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| Abstract                                                   | <p>This study is about the changes in the land use pattern and the livelihood transformation of the Yaw National family system in Gangaw Township, Magwe region, Myanmar. The study area, Kyaw Village exists between Pontaung and Ponnyataung Mountain ranges eight miles far away from each other. The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between lifestyle changes based on land use and family structure in order to understand the real situation of rural families. After 1988, in the time of the Revolutionary Council and State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), such land use projects as road construction, establishment of model villages, construction of railway lines, and establishment of oil company have increased and the confiscation of farmland of the local farmers have stepped up. In some villages, even the houses were confiscated, and thus, causing great troubles to local farmers. Moreover, due to the scarcity of own land areas, the farmers didn't have enough land areas to hand over to their children. As a result, the children were compelled to seek livelihood opportunities as company staff, casual laborers at road and bridge construction sites, etc. Moreover, it is also possible to go to Kalay by train conveniently, and trading Indian consumer goods and the products from Chin Hill has been booming. Being the junction of car roads and railroads, every house beside the road becomes home shop, making the town quite busy with merchandising. As a result, the price of road-side land areas of the village becomes extremely higher than that of the other street of the village land areas. This is the obvious change in family formation and relationship. Previously, father, the head of the family, alone took the responsibility of income-earning of the whole family; contrarily, all the household members are to work for income-earning of the family at present. In March, 2015, Kyaw Region was notified as a town. To be in line with the town's local amenities, government offices, electricity power stations had to be set up. Therefore, the change in livelihood patterns also caused the changes in family structure, economic and management changes during 2012-2016. For the field research, data collection methods include the design of Ethnographic research depending on specific objectives of this study correlate the documented data.</p> |
| Keywords                                                   | Land use, Livelihood transformation, Family structure, Ethnographic research                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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### **Land use, Livelihood and Change of Family Structure**

My interest in the village tract called Kyaw in Magwe Region (see fig. 1) first developed when I read a book called *Journey to Pondaung Ponnnya* (Pondaung Ponnnya Kha-Yee –thee), written by Myanmar writer Mawgyin Soe Myint. He wrote about the difficult economic and social conditions in this isolated region. I decided to do field research for my Ph.D on this area, focusing on the relationship between natural environment and social organization.<sup>1</sup> Many changes took place in that area, including government projects to do with infrastructure development.<sup>2</sup>

People from Kyaw previously used to go and work in other places such as Namatu, Bawdwin and Mokoke after completing their farm work (Kyar Htun U, 1971). During the growing season, they came home again and engaged in farm activities. The villagers are invariably small-holders.

However, three major developments took place, which turned this small village tract into a town. First, in 1995-96 Kyaw was initiated as a government development area, resulting in intensive regional development activities that brought in migrants from outside rushing in to seek job opportunities in such fields as building schools,

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<sup>1</sup>At that time, it helped that one of my cousins worked in Gangaw as a Police Lieutenant Colonel (Police Force, Gangaw District) which gave me convenient access to the region.

<sup>2</sup>I used ethnographic methods to collect data for this research as it provided the means to gain rich data concerning the research topic. The person who encouraged me to carry out research work there and introduced me to that region in 2007 was the District Chairman of the region, one of my cousins. He introduced me to the village chairpersons, the owner of construction companies. The person who gave me much help in this research, too. I have submitted this research paper to Understanding Myanmar Development Program in Chiang Mai University. In doing so, I employed particular emphasis on the use of informal focus group interview, key informant interview, participant observation, and documentary research.

exchange office, hospital, railway station, railroads, and tunnels, timber extraction, etc. Second, it was a prime time for oil-extraction during 1995-2000, resulting in the flux of oil field labourers and oil-field owners from the vicinity. Some villagers sold out their farmland to enter into oil extraction business totally changing their life style. One-third of these entrepreneurs eventually lost their businesses, ending up losing their lands and facing misery.

Third, Kyaw became a government project area in 2009-10. The Military Regime confiscated a total of more than (8000) acre of land area to build state-owned Ka.Pa.Sa factory. Total of (96) acres of land area and 41 homesteads in Kyaw -the study area- were grabbed. Thus, paddy land and farmland land decreased and current livelihood according their changing of live-works and transforming of families will be illustrated. Therefore, the change in livelihood patterns also caused the changes in family structure, economic and management changes during 1995-2015.

