CHAPTER FOUR

BORDER ECONOMY: THE LIVELIHOOD QUESTION

4.1. Introduction

Border economy or livelihood covers all aspects of livelihood pattern of the people at the borderland. Livelihood in its simplest meaning can be referred to those things that sustain or support a person’s life. It includes capitals, capabilities and activities required to make a sustainable living. This encompasses natural capital, physical capital, human capital, financial capital, social capital and others. Study of livelihood aspects of a particular society includes food security, water security and income sources of the populace. This also includes access to all those facilities such as health care, education, credit facilities or anything that contributes to quality of life. Livelihood security is one of the important indicators of a quality life though there is slight variation of livelihood pattern of people across different geographical area. The present chapter explores the different means and aspects of livelihood of the borderlanders at the Indo-Myanmar border in Longwa village.

In a borderland adjacent to urban or developed region, there exists cross border trade which serves as a backbone of border livelihood or economy. This can be seen in the US-Mexican borderlands or even in Indo-Myanmar border at Moreh in Manipur. However, in an underdeveloped or rural border like Longwa, people solely depend on agriculture and other allied activities for sustenance. This is due to lack of formal cross-border trade, commercial activities and other avenues. Since Longwa is a Konyak Naga village, the livelihood pattern in this village shares some similarity with the larger Konyak or Naga community albeit some variations.
Most of the Naga villages are essentially agrarian in nature. In olden days, the Naga villages had self-sufficient and subsistence economy. Most of the goods were produced within the village, except some few items such as salt and iron implements which were bought from outside through the barter system. However, with the advent of the British in the Naga Hills, followed by the rapid growth of modern means of the transport and communication, monetised economy, establishment of markets, etc., in the post-independent era and especially after statehood of Nagaland, the traditional nature of self-sufficient village has been changed into a dependent one. Despite these changes, more than 80% of the Nagas still live in rural areas, and agriculture remains the main occupation of the Nagas. Agriculture sector has about 70% work force of the total population and contributes 33% to the State’s Gross Domestic Product (Government of Nagaland 2009c:23).

Since agriculture mainly depends on availability of arable land, land retains its value as the most important natural resources of livelihood among the Nagas. Generally, land can be divided into two categories-cultivable land and forest land (Nshoga 2009:224). The cultivable and forest lands of a particular village are held either by the villagers collectively as common property or by various clans and morungs of the village as clan’s or morung’s land or by individuals separately. This holding of land varies from village to village as well as from tribe to tribe.

In Longwa, the village land can be classified into three categories such as individual family lands, lands belonging to morungs and community/village land. Each household or member of the village has customary rights and privileges to enjoy the fruits and products of the land based on the customary law of the village. In fact, it is very rare to find a landless Nagas, especially in the rural areas. Being agriculturalists,
the villagers have close relationship with their land. Land is the most important asset of the people on which they depend for their sustenance. However, land can be sold and bought among the villagers or outsiders but not to non-tribals as per Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution. In the following discussion, we shall explore some facets of livelihood economy in Longwa village.

4.2. Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of the Naga village economy. This is very true in Longwa village too. Most of the villagers depend on agriculture for their subsistence. Basically there are two types of agricultural methods among the Nagas:

1. **Jhum** or Shifting cultivation
2. Terrace cultivation

4.2.1. *Jhum* or Shifting Cultivation

*Jhum* or shifting cultivation is a simple and primitive mode of agricultural operation which is done through human labour. This is known as ‘slash and burn’ cultivation or shifting cultivation because of its shifting nature of cultivation involving slashing and burning of trees, bamboos and shrubs. This type of cultivation is mostly prevalent in tribal societies. In India, this cultivation is practiced in different states and is known by different local names. In Andhra Pradesh it is called *Podu* or *Pend, Valra* or *Watra* in Bihar, *Dahiya* in Madhya Pradesh, *Pama, Dabi, Koman* or *Bringu* in Odissa and *Jhum* in north eastern states of India (Nshoga 2009:235). *Jhum* or shifting cultivation is most prominently found in the hilly areas of Nagaland and is practiced by all the Naga tribes.
However, terrace cultivation is found in low lying areas and practice mainly by the Angamis, Chakesangs, Zeliangs and Rengmas, though other tribes also practice it to some considerable extent.

Among the Konyaks, *Jhum* or shifting cultivation is the main agricultural method which has been practiced for centuries. Almost all the Konyak villagers practiced *Jhum* cultivation, except those villages near the low lying area of Assam. The Longwa villagers are primarily agriculturalists who mostly practice *Jhum* cultivation. They have four *Jhum* fields in India and another four in Myanmar which they cultivate on the basis of rotation. One such *Jhum* field is big enough to be cultivated by all the villagers at least for three consecutive years.

In *Jhum* cultivation, a particular tract of land is cultivated for two to three years depending on the fertility and availability of land. Similarly in Longwa village, a particular field is cultivated only for two or three years. After cultivating the land for two or three consecutive years, it is left to lie fallow for around ten to fifteen years so as to enable the land to regain its fertility. In this village, most of the fields are located on the hill slopes and are held together collectively by the members of the community. Normally a particular tract of land or region is cultivated by all the villagers together annually. This has been an aged old practice of the Nagas. In the past, this gave them security, especially from the danger of headhunting raids. This also prevents the animals from attacking the crops in the field. Moreover, this practice helps in preserving the unity and solidarity of the village since most villagers go to field together and also involve in community works such as clearing of foot paths, construction of waiting sheds, platforms, etc.
Some of the important activities under the *Jhum* cultivation in Longwa are discussed below. Prior to the selection of the field site, a meeting called *ningtep* is held to discuss the site for the new field. This is mostly held in October and November. This is attended by the rich families in the village who butchered pigs, cows and *mithuns* and give feast to the villagers. In this meeting, they decide on the particular site to be cultivated in the subsequent year. They also set a date for actual commencement of the agricultural work. Prior to the commencement of the work, they set a date for prayer and fasting to be held before the beginning of the agricultural operation. This prayer and fasting programme is meant for all the villagers who pray for bountiful harvest, good climate and successful year. Following the prayer and fasting, they would start the agricultural activities on the fixed day. On the appointed day, villagers would go to *Ahng*'s field and cut the trees, bamboos and grasses since the *Ahng*’s field has to be cleared first.

