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Youths' Participation in Agriculture for Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods: A Case Study of Pa-O Self-Administered Zone in Southern Shan State, Myanmar

Miss Khine Zin Yu Aung



**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Development Studies
Common Course
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2020
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การอาสาสมัครของเยาวชนในเกษตรกรรมเพื่อการเสริมสร้างการ
ดำรงชีวิตที่ยั่งยืน:
กรณีศึกษาของพื้นที่ปกครองตนเองปะโอในรัฐฉานทางใต้
ประเทศเมียนมา



น.ส.ไคน์ ชิน ยู ออง

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลป
ศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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By	Miss Khine Zin Yu Aung
Field of Study	International Development Studies
Thesis Advisor	Assistant Professor Carl Middleton, Ph.D.

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ไคน์ ซิน ยอ ออง :

การอาสาสมัครของเยาวชนในเกษตรกรรมเพื่อการเสริมสร้างการดำรงชีวิตที่ยั่งยืน:
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ดร.คาร์ล มิดเดิลตัน

เมียนมา โดยร้อยละ 70 ของประชากรเป็นชนบทที่พึ่งพาภาคเกษตรกรรมในระบบเศรษฐกิจ ซึ่งสร้างประมาณร้อยละ 37.8 ของ GDP ประเทศ และอัตราจ้างงานประมาณร้อยละ 50 ของแรงงาน (FAO, 2020) อย่างไรก็ตามภาคเกษตรกรรมของเมียนมาไม่ได้ถูกพัฒนาเป็นที่ดีและไม่ได้ยืดหยุ่นเป็นอาชีพที่พึ่งพาได้และน่าดึงดูดต่อการดำรงชีวิตสำหรับผู้คน โดยเฉพาะสำหรับเยาวชนในชนบท เนื่องจากการขาดการพัฒนาในภาคเกษตรกรรม ผู้คนในพื้นที่ชนบทต้องแสวงหาโอกาสอื่น ๆ ในการดำรงชีวิตโดยการละทิ้งพื้นที่เพาะปลูกและย้ายไปพื้นที่อื่นเพื่อการทำงาน สถานการณ์นี้มีผลกระทบต่อทั้งการจ้างงานสำหรับเยาวชนและภาคเกษตรกรรมที่ต้องการความสามารถของเยาวชนมาใช้ในการพัฒนา จะเน้นการศึกษานี้จึงมุ่งเน้นไปที่ข้อท้าทายของเยาวชนในพื้นที่ชนบทที่ปรากฏในการดำรงชีวิต การมีส่วนร่วมเพื่อการพัฒนาเกษตรกรรมและวิธีการสนับสนุนพวกเขาในการเสริมสร้างการดำรงชีวิตที่ยั่งยืนในพื้นที่ชนบท การศึกษานี้ถูกดำเนินผ่านวิธีการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพโดยใช้กับกรณีศึกษาพื้นที่ปกครองตนเองปะโอ (SAZ) ที่ตั้งอยู่ทางตอนใต้ของรัฐฉาน ประเทศเมียนมา พบผลลัพธ์ว่าเยาวชนมีข้อท้าทายมากขึ้นในการเข้าถึงต้นทุนทางธรรมชาติและข้อท้าทายน้อยลงใน การเข้าถึงต้นทุนทางกายภาพ สังคม และมนุษย์ การค้นพบเชิงนัยยะสำคัญอื่นคือทั้งเยาวชนและผู้สูงอายุมีข้อท้าทายในการเข้าถึงต้นทุนทางความรู้ จุดแข็งของเยาวชนในการดำเนินชีวิตเชิงเกษตรกรรมคือการเปิดรับและความสามารถในการปรับตัวเข้ากับแนวทางเทคนิคและนวัตกรรมใหม่เพื่อเข้าถึงตลาดและห่วงโซ่คุณค่าของสินค้าเกษตรเทียบเท่ากับการ เชื่อมโยง ความหลากหลายของประชากร ในการเข้าถึงการดำเนินชีวิตของพวกเขาเยาวชนได้ทำการตัดสินใจที่ขึ้นอยู่กับปัจจัยของการมีประส บการณ์ และการเปิดรับ การสนับสนุนจากรัฐบาลและองค์กรต่าง ๆ การศึกษา พ่อแม่ และภูมิหลังครอบครัว และการเข้าถึงการเงิน การศึกษานี้ถือเถียงว่าการดำเนินชีวิตที่ยั่งยืนไม่ได้เกี่ยวข้องกับเพียงเงินค่าจ้างและผลประโยชน์เท่านั้นแต่ ยังคงเกี่ยวข้องกับ ความมั่นคงทางอาชีพ และความพึงพอใจ แม้เกษตรกรรมไม่ได้ เป็นงานที่มั่นคงและวางใจได้ในแง่ของเงินค่าจ้างหรือผลประโยชน์แต่มันยังถูกคำนึงในฐานะการดำเนิน ชีวิตหลักในบริบทของ ความยั่งยืนในปะโอ SAZ เพราะฉะนั้นจึงพบว่าความหลากหลายคือยุทธศาสตร์การ ดำเนินชีวิตที่ถูกเสนอมากที่สุดสำหรับเยาวชนอาสาสมัครที่มาร่วมการศึกษานี้ ดังนั้นการศึกษานี้จึงแนะนำ ให้ส่งเสริมการอาสาสมัครของเยาวชนในเกษตรกรรมผ่านการสนับสนุนทางเทคนิคและการเงินจากรัฐบาล, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs และภาคเอกชนเพื่อเสริมสร้างการดำเนินชีวิตที่ยั่งยืนมากขึ้นในปะโอ SAZ

สาขาวิชา การพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ
ปีการศึกษา 2563

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Myanmar in which 70 percent of the population is rural people relies on agricultural sector for its economy. It contributes about 37.8 percent of the country's GDP and employs about 50 percent of the labors (FAO, 2020). However, Myanmar's agricultural sector is not well developed and does not stand as reliable livelihood for the people, especially for the youths, in rural areas. Hence, the people in rural areas have to seek more livelihood opportunities like leaving their farmlands and moving to other places for work. This situation has impact both on youths and on the agricultural sector which needs youths' capacities for its development. Therefore, this study focuses on the challenges for the youths in rural areas in approaching their livelihoods, their contribution to agricultural development and how to support them in enhancing sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. This study is conducted through qualitative methods with the use of case study of Pa-O SAZ located in Southern Shan state of Myanmar. The findings result that youths have more challenges for access to natural capital and less challenges for access to physical, social and human capitals. Another significant finding is that both youths and the elders have challenges for access to knowledge or information on their livelihoods. The strengths of the youths for agricultural livelihoods are having more capabilities to adapt with new techniques, innovative ways as well as to connect with varieties of people. For their livelihoods, the youths make decision depending on the factors of having experiences and exposures, support from government and organizations, education, parents and families' background and access to finance. This study also argues that sustainable livelihood is not only about getting more wages and profit but also about having job and social security. Though agriculture is not promising and reliable work in terms of wages or profit, it can still be regarded as a main livelihood in terms of sustainability in Pa-O SAZ. Hence, diversification becomes the most preferred livelihood strategy for all of the youths participated in this study. Therefore, the study suggests to promote the youths' participation in agriculture through financial and technical supports from government, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and the private sector in order to enhance more sustainable livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ.

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Field of Study:	International Development Studies	Student's Signature
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Khine Zin Yu Aung

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
MIID	Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNO	Pa-O National Organization
PYO	Pa-O Youth Organization
SAZ	Self-Administered Zone
SAD	Self-Administered Division
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
TPA	Terra People Association
TYC	Taunggyi Youth Center
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nation's General Assembly
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Research Problem

Myanmar in which 70 percent of the population is rural people relies on agricultural sector for its economy. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO 2020), agriculture contributes 37.8 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), accounts for 25 to 30 percent of total export earnings and employs about 50 percent of the labors. The development of agricultural sector can be the major factor not only for the rural people to have access to sustainable livelihood opportunities but also for the rural development of the country. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2006), agricultural development is defined as the process that creates the conditions for the fulfilment of agricultural potential. Those conditions include the accumulation of knowledge and availability of technology as well as the allocation of inputs and output. With the aim of establishing a peaceful, modern and developed country, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has established 12 political, economic and social objectives and one of the major economic objectives is “Development of agriculture as a base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well (FAO 2020).”

In addition to such attempts of setting objectives, there have been many policy reforms in the last few decades to spur rural development. These include: land law reforms; abolition of the rice production quota, allowing farmers to choose which crops to cultivate; liberalization of domestic and international marketing of rice in 2003, and of industrial crops in 2004; removal of the export tax on key agricultural commodities; a law allowing the establishment of microfinance institutions; use of crops as loan collateral; and passage of a plant pest quarantine law in 1990, a pesticide law in 1993, and a fertilizer law in 2000 (Phyo 2018). Moreover, the government has been using a value-chain approach to agricultural development to create the job opportunities and increase income in order to achieve both sustainable inclusive growth and rural development (Phyo 2018).

However, the implementation of development projects, supports and policies has yet to fit with those requirements and priorities to secure of livelihood capitals for those who mainly rely on agricultural livelihood. Through the political transitions of Myanmar after 2015, its rural transformation receives far less elite and international attention than its human rights violations or economic prospects, but is critically important to the nation's future (Faxon 2020). In addition, the index of the rural or agricultural development has yet to emphasize on the livelihood security and well-being of farmers' lives. Hence, the farmers in rural areas are still facing the challenges to survive with their agricultural livelihoods. Because of those challenges and gaps in livelihood capitals and opportunities in rural areas of Myanmar, the people living there have difficulties for their regular income and survival. Moreover, the lack of development in agricultural sector becomes one of the factors for the people in rural area, especially youths, to be desperate to seek more options of livelihood opportunities like leaving their farmlands and moving to other places for work. This situation has impact both on the employment for youths and on the agricultural sector which needs youths' capacities for its development.

Youths are defined as the persons falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years according to United Nation's General Assembly (UNGA 2001). In Myanmar, youths are generally regarded as the citizens between the ages of 15 and 35 years although there is no official definition of youths (The Global New Light of Myanmar 2018). The nature of youths may differ depending on the context of social and traditional norms and how they have grown up. However, most youths from rural areas prefer to migrate because they face various obstacles such as lack of prospects for their further career development, underdeveloped social life, economically weak and underdeveloped sector, various cost, inequality and exclusion, etc. (Meta 2020). The youths in rural areas do not perceive agriculture as a remunerative or prestigious profession, and until they find meaningful economic opportunities and attractive environments in rural areas, they will continue to migrate to cities (FAO, 2014). In the rural areas of Myanmar, agriculture can be regarded as a major livelihood but not as reliable, attractive and promising work for the people, especially for the youths. From the perspectives of the youths in rural areas, agriculture is seen as very tiring work and challenging to get profits and regular income. The other narrative is that the

agricultural work is only for those who are not educated, qualified and skillful to access other livelihood opportunities (Faxon 2020). In this situation, the youths in rural areas do not see agriculture as their livelihood opportunities and just as the exhausting work they have to leave behind.

Among any other places in Myanmar, Pa-O Self-Administered Zone (Pa-O SAZ) located in Southern Shan State is an appropriate place to explore the role of youths and agriculture concerning sustainable livelihoods because of the complexity of socio-economic issues within the context of geographical and political significance. Pa-O SAZ covering three townships: Hopong, Hsihseng and Pinlaung was established under the 2008 Constitution and came into force by decree in 2011 (Knipe 2018). Although there are active ethnic armed organizations (EAO) in Southern Shan State, there is no armed conflicts in Pa-O SAZ since Pa-O National Army, the armed wing of PNO, has signed ceasefire agreement with State Peace and Development Council in 1991. Being a self-administered zone, these three townships and Pa-O people are administered not only by the government but also by Pa-O National Organization (PNO) which has their own development agenda. Moreover, there are also many agricultural development programs implemented and funded by local and international organizations to support the local people with livelihood opportunities. PNO having some autonomy also makes policies and implements their development agenda such as giving agricultural development trainings to local people (Knipe 2018). In addition, local people especially youths there also run their own farms with or without support of outsiders and attempt for value-chain of agricultural products.

However, the agriculture in Pa-O self-administered zone is still facing with the challenges for its development and the youths there are also facing with the challenges of the lack of livelihood opportunities. According to Food Security Policy Research Paper (2019), about 70% of the migrants in southern Shan state left their former agricultural works to migrate internally or externally. Like many other people in the rural areas of Myanmar, most have to migrate for work due to the lack of job opportunities and agricultural development in southern Shan state. This situation shows that the agricultural sector there still needs to be developed well enough to employ the youths and provide them with reliable and sustainable job opportunities.

For the youths, especially those who cannot access to higher education level, in rural areas where only agriculture stand as the main livelihood, the development of agricultural sector is important to provide them with livelihood opportunities in accordance with their preference. Relatively, the capacities and participation of youths also play a vital role for agricultural and rural development. However, the agricultural livelihood is not favorable one for the youths in rural areas due to the uncertain condition to get regular and enough income in contrast to other types of works. Therefore, focusing on enhancing sustainable livelihood in rural areas, this study explores; i) the livelihood and agriculture challenges for people in Pa-O SAZ, ii) the role and contributions of youths to agricultural development, iii) the influencing and promoting factors to them in deciding their livelihood strategies and approaching the outcomes, iv) how to support youths' participation in agriculture. While the experiences and perspectives of youth and local people vary based on gender, status and education, this study finds the vital role youths in developing agricultural livelihood and enhancing sustainable livelihood in rural areas. In addition, this also explores the role of agriculture which still stands as a sustainable livelihood despite being unattractive income sources. Hence, in order to enhance sustainable livelihoods in rural areas, the results of this study aims to suggest that youths' participation in agriculture should be promoted by providing right and enough information for their knowledge of farming and by strengthening access to land ownership as well as financial and technical support.