In addition, general infrastructural development turned Kyaw village tract into a much more populated town. In this paper, I look at the effects of these developments on the Kyaw communities.

### **Kyaw Village Tract and its People**

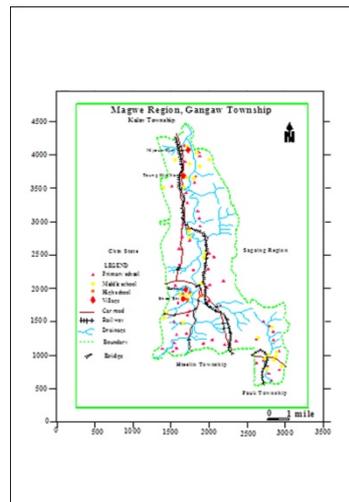
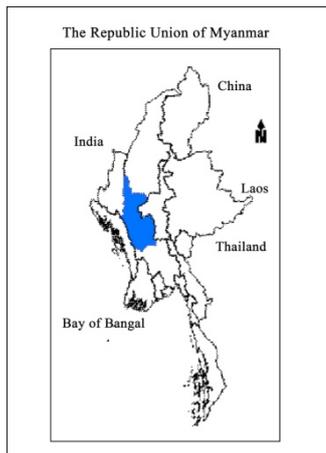
Kyaw Village Tract lies between Pondaung and Ponnya Taung mountain ranges that are eight miles far away from each other. It is (260) Kilometers far away from Mandalay. In 2015, when Kyaw was declared no longer to be a village tract but a town, there are a total of (4565) people, being administered by the new town administration Township and District administrator, etc., by level. The majority of

population living in the research site is the Bamar (Yaw) ethnic group; however, a few Chin ethnic groups also inhabit in this area.

In olden days, the Kyaw residents concentrated on farming, searching for forest produce, etc. Moreover, most farmers keep certain animals at home for home consumption. After 1988, once Kyaw was drawn into Myanmar's infrastructural development they entered into trading business and thus their livelihood patterns have changed. Moreover, the migrant workers in the vicinity came into Kyaw to seek jobs for their living.

There are altogether (6) villages in Kyaw region. In 2015 Kyaw was officially declared a town. After the declaration of town level, the villages are divided into Ward(1), Ward (2), and Ward (3). There is an administrator in every ward. From Kyaw is also possible to go to Kalay by train conveniently: Indian consumer goods from the India border are traded here via Monywa as are products from Chin Hill.

Today, most of the farmers are earning a living by selling forest produce, such as bamboo, bamboo shoots, mushrooms etc. Some of them became shop owners by running grocery shop from their home. Only a few of them work as civil servants or as employees in companies. Moreover, a few people become rich owners of expensive cars, such as Bedfords, Dozer , Ten-wheel Car etc.