Subsequently, villagers would start felling the trees and bamboos in their own respective fields along with their age-grade mates. This is done usually in November and December. As in many other villages in Nagaland, even in this village people are organised on the basis of age grades called *ei-sha*. One *ei-sha* comprises of friends and neighbours of the same age or contemporaries. The members of each age grade would take turn to work in their fields on the basis of rotation. This age grade system provides people with companionship, fun and help in village. Moreover, this also strengthens the community feeling and brotherhood among the villagers.

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73 Even during the pre-Christian era, the Naga villagers performed all rites and rituals before starting a new field.
Every abled person in the village would go to the proposed site and fell shrubs, creepers, trees, and bamboos. While the womenfolk clear the shrubs, creepers and small trees, the men folk cut down the big trees and bamboos. The felled shrubs, creepers, trees and bamboos are left to dry for several weeks. Once these are dried and ready to be burnt, the men folk would burn the debris either with match stick or fling stone or bamboo thongs. After the debris is burnt, the remaining unburnt trees especially the big logs are chopped and burnt. Some of these are used for construction of field hut; some for constructing platform in the field so as to prevent soil erosion, and the rest are used as firewood. The burning of debris enriches the fertility of the soil because of the presence of nitrate, lime and phosphate (Nshoga 2009:230).

Succeeding the burning and clearing of unburnt woods, every household constructs a field hut. These huts are very big as compared to the huts of other Naga tribes. Another very interesting thing about the Longwa villagers is that they also construct toilets in the fields. The construction of toilets is necessitated by the fact that all the villagers cultivate fields collectively and therefore it is difficult to cross the fields and go to jungle for their needs. This may also probably have close connection with the headhunting culture which prevented people from going to jungles for nature’s calls. Whatever may be the reason, it is an innovative and hygienic practice which is not seen in the fields among other Naga villagers.

Following the construction of field huts, millet is sown in the month of January. It is pertinent to mention that besides rice, people depend on millets and maize for their sustenance in this village. After the sowing of millets, paddy is sown in February and March. Paddy is sown either by dibbling or broadcasting in the tilled soil with the help of dibbles and hoes. In dibbling method, a small area is dug with the hoe and the paddy
is put in the hole. But in broadcasting method, the entire field is dug with hoes and spades and the paddy seeds are broadcast or thrown. In Longwa, the dibbling method is preferred as compared to the latter. It is also found that there are varieties of paddy having different colour, taste and aroma which are used by these villagers. They carefully select the paddy depending on the topography and climate of the selected field. Along with paddy, other crops such as maize, yam, ginger, soya beans, chilli, millet, sweet potato, tapioca, etc, are cultivated. Most of the sowing work including that of vegetable is done by women.

The next important agricultural operation in Jhum cultivation is weeding of grasses and plants. This is the busiest agricultural period for the farmers because weeds grow much faster than the paddy plants. The weeding period starts after few weeks or a month of sowing. The farmers use hoe, scrapper, *daos*74 as well as their hands for weeding. In some fields, there are several rounds of weeding which need more labour and thus continue till the appearance of paddy. In most cases, there are three rounds of weeding. As soon as the paddy is visible, the farmers made some scarecrows in order to ward off the animals and birds. These scarecrows are mostly made in the shape of human being, covered with torn clothes, plastic bags and bamboo splits.

Subsequent to the weeding operation, the most crucial agricultural operation of harvest starts. Harvesting period is normally in September. Usually harvesting is done by observing some rituals and ceremonies. In the Church, the pastor and other leaders pray for the bountiful harvest. Agricultural implements such as sickles and knives are used for reaping, threshing mat, winnowing fans and baskets for threshing. Most of these implements are made by the villagers themselves. Basically, there are two types of

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74 *Dao* refers to machete.
reaping operations. Firstly, by cutting the ears of paddy without the paddy stalk and putting them directly into the basket. Secondly, cutting the paddy stalk in a bunch and putting them together in the basket or cloth worn on the back. Following the harvest of paddy, the paddy ears or stalks are put on the threshing floor, where the young men thresh the paddy either by feet or by beating with sticks and bamboos. Consequently, the hay and chaff are separated from the paddy with the help of winnowing fans. After the paddy is left to dry, measurement is done with a basket or a tin, and is carried to the granary. Out of the harvested paddy, one-tenth is set aside and given to the Church as tenth tithes as followed by the Christians.

After the paddy harvest, the farmers would cultivate soyabeans and maize and other vegetables. This period continues till the next agricultural season. This shows that their lives revolve on different agricultural seasons and operations throughout the year without much interval. Their food habits, festivals, religious rites and cultural activities go along with agricultural operations throughout the year. It is believed that the Konyaks have the calendar of their own based on the appearance of the moon (Chingang 2008:45). They call the name of each month according to the nature of agricultural work and to a particular phase of moon. The agricultural seasonal calendar is packed with one agricultural operation or the other. However, it is found that these activities are not restricted to a particular month. Rather, there are lapses of activities over several months depending on climatic condition as well as the topography of the cultivated area.
### Table 4.1
Agricultural Season of Longwa Villagers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Konyak</th>
<th>Longwa</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Wangtule</td>
<td>Numnyu</td>
<td>Burning of fields and clearing of debris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Taile</td>
<td>Jangpa</td>
<td>Construction of field huts and sowing of seeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Tepwele</td>
<td>Paipa</td>
<td>Sowing of seeds and planting of other vegetable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Aolengle</td>
<td>Henpa</td>
<td>The crops start appearing during this time. People celebrate the Aoleng Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Lenghale</td>
<td>Hoha</td>
<td>Weeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Phonglongle</td>
<td>Ngenpa</td>
<td>Weeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Le-aa</td>
<td>Reeksa</td>
<td>Weeding/Clearing of paddy stalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Tanglale</td>
<td>Reeknyu</td>
<td>Early harvesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Aonyele</td>
<td>Tepa</td>
<td>Harvest and transferring of harvest from the fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Nokletle</td>
<td>Jampa</td>
<td>Meeting held to decide for the next plot of land to be cultivated in the coming year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Shaopanle</td>
<td>Rupa</td>
<td>Cutting and felling of trees, bamboo and grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Shauumle</td>
<td>Nemsa</td>
<td>Drying of felled trees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Konyak Calendar from Chingang 2008:45-47