1.2. Research Questions

Main Question

How can sustainable livelihood opportunities be enhanced by promoting youths' participation in agriculture in Pa-O self-administered zone (SAZ)?

Sub-Questions

1. What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people, especially for the youths, in Pa-O SAZ in terms of livelihood capitals in sustainable livelihood approach (SLA)?

2. How do the youths contribute to agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?
3. How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihoods and what factors are promoting their participation in agriculture?

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- ❖ To address the challenges that the people in Pa-O SAZ face for their livelihoods and highlight the specific challenges for the youths regarding the livelihood capitals
- ❖ To identify the strengths of the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods in comparison with the elders and their role and contributions to agriculture development
- ❖ To explore the influencing factors to the youths in deciding their livelihoods and the promoting factors to their participation in agriculture
- ❖ To access how youths' participation in agriculture can be promoted in order to enhance sustainable livelihoods in rural areas

1.4. Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the concepts of sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) by Department for International Development (DFID) focusing on livelihood assets, strategies, and structures in developing the research questions and in analyzing the data. DFID' adaption of SLA aims of 'eradicating poverty' and commits to 'policies and actions that promote sustainable livelihoods' to achieve this aim. (Carney et al., 1999). As the problems this research aims to address is to enhance sustainable livelihoods for the people in rural areas, the concept DFID's sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) is applied to understand how the people approach to achieve their livelihood outcomes based on the strengths of the local people as well as their knowledge, experiences, decision making and management in rural areas. In addition, it is also important to know how the local people are influenced by external structures in order to understand how they struggle to achieve their livelihood outcomes.

Therefore, the role of structure is also focused in exploring how the youths approach their livelihood strategies.

Sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) is way of thinking to analyze and change the lives of people who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage. It also helps to understand the livelihoods of the poor and to recognize that all people have assets and abilities which can be improved for enhancing their livelihoods. It is based on the connection between people and overall enabling environment influencing the outcomes of livelihood strategies. Sustainable livelihood approach can help this research explore the livelihood assets and strategies of the people in target areas (Pa-O self-administered zone) and understand how those factors support them in enhancing their livelihoods. PNO administering Pa-O SAZ is attempting for the development of the region, focusing on agricultural development and livelihood opportunities. Although there is no armed conflicts in Pa-O SAZ, there are many active ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) in Southern Shan State where it is located. Therefore, attempt for livelihood development in Pa-O SAZ needs to consider the conflict context in the area such as displacement, migration for survival and work and security. Given such context, this study applies SLA to cover the needs, gaps, and pathways for agricultural development and sustainable livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ by using its elements in framing the research questions, tools and approaches. The components of SLA such as vulnerable context, livelihood capitals, structures and process, livelihood strategies and outcomes provide this study with a framework for analysis on how sustainable livelihoods can be enhanced in Pa-O SAZ.

Therefore, the conceptual framework of this research can be illustrated as follows:

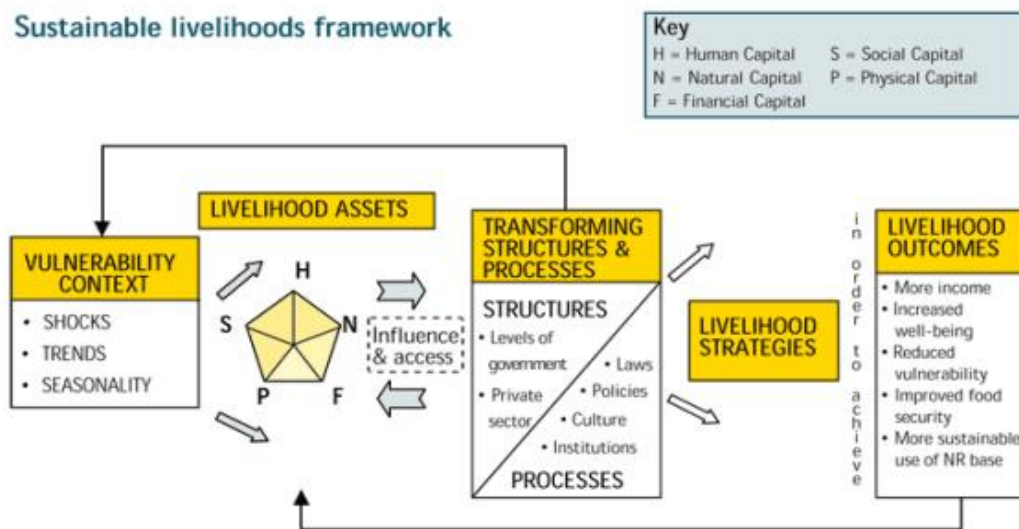


Figure 1: Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DFID 2000)¹

According to SLA, the vulnerability context frames the external environment in which people exit and gain their livelihood assets. The livelihood assets which can also be called people's strengths include human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital and financial capital. Under the influence of structures and institutions which operates all level of livelihood approach, the people use their own assets and attempt to get livelihood outcomes through the strategies: agricultural intensification or extensification relying on natural resource based activities, livelihood diversification including off-farm activities and migration.

According to DFID (2020), the livelihood capitals are defined as follows:

- *Human Capital: It represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. At the household level, it varies according to household size, skill levels, leadership potential, health status, etc. and appears to be a decisive factor in order to make use of any other type of assets.*

¹ The diagram was designed by Enoch Kwame Tham-Agyekum/ The Implications of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach for Rural Development/ 2015/ Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/24814084/THE_IMPLICATIONS_OF_THE_SUSTAINABLE_LIVELIHOODS_APPROACH_FOR_RURAL_DEVELOPMENT

- *Social Capital: It means the social resources upon which people draw in seeking for their livelihood outcomes, such as networks and connectedness, that increase people's trust and ability to cooperate or membership in more formalised groups and their systems of rules, norms and sanctions.*
- *Natural Capital: It is the term used for the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services (such as land, water, forests, air quality, erosion protection, biodiversity degree and rate of change, etc.) useful for livelihoods are derived.*
- *Physical Capital: It comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods, such as affordable transport, secure shelter and buildings, adequate water supply and sanitation, clean, affordable energy and access to information.*
- *Financial Capital: It denotes the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives and it comprises the important availability of cash or equivalent that enables people to adopt different livelihood strategies.²*

The sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) provides a way to evaluate how organizations, policies, institutions, cultural norms shape livelihoods, both by determining who gains access to which type of asset, and defining what range of livelihood strategies are open and attractive to people. (Carney 1998). Therefore, this research will apply SLF in evaluating agricultural development programs and supports in order to explore how to enhance sustainable livelihoods by focusing on the youths and agriculture.

² The Implications of the Sustainable livelihoods Approach for Rural Development by E. Tham-Agyekum, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/24814084/THE_IMPLICATIONS_OF_THE_SUSTAINABLE_LIVELIHOODS_APPROACH_FOR_RURAL_DEVELOPMENT

1.5. Research Methods

This research comprised the secondary data collected from internet-based resources and the primary data from interviews including group discussion and observations conducted through qualitative research methods.

1.5.1. Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data for this research were collected from the academic papers and articles focusing on the areas of youths, agricultural sector, sustainable livelihoods and rural development. To get the preliminary knowledge of agricultural development programs and supports implemented in the target area of the research, the data and information from United Nations (UN), International Non-Government Organizations (INGO), Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) were also collected through their websites, news, reports and articles. The published articles were researched online to review different narratives and perspectives from different stakeholders on the study areas in collecting comprehensive data for this study.

1.5.2. Primary Data Collection Methods and Tools

In collecting primary data, this research used qualitative research method in which data were collected through the research tools; key informant interviews, group discussion, in-depth interviews, informal interviews and observations. Some example cases were also used to accentuate the findings in certain sections. The respondents included those from administrative or policy making body (PNO), CSOs, as well as the elders and the youths working on agricultural business in targeted areas. Different types of respondents were selected by using purposive and snowball sampling methods.

Key informant interviews were conducted with those from administrative or policy making body, CSOs and media working on agricultural development, rural livelihood supports and youth empowerment in Pa-O self-administered zone. This supported the study to understand how CSOs were implementing the programs or giving supports to local people and youths for their livelihoods and agriculture development. Also, the respondent from Pa-O National Organization was interviewed

as administrative or policy making body of Pa-O SAZ to know its perspectives on the current situations of livelihoods including agriculture and non-agriculture such as migration as well as the role of youths in agriculture and rural development. To know the opinions and experiences of youths through their participation in agriculture, in-depth interviews were conducted with those (youths) working on private farms and agricultural value chain in Pa-O self-administered zone and Taunggyi where many Pa-O people also lived. The youths from different backgrounds especially those who owned lands and those who did not own lands were selected for individual or in-depth interviews to understand the specific challenges through their experiences. In addition, the old farmers were interviewed to know their perspectives on youths' participation in agriculture. Then, a young migrant was interviewed to explore her opinions on agricultural livelihoods through her experiences as a migrant. Observations on the farms and agricultural businesses or entrepreneurships and some informal interviews with two young farmers and one young migrant were conducted to get comprehensive data for the study. A key limitation of this study was the constraints for systematic sampling to have many representative numbers and gender balance of the respondents for each category, especially for young migrants.

In collecting the data for this study, semi-structured questionnaire were pre-designed to ask each category of the respondents for each type of interviews. Most of the questionnaires for all of the interviews were similar under the sub-questions of the research, but were followed up with some specific questions for each type of respondents. The questions were open-ended for the researcher to explore further information from the respondents depending on their responses to the questions. The following table is to describe the whole picture of data collection and analysis based on SLA. This explains what data were collected and how they were collected and analyzed to answer the questions of this study.

Table 1: Methodology Matrix for Data Collection and Analysis

Question	Data Collected	Sources/ Respondents	Research Tools	Data Analysis
<p><u>Sub-Question 1</u></p> <p>What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people, especially for the youths, in Pa-O SAZ in terms of livelihood capitals in SLA?</p>	<p>- The challenges for the people in Pa-O SAZ and specific challenges for the youths to access their livelihood capitals based on SLA</p> <p>- Why they have those challenges and how those challenges can be solved</p>	<p>- PNO (1), Young Agro-Entrepreneur (4), Old Agro-Entrepreneur (1), Young Farmer (7 from In-depth and 2 from Informal), Old Farmer (2), CSO (8), Media (1), Young Migrant (1 from In-depth and 1 from Informal)</p> <p>- Reports, Academic papers or articles</p>	<p>- Secondary research and review (internet-based)</p> <p>- KIIs, In-depth Interviews, Group Discussion, Informal Interviews</p> <p>- Observations</p>	<p>- Data are transcribed, identified and coded according to the research objectives and questions</p> <p>- Data are grouped according to the sub-questions of the research</p> <p>- Data prepared and grouped are analyzed by content analysis based</p>
<p><u>Sub-Question 2</u></p> <p>How do the youths contribute to</p>	<p>- The important role of youths for agriculture development</p>	<p>- PNO (1), Young Agro-Entrepreneur (4), Old Agro-</p>	<p>- Secondary research and review (internet-</p>	<p>on the concepts of sustainable livelihoods approach</p>

<p>agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?</p>		<p>Entrepreneur (1), Young Farmer (7 from In-depth and 2 from Informal³), Old Farmer (2), CSO (8), Media (1), Young Migrant (1 from In-depth and 1 from Informal) - Reports, Academic papers or articles</p>	<p>based) - KIIs, In-depth Interviews, Group Discussion, Informal Interviews - Observations</p>	
<p><u>Sub-Question 3</u> How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihoods and what factors are promoting their participation in</p>	<p>- The influencing factors to the youths in Pa-O SAZ in deciding their livelihoods to have more understanding on how the youths make decision</p>	<p>- PNO (1), Young Agro-Entrepreneur (4), Old Agro-Entrepreneur (1), Young Farmer (7 from In-depth and 2 from Informal), Old Farmer (2),</p>	<p>- Secondary research and review (internet-based) - KIIs, In-depth Interviews, Group Discussion,</p>	

³ There were three respondents for informal interviews. But they were not counted and listed in the number of (25) respondents described in Table 2.

agriculture?	regarding their livelihoods - The factors promoting the youths' participation in agriculture in Pa-O SAZ to understand more how to support their participation in agricultural livelihoods - The role of structures and process for the youths in approaching their livelihood strategies	CSO (8), Media (1), Young Migrant (1 from In-depth and 1 from Informal) - Reports, Academic papers or articles	Informal Interviews - Observations	
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The interviews and discussions with the respondents were conducted through in-person interviews by using the semi-structured questionnaire and informal conversations. Each interview took about an hour. All of the interviews and observations were conducted in the houses, farms or offices of the respondents in three townships of Pa-O SAZ: Hopong, Hsihseng and Pinlaung and Taunggyi Township. A local interpreter was hired to help with the interpretation for the interviews and to connect with CSOs and communities. In Pa-O SAZ, though most people could understand Burmese language, they were not able to use it fluently and felt more comfortable to communicate with their own language. Also, as some local communities were not approachable for the outsiders, the local interpreter could help

with introduction and coordination to have the interviews and observation done sound and smooth. Data were collected from 1st July 2020 to 24th July 2020.

With respect to ethical issues, the interviews except informal ones were conducted only after getting signed informed consent form from all of the respondents (see Section 1.8). All of the interviews were recorded both by note-taking and by audio recording with the agreement of the respondents. There were all together 25 respondents from different types of stakeholders and three respondents (two young farmers and one young migrant) for some informal interviews and a few observations were also done in Pa-O SAZ and Taunggyi Township. Although the respondents were categorized into different groups such as administrative or policy making body, CSOs, media, and migrant, they all had the background or experiences on farming as they were from farmer families or as they worked on agricultural livelihoods as their another work. The following table is to explain detail about the backgrounds of the respondents and to describe the codes for each interview based on the type of the respondents.