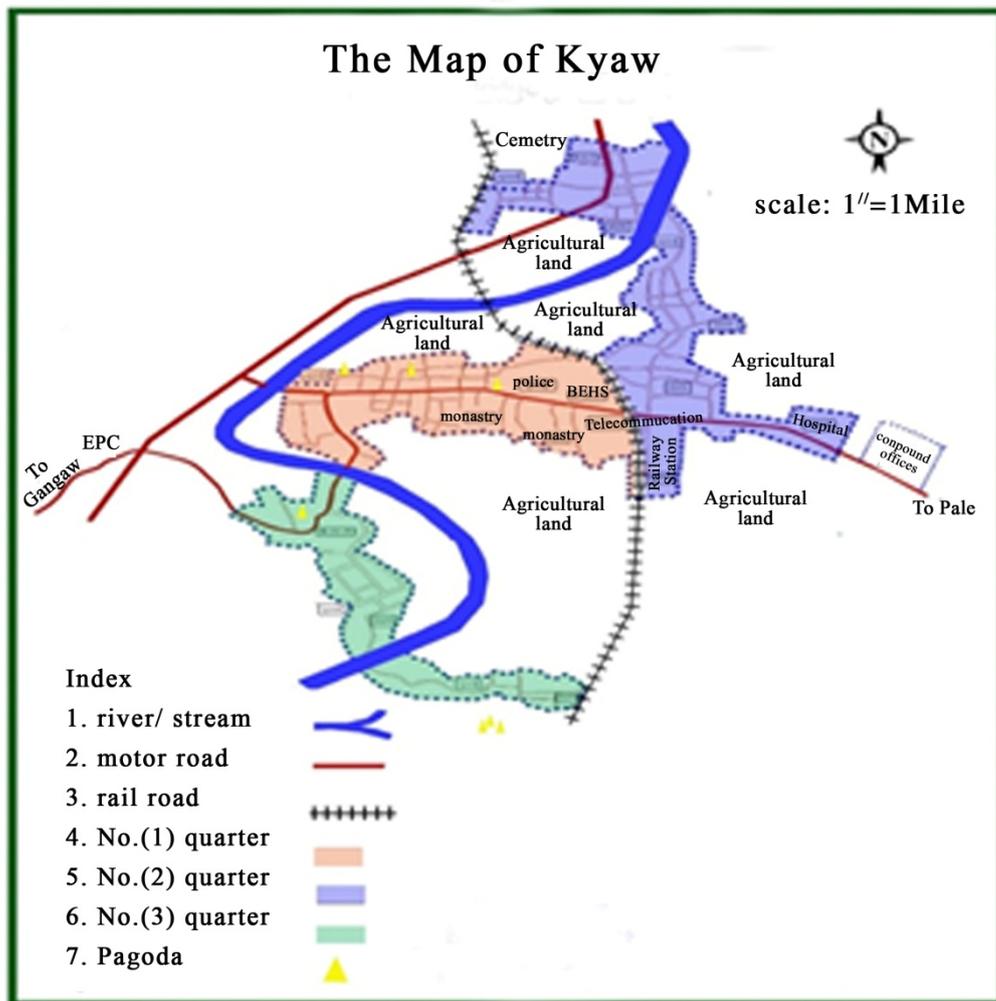


Figure-1 :The map of Kyaw Region

Source: Land Records Department in Gangaw township,2017

## Land use practice in Kyaw

In Kyaw town there are five types of cultivated lands, paddy land , farmland,alluvial soil land, Taungya (shifting cultivation) in the forest land and garden land in the fallow land. The paddy land is “Kyitmyay” type, the best type of soil in the region. They grow paddy and green peas (Figure:3). They traditionally call farmland

“thetwetkhautmyay” (sand and alluvial soil mixed), and it is the second best type of soil in the region. They grow gourd, egg plant, etc. which are seasonal crops and they also grow green pea on this type of soil. Sand soil (farmland) is the poorest type of soil; if green pea is sown on this type of soil, only plants will grow with no grain at all. They grow paddy and other seasonal crops in the Taungya. They planted teak trees on the fallow land area (wild forest) which were changed to garden land in 2015.

Dry-seeding cultivation was to be carried out annually as there was less rain in the region. The estimation of less rain for the very year caused the farmers to practice dry-seeding cultivation. The small stream was blocked and took the water for paddy cultivation on self-help basis. Some paddy fields can be irrigated from Myauktaw dam.



**Figure-3: The green peas plants**

### **Historical context of land use**

Between 1995 and 2011 a large number of construction activities took place. Much local village paddy land, farmland, virgin land and fallow land including homestead were grabbed during this period.