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75 Interview with Yanlang Shakkam on 21st October, 2011. There is slight difference among the Konyak villages.
Since their livelihood depends primarily on agriculture, their major tools and implements are mostly agricultural implements. Most of the tools are made by village blacksmiths. These implements form an indispensable part of their lives. Each household has all the necessary implements for all its members. No one goes to field or jungle without carrying the implements. Some people would carry their *daos* even while travelling to the district headquarters as observed by the researcher during the field work. Some common agricultural tools used in Longwa are given below.

**Table 4.2**

*Common Agricultural Implements used in Longwa*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Longwa</th>
<th>Purposes/ activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spade</td>
<td>Kho</td>
<td>Used for digging, dibbling and sowing of vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoe</td>
<td>Kongkei</td>
<td>Same as spade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machete</td>
<td>Shang/Yang</td>
<td>Used for cutting and felling of trees and bamboos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrapper</td>
<td>Phakcha</td>
<td>Used for weeding of grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sickle</td>
<td>Shahget Akok</td>
<td>Used for harvesting paddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshing Mat</td>
<td>Ka</td>
<td>Used for threshing and drying of paddy, millets, maize, soya beans and leafy vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnowing Fan</td>
<td>Ram</td>
<td>Used for separating the chaff from the paddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowing Implement</td>
<td>Yanthang</td>
<td>Sowing of maize, yam and rice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Interview with Nahlak Shakkam, President of Longwa Students’ Union, 24th October, 2011.*

*October, 2011.*
4.2.2. Terrace Cultivation

Terrace cultivation is another form of cultivation practiced by the farmers in Nagaland. In Longwa village, there are only around ten households who practice terrace cultivation. However, this is cultivated as subsidiary of Jhum cultivation. This is because of the hilly terrain and scarcity of water that make people to adopt the jhum cultivation. Most of the terrace fields are located at the low lying area near Phomching sub-division.

Terrace cultivation is totally different from Jhum cultivation. The most important distinctive feature of terrace cultivation is that, unlike the Jhum cultivation which keeps on shifting after every two or three years, it is permanent. Moreover, it depends largely on water for its growth and productivity. Some of the common procedures followed in terrace cultivation are discussed below. First of all, the slope is dug or levelled into terraces which range from the length of 10ft to the breadth of 50ft. The field is usually dug by the menfolk with instruments like hoe, spade, shovel, etc. Most of the agricultural works are done manually. It is very rare to use animals such as oxes, buffaloes or cows for work as contrary to other places. Moreover, the use of machines is yet to make its entry in this remote village. After levelling the terrace field, the quarried stones are used to bank up the walls of the terrace by mixing with mud. Subsequently, the terrace field is connected to canals through which water from the stream or river would be channelled. If the river or stream is far, water is transferred through pipes or bamboo trunk or bark of a particular hollow tree. Besides this, the field gets sufficient water during the monsoon season.

Following the decomposition of the uprooted plants and grasses, these are properly mixed with mud. In the mean time stones, pebbles and roots are removed with
the help of spades or hoes. Soon after this, the planting of paddy is ready. Unlike the *Jhum* cultivation, in terrace cultivation paddy saplings are sown in a separate nursery simultaneously with the digging of the field. When the field is ready, paddy saplings are transplanted which are mostly done by women folk. After the transplanting of paddy, weeds are cleared from the terrace walls as well as on the banks of the canal. Subsequently, the water canals and surroundings of the fields are cleared. After about three months, the field is ready for harvest. Usually the ears of the paddy is cut off and put directly into the baskets which are finally kept in the threshing floor. Threshing of paddy is mostly done by menfolk with sticks, bamboo poles along with their feet. Once the paddy is threshed, the hay and shaft are separated from the paddy and the paddy is measured and carried to the granary.

In contrast to *Jhum* cultivation, terrace cultivation is less labour intensive and therefore takes less time and resources to complete the agricultural operation. Moreover, the harvest is better and most prominently environmental friendly. However, due to hilly terrain it is difficult for the villagers to get sufficient water for terrace cultivation. Besides, since they have been practicing *Jhum* cultivation for ages, it is difficult for them to shift to another system of cultivation altogether.

### 4.3. Other Economic Activities

Though the Longwa Konyak Nagas are primarily agriculturalists, they also engage in various other economic activities which add to their economy and livelihood. In the next section, we shall discuss some of the various economic activities of the borderlanders.
4.3.1. Kitchen Garden

Besides agriculture, kitchen garden constitutes an important source of rural economy among the Nagas in general and Konyaks in particular. In Longwa village, every household has a kitchen garden in their compound. Some families have additional kitchen gardens far away from their house due to limited space. Some common vegetable found in kitchen gardens in this village are: maize, yam, beans, mustard leaves, ginger, chilly, tapioca, tomato, etc. Some villagers have planted different fruits in their kitchen garden such as papaya, banana, lemon, orange, sugarcane, etc. These kitchen gardens not only provide the needs of the people, but also provide fodders for animals such as pigs and cows. Some of the common fodders are leaves and tubers of tapioca, yam, sweet potatoes and grasses. Most of the gardens' products are for self consumption and not for commercial purpose. This may be due to the lack of marketing avenues as well as limited production.