Table 2: Background of the Respondents in the Study

No	Type of Respondents (Interview Code)	Organization	Age	Education (finish)	Gender	Interview type (Tool)	Date
1	PNO1	PNO	56	Graduate	Male	KII	3.7.20
2	Young Agro-Entrepreneur 1	Yoma Khun Avocado Farm (three interviewees)	24/ 25/ 29	Graduates	Male	Group Discussion	4.7.20
3	Young Agro-Entrepreneur 2	Tamoe Out Avocado Farm	36	Graduate	Male	In-depth	6.7.20
4	CSO1 (elder)	Naung Kham Development	58	Graduate	Male	KII	7.7.20

		Center (Manager)					
5	Young Farmer1	Farm Owner	35	Primary	Male	In-depth	7.7.20
6	CSO2	Naung Kar Community Development Center	39	Graduate	Male	KII	8.7.20
7	Young Farmer2	Farm owner	30	Graduate	Fema le	In-depth	8.7.20
8	CSO3	Seven Star Organization (Finance)	24	Graduate	Fema le	In-depth	8.7.20
9	Young Farmer3	Farm Manager	26	Primary Level	Male	In-depth	9.7.20
10	Young Farmer4	Farm Owner	35	Graduate	Male	In-depth	9.7.20
11	Young Farmer5	Farm Owner	36 ⁴	Lower Secondary Level	Male	In-depth	9.7.20
12	CSO4	Seven Star Organization (Focal person)	24	Lower Secondary Level	Fema le	In-depth	9.7.20
13	Young Farmer6	Farm Manager	24	Lower Secondary Level	Male	In-depth	9.7.20
14	CSO5	Parami Development Organization	27	Graduate	Male	KII	10.7.20

⁴ The age range of the youths in this study is between 18 and 40 according to how PNO defines the Pa-O youths. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

15	Old Farmer1	Farm Owner	60	Primary Level	Male	In-depth	11.7.20
16	Young Migrant	Impact Terra Co.Ltd. (Golden Paddy)	25	Graduate	Female	In-depth	11.7.20
17	Old Farmer2	Farm owner	44	Upper Secondary Level	Male	In-depth	11.7.20
18	Old Agro-Entrepreneur 1	Potato Group	58	Upper Secondary Level	Male	In-depth	11.7.20
19	CSO6	Shwe Kanbawza (Field Manager)	22	Graduate	Female	In-depth	11.7.20
20	CSO7	Shwe Kanbawza (Focal Person)	27	Primary Level	Female	In-depth	11.7.20
21	CSO8	Taunggyi Youth Center (TYC)	27	Graduate	Male	KII	13.7.20
22	Media1	DEMO	25	Graduate	Male	KII	13.7.20
23	Young Farmer7	Farm owner (Cooperative)	24	Graduate	Male	In-depth	13.7.20

1.5.3. Data Analysis

The data collected were tabulated using Microsoft excel spread sheets in order to be analyzed systematically. Data were transcribed, identified and coded in Burmese language according to the research objectives and questions. The data prepared and grouped were analyzed based on sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) to explore

the challenges for the people to have access to livelihood capitals (physical, human, financial, natural, and social). During the interviews and observations, the term ‘capitals’ was not used as it would be confusing for the local communities. The questions about challenges were open-ended types and the answers were later categorized and analyzed in accordance with five capitals of SLA. As the youth was the unit of this study, the data were analyzed to highlight the role of youths’ participation in agriculture by exploring the differences between youths and the elders regarding the challenges the youths faced for the livelihood capitals and how they worked on agricultural livelihood. Moreover, the concept of structures in SLA was also used to analyze the data in exploring the factors influencing the youths while deciding their livelihoods and the factors promoting their participation in agricultural livelihood. According to the data analyzed through SLA, this research found out how sustainable livelihoods could be enhanced by promoting youths’ participation in agriculture in rural areas. The data were analyzed using content analysis based on SLA, by exploring the challenges of livelihood capitals for the youths and their role in agriculture with the understanding on the influencing factors to the youths in deciding their livelihoods and the promoting factors to their participation in agriculture. Finally, the findings were categorized according to the research’s objectives in order to answer the main question of the research.

1.5.4. Research Location

The research was conducted in Pa-O Self-Administered Zone (SAZ) and Taunggyi Township in Taunggyi district, Southern Shan State of Myanmar. There are five SAZs and one Self-administered Division (SAD) in Myanmar: Danu SAZ, Pa Laung SAZ, Kokang SAZ, Pa-O SAZ and Wa SAD in Shan State and Naga SAZ in Sagaing Region. According to 2008 Constitution, SAZs and SAD are administered by respective leading body having equal rank to State and Regional administrative level. Pa-O SAZ covering Hopong, Hsihseng and Pinlaung townships is administered by PNO which wins political seats both in 2010 and 2015 election. According to Myanmar Population and Housing Census 2014, the population in Pa-O SAZ is about 425,000 and 80% of the population is living in rural areas.

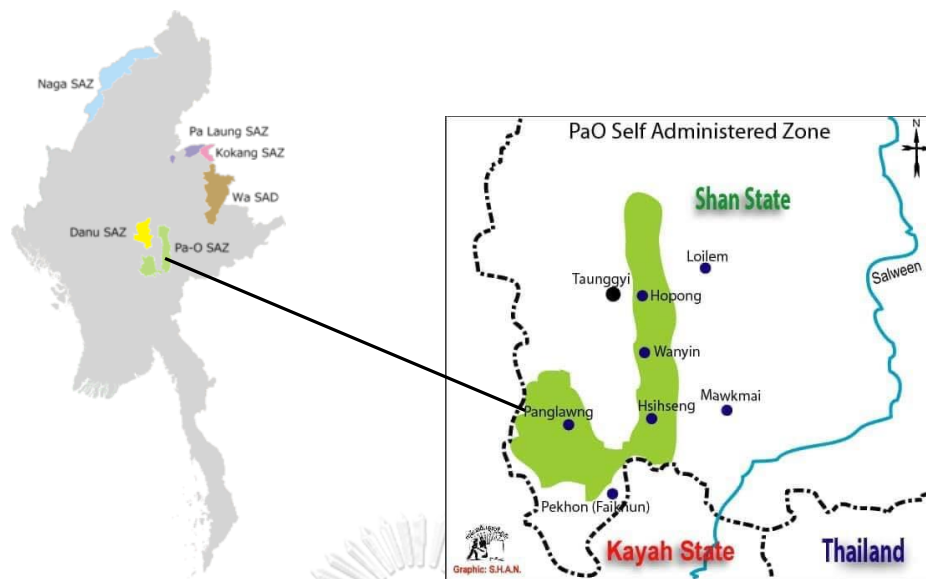


Figure 2: The Map of Pa-O Self-Administered Zone

This research looked at the livelihood challenges for the people in Pa-O SAZ as well as the challenges and strengths for the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods. This study also explored the role of supports from government, NGOs/INGOs, private sectors such as local entrepreneurs as one of the promoting factors to the youths for to work on agricultural livelihoods. The interviews and observations were conducted in Thihan Sway and Naung Kar villages nearby Taunggyi Townships, Naung Kham Development Center in Hopong Township, Site Khaung in Hsihseng Township and Naungtayar in Pinlaung Township. Despite a lot of development programs such as Farmer Field School and Trainings on Agricultural and Livelihoods implemented and funded by UN, SWISSAID, INGOs, NGOs and PNO to support agricultural sector and youths' empowerment in those townships, the agriculture is still seen as undeveloped and the youths are still migrating due to the lack of livelihood opportunities there. Therefore, this research selected Pa-O SAZ having both opportunities and challenges for youths and agricultural livelihoods to explore how to enhance sustainable livelihoods through youths' participation in agriculture in rural areas.

1.5.5. Research Limitations

This study faced limitations such as the restrictions on travel and the rule of social distancing to protect against Covid-19 spread in Myanmar. Although the

restrictions on travel were reduced during the data collection period of this research, it was still challenging to visit to the targeted townships and to stay overnight there in order to observe the studied sites more closely and talk with more communities there. Like any other ethnic minorities in rural areas of Myanmar, the local communities in Pa-O SAZ hesitated to speak with the strangers, especially with Bamar, as one of the impacts of political and armed conflicts in Myanmar. In addition, they also had concern to have the exposure with the strangers due to the spread of Covid-19 at that time. Therefore, the local interpreter who had background knowledge on research and connection with those from organizations and local communities was hired to help with the interpretation if necessary and coordination with the local people and organizations. However, due to the limitations in approaching to the targeted communities, it was difficult to get balanced number of the respondents for each category, especially for young migrants and to focus on gender balance. Also, few number of elder respondents in this study could not represent all of the elders and the findings from them could not be generalized as the experiences of all elders in Pa-O SAZ.

1.6. Research Scope and Unit of Analysis

This research explores how to enhance sustainable livelihoods by promoting youths' participation in agriculture in rural areas. Therefore, this study is based on the areas of sustainable livelihoods for rural development, agricultural development programs, and youths' participation on agriculture. The unit of analysis for this study is the young farmers in Pa-O self-administered zone to examine the interrelation between youths and agriculture as well as the impacts of that interrelation on enhancing sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. The data were collected both from secondary sources and from primary sources by conducting interviews and discussions through qualitative research method. There are 25 respondents for formal interviews and three respondents for informal interviews all together from different backgrounds: PNO, NGOs, CSOs, as well as the local communities especially young farmers. The research covers the Pa-O self-administered zone in Taunggyi, Southern Shan State of Myanmar, from 1st July 2020 to 24th July, 2020.

1.7. Significance of the Research

Despite extensive academic research on sustainable livelihoods, agricultural sector and rural development, limited work has considered the role of youths and the interrelation between youth and agriculture and rural livelihoods in Myanmar. Hence, the significance of this research is the exploration of the link between the youths and agriculture, by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods as well as the influencing and promoting factors to the youths in deciding and approaching their livelihoods. The contribution of this study will have impacts on the approaches of stakeholders including NGOs, CSOs, Community Leaders to implement the programs, give supports and make policies for agricultural development and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. Relatively, this will also have impacts on the use of livelihood strategy of the youths in rural areas and support the rural development through youth empowerment. The spotlight on the interrelation between the youths and agriculture in this research will also give an idea to the academia to further research on those study areas. In addition, this study will contribute an analytical reflection on the application on SLA for understanding rural livelihoods.

1.8. Ethical Issues

This research was conducted with only academic purpose under consideration of ethical issues. The respondents of the research were informed and the interviews were conducted only after taking their consent. The research ensured voluntary participation of all of the respondents and safety for their confidentiality and privacy. Also, the photos and voice recording during the interviews were taken only with their permission. The respondents were also be informed that they could leave the interviews or discussions freely anytime if they did not feel comfortable with. This research respects “Do No Harm” principle throughout the processes from data collection to data analysis.

1.9. Thesis Structure

Chapter 2, the following chapter, discusses the literature reviews of agricultural sector in Myanmar, regional context of southern Shan State, sustainable

livelihood approach for rural development, youths and agricultural livelihoods in Myanmar and the knowledge gaps that this study aims to explore. In Chapter 3, the findings on the challenges for the local people, especially for the youths, to have access to the livelihood capitals are discussed to answer the first sub-question of the research: *What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people, especially for the youths, in Pa-O SAZ in terms of livelihood capitals in SLA?* Chapter 4 answers another sub-question: *How do the youths contribute to agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?*, by providing the findings which highlight the contribution of youths' participation in agriculture and Chapter 5 discusses the factors influencing Pa-O youths in deciding their livelihoods and explores how to promote their participation in agriculture to answer the last sub-question of the research: *How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihoods and what factors are promoting their participation in agriculture?* Finally, Chapter 6 wraps up all of the findings and concludes with analytical discussion in order to answer the main question of the study: *How can sustainable livelihood opportunities be enhanced by promoting youths' participation in agriculture in Pa-O self-administered zone (SAZ)?* Chapter 6 is also followed up with the reflection on the application of SLA in studying rural livelihoods as well as gives suggestion for further research relating this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Myanmar, an agricultural country, both youths and agriculture can be regarded as the major driving factors for enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities in rural areas of the country. This chapter discusses four key themes; Agricultural Sector in Myanmar in section 2.1., Regional Context of Southern Shan State in 2.2., Sustainable Livelihood Approach for Rural Development in section 2.3., Youths and Agricultural Livelihoods in Myanmar in section 2.4. Finally, section 2.5. addresses the knowledge gaps that this study aims to explore with the focus on its research main question.

2.1. Agricultural Sector in Myanmar

Agricultural sector can be regarded as the backbone of the economy of Myanmar as it contributes 37.8 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) with 25 to 30 percent of total export earnings and employs over 60 percent of the country's population of 54 million (FAO 2020). Approximately, 26 percent of the population in Myanmar is below the poverty line and most of those people are living in rural areas where they can rely only on agriculture for their livelihoods. Myanmar has three principal agro-ecological zones: the delta and coastal zone, the dry zone, and the hill regions (Haggblade et al. 2013). The delta and coastal zone is the most densely populated, water for irrigation is highly accessible as well as fish production are predominant. Agriculture at the dry zone is productive in river valleys as it is located in a rain shadow. A mix of rain-fed upland crops and paddy are also produced in river valleys of dry zone. The agricultural context in the hilly regions with more trees, common practice of shifting cultivation, and political complexity is different from the situations in the delta and coastal zone and the dry zone. While rice is the major staple in Myanmar, other crops are being cultivated in the region, especially outside the delta region, namely: cereals, oil crops, and pulses, which altogether account for 77% of cultivated areas (Baver, Jonveaux, Ju, Kitamura, Sharma, Wade and Yasui 2013).