**Table (1): Historical context of land use in Kyaw region for road transportation and construction activities**

| Sn | Year      | Name of project                         | Acres grabbed | Support                                     | Remark                                               |
|----|-----------|-----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | 1.4.1958  | Police Station                          | 3.5           | -                                           |                                                      |
| 2. | 1966      | Monywa-Pale-Gangaw-Hakha Road           | -             | -                                           | 199 miles                                            |
| 3. | 1966-67   | Kyaw-Yaymyeni                           | -             | -                                           | 14 miles                                             |
| 4. | 1968      | Forestry Center                         | 0.75          | -                                           | Some unused land were returned.                      |
| 5. | 1987-1990 | Statr High School                       | 11            | 30,000 Ks/acre                              | Money received from sale of village football ground. |
| 6. | 1995      | Kalay-Gangaw Railroad                   | -             | -                                           | 71.61 miles                                          |
| 7. | 1995      | Railway Station<br>Rail road            | 26            | -                                           | Returned some unused land                            |
| 8. | 1996-2007 | Railway Tunnel                          |               | -                                           | 5610 feet Fallow land                                |
| 9. | 1996      | Exchange office                         | 0.48          | -purchase on current price                  | Some cash, some land                                 |
| 10 | 1996      | Hospital                                | 4.5           | -                                           | -                                                    |
| 11 | 1996      | Water supply                            |               | UNICEF                                      |                                                      |
| 12 | 2007      | Joint venture (Myanmar Chinese)Oil test | -             | -                                           | 7 miles away from Kyaw village                       |
| 13 | 2009-10   | Ka-pa-sa Factory                        | 96            | A plot of land (4lks);house (40x60),(50x60) | Acres confiscated from Kyaw region alone             |
| 14 | 2013      | Electricity power hill                  | 5.56          | Purchase on current price                   | -                                                    |

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|    |       |                       |        |                              |  |
|----|-------|-----------------------|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 15 | 2014  | Construction Centre   | 0.28   |                              |  |
| 16 | 2015  | Administration office |        | Purchase on<br>current price |  |
| 17 | 2016  | Fire station          | 1.5    | Purchase on<br>current price |  |
|    | Total |                       | 149.57 |                              |  |

Source: Field survey in 2017

In 2010-11, the Ka-pa-sa road ( Figure-5) had to be paved through Shwebin (ward II), resulting in the transfer of (41) households and a total of 3100 feet for the street. It was to transfer (9) houses first and (32) houses secondly, and so it was to confiscate the paddy land, at the price of (4) lakhs per plot (locally call Le-tad-twin). For the first (9) houses, a new quarter (40x60) feet, and for the second (32) houses (50x60) feet were systematically located with village main road. The first (9) houses were transferred by U Sanny Company, with no transfer changes and transitional charges.

For the transfer of the second (32) houses, (Figure-6) (Figure-7) the state authorities and the Naing Min Company gave from (20) thousand kyats to (50) thousand kyats per house for the transfer charges depending on the size of the house. A homestead was given to those who had separate house in the same compound of their parents. Farmers used to live in wide home compounds: they usually built barn, cow-shed, haystack in the compound, the essential things for farmers. Moreover, they also bred pigs in their homestead. Accordingly farmers got into difficulties with narrow plots of land they were given. Moreover, they had to rebuild their houses and were in debt. In fact, the authorities and the private business persons were the ones who attained a great deal of benefits and advantages exploiting the poor farmers without giving the

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full size of plots of land as they had grabbed from the farmers and without giving current prices.

In 2015, raising up town level was declared, and plots of land to build government buildings were in great demand. However, there were no longer large projects in the region, so the big companies and the local branch companies moved to other regions nearly for example, to Chin State to carry out development projects. The Companies took the employees that they had already appointed along with them. With the scarcity of farmland in the region, the sons and daughters of the farmers entered into company posts as company staff, sales persons, clerks, etc.



Figure (4): The Railway Station



Figure-(5) : Ka-Pa-Sa Road



Figure (6): The transfer of houses



Figure (7): The transfer of houses

## **Traditional Land Tenure System**

Previously, paddy land alone didn't work for food security, so new plots of land (Taungya) was formed for the security of food for the family members. The person who initiated the first cultivated taungya is called the pioneer (locally called "dhamma-oo-cha").

