CHAPTER-V

GENERAL PROFILE OF MADAN ŬNG SYIEM VILLAGE
CHAPTER-V

GENERAL PROFILE OF MADAN IING SYIEM VILLAGE
(SAMPLE VILLAGE NO.2)

Madan Iing Syiem village is located in the East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya under Mylliem Development Block and falls within Mylliem syiemship. The village stands on National Highway No.40 and it is situated at a distance of 16 kms. south of Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya. This village has 185 households and a population of 1029 persons (2001 Census Report). Madan Iing Syiem literally means ‘home of the king’ and it is one of the most ancient villages of Meghalaya. It was once the seat of administration of the Mylliem syiemship and presently, its durbar has been shifted to Shillong.

Madan Iing Syiem village is one of the the sample villages chosen for the present study on grounds that it satisfies the following three criterias as listed in the methodology, keeping in mind the objectives of my study:
1. It is a non-forested village with a marked departure from a forest-based economy to a diversified one.

2. There are evidences of change in the socio-economic life of the villagers, which affords us to make a contrast study.

The total geographical area of Madan Íing Syiem village is 2 sq. kms. with a population of 1029 persons and a total of 185 number of households as per the 2001 census data.

Table 5.1: Population Distribution of Madan Íing Syiem Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Mylliem Development Block (2001 Census).*

**Land and Geography**

The village, situated towards the south of Shillong city is characterised by smooth hills and valleys running both towards the north and south with unknown parallel ranges. The altitude of the village is higher than that of Shillong city since it is situated uphill closer to the Shillong peak. The elevation difference between the hill top and valley floor is approximately 100-200 m. The entire village is hilly with smooth slopes, which are mostly under grass or shrub cover
and small patches of forestland. A distinctive feature of the terrain is its almost barren hills with grassy plains and massive proportions of land slope. Narrow strips of valleys and terraced paddy fields are also found alongside streams.

**The River System**

Madan Íing Syiem village has a number of rivers flowing from their source in the mountains but they are not perennial and remain dry during most part of the year. These rivulets are indicative of mountain torrents, thereby carrying in their force a large volume of deposit to enrich the soil in the valleys. Some of them form into cascades and waterfalls, which are a familiar sight on the roadside leading to the village.

There are three major rivers flowing across the village. They are Um Jlieng river, Um Jaliang river and Um Tang Syiem river. These rivers flow across the village providing a natural boundary, which clearly demarcates the village from the neighbouring villages.

**Rainfall**

The village receives moderate to high rainfall, the monsoon season normally starting from May to late August. Since a major part of the village is sloppy with undulating hills, thus, inspite of the
heavy rainfall during monsoon, water drains out from the paddy fields. However, by and large the farmers do not have to depend on irrigation because the monsoon rains are sufficient.

**Forest and Vegetation**

The Khasi pine (*Pinus kesiya*) is the most extensive forest type found in the village. There are also patches of pure oak (*Dieng Kseh Bilat*) and associated species in the upper ranges of the hilltops. Due to the temperate cold climate in the higher altitude of the village, the vegetation cover is very sparse here. Bamboo thickets are found only in the lower ranges, which are mostly of secondary origin species.

The village once had thick forest cover but the increasing population pressure and resultant over exploitation of forests have taken a heavy toll of the forests. It has been almost 20-25 years since the forest cover was sufficiently available to meet the forest needs of the villagers. Today, Mylliem village is experiencing an extreme shortage of fuelwood, which is locally not available at all. Demand for fuelwood and wood for other purposes is met from outside the village.

There is a village forest covering an area of about 7 hectares, located on the outskirt of Madan Íing Syiem village, which is
commonly owned and managed by four surrounding villages including Madan Īing Syiem. The four villages are combined to look into the management of the village forest. This forest caters to the common needs of the four villages for various community purposes.