4.3.2. Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry is another major occupation of the Nagas besides agriculture. Every household in Longwa practises animal husbandry. They rear animals like pigs, cows, fowls, buffalos and mithun76. These animals are mainly reared for self consumption though some are meant for sale. Except for mithun, all other animals are kept within premise of the house. However, mithuns are kept in semi-feral state. Annually each owner would visit his own mithuns in the jungle and feed them with salt. For the rest of the year, they are left in the jungle. However, one interesting thing is that each owner

76 This is confirmed by the interview schedules used during the field work.
knows his own mithuns by the sign marked on the ear when the mithuns are young. Each owner has different pattern of cuts which distinguish his mithuns from the others.

The National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) has brought about revolution of animal husbandry in this village, especially in poultry farming. For instance, under this project a hybrid fowl has been introduced in this village after a thorough research and study. This has tremendous impact on poultry farming in this village. As a result of the initiatives, villagers have better and bigger fowl breed which also grow at a faster pace. All these add to their rural economy.

4.3.3. Basketry

This is another vocation mostly done by old men folk in Longwa. They are popular for their creativity and innovative designs. They make baskets of different sizes for different purposes, ranging from paddy basket, firewood basket, basket for fetching water, hunting, etc. Besides these, there are separate baskets meant for female and male. There are also some big baskets mainly used as containers for storing and preserving food grains. Baskets are made of bamboo splits and canes. Some of the common baskets woven and used in Longwa are Tongjha, Tongpei, Tongman, Noung, Khao, etc. Though these are mainly used by the villagers, some are sold outside the village especially in Mon town. The price ranges from Rs. 70 to 1000.

4.3.4. BlackSmithy

Almost every Naga village has its own blacksmith who is well versed in smelting, sharpening and manufacturing agricultural implements such as dao, spade, hoe, axe, scrapper, spear, knife, etc. The local smiths work with rusted iron scrappers through the process of heating and refining and then hammered rapidly to get the desired shape.
They use bellows to augment and ensure continuous flow of heat. In Longwa village, there are old folks who engaged in black smithy. They make hoes, machetes, spears, sickles, etc. However, with the implements coming from nearby towns in Nagaland and Assam, most people prefer the market products.

4.3.5. Gun Making

The Konyaks are one of the earliest Naga tribes to acquire the knowledge of gun making. They are believed to have learnt it from the Ahoms. Every Konyak village has experts in manufacturing of guns, mostly the muzzle loading guns.

In Longwa village, there are five gun makers engaged in manufacturing muzzle loading guns. Among them, Mr. Wangchet Taiwangshu is the best gun manufacturer. He is 55 years old, father of five and has been practising this art for more than 27 years. He is a self learner and spends most of his time in manufacturing muzzle loading guns. He uses vehicle steering, pliers, metal pipes, etc., for making guns. He charges his clients depending on the gun design and nature of work. With the introduction of new guns, he also makes different guns such as pistols along with muzzle loaders. The price of double barrelled guns ranges from Rs. 6000 to Rs. 15000 and Rs. 3000 to Rs. 6000 for single barrelled gun. Along with guns, he also makes gun powder and bullets. He gets customers as far as Mon, Dimapur and Kohima. However, due to the use of primitive or traditional method of gun making, it takes a lot of time to finish a gun. His income depends on the order he gets from his customers. Nevertheless, this is the only source of livelihood for him as he had injured his leg while making gun some years ago. This prevents him from doing other works in the field.
4.3.6. Brassworks

Brassworks are very popular among the Konyaks. These include brass gongs, brass heads and statues, brass armlets, earrings and brass necklaces. This has close association with the culture of head hunting among the Konyaks because the brassworks depict the human heads. The traditional Konyak necklaces usually have five to six human heads made of brass. In the olden days, the warriors were made to wear such necklaces. However, these necklaces of lower quality are available in the market for sale. The price ranges from Rs. 250 to 1500.

In Longwa, there are good numbers of blacksmiths who engaged in brasswork and metal works. However, one stands out among the rest as the best brass worker in the village. In fact, he can be considered as one among the Naga blacksmiths. He is Maopha Taiwangshu from Ahng morung. He is 45 years old and has 4 children, two daughters and two sons. His wife is from a Konyak village called Khanmoi in Myanmar. He has been engaged in this art for the last 25-30 years. He had learned this art of brasswork from his grandfather when he was around 15 years old. He earns around Rs. 30-40 thousands in a month depending on the order given by his customers. He gets order from both within Nagaland as well as from different places in India. In the recent years, he also got some order from the foreigners, especially the tourists. He uses around 10 materials for his work which mainly contain ash from a specific tree, beehives and stone powder which he procures from Myanmar. He makes miniature human statue, human heads which are used in necklace, decorative pieces, memento, etc. He takes 2 to 3 days to make small pieces, whereas for big ones he spends around 10-20 days. He has been awarded the Governor’s Award for Literary, Arts and Music in 2003 by the Government of Nagaland. He was also invited to display his master pieces...
at the first Hornbill Festival held at Kisama in 2000. However, so far he did not receive anything from the government except the award and recognition. He has trained around 8 youngsters from this village and they are practicing this art independently.

Besides him, there are many who go without being noticed and recognised for their contributions. However, in their own unique way, they have learnt to make a living from their sheer hard work and dedication.

4.3.7. Woodcarving

Woodcarving is another popular vocation among the Konyaks. The Konyaks can be considered as the best woodcarvers among the Nagas though other tribes are also engaged in wood carvings. Wood carving is mainly done by men in their leisure time with tools such as machete, axe, chisel, etc. However, with the coming of modern technology, woodcarving is done with better equipments as compared to olden days. Normally the wood carvers go to jungle, carefully select the trees, chop them into smaller size and carry them home. Following this, they make different designs and shapes. The woodcarvings range from wooden posts, beams and village gates beautifully carved with the motifs of human being, tiger, monkey, mithun, elephant, birds, etc. They also carve dishes, saucers, platters, cups, scabbard, rice pounding tables and pestles, meat cutting board and other utensils.