In Myanmar having 70% of its population in rural areas, the development of agricultural sector can be the major factor not only for the rural people to have access to sustainable livelihood opportunities but also for the rural development of the country. It provides the people in rural areas with basic necessities of human life, supplies basic inputs for industries and, and purveys goods for exports and other purposes. Moreover, the country has four key competitive advantages for agriculture: abundant land, water, and labor resources; and proximity to major future food markets (ADB 2015). Focusing on agricultural sector as a crucial role in reducing poverty and enhancing sustainable livelihoods in rural areas, development of agricultural is set as one major economic objective of Myanmar. According to FAO (2020), Myanmar Agriculture Policies aims:

- *To emphasize production and utilization of high-yielding and good quality seeds.*
- *To conduct training and education for farmers and extension staff on advanced agricultural techniques.*
- *To implement research and development activities for sustainable agricultural development.*
- *To protect farmers rights and benefits.*
- *To assist farmers to get fair price on their produce.*
- *To assist in lowering production costs, increasing high quality crop production, developing and strengthening of markets.*
- *To encourage transformation from conventional to mechanized agriculture, production of crops appropriate with climate and extension of irrigated area.*
- *To undertake renovation and maintenance works on old irrigation, pumping and underground water systems.*
- *To support rural development and poverty reduction activities through development of agriculture sector.*
- *To encourage local and international investment in agriculture sector for the development of advanced agricultural technology and commercial agricultural production.*

- *To justify and amend existing agricultural laws and regulations in line with current economic situation.*⁵

Despite the country's richness in resources and having a strategic location, agriculture has underperformed in Myanmar over the past five decades especially in terms of productivity, equity and stability. Myanmar's agriculture is characterized by low productivity, extreme inequality and high volatility (Kyi 2016). In addition, there has been a long and complicated history of land confiscation in rural areas of Myanmar, especially in the areas of ethnic minorities. Access to land tenure and security for land ownership are important factors to be considered in developing agricultural sector. Existing legal framework relating to land resources and tenure security in Myanmar is obsolete which needs to be better harmonized, and should incorporate international and regional best practice relating to land management (Kyi 2016).

In the trend of developing mechanisms of information and technology in Myanmar, access to information and exposure and familiarity to modern technology also become both opportunities and challenges for the farmers in rural areas. Most farmers also lack of information on the global supply-and-demand conditions that affect local prices; have limited access to crop management knowhow, and weather forecasts that impact agricultural operations (Myanmar Insider, 2017). Moreover, the major challenge of agricultural development is the lack of youths' interest to work on it. While agriculture is the mainstay of the domestic economy and the major employer, it is not an attractive sector for the youth and few see themselves working in because it is perceived as very hard work with low returns (Phyo 2018). Many young farmers engage in high-tech, high-risk and high-returns agri-ventures like protected agriculture, precision farming, organic agriculture, floriculture, medicinal and aromatic plants cultivation etc., which are mostly avoided by the aging farmers (Bhat *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the loss of youths' participation in agricultural sector can have huge impacts both on agriculture and livelihood opportunities for the youths in rural areas of Myanmar.

⁵ Myanmar at a glance, Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (2020), retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/myanmar/fao-in-myanmar/myanmar/en/#:~:text=Myanmar%20is%20an%20agricultural%20country,percent%20of%20the%20labour%20force.>

2.2. Regional Context of Southern Shan State

Shan State is located in the eastern of Myanmar, bordering with China to the north, Laos to the east and Thailand to the south. It is the largest administrative unit of Myanmar by land area, covering almost a quarter of the total area of the country. It is largely rural and subdivided into three areas: Shan South, Shan North and Shan East. Among those three parts, Southern Shan is the most accessible one in terms of transportation and security issues. In Myanmar, it is one of the most dynamic agro-ecological zones and the most complex in terms of geography, ethnicity, and agricultural practices (Lambrecht and Belton 2019). Southern Shan State covers 57,806 square kilometer and is divided into 21 townships, including two of the country's Self-Administered Zone (SAZ): the Pa-O SAZ and Danu SAZ.

In Southern Shan State, agriculture stands as the largest economic sector even in urban areas, followed by mining and by tourism. It also has geographical strengths with vast areas of farmlands and with access for trading across the borderline as it is bordered with China, Thailand and Laos. Rates of landlessness in Southern Shan are lower than in other parts of Myanmar, at 23%. One-third of landless households access land for crop cultivation, mainly by borrowing from parents or relatives. As a result, 85% of households engage in farming (Food Security Policy Project Research Highlights Myanmar, 2019). The crops grown there include maize and paddy, melon, strawberry, onion, garlic, ginger, pigeon peas and sugar cane. The people in Southern Shan State also plant perennials plants such as avocado, orange, tea, coffee and rubber. Despite having vast areas of farmlands and favorable soil for good-quality agro-products, there are still conflicts regarding land ownership and tenure like in other rural areas of Myanmar. Moreover, poor farming techniques and choice of crops and varieties are the factors for agricultural sector to remain undeveloped.

In addition to agriculture, mining and tourism, one more popular income sources for the people there is migration. They can easily cross the borders and work at China, Thailand and Laos mostly as unskilled labors. Some also migrate internally and work at other parts of Myanmar. According to Shan State Needs Assessment (2018), across all townships in Shan South displacement or migration for economic reasons is seen as more common than displacement related to armed conflict. About 70% of the population in southern Shan state migrate internally or externally for work

(Food Security Policy Research Paper 2019). Although infrastructure in Shan South is more developed than in other parts of Shan State, there is still a need for improvement, especially with regard to irrigation.

2.3. Sustainable Livelihood Approach for Rural Development

The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) is a holistic approach that attempts to capture and provide a means of understanding the fundamental causes and dimensions of poverty without collapsing the focus onto just a few factors such as economic issues and food security (Tham-Agyekum 2015). It can be regarded as a means for more effective and more relevant poverty reduction through understanding poverty from the perspective of the poor (Neely, Sutherland, Johnson 2004). It emerged as a bottom-up approach for rural development in the 1980s and 1990s. Since then, SLA was introduced and developed with shared common methodologies, tools and goals by development practitioners. It is an analytical framework which provides a way of thinking to analyze and change the lives of people who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage. The SLA is based on the connection between people and overall enabling environment influencing the outcomes of livelihood strategies.

As the first version, sustainable livelihoods is defined as follows:

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living. It is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term.” (Chambers and Conway, 1992)

Later, adapting Chambers and Conway (1992), it is defined it as follows:

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. It is

sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.” (Scoones 1998)

Department for International Development (DFID) uses the Scoones’ version of sustainable livelihood definition underlying some core principles: being people-centered, being holistic, being dynamic, building on strengths, use micro-macro link and aim for sustainability. DFID also developed a sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) as a core of SLA and as an instrument for investigating condition and influencing factor of people’s livelihoods. According to the Chambers and Conway (1992) definition for sustainable livelihood, the key terms are: capabilities, assets, sustainable, stress and shock where as other important terms associated with the sustainable livelihoods framework include: capital(s), coping, risk, resilience, vulnerability, security and well-being (Rigg 2007).

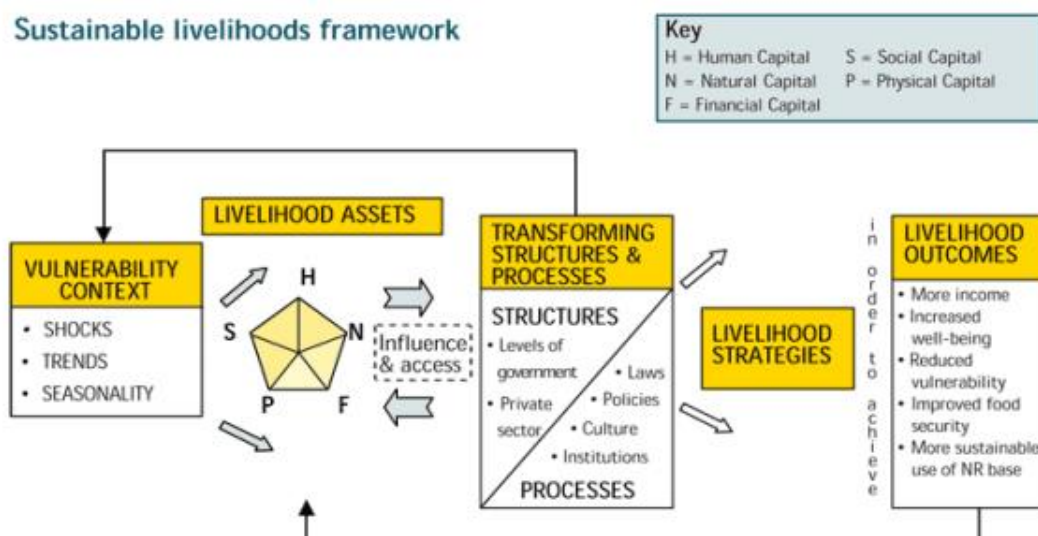


Figure 3: Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DFID 2000)⁶

⁶ The diagram was designed by Enoch Kwame Tham-Agyekum/ The Implications of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach for Rural Development/ 2015/ Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/24814084/THE_IMPLICATIONS_OF_THE_SUSTAINABLE_LIVELIHOODS_APPROACH_FOR_RURAL_DEVELOPMENT

The sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) includes five elements: vulnerability context; livelihood assets; policies, institution and processes; livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes. Those elements can be summarized as follows:

“...The framework depicts stakeholders as operating in a Context of Vulnerability, within which they have access to certain assets. Assets gain weight and value through the prevailing social, institutional and organizational environment (policies, institutions and processes). This context decisively shapes the livelihood strategies that are open to people in pursuit of their self-defined beneficial livelihood outcomes.” (Kollmair and Gamper 2002)

The SLF illustrates how people in rural areas achieve their expected livelihood outcomes through three types of livelihood strategies: agricultural intensification/extensification; livelihood diversification; migration. In approaching livelihood strategies, the people have to use livelihood assets (human capital, financial capital, physical capital, natural capital and social capital) gained in external environments of vulnerability context. The whole approach is operated under the influence of institutions and structures. This framework is an analytical tool to underline the inter-connections of its elements and the fact that livelihoods depend on a combination of assets of various kinds and not just from one category (Krantz 2001).

In Southern Shan State which has diverse ethnicities and significance political and geographical context, using SLA helps to understand the livelihoods situations of the region in every aspect, in terms of vulnerable context, livelihood capitals, structures and process, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes. The livelihood challenges of the people in rural areas can be explored through assessing their access to livelihood capitals described in SLA. Then, it builds on strength by analyzing the strength of people (poverty-reducing potential) rather than their needs and tend to bridge the gap of communication between the policy level institutions and the community (Norton and Foster, 2001; Hinshelwood, 2003; Butler and Mazur, 2007; Carney, 2011). In Southern Shan State, the young people are being conditioned in

significant context such as living in conflict affected areas, having access to cross the borders informally for work, having vast acres of good-quality farmlands and being influenced by specific traditions, culture and different leaders. The concept of structures and process illustrated in SLA provides a potential pathway to explore how those structural contexts influence the youths in rural areas in deciding and approaching their livelihoods and how they can be supported to achieve their preferred livelihood outcomes.

2.4. Youths and Agricultural Livelihoods in Myanmar

The definition of 'youth' can vary depending on the socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political contexts of different countries. Young people are innovative and creative in problem solving and in finding solutions: they are the key to helping communities in meeting their subsistence needs, improving the security of the people and even acquiring control over their own lives (Kapur 2018). The number of young people in many developing countries today are at unprecedented highs, in both absolute and proportionate terms (IFAD 2014). In Myanmar with the population of about 51.4 million, youths between 15 and 19 make up 9.2 % of the country's population, youths between 20 and 24 makes up 8.6 %, youths between 25 and 29 makes up 8.25% and youths between 30 and 34 make up 7.7 % (Myanmar Population and Housing Census 2014). Myanmar's youth, which makes up about 33% of the population, are leading the way towards a better future for them and for the country. In a developing country like Myanmar, the role of the youths and their development should be emphasized as they are one of the major factors for the development of the country.

Myanmar is agricultural country and 70% of its population living in rural areas rely on agricultural livelihoods for their survival. Despite making policies for agricultural development throughout political transitions of the country, it remains underdeveloped and cannot be a reliable livelihoods for regular income and well-being of the people, especially of the youths, in rural areas. All over the world, the rural youths are faced with the challenges: insufficient access to knowledge, information and education; limited access to land; inadequate access to financial services, difficulties accessing green jobs; limited access to markets; and limited

involvement in policy dialogue (IFAD 2014). Myanmar is also facing with the challenges of youth employment and underemployment. The major proportion of youths, particularly in the rural areas, are unemployed and they are working as unpaid family workers (MOI 2019).

Farming sector is facing a number of problems today like indebtedness, climate change, inadequate government support and credit, unregulated market, land degradation, infrastructure etc. which makes youngsters lose interest in agriculture (Chaudhary and Chaudhary, 2013). Consequently, youths living in rural areas do not prefer to rely only on agricultural livelihoods. The loss of rural youths' interest in farming pushes them to migrate to urban areas for better opportunities for work and social status. Today, agriculture makes up less and less of GDP and migration is on the rise: the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that 20% of Myanmar's population were internal migrants in 2014 and quotes government figures stating that 4.25 million Myanmar nationals live abroad, with up to 3 million in Thailand and substantial numbers in Malaysia, China, Singapore and the United State of America (Faxon 2020). Migration becomes an attractive and reliable income source for the rural youths in Myanmar who want to escape from the struggles for agricultural livelihoods.