**Land Ownership and Land-Use Pattern**

Size of land owned is an important parameter of the social status of a family. Madan Īing Syiem village stretches across a total land area of 210 hectares out of which 162 hectares is under cultivation. The percentage of cultivable land to total land is moderately high. The most striking feature of land ownership pattern of the village is that there are no Ri Raid lands or community land as found in other Khasi villages, but only Ri Kynti or private land, reason being that land as a commodity was either bought by private individuals or owned by clans and individuals families. As such there has been no instance of land reverting back to the community due to its non-usage for three consecutive years, which is the accepted system of land-tenure among the Khasi. In the village, lands have been properly managed and protected by the private owners, most of who rent out the lands for cultivation to the landless farmers for a stipulated period. From self-cultivation point of view, majority of the
households in this village are either marginal or small cultivators and so they are not in a position to be economically self-sufficient by depending exclusively on agriculture alone. The average size of land holding per household is approximately 6 to 8 acre per household, which is quite high, but the entire land is not used for cultivation. Land not utilised by the owner is either given on rent for cultivation or left fallow for regeneration or fertility of the soil.

**Table 5.2: Land Ownership Pattern**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Amount of Land (Acres)</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Above 10 acres</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5-10 acres</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Upto 5 acres</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Landless families</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Source: Fieldwork Data_

The above table shows that the land ownership pattern in the village is almost evenly distributed amongst the residents, except for a small percentage of 13 percent who are landless. Up to 25 percent of the total households in the village own lands above 10 acres and 30 percent hold land area of 5-10 acres. But it is remarkable that almost every household in the village owns a plot of land. This presents the village as a rural-based economy and it makes agriculture the primary occupation of the villagers here.
Land Use Patterns

Land for cultivation is of two types – Hilly land or ‘Ri Lum’ and Plains or ‘Pyntor’. Cultivation of paddy is normally practised along the plains or ‘pyntor’ while the hilly lands are used for cash crops cultivation. Land use in the village is associated with land ownership pattern. As most of the lands are owned privately, usage of land depends upon the capacity of the household members to use the lands according to their need. Most of the households who own lands cultivate only a portion of the total while the rest is not left fallow, because rotation of crops is also carried out, according to the season. A wide variety of seasonal crops are cultivated and so the lands are used accordingly from time to time, thus allowing it to recuperate its fertility.

It has also been found that the hilly lands or ‘ri-lum’ are scantily covered with patches of pine trees (Pinus kesiya) and bamboo thickets while the plain valleys or ‘pyntor’ are used for settled cultivation of paddy and food crops. While there is total absence of jhum cultivation practice in the village, the farmers make use of terrace cultivation in the slopes and settled cultivation in the plains. There are only few settlements on the hill slopes or near the paddy
fields because majority of the farmers prefer to live in the village, which is in close proximity to their fields. The area of forest cover in the village is 10 hectares as against a total land area of 210 hectares which is very low and is one of the reasons why local felling of trees for firewood is strictly prohibited, nor do the villagers depend on forest related activities. The following table shows the pattern of land use in the village.

**Table 5.3: Land Use Pattern in Madan Íing Syiem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL.N o.</th>
<th>Pattern of Land Use</th>
<th>Total Area in Acres</th>
<th>Percentage to Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Area under Cultivation</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>77.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Area under Settled Cultivation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Area under Horticulture</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Area under Jhum Cultivation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Area under Forest</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>210</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Village Gram Sevak (Block Office)*

**Infrastructure**

The basic infrastructural facilities such as hospitals, markets, post office, college etc. in the village are still far from being satisfactory but its closer distance to the city makes it easily accessible to facilities like markets, hospitals, schools, and colleges etc. which are making a fast changing influence in the life of the villagers.
Health

So far as health care is concerned, the village has no hospital or dispensary. The nearest Public Health Centre (PHC) is the Pomlum PHC located 8 kms. away from Madan Šing Syiem. There is only one Health Care Clinic run by the Social Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya, under the Mahila Mandal scheme. The clinic functions as a centre to supply medicines at a reasonable rate, it also runs a nursery school and a student nurse is employed at the clinic. There is also a private Doctor's clinic in the village where a doctor is available once a week every Saturday. This satisfies the basic medical needs of the villagers in the absence of which they would have to travel to the city for treatment.