4.3.8. Carpentry

Along with wood carving, carpentry is another popular activity among the Nagas. In every village, there are self-trained carpenters. In Longwa, there are few carpenters. They mostly engage in construction of houses and furniture for which they are paid Rs.150 per day.
4.3.9. Weaving

Weaving is a traditional occupation of the Naga womenfolk. In Longwa, most women engaged in weaving. Weaving is taught in the family by the mother to her daughters. Thus every woman has a full set of weaving apparatus or loom. In olden days when cotton was not available, the Konyaks weaved their clothes with their own local fibre. However, with the flow of cotton and other woollen materials, they have access to different types of threads having variety of colours. The most important handloom products are wrappers, shawls, hand bags, sling bags, loin clothes, ceremonial dresses, decorative pieces, etc. In the recent years, they have produced modern clothes such as skirts, dresses, neckties, waist coat, coat, etc. All these have different designs, colour, texture as well as spacing and bordering. The price of these products ranges from a few hundreds to thousand rupees.

Under the auspices of National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) launched in 2007, weaving as a cottage industry has got its impetus in this village. At present there are three Self Help Groups (SHGs) involving in weaving. Weaving has become more organised and their products are also marketed outside through various governmental agencies. Therefore, we can say that weaving contributes to economy of Longwa villagers, especially among women.

4.3.10. Beads Plaiting and Designing

This is another popular cottage industry among the Konyak women. They are experts in designing and plaiting of beads. Beads are plaited together in the form of necklaces, head gears, wrist band, waist band, etc. These beads are of different colours. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue and black are the favourite colours which are commonly
used. In Longwa, many women are engaged in the art of bead plaiting. They buy beads from Mon town or from Dimapur and Kohima. They sell their finished products either in Mon town or to the tourists in the village. They spend roughly around three hours in making a bead necklace and earn around Rs. 250 to 500 per a bead necklace. However, due to lack of marketing avenues, the bead plaiting industry is very limited.

Though the people are engaged in various activities to sustain themselves, we have seen the traditional arts are slowly giving way to the modern methods and materials. Conserving such rich material culture would help in preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Konyaks in particular and Nagas in general.

4.3.11. Hunting

Apart from these vocations, hunting and fishing also contribute to rural economy and livelihood. Hunting has been one of the favourites time pass for the Nagas since the olden days. Traditionally, the Nagas hunt wild animals with implements such as dao, bow and spear. They also laid different kinds of animal traps and snares. However, with the introduction of gun into Naga society, they have learnt the use of guns for hunting. Along with these hunting implements, hunting dogs are also used for wild hunting.

In Longwa, hunting is still very popular and most villagers go for hunting in their free time even after retiring from field work in the evening. Villagers hunt in group as well as individually. Longwa people still observe certain gennas and seek omens before they go for hunt. Some people pray for their safety and blessings on the hunt. This testifies the dualism of traditional indigenous religion and Christianity. The animals killed in hunting are shared among the members but the best portion is given to the chief Ahng. The one who killed the animal is given the head. In some cases, the
hunted animal is cut and sold out to the villagers as well as to outsiders. This is despite the direction given by the district authority for banning of hunting in Nagaland.

4.3.12. Fishing

Fishing is another activity practiced by the people of Longwa. This has been an old art for these villagers. Longwa has four major rivers, namely Tegak and Shumnyu in Myanmar and Tapi and Tege in India and several other streams. These rivers house numerous aquatic lives such as fish, crabs and prawns. In Longwa, fishing is done by the whole village together or sometimes by morung wise or individual groups. There are several techniques of fishing in Longwa village. One of the most primitive methods of fishing is the use of a poisonous creeper, shrub or bark of a poisonous tree. The poisonous bark or shrub is beaten by young men in the river with the help of sticks on the stones in the river water. The poisonous juice or liquid gets mixed with the river water which intoxicates the fish. After sometime, the intoxicated fish dies and is collected by the fishermen. This technique is still practiced by the Longwa people; however, the poisonous bark or creeper has been replaced by bleaching powder which is bought from the market.

The next prominent traditional method of fishing is the use of weirs. These weirs are made of bamboo split baskets which are placed in the river upward to catch fish. Fishes unaware of the weirs are caught inside the cylindrical bamboo splits. This method is applied along with the first method of fishing. Another method which is usually practiced by individuals or small group is the use of fishing nets and hooks. However, these are of very recent development. Most of the fishing nets and hooks are imported from Assam. Besides all these methods, there are few instances of fishing with the use
of bombs. This is done mostly in deep waterfalls where it is difficult for humans to reach. A bomb or two is thrown which explode and kill the fishes in the deep water. Through the use of these methods, the Longwa villagers catch fish. However, these are for domestic consumption and not for commercial purpose. Based on their traditional custom, the biggest fish is gifted to the chief Ahng and also to village elders.

Apart from the traditional agricultural occupation and other handicrafts, the livelihood of the Longwa villagers has tremendously improved with the introduction of the National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP). The NAIP was launched in 2007 by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi and School of Agricultural Sciences and Rural Development (SASRD), Nagaland. This is a five year programme from 2007-12, which aims to create sustainable livelihood among the rural poor through capacity building, skill upgradation, information access and promotion of specific Self Help Groups (SHGs). Under this project, the department has taken up a project field where they grow different types of crops and conduct research on them. They also have a green house and nursery in this field. At present, there are two project fellows namely Mr. Medovi Angami and Mr. Chingkai Konyak who look after the project field. The scientists and professors from the SASARD and ICAR also conduct regular visits. The NAIP has initiated the concept of self help in this village. At present, there are 25 SHGs involved in tailoring, weaving, fishery, piggery, poultry, dairy and cultivation of cardamom, passion fruits, oranges, mushroom and other vegetables. Under this project, the villagers are given vegetable seeds or saplings and also hybrids of fowls and pigs. Tailoring as well as weaving machines are provided to the villagers free of cost under this project. The villagers are given free training, demonstration and
hands-on practice on various livelihood programmes. In this way, this project has made a huge contribution in creating sustainable livelihood opportunities.