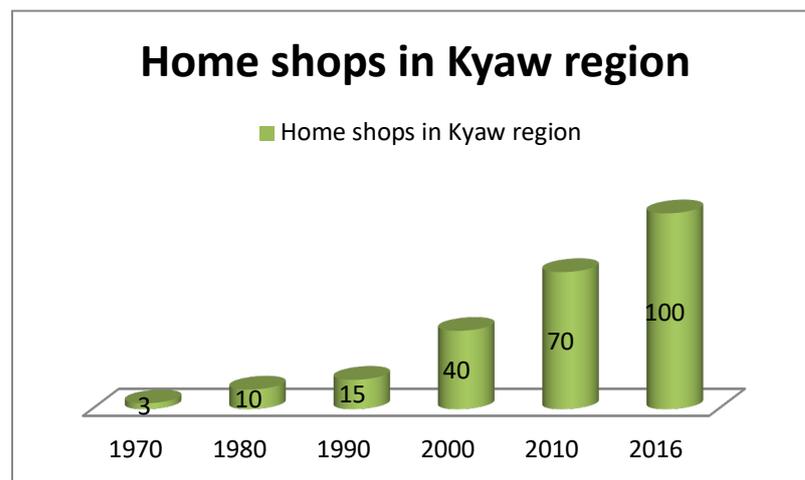
Nowadays, there are no new shifting cultivation in Kyaw; instead, the shifting cultivation become permanent resident areas, locally known as living "Poke-sin-pin-sin". It means that the members of a family have to live in the shifting cultivation the whole year round doing their cultivation activities from cultivation period up to the end of harvest. Few of local people know rules and regulations regarding land ownership, authenticity, etc, that are prescribed by the government. It is regarded that land ownership is all right by handing over the land to new generations. For example, in the whole Kyaw city, the grant for homestead ownership is only in the hand of former head. No one knows the law on land grant. They buy and sell homestead and farmland as well as mortgage farmland with their friends near them as witnesses. Loyalty and honesty solve all the problems, more reliable than the government prescribed rules and regulations.

As per the 2012 Farmland Act, Permission Act (7) was distributed: the Act which permits to use fallow land after presenting the application to the Naypyidaw Council or to Region or to State Farmland Management Committee, and them to Township Farmland Management Committee that distributes Permission Form (7) (The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw,2012). It is therefore some local farmers have at present already submitted application and received permission certificates. Some are still working

through the use of land revenue receipts. Therefore, local people have to depend on land certificate. State owns the land.

### **Livelihood strategies in Kyaw**

In 1970, there were only three shops there (Tin Myint, 1992). It was, therefore, to buy salt and jaggery (palm sugar) to consume for the whole year round from Myaing and Pale.



**Figure- 8: The status of trading and existence of home shops in Kyaw region**

**Source: The village administrative office in Kyaw region, 2017**

After the construction of railroads, home shops have remarkably increased in Kyaw. In 2000, up to (40) home shops have been counted (Figure-8) The oil extraction business reached its prime time in 1995-2000 and accordingly the sale of Myanmar beer has increased up to (3000) bottles par day. The sales of whisky and beer have also increased remarkably. Later, most of the local people sold out their cattle after harvest and set up oil wells (Figure-9,10). Though such ventures, some of them attained economic gains and were able to build concrete house and to buy cars, upgrading their living standards. Some of them were not lucky enough to have

economic success. However, one third of local people who worked oil extraction became landless. In 2010, it increased up to (70) home shops (Figure-8). Due to booming trading business,(Figure-11,12)the plots on both sides of the road of Kyaw village become very expensive.

In 2010, Ka-pa-sa project took place again. The sale for consumer goods, household utensils needed for project workers were in great demand. With the development of road transportation, there emerged big shops. There are 11 super stores, one gas station (Figure-13) and (3) big restaurants (Table-2). As a result, it is crowded along the Kyaw main road.

Table-2; Stores and shops, 2017

| Sr. | Types of shops              | Number |        |       |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
|     |                             | Big    | Medium | Small |
| 1   | Stores                      | 11     |        |       |
| 2   | Restaurants                 | 3      | 3      |       |
| 3   | Gas station                 | 1      |        |       |
| 4   | Goldsmith shop              |        | 4      |       |
| 5   | Electrical goods shop       |        | 10     |       |
| 6   | Mobile and accessories      |        |        | 7     |
| 7   | Drug store                  |        | 6      |       |
| 8   | Tea shop                    |        | 6      |       |
| 9   | Hardware shop               | 2      | 7      |       |
| 10  | Construction materials shop |        | 1      | 3     |
| 11  | Rice shop                   |        | 3      |       |
| 12  | Garment stores              |        | 14     |       |
| 13  | Other small shops           |        |        | 19    |
|     | Total                       | 17     | 54     | 29    |