Education

It is significant that the literacy rate of Madan Šing Syiem village is fairly high compared to other villages in Khasi Hills. The present literacy rate of the village is 63.33 percent. There are quite a number of well-educated residents within the village who have obtained their education from schools and colleges in Shillong. There are four lower primary schools in the village, out of which, one is soon to be upgraded into a High School:
1. Hemont Zenith Primary School.
3. Per Sara School.
4. Lower Primary Government School.

Table 5.4: Educational background of Madan Šing Syiem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Above Higher Secondary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Above Secondary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Below Primary</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>63.33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork Data*

**Government Offices**

There are no Government institutions within the village itself. However, there are a number of offices in the outskirts of the village starting from 4½ mile to 7th mile on the Upper Shillong road which makes the village closer to them. They are:

1. Mylliem Development Block Office (5th Mile)
2. Office of the Assistant Conservator of Forest (4½ Mile)
3. Agriculture Office (6th Mile)
4. ICDS Office (5th Mile)
5. Convention Energy Office (5th Mile)
6. A.H. and Veterinary Office (5th Mile)

Economic Profile of Madan Íing Syiem Village

The economy of the village is varied in occupational features. Though the primary occupation is agriculture, the villagers depend on a wide range of economic activities such as business and trade, cottage industries, daily labourers and even government service in petty jobs.

The following are the main occupation followed by the people of Madan Íing Syiem village.

1. Agriculture

Agriculture is the primary occupation of the people of Madan Íing Syiem village. The method of agriculture practice is still traditional. Use of improved agricultural implements, high yielding varieties of seeds and chemical fertiliser are not adopted. Unlike other tribal villages, the people never practise jhum cultivation. The lands are not left fallow for a long period and seasonal crops are grown according to season. The climate and soil conditions of the village are conducive to the cultivation of root crops like potato, carrot, radish and other vegetables.
PIC.5 : BUN CULTIVATION IN THE VILLAGE

PIC 6 : BUN CULTIVATION OF SEASONAL CROPS
Depending on the topography, three categories of land are available for cultivation – these are:

(1) Wet paddy land or “pynthor”.

(2) Hilly land or “Ri Lum”.

(3) Homestead land, or “Ka Kper”.

Wet rice cultivation is practised on low lands called “pynthor”. Such lands are situated on the foothills and are divided into compartments with the help of earthen banks that are locally called ‘stir’. This is done in order to retain rainwater.

The hilly lands or ‘ri lum’ are generally used for cultivation of potato and hill paddy. Potato may be considered as the cash crop of the Khasi in so far as it has become an extensive trading commodity for the people of this village.

Homestead lands are used by every household to grow vegetables and fruit trees like orange, plum, peach etc. which they sell in the local markets. It has also been found that homestead lands yield better and produce more because personal care and attention is available.

The adoption of improved agricultural technology is negligible because the farmers still make use of traditional farm implements.
made of wood, bamboo and iron. The Khasi hoe called “U Mohkhiew”, an axe for felling trees and shrubs “U sdie”, a sickle “ka rashî” and a harrow “Ka iuh moi” are used. For manuring the fields, the farmers use “sboh sem masi” (lumps of decomposed cowdung) and “sboh sem sniang” (pig sty), while the use of chemical fertilizers is not prevalent. The winter crops that govern the yearly cycle of all activities include potatoes, radish, cauliflower, carrots, green leafy vegetables and beans. Paddy is sown in early April and by winter they collect the sheaves and start thrashing out on the spot by beating them against stone (shoh kba) both by men and women.

The land-use pattern of the village also shows a high percentage of cultivable land, 77% or 162 hectares as against a total land area of 210 hectares, which makes agriculture the primary economic activity of the village.

2. Businesses and Trading

A sizeable number of the villagers are engaged in various petty business activities like running tea shops, hotels and general grocery stores, etc. This is mainly because of the location of the village on the national highway that connects Cherrapunjee, which is an important place of tourist interest and a passage to Bangladesh.
Tourists and travellers passing by this route often stop for a while and
take tea or food in these tea stalls.