4.3.13. Commercial Activities

Due to its geographical isolation and hilly terrain, Longwa fares poorly in terms of commercial activities. In olden days, barter system was said to be popular. There was exchange of goods such as salt, rice, iron implements, handicrafts, etc., with the neighbouring villages. At present, the village is connected to Mon town through a narrow metalled road. Most of the villagers buy their basic needs from this town which is the district headquarters. They travel to Mon in the morning and return the same day in the evening either by Nagaland State Transport (NST) bus or Sumo. They sell their products such as vegetable, fruits, handicrafts, etc., and buy other commodities such as sugar, milk, meat, pulses, oil, tea, biscuits, betel nut, cigarette, medicines, etc. Thus, for most Longwa villagers, Mon is the most important and the nearest market.

In Longwa, there are six tuck shops where basic minimum necessities such as sugar, salt, milk, tea leaves, betel nut, biscuits, etc., are available. The price of these commodities is fixed by the Village Council. If any shopkeeper violates the price set by the Village Council, they are penalised. It is found that in consultation with the Village Council, the shop keepers charged five rupees higher than the printed price as their profit. Most of these shopkeepers are natives of this village except two from Bihar. These shops provide the basic necessity not only for the villagers but also meet the needs of other Konyak villagers from Myanmar. Konyaks from neighbouring villages such as Khanmoi and Wanyah in Myanmar come regularly to buy the basic commodities such as rice, salt and medicine since they do not have shops in their
village. In return, they also bring handicrafts, local food products and opium to Longwa. Indian currencies are used for regular transaction in this borderland.

Besides the tuck shops in the village, the village also has a bakery where different types of biscuits are manufactured. Moreover, the Longwa villagers also have access to Assam Rifles’ canteen in the village. They get most of the consumer goods from the canteen at the cheaper rate. Besides these, they also get medicines. Some people also buy alcohol from the canteen though it is restricted. The canteen opens daily from 2.00-4.00 p.m.

4.3.14. Cross Border Trade

This border village has huge potential for cross border trade. Realising its potentials and prospects, the Government of India has set up the International Trade Centre (ITC) in Longwa in the year 2010. This is the third ITC in Nagaland. The other two ITCs were established in Pangsha in Tuensang district and Avangkhu in Phek district.

The Longwa ITC consists of only two Assam type buildings devoid of any other facilities required for such a trade centre. There is no electricity, no water connection, no telecom facilities, no store room, rest room, bath room and toilet, etc., in this trade centre. Unlike other trading centres like Moreh in Manipur and Zowkhatar in Mizoram, there is neither bank nor post office in this border village. The nearest bank and post office are located in Mon town, 41 kilometres from this border village. Moreover, there is no immigration office though there are security personnels such as AR, SIB and VGs who manned the border areas and check on the movements of tourists. The question here is: Can India claim to have its International Trade Centre in such a poor state of infrastructure? The term border haats is more suitable for this centre rather than having
a gigantic tag attached to it. Though the ITC at Longwa has been established, no commercial activities have been taking place at this centre. In fact, instead of becoming a commercial centre, it has turned into a cow shed. The failure of this initiative has many factors responsible. These include the apathy of the villagers towards the project, poor implementation of the government officials, lack of close economic relationship between India and Myanmar in this area as well as the lack of road connectivity on the Myanmar’s side.

4.3.15. Tourism

Besides the traditional agro-based occupation, few villagers have been involving in tourism industry. As of now, tourism is a very nascent industry taking its root in this village. We can call this tourism as ethnic, cultural or rural tourism. In the recent years, there is continuous flow of tourists, especially from European countries. They are mostly attracted by the traditional set up of the village including the pattern of house and the presence of Ahngship. Another attraction could be the geographical location of this village straddling the Indo-Myanmar border and the scenic beauty of this village. Having these potentials as a tourist attraction, there is a budding rural or ethnic tourism industry in Longwa. The Government of Nagaland has initiated the Rural Tourism Projects in Longwa from 2004-05 under the Prime Minister’s packages. The village has a tourist guest house constructed by the Government of Nagaland and run by the Village Women Society. There is a caretaker who looks after the guest house. The tourist lodge costs Rs 600 per room for a night. According to the staff of Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) stationed in this village, there have been 500 plus tourists in the village from 2010 October to 2011 October. Besides the conventional tourists, there are researchers,
folklorists and media persons who documented the life of the people of this village. There are some villagers who have taken up the job of tour guide and thus become self employed. However, the flow of tourists in this village has some negative impacts. The villagers charged exorbitantly from the tourists. Some old folks and children started asking money for taking photographs. Such unhealthy practices have a corresponding negative impact on the growth of tourism apart from denting the famed Naga traits of hospitality, honesty and sturdy worker. In order to develop and promote tourism, awareness and sensitisation at the mass level would do a whole lot of good. Most of the tourists come through private tour guides and tour agencies and therefore the benefits go only to these tour guides and agencies. The villagers as a whole will be benefited if the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approach is initiated. Community-Based Tourism refers to tourism activities planned and managed by the whole community and enjoyment of benefits by the community. During the field interview, many people, especially the leaders, expressed their eagerness to start this innovative practice. It is just a matter of time when this village will have a comprehensive CBT which would not only benefit this village but the entire tourism industry in the state.

Apart from the occupations discussed above, there are a few people from Longwa village who are engaged in government sector. The total number of government employees in this village is 70 and therefore their contribution to the economy is very minimal. Some are working as government teachers, some as fourth grade staff and some as health coordinators. Besides these government employees, there are private entrepreneurs and businessmen who contribute to village economy and livelihood. Due to its rich social capital, the villagers look after one another in sickness, crop failure, natural calamities and deaths.
In order to analyse the livelihood status of the people, it is pertinent to study the execution and implementation of various governmental livelihood policies and programmes. In the next section, we shall discuss the various livelihood programmes implemented in this border village and analyse how far these programmes and schemes have been successful in enhancing and improving the livelihood of the borderlanders.

4.4. Various Governmental Programmes and Schemes

Since the independence of India, the subsequent governments, both at the centre and the state have introduced various schemes and programmes to enhance and improve the livelihood quality of the people. This is visible in the last twelfth five year plans of India and other related programmes. The following are some of the governmental programmes and schemes which are found implemented in this border village.