Source: Township General Administration Department, 2017

At present, there are only 7 local people who own companies and branch companies who are rich enough to set up branch companies in the vicinity (table-3). They especially build bridges, project buildings, etc. They work not only in Kyaw but also up to Myitkyina, Monywa, Shwebo, Taunggyi, Namsan region, Mogoke, etc., the upper Burma areas, the Middle part of Myanmar, especially to Chin Hills.

**Table-3: Households in Kyaw city who own Dozers, Bedfords , in 2017**

| Sr.   | Type of Vehicles                                       | Word-I,HH | Word-II,HH | Word-III,HH |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 1     | Mechants-branch construction companies(Bedford, Dozer) | 7         | -          | -           |
| 2     | 10 weel car owners                                     | 12        | 6          | -           |
| 3     | 6 wheel car owners                                     | 12        | 13         | 6           |
| 4     | Light truck                                            | 9         | 2          | -           |
| 5     | Luxury Car (Pajero, Serv)                              | 17        | -          | -           |
| Total |                                                        | 57        | 21         | 6           |

Source: Field Survey in 2017

Along with the ownership of Bedfords, Dozers, Ten-wheel cars, etc., the grown-up boys become drivers of these cars. Change of livelihood among next generation thus emerged. They not only work in Kyaw but also go to other areas to work at the work sites of their branch companies in other regions in such jobs as earth carrying, pebble carrying, crushing attrite, etc., and so they gained the opportunity of communicating with other people from different regions. This is in fact the real conditions of rural development.

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**Figure-9: Oil well near Kyaw Village**



**Figure- 10: A productive oil well**



**Figure-11: booming trading business**



**Figure-12: Booming trading business**



**Figure-13: The gas station**

### **Effects on families**

Along with the social and economic changes, family organization patterns have already changed. In olden days, the head of the family was father. Father alone had to seek for money and was the most influential person in the family. Most local people had at least seven to nine offspring in their family. After they got married, they used to live with their parents' families at least for three years and they built houses near their parents' houses in the same compound that are owned by husband's parents when they can be able to build new separate house.

In 1962, the road construction of Pale-Gangaw, Haka began and the soldiers from government timber extraction board entered into Kyaw. Since then the women of Kyaw got married to the soldiers. Then, when the workers from personal oil extraction sites, oil companies, and the company owners who came from China arrived, Kyaw ladies got married to them too. Now some ladies also married to the captains from Ka-pa-sa factory. The head of the family is still the father, but not only the father and mother but also grownup children try to earn money for the family. After marriage, the couple mostly used to live separately in neolocal residence. Now, most of the local people have three to four Children.

Land division is generally accomplished seven days after the death of parents. The influential persons at that time are the eldest brother or the eldest sister of the family. The farmland is equally shared in general, but those who are rich generally take the reduced portion. Paying respect to elders and reciprocal relationship lead to lack of farmland inheritance problems. There is not enough land to give to the children of the family. The young generation, especially at the age of 18-25, boys tend to enter into

driving profession. They became drivers of Bedfords, Dozers, ten wheel trucks, six wheel trucks, etc.

According to the narration of an informant aged 70, he has 6 children, two sons and four daughters. “After the land confiscation by Ka-Pa-Sa, all the homestead was gone. The plot I received is not large to build separate houses for children. The second daughter alone engage in farming, and now I do not have any sons and daughters who would live with me in the same household compound.”

### **Conclusion**

Paddy land and farmland decreased because of the government construction projects. Therefore, given the scarcity of land today, most of the farmers need to diversify by also selling forest produce. Some of them run grocery shops at their home. Only few of them work as civil servants or company employees. Moreover, a few people became rich in other ways. So, given the lack of opportunities in the farming sector, the next generation will need to change their career as they do not have enough farmland inherited from their parents. The various projects introduced in the area have therefore clearly impacted the livelihood pattern as well as family structure of people who live in Kyaw.

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