2009	56525	71400	44625	8330	21420
2014	33345	81000	54675	11340	31590
2017	22990	60500	45375	10164	17424
2019	13566	0	53550	5712	3672

Table 4 - Productions of Agricultural Crops in Chaing Village Tract (in Viss)

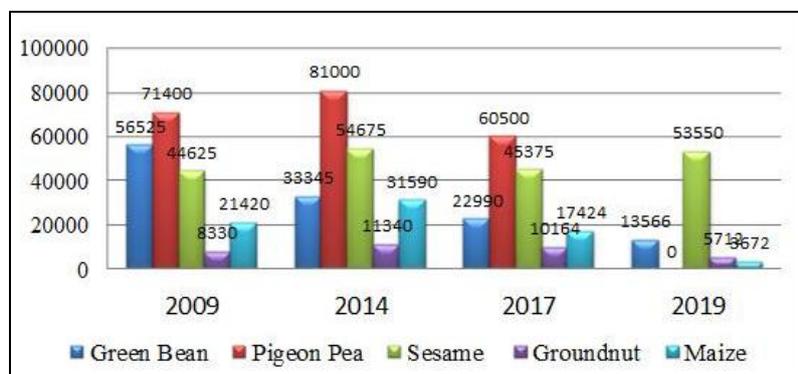


Figure 3- Production of Agricultural Crops in Chaing Village Tract (in Viss)

As the above mentioned factors, the income is not enough for their living. So, the economic activities have changed. Some of the farms are rented by China Company (watermelon farming). The 85 persons per 100 women (30 years old and above) mainly works in weaving industries that produce the various types of blanket and bags. Betel gardening and plum activities have worked as the economic activities. Besides, the local youth, both male and female (80 persons per 100 persons) migrate to urban area and overseas for good income. Besides, some students (73 students per 100 students) cannot continue their education in new places. The socio-economic conditions are also changed as the above reason.

The local people participating in the interviewing and focus group discussion answered about the changes of economic activities. The local people want to live in native if there develop either in agricultural sector or plum activities or betel gardening. Migrating to other areas cannot create the development of local area. The main driving factors of the changes are the crop production is dropping, not enough money for their living and the instability of crop prices. These answers are classified as pro and con of the changed economic activities.

Pro	Con
High Income	Families are separated
Enough money for their essential living factors	Only children and old people (dependent persons) left in village, the local people want to live in their native
Some students could continue their education in new place	Food insecurity as the crops production decreases
	Humanitarian crises and national security

### Conclusion

Based on the results, which economic activities would be better? In the rural area, the essential living factors, food, living, clothing, mainly rely on agriculture. Fostering the role of agriculture cannot separate the development of rural area as agricultural sector is an important growth engine of rural development. Moreover, production of crop (food products) plays a special role in sustainable economic development. One of the main reasons to promote agricultural sector is that the agricultural sector contributes 38% of GDP, accounts for 20 to 30 percent of total export earnings and employs more than 70 percent of workforce in Myanmar.

Besides, an important part of industrial growth in the most developing countries, like Myanmar, can be related to forward and backward linkage with agriculture. Agriculture is essential to provide food and raw materials and absorbs a lot of labors. As there happen climate change and soil degradation, conservation agriculture should adopt for improving the environmental sustainability, soil fertility, and pest management and farm profits. Adaptations like changes in crop-management or ranching practices and improvements to irrigation are required. Drought Risk Management is required as the frequency of drought closer to closer. As the instability of price is one of the big problems, private and public should collaborate to improve agricultural sector.

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