4.4.1. Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY)

*Indira Awaas Yojna* (IAY) is one of the major flagship programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development to construct houses for Below Poverty Line (BPL) population in rural India. IAY was launched during 1985-86 as a part of Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) and was subsumed in *Jawahar Rozgar Yojana* (JRY) in 1989. It has been delinked from JRY and has been operating as an independent scheme since 1st January, 1996. The objective of IAY is primarily to provide grant for construction of houses to members of SC/ST, freed bonded labourers and also to non-SC/ST rural poor below poverty line. Along with housing, sanitary latrine, smokeless *chulha* and safe drinking water are to be provided to each house. Each house

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77 Refer to www.megcnrd.gov.in/forms/iay.pdf.
constructed under this scheme must have the logo of IAY and must be allotted in the name of the woman or jointly between the husband and wife. It is implemented through the Zilla/District Rural Development Agency but the houses are to be constructed by the beneficiaries themselves and not by contractors.

In Nagaland, IAY was launched with effect from 1985-1986. However, this was done without collecting any information about the shortage of houses in the state. It was only in 1997-98, a survey of BPL population was conducted in the state. Thus in Nagaland, instead of benefiting the BPL population, huge number of non-BPL section also enjoys the benefit (www.agnagaland.gov.in/.../ civil-chapiii-3RuralDevelopment(IAY)). In Nagaland, this scheme is being implemented by the Department of Rural Development through the Block Development Officers and Village Development Board at the block and village level respectively. All together 12,415 houses have been constructed and 839 are under process of allocation to the beneficiaries (Nagaland Basic Facts 2011:122). The department provides Corrugated Galvanised Iron (CGI) sheets to the beneficiaries under this scheme. However, the implementation of this scheme has not being fully realised since in the remote villages, thatch or palm roof houses with bamboo mat walls are still found in large numbers. Even though the Department of Rural Development provides CGI sheets, they do not reach all the needy populace. Some CGI sheets are siphoned on the way starting from the department followed by the DRDA and the VDB at the village level. These are complicated by the poor road connectivity which hinders the transportation of these CGI sheets from the district headquarters.78

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78 Based on observation during the field work.
In Longwa village, this scheme has been initiated only in the recent years.\textsuperscript{79} The exact year cannot be ascertained due to the dearth of documents. However, the presence of more than 95% of palm roof house gives evidence to this fact. Besides the CGI roofing, some pucca latrines have been constructed under this scheme. This scheme is being implemented by the VDB. The VDB distributes to those villagers who have completed the ground work for house construction. Following the spot verification, CGI sheets are allotted to the beneficiaries. The present VDB has targeted the completion of CGI sheets roof house within three years. But the question remains whether the present VDB will be able to accomplish what is left unaccomplished for the last 25 years.

\textit{4.4.2. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)}

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a job assurance Act, enacted on 25\textsuperscript{th} of August, 2005 as a part of the Common Minimum Programme of the United Progressive Alliance led government. This Act ensures a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of rural household, including both Below Poverty Line (BPL) and non-BPL families, willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the wage of Rs 100 per day which has been increased to 118 per day per person. The Act was renamed as \textit{Mahatma Gandhi} National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2\textsuperscript{nd} of October, 2009. This Act directs state governments to implement National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes in their respective states. For its implementation, the Central government meets the payment of wage, 3/4 of material cost and a percentage of administrative cost, whereas the state governments meet the cost of unemployment allowance, 1/4 of

\textsuperscript{79} Based on the discussion with the VDB Secretary, Yanlang on 24\textsuperscript{th} October 2011.
material cost and remaining administrative cost. The Act engages decentralized institutions like Panchayati Raj Institutions, Village Development Council, and Village Employment Council, etc., for its implementation.

In Nagaland, the Village Development Board has the responsibility to implement the MGNREGA in each village. This Act was first implemented in Mon district in February 2006 based on the fact that Mon is the least developed district in the state. In Longwa village, this Act was introduced in the later part of 2006 and implemented by the Longwa Village Development Board. Under this scheme, the villagers have constructed an approach road to Longwa Wasa and repaired the village road. As per the Act, an individual gets 100 rupees per day. Till October 2011, there are 613 job card holders in this village as against 3,33,690 in Nagaland (till Feb.2011).

4.4.3. Grand-in-Aid (GIA)

Grant-in-Aid to the VDBs is one of the major State Sponsored Schemes in Nagaland. Under this scheme, funds are allocated to the VDBs on the basis of taxpaying households of the village. For villages having 50 households or below, a total amount of Rs. 10,000 is deposited. Villages having 51 households or more, Rs. 200 per house is deposited. From the total fund received, there is separate earmarking for women and youth with 25% and 20% respectively. The rest 55% of the fund is used for general welfare of the village. This scheme is being implemented by the VDBs in the rural areas.

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80 Refer to www.nrega.net.
for construction of wells, roads, culverts, latrines and maintenance of schools and community halls. Moreover, some income generating programmes are conducted in order to improve the rural economy.\textsuperscript{83} From 2009-2010, this programme has been implemented in 1128 VDBs and 2, 23,181 taxpaying rural households (Nagaland Annual 2009:78). During 2010-2011, Rs.2525.00 lakhs has been earmarked for the allocation of funds to the VDB @ Rs.1000/- per household (Nagaland Basic Facts 2011:122).

In Longwa village, the GIA is implemented by the VDB. From the interview conducted with the VDB secretary, it is found that the present VDB follows the gender budgeting whereby the women society is allocated 25% of the fund for their development and empowerment. Women society utilises this amount in weaving, kitchen garden, beads designing, etc. As per the guidelines, 20% is allocated to the youth for their welfare activities. The remaining 55% is used for the general welfare of the village as whole. However, due to late beginning of the development activities in the village, much works are left to be done. Moreover, the researcher could not get the exact number of households availing this scheme due to non-availability of proper files and records.