This has become a lucrative business and it is a common sight
to see tired travellers especially tourists on their way to Cherrapunjee
halting by these tea shops and enjoying a cup of hot tea with locally
prepared Khasi specialities like ‘pu-tharo’ and “pu-khleiñ (rice
pancakes). Besides tea shops, the other business activities in the
village include tyre repair shops, carpentry, general stores and a few
local wine dealers.

The following table shows the percentage distribution of
business activities in Madan Íing Syiem village.

Table 5.5: Distribution of Business Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Business Activities</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tea Stall</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Store</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cement Dealer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Charcoal Seller</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork Data

3. Iron Smelting or Shlem Saiñ Nar Mawpyrsut

Iron smelting is one of the chief industries in the Khasi Hills
and Madan Íing Syiem village has earned a name for itself as one of
PIC.1: THE IRON SMELTING INDUSTRY (SHLEM SAIN NAR)

PIC.2: MAKING IRON TOOLS
the oldest centres of this industry. W.W. Hunter in his Statistical
Account of Assam 1879 wrote:

“The smelting of iron was once the chief industry in the
Khasi Hills, and a considerable quantity of the metal
used to be exported to Sylhet, both in the crude and
manufactured state. Recently, however, this industry has
almost died out, in the face of the competition of the
superior article imported from England and sold in the
plains at a cheaper rate.”

Many early writers have commented upon this industry, which
was indigenous to the Khasi since time immemorial such as Colonel
Lister, Yale, Cracroft and Thomas Oldham. Colonel Lister reported
that in 1853, the estimated quantity of 20,000 mounds of iron in the
shape of hoes was exported from the hills to the Assam valley

Besides Nongkrem and Laitlyngkot which are known as centres
of iron industry in the Khasi Hills, Madan Iing Syiem village is also a
centre of iron industry still being pursued on a large scale for
producing the typical Khasi hoe called \textit{u Moh-khiew} and various
types of Khasi dao or \textit{wait}.\footnote{\textit{u Moh-khiew} is a traditional type of Khasi hoe which is still manufactured in Madan Iing Syiem village. It is characterized by its long handle and curved blade, which is ideal for digging and cultivating the soil.\textit{Wait} is another type of Khasi dao that is used for cutting and clearing land. It is characterized by its shorter blade and is more suitable for precise cutting tasks.}
Method of Khasi Black smithy in Madan Ŧing Syiem

It is interesting to note that the local blacksmiths of this village still use the ordinary hand-driven bellows. The ancient cottage industry is carried out in primitive charcoal fires, which are blown by huge double action bellows. On the side of the bellow is a nozzle through which is inserted a tube connecting the hearth. Over the hearth is a chimney of pipe clay to direct the heated air from the smelter to the opening in the roof. In Madan Ŧing Syiem there are 2 iron cottage industries which produce various iron implements for daily use such as knives, swords, spades and a number of Khasi 'daos' such as *wait bnoh* or the hooked dao, *wait lyngkut* or curved dao, *wait kynda* or warrior's knife, *wait sum* or butcher's knife, *tari dao* or kitchen knife, etc. and the Khasi hoe or *mohkhiew*. These household and agricultural implements are bought by traders in bulk and sold at Barabazar, Shillong and various interior markets.

4. Carpentry

Carpentry as an economic activity also finds place in the economic life of the villagers, but there are only 2 furniture making centres in the village. The carpenters have to purchase wood from outside the village, which are heavily priced by the dealers. Most of
the timber comes from West Khasi Hills in truckloads and are sold in the local markets or saw mill located at Upper Shillong (Lai Mer). Each carpentry shop owner employs about 3 to 4 skilled labourers who are engaged in different activities like sawing, polishing etc. The labourers are paid Rs.100 per day. All types of furniture for daily use are made such as tables, beds, chairs, doors, windows etc. Depending upon the type of wood, the prices are fixed at varied rates, some of which are available on placement of order. There is no local wood available for sale, and it has been a regular practice in the village for the past 20-25 years that firewood has to be purchased from outside.

Distributing the total adult working population of the village we find the following broad occupational pattern of Madan Íing Syiem village.