However, migration should be a choice, not a necessity. It is important to avoid situations in which young rural women and men feel compelled to migrate to urban areas or abroad due to a perceived lack of opportunity in their rural communities (IFAD 2014). On the other hand, youths are in demand for agricultural development of every developing countries. Agriculture requires extensive research, production, utilization of science and technology, cropping, irrigation and many more functions. Youth people who are well educated and possess efficient knowledge of how to implement agricultural activities can assist in the development of agricultural activities. Making use of technologies and implementing extensive research is the work of the youth (Bennell, 2007). Youth could be the ideal catalyst to change the poor image of agriculture given their greater possibility to adapt new ideas, concepts and technologies (Akosa, 2011).

There is a low level of policy and investment intervention that focuses explicitly on rural youth and on youth employment opportunities in the agriculture

and agribusiness sectors (Proctor *et al.*, 2012). In attempts to enhance the opportunities for rural youths' employment and agricultural livelihoods, their participation in every processes should be strengthened. There have been four main areas about participation; information-sharing, in this case, individuals are informed in order to facilitate collective and individual action. Consultation, individuals are consulted, they provide ideas and suggestions, they interact with an organization and takes account of their feedback. Decision Making, youth participate and get involved in decision making, which may be individual or joint with others, decision making may be on specific issues of a policy or a project. Initiating action, youth are involved in the commencement of any kind of accomplishment (Youth Participation, 2010).

The government and development practitioners in Myanmar should address the challenges of the youths in rural areas by promoting their participation and empowerment especially for agricultural livelihood so that they will be able to develop themselves and agricultural sector. In 2011, FAO has developed and implemented an innovative public-private partnership model to support rural youth employment in agricultural sector of Myanmar. The components in this model include: tailor-made and market-oriented vocational training activities adapted to rural youth's levels of understanding and their limitation (e.g., the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools approach); linkages with public actors and private actors (e.g., the Department of Agriculture, farmers' organizations, cooperatives and microfinance institutions) to support the youths with access to land and credit as well as provide guidance to youth in the selection of higher-value agricultural products and market opportunities; and inclusion of youth in programmed design, as well as relevant national policy and strategy processes (Phyo 2018).

2.5. Knowledge Gap

The SLA is said to be an effective approach in addressing the issues of rural poverty and rural development with its core principles of being people-centered, building on strengths of local people and being a bottom-up approach. However, there are many critics that it is necessary to look beyond SLA such as exploring not only what assets (strengths) people have or lack but also why they have or not and how they can get those assets. Exploring the reasons that what kinds of people lack what

assets is a fundamental way to understand how to support them to have those assets. In attempting for agricultural development in Myanmar, most focus on the statistic data such as its contribution to the country's GDP, with less interest on the well-being and livelihood security of the rural people. It is also important to focus and explore how agricultural livelihoods can benefits the communities, especially the youths, in rural areas, and vice versa. There is no studies yet to highlight this interrelated benefit between agricultural development and youths' participation in rural areas of Myanmar. Therefore, the findings in this thesis contributes to fill this knowledge gap. Moreover, while existing studies explain the important role of youths in developing agricultural sector in Myanmar, this study intends to explore the influencing and promoting factors to the youths in approaching their preferred livelihood strategies including agriculture, non-agriculture and diversifications. . This also focuses to highlight on the contributions of youths to agricultural development with specific case studies.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS: YOUTHS AND AGRICULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF PA-O SELF-ADMINISTERED ZONE

This chapter answers two of the sub-questions, “*What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people, especially for the youths, in Pa-O SAZ in terms of livelihood capitals in SLA?*” In answering those questions, findings are divided into four sections; 3.1. Pa-O Self-administered Zone (SAZ), 3.2. Livelihood and Agricultural Challenges for the People in Pa-O SAZ, 3.3. Opportunities and Challenges for Pa-O Youths in Working on Agricultural Livelihoods, 3.4. Impacts of Covid-19 on Youths and Livelihood Conditions in Pa-O SAZ and 3.5. Conclusion which discusses the findings, addressing the challenges that the people in Pa-O SAZ face for their livelihoods, highlighting those challenges for the youths to access to land ownership and financial supports as well as the knowledge capital for their livelihoods and pointing out the role of PNO as policy making or leading body in solving those issues.

3.1. Pa-O Self-administered Zone (SAZ)

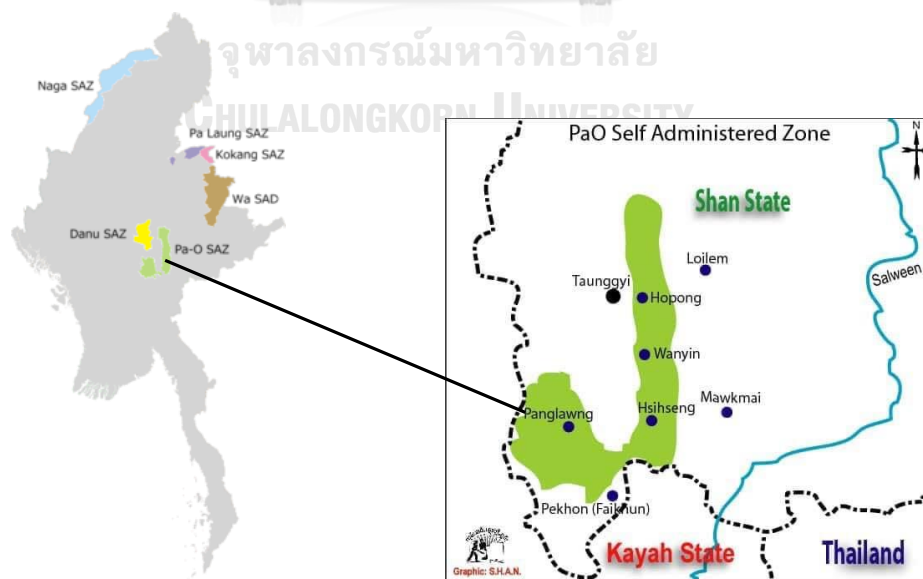


Figure 4: The Map of Pa-O Self-Administered Zone

Pa-O self-administered zone (SAZ) is one of five SAZs in Southern Shan State of Myanmar with over 70% of its population living in rural areas. Among seven states and regions in Myanmar, Shan State is the largest covering one fourth of the country area and the most populous administrative unit with the population of 5.824 million residents (Myanmar Population and Housing Census 2014). It is bordered with China, Laos and Thailand, and divided into three similarly sized regions – as Shan (North), Shan (South) and Shan (East). Shan state's economy including agriculture relies much on China and Thailand both for inputs and as a market for agricultural products (Shan State Needs Assessment, 2018). Moreover, it is very common for the people in Shan state to informally migrate to neighboring countries such as Thailand and China by passing the border.

Being one of SAZs in Southern Shan State, Pa-O self-administered zone is said to be significant due to the complexity of socio-economic issues within the context of geographical and political situation. There are three townships in Pa-O Self-administered Zone: Hopong, Hsihseng and Pinlaung under the control of Pa-O National Organization (PNO). Hopong is the nearest township to Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State, and it can be reached in two hours by car from Taunggyi. Hsihseng is in three-hour drive distance and Pinlaung is in about four-hour drive distance from Taunggyi. The approximate population of Pa-O SAZ is around 425,000 and about 80% of the population is living in rural areas. The majority is Pa-O ethnic group and minority ethnicities living in Pa-O SAZ include Bamar, Shan, Intha, Danu, Lisu and Taungyoe. The estimate population of Pa-O people living around the country is about 800,000 and it is regarded as the seventh largest ethnic group in Myanmar and the second largest group in Shan State. They also live in Karen, Kayah Mon, Bago and northern Thailand.

According to National Youths Policy of Myanmar, the youths are defined as those between the age of 15 and 34. However, in Pa-O SAZ, the youths are defined as those with the age between 18 and 40. This age range is regarded by PNO. According to a respondent from PNO, they think that people around the age of 40 can be the mediator between the young generation and the old generation (KII PNO1, 3rd July 2020). The following table shows the number of village tracts, households and populations in three townships of Pa-O SAZ.

Table 3: Village Tracts, Households and Population in the Pa-O SAZ⁷

Township	Village Tracts	Households	Population
Pinlaung	25	35,527	182,259
Hsihseng	13	24,245	140,288
Hopong	22	17,647	103,464
Total	60	77,419	426,011

According to 2008 Constitution, the Chairman of Pa-O National Organization (PNO) has equal rank to the state or region level administrative body and has autonomy to administer these three townships. One respondent from PNO said that the population of Pa-O people living in Pa-O SAZ is only about 30 percent of the actual population of Pa-O people around the world. He also said that Special Region (6) which was under the control of Pa-O National Army covered more than these three townships. Therefore, PNO also has informal influence on Pa-O people living anywhere of the country and around the world. PNO, as a leading body of Pa-O SAZ, can collaborate with local or international organizations for the development of the region. It also develops 5-year Strategic Development Plan (2018-2022) in cooperation with MIID. Agriculture is one of the prioritized sectors to be developed according to that development plan.

In addition, based on the findings and observations in this study, it is found out that most of the local people especially youths there also are trying to run their own farms with or without supports of outsiders and attempt for value-chain of agricultural products. Primarily, the common cash crop of Pa-O people is thanapet tree (cheroot leaf), a kind of leaf to be used for wrapping tobacco. They also grow rice, potatoes, peanuts, soybeans, sunflowers, pigeon beans, corn, garlic, ginger, turmeric, coffee, avocado, pineapples, mangoes, bananas, and cabbage. The respondents in this study include those from PNO and CSOs, old and young farmers, young entrepreneurs, and the staff working at agricultural company. Though some of their main jobs are diverse, they all have background for farming and do it as their side job. They grow avocado, coffee, potato, pineapple, grapes, lily flowers, orange, mango, garlic, and

⁷ Myanmar Population and Housing Census 2014

beans. According to the finding of the study, there are three main types of farming that the youths in Pa-O SAZ attempt for value-chain and good-quality products. Those are avocado plantation with grafting techniques, potato plantation with the new techniques from foreign countries and the coffee plantation with new techniques from the development organizations. There are few people who try to work on orchard farms of lily flowers, pineapple and vineyards as their livelihoods.

3.2. Livelihood and Agricultural Challenges for the People in Pa-O SAZ

Pa-O SAZ has comparative geographical strengths for doing any kinds of livelihoods such as agriculture, trading, migration which are major livelihoods for the people living there. As it is a hill region, not only there is a vast area of farmlands but also the quality of soil is good enough for growing any type fruits and vegetables. Favorable climate is also another strength for agricultural livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ. The townships in Pa-O SAZ are not much far from Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State, and one of the Pa-O townships is bordered with Kayah State. With the accessible transportation to and from all of three townships, people in Pa-O SAZ can do trading of fruits and vegetables they grow without many challenges. Moreover, as Shan State is bordered with Thailand, China and Laos, the people including Pa-O can easily across the borders to go and work at those foreign countries legally or illegally. According to the respondents in this study, Pa-O people mostly migrate to Thailand and some to China for work. There are also internal migrant workers who migrate to different states and regions of Myanmar. The remittance from migrant workers is said to be one of the major income sources for the people in Pa-O SAZ. In addition to the livelihoods of agriculture, trading and migration, the people work as government staff or as company staff while others are working as day labors at farms or at constructions. Some also set their own business such as running restaurants and grocery shops.

Despite the geographical strengths of Pa-O SAZ, there are challenges for the people living there in approaching to achieve successful livelihood outcomes. The challenges and difficulties they face for their livelihoods can be distinguished into six categories based on five livelihood assets (capitals) as mentioned in sustainable livelihood approach and one more capital which is found out to be significant and

important for the people in Pa-O SAZ in working on their livelihoods. In this part, all of the respondents (both the elders and the youths) answer to the question about the challenges for everyone (both the elders and the youths) to access their livelihood capitals. The comparison with the challenges for youths will be followed up with figure 6 in section 3.3. The following figure shows the percentage of the respondents who mentioned the challenges for everyone to access each livelihood capital.

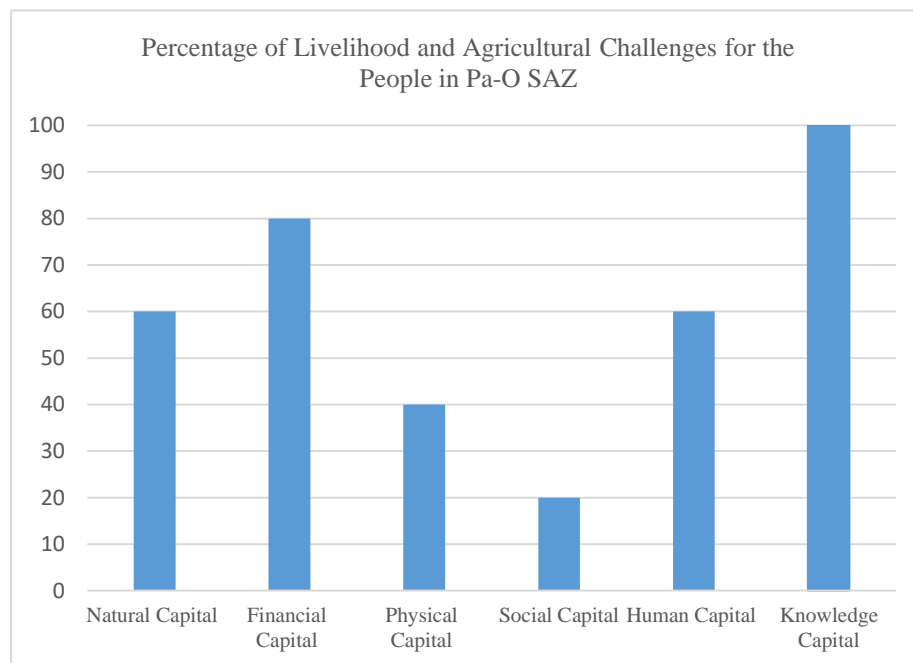


Figure 5: Percentage of Livelihood and Agricultural for the People in Pa-O SAZ

(Percentage for this figure is counted by the number of the respondents in this research who responded to the question for each livelihood capitals.)