4.4.4. Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF)\textsuperscript{84}

Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme was launched by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on 19\textsuperscript{th} February, 2006 in Assam. The main aim of this fund is to bridge the regional imbalances by providing financial resources to supplement the development activities in the backward areas and to strengthen the VDBs and Urban


\textsuperscript{84} For details refer to www.brgf.gov.in.
Local Bodies (ULBs) with appropriate capacity building to facilitate participatory planning, decision making and implementation. The BRGF programme covers 250 districts in 27 states and implemented by the Panchayats, municipalities and local bodies.85

In Nagaland, this cent percent centrally sponsored programme was launched in 2007-2008. The state government has identified five districts in the state, namely Mon, Tuensang, Longleng, Kiphire and Wokha (Nagaland Annual 2009:77). Under this scheme, fund is allocated to the VDBs and ULBs on the basis of rural and urban population similar to grand-in-aid to the VDBs based on tax paying households of the BRGF districts. This scheme is being implemented by the village community and supervised by the VDBs in case of rural areas; and in towns, town committees have the responsibility for implementation. According to official source of the Department of Rural Development, Nagaland, during 2010-2011, Rs. 2222 lakhs has been released by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, against the allotted budget of Rs. 3700 lakhs. The sanctioned amount has been released to 5 ULBs and 421 VDBs in Nagaland.86

Longwa village being under Mon district, which is the most backward district in Nagaland, is entitled to enjoy this scheme. Though it is only 41 km from the district headquarters, this village can be considered as the least developed village in the district. As in other villages under the BRGF, in Longwa village, the BRGF is monitored and implemented by the VDB. So far few houses have been constructed under this scheme. The beneficiaries have received CGI sheets and other construction materials.

85 For more information refer to (sirsa.gov.in/ntfiles/brg/.pdf).
86 For more information on BRGF in Nagaland refer to http://www.agnl.caggov.in).
4.4.5. Border Area Development Programme (BADP)

Border Area Development Programme (BADP) is a centrally sponsored programme of the Government of India in all the states bordering the neighbouring countries. The main objective of this programme is to meet the special development needs of the people in the remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international borders. The basic rationale of this programme is that most of the border areas are neglected or left out during the development plans of both the centre and the state schemes. Therefore, this programme is initiated in order to bridge the development gaps in these areas. Under this scheme, funds are to be utilised within 0-10 km of the international border.87

In Nagaland, this programme is implemented by the Department of Under Developed Areas (DUDA) since most of the border areas fall under the backward or underdeveloped areas. The BADP covers seven rural developmental border blocks sharing international boundaries with Myanmar. These seven blocks are Pungro Block in Kiphire district, Noklak and Thonoknyu Blocks under Tuensang district, Phomching, Tobu and Chen Blocks under Mon district and Meluri Block under Phek district (Nagaland Annual 2009:12). The programme covers development of road connectivity, community halls, waiting sheds, rest house, drinking water, rostrum, health, education, electricity, agriculture and allied sectors, etc.

The present study area falls under Phomching sub-division in Mon district which is also one of the seven border rural developmental blocks in Nagaland. In fact, this village is the largest border village under this sub-division yet poorly developed. Under this programme, the village has been receiving financial assistance from the government which are used for construction and maintenance of roads as well as for providing

87For details on BADP refer to (planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committeewrkgrp/wg_badp.pdf.).
drinking water facilities. Presently, most villagers have access to safe drinking water facility through pipe connections, though some households are yet to get the connections.

Currently, there are two important projects launched under this scheme. The first project is the Mini-Museum Project in the village. The foundation of this project was laid by the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Mr. Neiphiu Rio, on 29th October 2009. The objective of this museum is to preserve the ancient monuments and relics of this village. During the second phase of field work during October 2011, the researcher witnessed the construction of the museum which would take months or may be years to complete and fully functional. This gives evidence of time taking and slow completion of projects in rural Nagaland. Moreover, the museum building seems to be too small to house the manifold collections of this village. Another project is that of indoor stadium which is yet to be started.

From the above discussion, we may argue that though most of the government schemes could not reach the beneficiaries in totality, yet some fractions of the funds could percolate down to the needy and poor villagers. The penetration of Government schemes is quite self evident in certain areas. To cite an example, some villagers proudly display the name of the scheme on their roof tops. With the implementation of these limited schemes, the livelihood of these villagers has been enhanced and improved to a considerable extent. But there are many areas which need serious intervention and implementation from the government as well as from the villagers.
4.5. Summary

In conclusion, we may say that the economic pattern of Longwa villagers is primarily agrarian since majority of the population depend on agriculture for their sustenance. Besides agricultural activities, they also engaged in handicrafts, agro-based activities, animal husbandry, and petty businesses. With the initiation of the governmental schemes and programmes such as NAIP, BADP, BRGF, etc., the livelihood pattern of the villagers has been enhanced to a considerable extent. But there are many villagers who are struggling to meet their basic needs. Very few among them are employed in government sectors.

In order to improve the livelihood sustainability of the villagers, education has a big role to play. The root cause of educational backwardness of the village must be looked into with proper strategy. Vocational training and employment generation programmes would definitely help the villagers to use their immense human resources. Moreover, other resources such as handicrafts and tourism must be tapped and utilised in a proper way. The prospect of border trade is very bright provided such opportunities are exploited to its optimality. The villagers can also conduct weekly bazaars in the International Trade Centre (ITC) so that borderlanders from Myanmar can also partake in this venture. Being a border village, it can be developed into a trade or transit points like that of Moreh in Manipur and Tamu in Myanmar and Zokhawtai in Mizoram and Rhi in Myanmar along the Indo-Myanmar border. But the basic requirements such as adequate infrastructure, proper connectivity, electricity, store room or ware house, guest house or hotels, banks or other credit facilities and electricity must be in place before any substantial trade takes place. For such a trade centre to flourish, security and proper custom office and officials of India and Myanmar is essential. With border trade, the
border livelihood can be improved provided trade is carried out cautiously keeping in mind the negative effects of border trade on the borderlanders. Some negative impacts such as illegal migration, human trafficking, drugs and arms trafficking and illegal trading etc. The Indian and Myanmar states along with the borderlanders have to be cautious in handling such serious problems keeping in mind the free movement of insurgent groups along this border.