**Table 5.6: Broad Occupational Pattern of Madan Íing Syiem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of Adults engaged</th>
<th>Percentage to Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cultivation</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Traders</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>32.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forest Activities (carpentry)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cottage Industry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork Data*
The above table holds out, as it is, the predominance of agriculture, which engages 72 out of 180 adult working members of the households accounting for 40 percent of the workers. The next occupation significantly distinctive to this village is trade and business. This occupies as many as 58 adults amounting to 32.22 percent. In sharp contrast to the other sample village Lawbyrwa, forest activity in this village is conspicuously nil. Employment of 10 persons in Government services and school teaching also indicates some degree of educational advancement.

5. Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

These Self-Help Groups are sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Department of the Government of Meghalaya. The formation of a number of Self-Help groups or SHGs has been an important means of employment opportunity for the villagers.

There are in total 5 SHGs in Madan İing Syiem village organized by the Soil and Water Conservation Department, East Khasi Hills District, under its Watershed Development Programme (WDP) scheme. It was observed that all these groups have built up a creditable system in which every member gets trained to take collective responsibility without depending on one individual.
Although the levels of knowledge, skills, understanding differ from one group to another either within or outside the village watershed areas, concentrated efforts by certain individuals and nurturing of those groups was found to be far more important than formation of such groups.

The following table shows the number of SHG’s in Madan Ŭing Syiem village, their membership and their activities and achievements.

**Table 5.7: Profile of Self Help Groups in Madan Ŭing Syiem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of the SHG</th>
<th>Date &amp; Year of Formation</th>
<th>Total No. of Members</th>
<th>Activities and Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bankyrsoi Self-Help Group</td>
<td>24.07.03</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(1) Social work which include cleaning of the village every year on the 2nd Oct. which coincides with Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday. (2) Started Mushroom cultivation with financial assistance of Rs.10,000 from Soil Conservator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nangkyntiew Shaphrang Self-Help Group</td>
<td>27.08.02</td>
<td>13 (all women) Membership Fee</td>
<td>(1) In the first coaching year, the group started cultivation of vegetables and daily wage labour and the money earned was kept in the Bank. (2) The group started selling iron to the backsmiths in the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl.No.</td>
<td>Name of the SHG</td>
<td>Date &amp; Year of Formation</td>
<td>Total No. of Members</td>
<td>Activities and Achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lawei Baphymai Self-Help Group</td>
<td>05.05.03</td>
<td>12 (women)</td>
<td>(1) To give loans to each and every member in the group from their own revolving fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Membership Fee – 20 per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shilynter Self-Help Group</td>
<td>03.06.04</td>
<td>11 (50 each)</td>
<td>(1) Giving loans to the members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nangkiew Shaphrang</td>
<td>01.03.02</td>
<td>12 (20 each)</td>
<td>(1) In the first year the group started cultivation of vegetables and the sale proceeds was kept in the Bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Received a grant of Rs.10,000/- from Soil Conservation Division to make Verm compost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It has been observed that the efforts made by the Soil and Water Conservation Department in Madan Íng Syiem village are encouraging and helpful. Through decentralization of decision making process and empowerment of existing village institutions namely Watershed Association, Watershed Committee, Self-Help Groups, User Groups, etc. financially and socially there is a ray of hope that at one point of time they may become viable to take up development process on their own. Training camps are also organised by the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and Community
PIC.3 : FIREWOOD FOR LOCAL USE

PIC.4 : THE RESEARCHER WITH MEMBERS OF THE SELF HELP GROUPS
and rural Development Block to enlighten the villagers on the management of the investments and also to provide opportunities to interact.

The Self-Help Groups, under the guidance and supervision of the Soil and Water Conservation Department, will go a long way to help the village folk in developing them confidence and skill to work collectively for their economic welfare.