Among 25 respondents in this study, 15 respondents said that they faced challenges for natural capital which includes land, water and climate and 20 respondents mentioned about the challenges for financial capital focusing on the difficulties for investment. Only ten respondents said that there were challenges regarding physical capital. Most of the respondents did not mention much about social capital and human capital as those did not seem obvious for them. However, five respondents said that they had limitations to connect with many people and it affected

their livelihoods and 15 respondents discussed about the shortage of labors, especially skilled labors who can work well for certain livelihoods including agricultural-based ones. The another challenge that all of the respondents mentioned is the limited access to “information or knowledge capital” which they meant access to market and data for land type, soil quality as well as network with many kinds of people.

3.2.1. Natural Capital

According to sustainable livelihood framework (SLF), natural capital includes access to land, water, favorable climate, wildlife, etc. This capital is said to be the most vital one for the people in rural areas where agriculture stands as one of their major livelihoods. Some said that they sometimes face difficulties in growing and harvesting crops due to irregular rain and climate change. But, according to them, this is not the major challenge for their livelihoods. Then, as there is a vast area of farmlands in Pa-O SAZ and most people and the households there have farmlands which they inherit from their ancestors, it is not very challenging for them to access to land tenure if they want to do agricultural livelihoods.

However, having a lot of farmlands does not mean having security to own and right to land tenure for the people in Pa-O SAZ because some people do not have Form 7⁸, the certificate of land ownership approved by government. Also, government’s laws and policies are not strong and clear enough to well recognize the customary land ownership of ethnic minorities. Although 2012 Farmland law states to recognize the customary land ownership, it does not secure land tenure and ownership of ethnic minorities if they do not have Form 7. Therefore, they are still facing the challenges of losing their lands because of the land-grabbing by the military, government, and companies. Despite being a SAZ, there are some complaints from the communities that the leaders from PNO are too reluctant to solve the issues against other political parties and armed groups including the military. Therefore, the communities complain that PNO leaders should have authentic or full autonomy to administer the region and to solve the issues which negatively affect the people in the region. The land issues between Pa-O people and the military in Hsihseng Township

⁸ The Land Use Certificate issued according to Section 7 in farmland Law 2012, Myanmar. It allows the land owners to sell, transfer or inherit their lands.

is an obvious case to highlight the challenges for the farmers to secure their right for land tenure.

Case 1: Land Issue between Pa-O people and Military in Hsihseng Township

“According to the media and the respondents, the farmers in Hishseng Township faced a lot of hardship for their survival as the military grabbed their lands long time ago. But, since the military did not do anything on those lands they grabbed, the people continued to do farming on those farmlands. Although the military warned and gave notice to the people not to do farming on those lands anymore, the people there could not do anything else for their survival except farming on those farmlands. During the data collection for this study, it was heard that the crops grown by the local farmers on those farmlands were destroyed by the military. Leaders from PNO were trying to solve the problems by negotiating between the people and the military while the young activists and media stood with the local people, by criticizing the military for its actions and asking to take into consideration the hardships of the people. The case was not solved yet till now and Pa-O farmers have been helpless for their survival.”

This land issue case showed that the access to farmland and land tenure, one of the natural capital, is challenging for the people in Pa-O SAZ to do agricultural livelihoods. Despite this popular land issue in Hsihseng Township, 60 percent of the respondents talked about the challenges and difficulties for access to natural capital in working on agriculture and non-agriculture livelihoods.

As mentioned above, it is found out from the observations on Pa-O SAZ during the study that the land issues in this region should be distinguished into two parts: land tenure and secure to own the lands. For land tenure, as there are vast acres of farmlands in Pa-O SAZ, it is not very challenging for the local people to have farmlands. However, they have challenges for land ownership as they need to have official documents such as Form 7 which is supposed to secure their land tenure. Most

ethnic minorities including Pa-O people regard the lands in their region as their own according to their customary way which means lands owned by their ancestors (Boe Bwar Pai Myay in Burmese) or customary lands (Yoe Yar Myay in Burmese). Therefore, they think they own the lands in their region regardless of Form 7 whereas the Farmland Law does not provide strong and clear recognitions on customary land ownerships in ethnic minority areas. Nevertheless, the respondents respond to this part generally focusing on all type of land issues in the region.

3.2.2. Financial Capital

Financial capital for livelihoods means having access to loan, own savings, remittances, pensions or wages which can be used as investment in doing livelihoods. Financial investment plays a vital role for every kind of livelihoods; agriculture, non-agriculture and migration. Most of the people in Pa-O SAZ, especially those from rural areas, do not have enough money to start or invest for their livelihoods. Hence, 80 percent of the respondents in this study said that there were challenges for financial capital in making their livelihoods. A 36-year-old male farmer having avocado farms highlights the challenges for financial capital.

“Money is one of the most important capitals for starting a business and it is also the most challenging for the people here to have access to financial support for their livelihoods.” – (In-depth interview, Young Agro-Entrepreneur 2, 6th July 2020)

For agricultural livelihoods, the farmers have to take loan at the beginning of farming season every year. The farmers who have Form 7 can get loan from government’s Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and those who do not have Form 7 have to take loan from private money lenders with higher interest rate. They have to pay back the loan after harvest season so that they can take loan again for next farming season. There are very few farmers who do not need to take loan for farming every year. Also for other kinds of livelihoods like trading and migration, they need to have money to buy the groceries they will trade or to pay service fees to the agencies for migration. Then, financial investment is also necessary for the people to become skilled labors so that they can earn well enough to make a good living.

In addition to ADB, there are many other credit sources including micro-finance programs in different forms and private money lenders in Pa-O SAZ. However, most local people have challenges for financial capital to make investment for their livelihoods. This is because they become to be in the debt cycle while trying to pay the interest or to pay back the loan at a certain time. Sometimes, they have to borrow money from private money lenders with higher interest rate to pay back the loan to ADB and other micro-finance programs. The other reason is that not everyone can have access to those credit sources. It is challenging for most people who do not own any property to have access to those credit sources. Therefore, they do not have any other option except to work as random unskilled labors with daily wages or monthly wages. Although Pa-O people can migrate to neighboring countries for regular income, the remittances of most people can support only for the survival of their families: basic needs, health and education. As most of them migrate unofficially and work as unskilled labors, their remittances are not reliable enough to make investment for running own farms, especially for those who are not well educated and who do not own any farmlands.

3.2.3. Physical Capital

Physical capital means access to good infrastructure like roads and houses as well as access to vehicles and machines. Pa-O SAZ is hilly region and most of the farmlands there are vast and far from the house-plots and townships. However, due to the good and accessible road transportation system, the people in Pa-O SAZ do not have much challenge in travelling around the townships and going to the farmlands. Having good transportation system is important not only for farming but also for trading and other types of livelihoods.

Being a hilly region, the use of machines for agriculture in Pa-O SAZ is not as common as that in other lower parts of the country. The types of agricultural machines used in Pa-O SAZ include water-pumps, big and small tractors, three-wheel trucks, cars and motorcycles. The most common machines they use for farming are water-pumps and small tractors. Machinery use depends on the type of plants and crops the people grow, as well as the location of their farmlands. For instance, those having farmlands on slope areas cannot use big tractors on their lands. Then, only

those who can afford and has vast area of farmlands big tractors and trucks for farming.

The other common machines are cars and motorcycles which are used for carrying the things and travelling. As there is no public transportation system to go around the townships, the people in Southern Shan State including those from Pa-O SAZ rely only cars and motorcycles for transportation. Therefore, almost every household in Pa-O SAZ owns a motorcycles at least for their transportation. Only 40 percent of the respondents said that there were challenges for access to physical capital for their livelihoods.

3.2.4. Social Capital

Social capital can be defined as having networks and connections with friends, relatives, neighbors and colleagues as well as trust, support, respect and mutual understanding with those people. Social capital also means involving in collective communities where they can support and share their resources and having access to mechanism for participation in decision-making and leadership. While talking about the challenges for livelihood assets, most of the respondents in this study did not mention about social capital much. This is not because social capital is not important for their livelihoods but because it is not very obvious for them to see it as one of the capitals for their livelihoods.

The another reason that only 20 percent of the respondents talked about the challenges for social capital is that they do not have as much challenge for that capital as other types of capitals. The people in Pa-O SAZ are already conditioned to be in strong and collective communities for many kinds of reasons. Being a part of an ethnic minority and living in a specific self-administered zone are the conditions to make Pa-O people united and collective enough to share physical, technical and emotional supports to one another when they are supposed to do so. For instance, some youths who own the avocado farms share their new techniques of grafting the plants to other farmers and demonstrate the grafting technique so that they can do it themselves later.

“As the saying goes ‘Your network is your net worth,’ network is very important for business. If someone is

isolated in doing business, he or she will be left behind.” – (In-depth interview, Young Agro-Entrepreneur 2, 6th July 2020)

The collective communities found out in this research can be categorized into three groups; Pa-O National Organization (PNO) which administers Pa-O SAZ, CSOs/CBOs such as Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO) and Ar Luu (Potato) Association and other informal communities within a group of villagers of same village, friends and business partners. According to the interviews and observations, it is found out that most local people have access to those types of collective communities. Only five respondents mentioned the difficulties to have a network or to be involved in a certain community regarding their livelihoods and this makes them face more challenges in handling with their livelihoods. They find it challenging because they are newcomers or do not have much exposure with social media or digital platforms where they can connect with many people. The following case is an example to explain the challenges for a newcomer to connect or communicate with many people.

Case 2: A vineyard owner – A new comer to Pa-O SAZ

“One of those who said ‘yes’ to having challenges for social capitals is a vineyard owner in Hopong township. His ethnicity is Chinese and lived in border areas. He moved to Hopong few years ago because of armed conflicts in border areas. He is 35 years old and a father of three children. His main livelihoods was trading agricultural products before he started vineyard farm. Last year (2019), he visited to his uncle living in Pyin Oo Lwin and got an idea and suggestion from him to start vineyard farms. His uncle shared him some knowledge and techniques to plant grapes. He also thought that grape would be demanded in market as not many local people grow it. Therefore, he bought two acres of farmlands with his savings to start vineyard farming. According to him, he has difficulties to get information such as land sales and market access as he does not have many friends and network in this region. This is because he is a new

comer to this region and he cannot speak Pa-O or Shan language. He can speak and understand Burmese language, but not fluently. Therefore, it is difficult for him to fluently and friendly communicate with many other people in Pa-O SAZ. As a result, he had to pay double to buy the farmlands as he could not collect and check the land prices from different people and sources. Moreover, he has to struggle for market access too at the time when he sells the grapes from his farm. However, he keeps trying to extend his farm business by planning to make grape wine and to decorate the farm as a place to visit for the people. He is also trying to build network and get more friends through social media such as Facebook.”

3.2.5. Human Capital

Human capital or human resource is one of the most crucial capitals to promote and attain the livelihood opportunities of a society. According to sustainable livelihood framework, human capital means having a good health, education, knowledge, abilities, skills, capacities to work and to adapt with time and circumstance of a situation. While discussing about the challenges for access to human capital, the respondents in this study emphasize on labor force or manpower and the people’s skills and capacities to work rather than focus on health and education.

“As most youths migrate across the borders for work, the farmers and farm owners in this regions face the challenges of labor shortage in farming season.” – (KII, CSO1 (elder), 7th July 2020)

Among the respondents in this study, 60 percent (15 respondents) talked about the challenges of labor shortages by highlighting the issues of migration. According to them, they face the challenges of labor shortage because most youths migrate to Thailand and China and some to other parts of the country. This is also because there is no favorable job opportunities for the youths which meet their expectation for income, skills and experiences in Pa-O SAZ. On the other hand, the labor shortage

what the respondents mean is the shortage of skilled labors for farming and other types of livelihoods.

To develop the agricultural sector, it is necessary to have enough and skilled labors who are physically strong, have knowledge and capacities to apply new techniques in farming. Those who can attempt value-chain of agro-products are also in demand for agricultural development. Despite increasing use of machines for farming, most types of plants like avocado grown in Pa-O SAZ cannot be handled with only use of machines. In addition to agricultural livelihoods, young people who have strengths and skills play a vital role for the development of any kind of livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ. Therefore, it is challenging for the local people, especially for the elder farmers, to develop their livelihoods due to the shortage of young and skilled labors.

3.2.6 Knowledge Capital

As this part of the study focuses on the challenges for agricultural livelihoods, this also tries to explore what else challenges the local people face apart from access to five existing capitals mentioned in SLA. It is found out that, all of the respondents mention the challenges for access to useful and reliable information which can also be regarded as knowledge capital for their livelihoods. They do not directly say it as a capital or asset for livelihood, but as the needs of knowledge or information about how to attempt for access to market, what to plant in which soil, which technique to use to get good-quality products and how to approach value-chain of agricultural products. Knowledge is a combination of information, experience, and insight that helps the individual or the organization. It is linked to doing and implies know-how and understanding⁹. Therefore, the lack of those information makes them face challenges to have sufficient knowledge to work properly on agricultural livelihoods.