It will also help them for better access to resources, credits and other required inputs in achieving their desired goals. The Watershed Development Programme is a scheme funded by the Government of India under the Ministry of Agriculture and is mainly directed towards the overall development of jhum areas of the watershed basis by way of reclaiming the land offered by shifting cultivation and thereby to bring about socio-economic upgradation of the jhumia families living in these areas. This scheme, if properly implemented, is sure to benefit the Khasi farmers who are traditionally dependent on jhum cultivation. The Department of Soil and Water Conservation, Meghalaya, which initiated the promotion of self-help group schemes claims that the SHG's are slowly picking up with greater involvement in credit-cum subsidy programme that would ensure a time bound
programme for bringing a specific member of families now under Below Poverty Line (BPL) out of their chronic poverty and deprivation.

6. Daily Labourers

Daily labourers constitute an important segment in the area of study. There are basically 4 categories of daily labourers in Madan Ŭing Syiem village. They are:

(i) Stone crusher (shoh maw)

(ii) Sand Tiller (Tih Shyiap)

(iii) Muster Roll in road construction (Bylla surok)

(iv) Landless labourers. (Bylla sngi)

While menfolk are usually employed in the first three categories, women also engage themselves in such activities though in lesser numbers.

In the foregoing Table 5.7 under the heading “Broad Occupational Pattern of Madan Ŭing Syiem”, the number of persons under the category of ‘Labour’ has been shown as 20 with 11.11 percent of the total number of adult workers. They are mostly landless labourers who work with others on daily wages. While it sounds paradoxical to find landless persons in a country where land belongs
to the people, needless to say, the process of land alienation that has been increasingly taking place in Khasi Hills since last few decades this class of landless persons is gradually increasing.

**Use of Fuel wood as Household Energy**

In any study of the usages of forest and forest products, one of the important considerations that come to the forefront is the consumption of firewood as household energy. Like any other tribe, the Khasis traditionally use firewood as the medium for cooking and heating. Charcoal is extensively used for various domestic requirements like warming themselves during winter season, cooking, and for drying up clothes in monsoon. Even the core of the roots of matured pine comes handy for lighting purposes.

It is a usual practice of Khasis to collect firewood from the forest during the dry season beginning from January to March and to stack them for cooking, heating and warming themselves during the wet seasons. Every household of average size (4 to 6 persons) must have a provision of one ‘thup’ of firewood for the year. ‘Thup’ or ‘Thak’ is a local name given for a stake of firewood approximately weighing 10 quintals or about one-jeep-trailer load. Calculating on the basis of the above estimate it will be seen that the annual
consumption of firewood by 60 numbers of households will come to 600 quintals.

With a view to find out whether this heavy requirement of fuelwood has been reduced by supplementing it with other sources of energy like electricity, kerosene and non-conventional energies, a study was made on our sample village – Madan ïing Syiem.

The data collected in this regard are expressed in the following Table.

Table 5.8: Household Energy Consumption in Madan ïing Syiem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Types of Energy Used</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kerosene</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork Data*

The above table reveals that all the 60 households, the entire families or 100 per cent households still use firewood as their primary source of energy. However, they have also started using other sources of energy such as electricity, kerosene and charcoal to supplement the daily requirements of firewood to the extent of 41.66 per cent in Madan ïing Syiem. This fact indicates two things: (1) scarcity of
firewood in the village and (2) higher cost of firewood. This has a sharp contrast with the other sample village, i.e., Lawbyrwa.

**Monthly income of Households**

The economic status of a family or household reflects on the actual income it earns, it was thus considered important to collect, assess and analyse the monthly income of each family of the sample village in order to explore the socio-economic structure under the changing scenario. One of the objectives of the present study being exploring the emerging socio-economic structure of the Khasis under the changing harmony between the Khasi and the forest, in this study an attempt has been made to bring out, as accurate as possible, the monthly income of the 60 households under study from all sources.

In the following table, the households have been grouped under three different categories of High, Middle and Low income groups to make it convenient to express the income in terms of amount and percentages for comparative study between two sample villages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Income Groups</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Above Rs.8000/-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Between Rs.8000/- to 4000/-</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Below Rs.4000/-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork*
The above table reveals that the majority of the households fall under the Middle-income group with 33 households out of 60 under review. The second category of Low-income group includes 15 households and the third category of High-income group has only 12 households with 55, 25 and 20 per cent respectively.