According to literature reviews on sustainable livelihood framework, knowledge capital is regarded as a part of human capital, not as a separate capital. However, all of the respondents in this study vividly mention about the lack of

⁹ Information Vs. Knowledge: Key Differences, retrieved from <https://www.guru99.com/information-vs-knowledge-difference.html#1>

sufficient knowledge as they have challenges to the right and reliable information and dataset needed for their livelihoods.

“Now, if we want to start farming, we need to know what to plant depending on the demand of market and where to plant to have good-quality products. We also don’t know where to find those information.” – (In-depth interview, Young Farmer 7, 13th July 2020)

As a matter of fact, most people around the world can easily get the news and information in this age of social media such as Facebook. Social media is one of the most reliable sources for getting knowledge and information in Myanmar, either. However, not all the people in rural areas can access to social media as they cannot access to internet and as they are not familiar with the technology. On the other hand, having access to rich sources of information does not mean having access to right and reliable information. Only access to rich information does not support to have strong knowledge. As there are many kinds of misinformation on social media, the respondents, especially the youths, claim that it is crucial for them to have a reliable mechanism for getting right information about livelihoods. Access to information supports them to have sufficient knowledge which is said to be significant capital for approaching livelihoods. It surprisingly stands the most demanding and challenging one for the local people in approaching their livelihoods. This is discussed more detailed in Chapter 5.

3.3. Opportunities and Challenges for Pa-O Youths in Working on Agricultural Livelihoods

Whereas section 3.2. discusses livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people in Pa-O SAZ, this section tries to highlights the specific opportunities and challenges for the youths when they work on agricultural livelihoods.

As discussed in the section 3.1. and 3.2., the youths in Pa-O SAZ, comparing the youths from other parts of rural Myanmar, have more opportunities to start a small or medium entrepreneurship for some reasons: geographical strengths of Pa-O SAZ, good-quality soil to plant any type of crops, favorable climate for farming, good and accessible transportation system as well as collective and supportive

communities. Moreover, PNO as a leading body of Pa-O SAZ also makes policies and implements the development plans for three townships under its administrative control. According to the respondent from PNO, they get separate budget for paving road. This is another example of strength of being a SAZ. However, they still need to have more authentic autonomy to fully administer their Pa-O SAZ. Within their limited autonomy for the moment, PNO attempts to collaborate with many kinds of local and international organizations to implement more development projects in Pa-O SAZ. The support of such organizations provides the local people not only with financial and technical support for their livelihoods but also with more job opportunities, especially for the youths. As the direct impacts from the support of the local and international organizations, the youths can join the training from them to get more awareness on development issues, to learn new techniques and skills and get more networks for their livelihoods. Indirectly, the youths can have more opportunities for work as those organizations usually employ the local youths for their projects. However, this indirect impact of providing employment to the youths is not very inclusive as it depends on how and where the project is implemented and its criteria to select the employees.

All of these conditions are supporting the Pa-O youths who are willing to work on agricultural livelihoods with the opportunities to do it as an entrepreneurship. All of the youths interviewed in this study have will and plan to work on agricultural livelihoods; *farming or trading*, by using modern techniques or technologies. Although some youths interviewed in this study are working at organizations or at companies, they have intention and plan to work on agricultural livelihoods. They all have agricultural background though they are working in different sectors now. Moreover, they think that working on agricultural livelihood is a potential way for them to be an entrepreneur or to own a business due to the strengths mentioned and they also regard agriculture as a sustainable livelihood for them and for their region. Among many options of fruits, crops and plants they want to grow or trade, the most common fruits attracting the youths for agro-business are avocado, coffee, and some flowers such as lily.

To explore livelihood and agricultural challenges for the youths, the same questions regarding the challenges for everyone are repeated by emphasizing on the

youths' struggle and weaknesses to handle with their livelihoods. Then, the findings are compared, as in Figure 6, to highlight their challenges comparing with that of everyone.

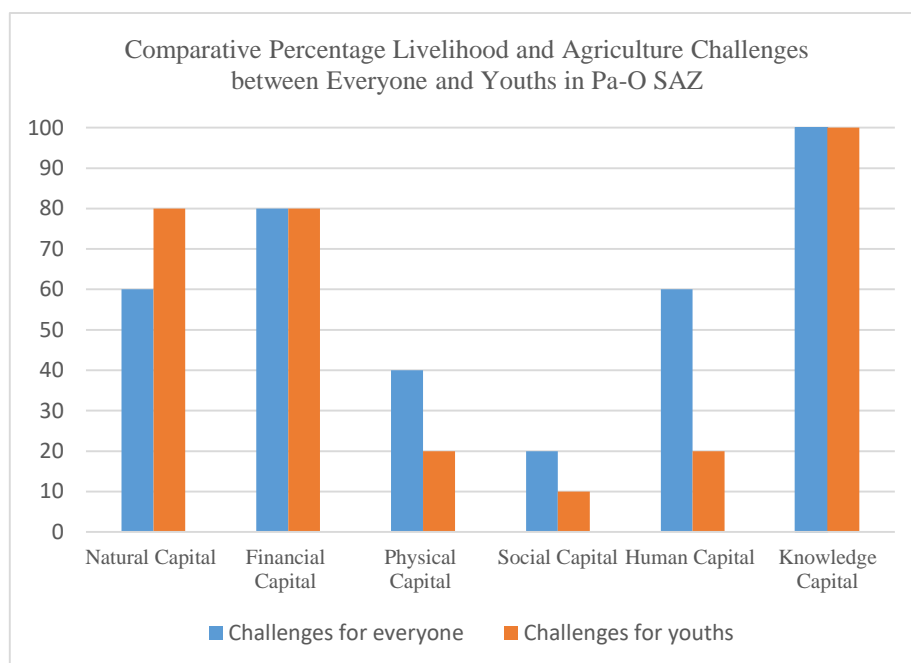


Figure 6: Comparative Percentage Livelihood and Agricultural Challenges between Everyone and Youths in Pa-O SAZ¹⁰

Comparing the challenges between everyone and the youths, there are differences in the percentage of the respondents in explaining the challenges for natural capital, physical capital, social capital and human capital. According to the percentage, the youths have more challenges for access to natural capital and less challenges for social, physical and human capital. While 60 percent of the respondents said that there are challenges for everyone to access to natural capital, 80 percent talked about the challenges for the youths regarding natural capital. This is because it is difficult for the youths to have the ownership sense of the properties. While most elder people have access to farmlands by buying or by inheriting from their ancestors, most younger generations do not have access to it as they cannot afford to buy or do not inherit the farmlands from their parents or elder ones yet. Therefore, even some

¹⁰ Percentage for this figure is counted by the number of the respondents in this research who responded to the question for each livelihood capitals.

youths are leading to do farming on their parents' farmlands, they feel like helping their parents' livelihoods, not as their own livelihoods as they do not own those lands. One farmer from Naungtayar Township said,

“To encourage my son to do potato plantation, I told him that he owned three acres of my farmlands so that he would put much effort to do it as his own.”(In-depth interview, Old Entrepreneur 1, 11th July 2020).

However, most parents or elders are not like him. The youths still have challenges for access to land ownership though their family owns farmlands. Therefore, 80 percent of the respondents mention about the challenges of access to natural capital for the youths while only 60 percent talks about that challenges for everyone.

According to the percentage of the respondents described in Figure 6, the youths have less challenges for physical, social and human capitals. In terms of physical capital, the youths have less challenges as they are more familiar with the use of machines than the elders. For instance, youths have more capacities to drive big tractors and trucks. Even the elders own those kinds of machines, they have to hire the youths to drive those. Also for social capital, the youths are familiar with more kinds of platforms for social networks. In addition to organization-based and community-based networks, the youths have more access to online platforms to connect with more people. Hence, the challenges of access to social capital for youths are less than that for the elders. It is vividly different between youths and the other people (the elders) in terms of challenges of access to human capital. According to the respondents, the youths themselves have more strengths and skills to work and have more connections with young and skillful labors. The youths have equal percent of challenges of access to financial capital and knowledge capital to everyone (the elders).

3.4. Impacts of Covid-19 on Youths and Livelihood Conditions in Pa-O SAZ

It is undeniable that Covid-19 has huge impacts on the socio-economic situations of people's lives around the world. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, global pandemic, the movement of people are strictly restricted and, consequently, the

economic situation of people who rely on remittances is seriously affected. In most rural regions in Myanmar, many people migrate internally or internationally for their living and remittance is one of their major income sources.

Pa-O SAZ where 88 percent of the population is in rural areas is also affected as most migrant workers have to come back unexpectedly. Most of them lose their jobs and the others are under unpaid leave and they are not sure when they can go back and earn again. Some cannot come back home and they are stuck at the place where they work without having any job and savings. According to the respondents in this study, two third of migrant workers in Pa-O SAZ is youths ranging from the age of 18 to 40. Most of the migrant workers work at factories, constructions, food industry and farming in foreign countries, especially in Thailand. As there is no factory or industry in Pa-O SAZ, the returnees face with challenges to get jobs which suit with their skills and experiences. Since before, they migrated to other places for work as there is no job opportunity in their place. Therefore, the implications of Covid-19 makes the youths face more challenges for their livelihood and survival. One respondent from PNO in key informant interview said,

“Now, thousands of migrant workers are coming back home. We have to be prepared for the crisis of lack of jobs and income for local people, especially the youths. We are now trying to make policies for that. We collect information of their experiences and skills from their previous works so that we can consider about some policies and plans to provide employments to the returnees.” – (KII, PNO 1, 3rd July 2020)

On the other hand, a farm owner gives a different positive view on this issue of migrant workers and Covid-19. As mentioned in section 3.2.5. the farmers have challenges of labor shortage. Now, as many young people return home due to the pandemic, they expect to have more labors for their farming. A respondent with many acres of farms said that he could hire many labors. He continued that the farming works were finished well and quickly as the labors could not go anywhere and do any other things due to the restrictions on movement during the pandemic. Therefore, although Covid-19 has negative impacts on most of the local people who rely on

remittances, some big farmers who need a lot of labors see positive on this situation. The other indirect impact of the pandemic that the local people come to realize that they cannot rely only on remittance and migration cannot provide them with job and social security in the long term.

3.5. Conclusion

The geographical strengths of Pa-O SAZ provides the local people with favorable conditions for rural livelihoods such as agriculture, trading, livestock and migration. In this study, the challenges for livelihoods and agriculture in Pa-O SAZ are explored and analyzed based on five livelihood capitals of SLA. According to the findings from interviews and observations, the access to financial capital is the most challenging one for the elders and accesses to financial and natural capital are the most challenging ones for the youths. The access to social capital is the least challenging one both for the elders and the youths there. In addition to the challenges for existing five capitals, all of the respondents mention a lot about the knowledge capital. Despite having access to social media in this technology age, the local people including youths still have challenges to get sufficient knowledge with a combination of right and reliable information for making their livelihoods smooth and successful.

When discussing how to respond to those challenges for livelihood assets, it is found out that policy makers and development practitioners play a vital role for local livelihood opportunities. Most of the respondents said that it was the responsibilities government and PNO to make effective policies and plans for the development of their region. The local people also want PNO to have more autonomy in order to respond some issues effectively. For instance, the young activists are not very satisfied with the response of PNO to the land issues between the military and the local people in Hsihseng Township. Also, the people expect that government or PNO would provide them with reliable information on local livelihoods through effective mechanism so that they can decide what to do and how to do effectively.

One more important finding is the change in view on the role of migration and remittances. Due to the spread of Covid-19 virus, people in Pa-O SAZ come to understand that they cannot rely only on the remittances. As most of the migrant workers there migrate unofficially to bordering countries and work as unskilled

labors, they do not have any guarantee for healthcare and job security. During the pandemic, most of the migrants have to come back home and face the challenges of lack of suitable jobs for them. According to the findings, it is necessary to accommodate the returnee with the job opportunities which suit with their experiences and skills from working abroad. Therefore, the role of policy makers such as PNO is important for responding a lot challenges for local livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ. The findings in this study suggest that the policy makers need to review and make better policies and plans specifically for, land issue, financial issue which need to be responded together with the funders of micro-finance and access to information for knowledge capital which should be developed with the support of technical experts.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: CONTRIBUTION OF YOUTHS' PARTICIPATION TO AGRICULTURE IN PA-O SELF-ADMINISTERED ZONE

This chapter provides the findings on Differences between the Elders and the Youths in Pa-O SAZ for Agricultural Livelihoods in section 4.1. and Contributions of Young Entrepreneurs to Agricultural Livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ in section 4.2. Finally, section 4.3. discusses the findings of this chapter in order to give answer to another sub-question of this research, "*How do the youths contribute to agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?*" The findings in this chapter explain the contributions and strengths of the Pa-O youths in working on agricultural livelihoods comparing with the elders.

4.1. Differences between the Youths and the Elders in Pa-O SAZ for Agricultural Livelihoods

As this study focuses on interrelation between youths and agriculture, it is important to find out the significance or differences of youths' participation in agriculture comparing the participation of elder generation in it. In this study, the findings from the interviews and observations show that the youths are different from the elder generation in terms of attitude, experiences, capacities and skills to access to information and social capital and challenges while working on agricultural livelihoods.

According to the interviews with youths and the elders working in agriculture, it is found out that youths have different attitudes from the elders on agricultural livelihoods. Most of the elder generations have to do farming as their livelihoods because this is the only livelihood they can do and there is no other option for them. Hence, most parents do not want their children to rely on agricultural livelihoods if they have other options for livelihood opportunities. For most of the youths, they decide to work on agriculture only if they prefer to do it among any other types of livelihoods they can access such as working at companies or organizations, running small shops (grocery or digital accessory) and migration. The different attitudes

between “have to” and “want to” make significant differences in the ways how they work on agricultural livelihood and what they expect from it. For most of the elder people, they do farming and rely on agricultural livelihood only for their survival and basic needs for their families. Most elder generations expect to get some money to pay back loan and to spend on basic needs of the families after the harvest season. For the younger generations, as they see and do it as their own business, they want to get more profits and expect to extend their agro-business more and more.

A young female farmer who also works in CSO said her intention for livelihood,

“Now, I am selling pineapple from my farm. But, I have plan to make wine with pineapple. I’m leaning how to do it and how to advertise the products. I hope to get more profit in that way.” – (In-depth interview, CSO 4, 9th July 2020)

In terms of experiences, it can be said that the elders have more experiences than the youths. According to the respondents in this study, most of the elders in rural areas of Pa-O SAZ have been doing farming for about two decades. Therefore, the elders have experiences on how to use and cultivate the farmlands well and what to plant on what type of lands based on their local knowledge. For the youths, though they do not have as much experience on farming as the elders, they have more exposures with new techniques and accesses to digital platforms where they can get information and make networks for agricultural livelihoods. Moreover, the youths are physically stronger and more capable to adapt with changes such as using new techniques, innovative ways, and planting different types of fruits and vegetables.

One young farm owner in group discussion said,

“First, my parents and other elder people in the village did not like when I plant avocado by using new techniques called grafting. They thought that I was doing nonsense on their farmlands. But, now they can see the result.” - (Group Discussion, Young Agro-Entrepreneur 1, 4th July 2020)

One girl who graduated from Yezin Agricultural University also said,

“I showed my father some new techniques for potato plantation by which he can reduce using chemical fertilizers. He tries to use it when I am at home. But, when I go back Yangon for work, he just uses his traditional way of plantation by using a lot of chemical fertilizers.” – (In-depth interview, Young Migrant, 11th July 2020)

Based on the findings from interviews and observations, it can be said that the youths have more opportunities in making living on agricultural livelihoods. Being a strong human capital, the youths, themselves, can be regarded as an opportunity for agricultural development. However, as described in section 3.3., the youths still have more limited access to land ownership than the elders and face challenges of access to financial support and reliable information as much as the elders for agricultural livelihoods. Though the youths can get information on market price, market access, modern techniques for farming and for value-chain of agro-products and have access to social networks more easily than the elders, they still have limitations to get reliable and trustworthy data and information through a systematic mechanism. In addition, another difference or limitation for the youths is that they cannot be involved in policy making or decision making processes as much as the elders do.

The findings also show that all of these differences between the youths and the elders can shape how they approach and attempt in making living on agriculture. Those differences can make the different results and benefits which they get from farming. This is also related to their targeted livelihood outcomes. Some youths making living on agriculture in Pa-O SAZ have intention to extend their agro-business as eco-tourism or community-based tourism in their regions. Despite the different attitudes and approaches, there is no major clash between the youths and the elders regarding agricultural livelihoods. Then, although this study focuses on the age in exploring the different situations in farming, there can be other intersectional factors such as financial and educational backgrounds which can differ the attitudes,

approaches, opportunities and challenges between the local people in making living on agricultural livelihoods.

4.2. Contributions of Young Entrepreneurs to Agricultural Development in Pa-O SAZ

The study finds out that there are some young entrepreneurs who are managing their own farms in Pa-O SAZ. As discussed in section 4.1., the youths are willing to work on agricultural livelihoods from different points of views. According to the youths interviewed in this study, they see agriculture as their own business and try to find the way to make it successful when they decide to do it. Due to their confidence, capacities for new techniques and more networks as well as having innovative ways for agricultural livelihoods, they can work on agricultural livelihoods more successfully and make profits from it. Moreover, when their agro-business becomes larger, they can employ more labors for farming. This can be regarded as direct impact on opportunities for local youths' employment. As an indirect impact, those successful young entrepreneurs inspire other youths to be willing to participate in agricultural livelihoods. This study conducted in-depth interviews with some young local entrepreneurs and observed the farms named Tamoeout Farms and Yoma Khun Farms to explore how they are contributing to agricultural livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ.

4.2.1. Tamoeout Farms



Figure 7: Pa-O Youths Working at Tamoeout Farms (Photo Credit: Author)

Tamoeout Farms which mainly grow avocado are located in Sike Khaung region, Hopong Township and Kyauk Ta Lone region in Taunggyi Township. This is one of the most popular farms in Taunggyi and Pa-O self-administered zone for its good-quality avocado. The varieties of avocado grown at Tamoeout Farms include Peterson, Pinkerton, Hass, Bacon and some local varieties. Tamoeout Farms are also famous for applying new modern technique called ‘grafting’ and for planting avocado with standardized quality. In addition to growing and selling avocado fruits and seeds, those from Tamoeout Farms share their new techniques of grafting to other farmers around Shan state as well as some places in Kachin and Chin states too. The Farms cover around 300 acres of lands, most in Sike Khaung region of Hsihseng Township and some in Kyauk Ta Lone region nearby Taunggyi Township. Among 300 acres of lands owned by Tamoeout Farms, around 150 acres have been used for avocado plantation. Many varieties of avocado are mainly grown in these farms and some other fruits such as coffee and orange are also grown there.

The founder/owner of Tamoeout Farms is a 36-year Pa-O youth living in Taunggyi. He was born in Kyauk Ta Lone region nearby Taunggyi. He started to do that agro-business by buying few acres of farmlands around 2015. Before starting that business, he did varieties of works such as running phone accessory shop and working at Singapore for ten years. He worked at a technical company and was paid well. However, as he preferred to work on own business and started an entrepreneurship, he resigned from the work in Singapore and come back to home country. At first, he run a phone accessory shop in Taunggyi though it was not his initial goal for livelihood. Then, he started to implement his plan for avocado farms around 2015. In fact, farming has already been familiar to him as he was born in this region and his parents are also farmers. However, he tries to do farming not in traditional way, but in modern way by using new techniques and attempting for value-chain of agricultural products.

When he started that business, it was challenging for him as he did not own any farmlands. He tried to buy the lands in remote areas with cheaper prices. Then, as he believed that avocado is the most promising fruit to have benefit in Pa-O SAZ, he decided to plant avocado for his farming business. This was also because of his confidence on planting avocado as he had data and knowledge on market access of that kind of plantation. He started to do avocado farming since 2008, but he did it only

in traditional way and could not make significant profits from it. In 2014, he was involved as an interpreter in agricultural training given by USAID to Pa-O local farmers. From that training, he got more exposures and knowledge on farming and more connections with experts from foreign countries. Since then, he tried to change the strategy and techniques in his avocado plantation by using the knowledge and skills he got from the training. In 2018, he went to Israel for one-month agricultural engineering on scholarship and to California for one-month excursion together with Avocado Association. After that, he has made more networks with the entrepreneurs and experts from other countries and could start to import new varieties of avocado seeds and plants from California. He trades avocados from his farm to City Marts in the cities and to other individual customers around Myanmar. He also exports those to China and Thailand. There is a Facebook page with the name “Tamoeout Farms” to share information about their activities and to sell the fruits.

Despite having challenges of financial assets, he has been trying to extend his agro-business gradually in this way. He is also trying to do horse breeding in his farms with the aim of running eco-tourism business in the future. Now, Tamoeout Farms employ about 25 youths to work as farm manager or labor leader with monthly wages. There are about 20 to 30 labors under the management of each labor leader. Hence, this farm provides many job opportunities to local youths who prefer or have to work only in this region. Consequently, those young labors working in his farm can also be the farm owner in the future as they are inspired by their employer and get experiences on new techniques of farming. One of his labors, farm manager, said that he wanted to own avocado farm like his employer as he learned modern techniques like grafting plants and thought it was promising livelihood for him (In-depth interview, Young Farmer 6, 9th July 2020). This can be regarded as one of the direct contributions of Tamoeout Farms to local people who rely on agricultural livelihoods. The farm owner, said,

“I don’t employ the labors, I employ the leaders. Those who are working at my farms as full-time manager are given full authority to lead and manage the farms and day-labors for farm works. I also don’t stop them if they start to work on their own farms. I even want to

encourage them to do it.” – (In-depth interview, Young Agro-Entrepreneur 2, 6th July 2020)

As another direct contribution, the farm owner and managers from Tamoeout Farms share and demonstrate the techniques of grafting to plant avocado to other farmers not only from Pa-O SAZ but also from anywhere in Shan State. The farmers have to pay for travel expenses and labor wages for this services. They even went to some regions in Chin and Kachin State to share their knowledge and techniques on avocado plantation. Therefore, many other farmers come to be familiar with new techniques of plantation and make their farm more productive. Their effort of sharing new techniques directly contributes the development of agricultural livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ. In addition, the farm owner is involved in economic advisory team of Pa-O’s policy making bodies for development sector. Based on his knowledge and experiences, he can contribute the suggestions and ideas for making policies and implementation plans for the economic development of Pa-O SAZ. This can be regarded as an indirect contribution of a young local entrepreneur to agricultural development and local livelihood opportunities within the region.

4.2.2. Yoma Khun Farms



Figure 8: Avocado Plantation and Organic Chicken Breeding in Yoma Khun Farms

(Photo Credit: Author)

Yoma Khun Farms is a collaborative farm owned and shared by five Pa-O youths who are around 25 years old. They all are graduates and native of Pa-O SAZ. The Farms are located in different regions of Pa-O SAZ and Taunggyi Township. The

one observed in this study is in Htiham Swe village nearby Taunggyi Township and covers about five acres of farmlands. There are about 30 to 40 acres of farmlands all together under the name of Yoma Khun Farms. They mainly plant avocado and elephant foot yam and do organic livestock of chicken breeding in their farms. They started to work on this agro-business around the year of 2016.

At the beginning, they worked on avocado plantation together with the owner of Tamoeout Farms. They together tried to learn and practice the new techniques of grafting the plants for avocado farms and attempted for value-chain. After about one year of working together, they decided to work on their own separate farms. Therefore, the ways of working on their avocado farms are very similar to each other though Yoma Khun Farms own less acres of farmlands and do more diversities of activities than Tamoeout Farms. To start their own farm, they had to try for investment such as to have farmlands, input costs, techniques and networks for market access. At first, they rented farmlands: some from their parents and some from the outsiders. They collected same amount of shared investments for all of the input costs to run their farms. Some had to borrow money for shared investments while some could use their savings. They already learned modern techniques for farming like grafting avocado plants since they worked together with the owner of Tamoeout Farms. Later, they could buy few acres of farmlands gradually.

Regarding their farming livelihood, they have intention to successfully run organic livestock farming and start approaching to it by growing avocado and elephant foot yam as well as working on organic chicken breeding at the same time. Hence, the products from their farms include varieties of avocado, elephant foot yam and organic eggs which they advertise through personal contacts and through online platform like their Facebook page named “Yoma Khun Farms”. They also have similar goal for their livelihoods that they want to run the entrepreneurship of eco-tourism with organic livestock farming in Pa-O SAZ in the future.

Each owner of Yoma Khun Farms manages their avocado farms by hiring day labors for taking care of their plants and clearing the weeds. This is direct contributions to the local livelihoods by providing the youths with job opportunities in their farms. They also have connections with other community-based organizations (CBOs) such as Naung Kar Community Development Center which gives agricultural

training to the youths from rural areas of Myanmar. With their networks and connections with those organizations, they get and share the information and knowledge on organic livestock farms. Like Tamoeout Farms, they share the new techniques of grafting the plants to other local farmers by getting service fees. Moreover, they collaborate with local farmers to grow elephant foot yam as co-operative plantations. Such kinds of sharing and collaboration with CBOs and local farmers can also be regarded as direct contributions to agricultural development in their regions.

All of the owners of Yoma Khun Farms are graduates and most have exposures and experiences in other types of work. Agriculture is not the only way for them to rely on for their livelihoods. Before they start to do this agro-business, one of the owners worked as a tourist guide which seem to be more attractive job for him. According to the respondents from Yoma Khun Farms, their parents did not also encourage them to work on agricultural livelihoods as they thought farming did not suit with their children's educational level. However, they decided to do farming as they thought agricultural livelihood was sustainable and promising for them to stand and work as entrepreneurs. On the other hand, they believe that agricultural livelihoods should be promoted and it cannot be developed without the participation and effort of younger generations.

One of the owners of Yoma Khun Farms, said,

“About 90 percent of population in Pa-O SAZ rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. So, this is a huge sector we should not neglect. If young and educated generation like us do not participate in agricultural livelihoods, how can this sector be developed? Who would do for that?” (Group Discussion, Young Entrepreneur 1, 4th July 2020)

They also expect that they will be able to inspire and encourage other youths in Pa-O SAZ to be interested and involved in agricultural livelihoods if they can do it successfully to some extent. Their motivation and effort to work on organic livestock farming and intention to run eco-tourism in their regions can be regarded as practical and direct contributions to the development of agricultural livelihoods too. If they can

meet their expectation to inspire and support other youths in Pa-O SAZ to work on farming or livestock, this will be an indirect contributions to agricultural development in their regions.

4.3. Conclusion

The findings on the differences between the youths and the elders for agricultural livelihoods and contributions of young entrepreneurs to agricultural livelihoods highlight the significant and vital roles of younger generations in developing the agricultural sector in Pa-O SAZ. Exploring the differences in attitudes, experiences, approaches, capacities and skills between the youths and the elders supports this study to understand on their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges while working on agricultural livelihoods and making this sector developed.

As discussed in section 4.1, it is found out that the elders have more experiences than the youths in agricultural livelihoods whereas the youths have more exposures, capacities and skills to adapt with new techniques of planting, innovative ways for market access as well as to connect with varieties of people from day labors to CSOs and NGOs. These strengths help the youths with better approach to do farming with certain intention as their own business or entrepreneurship. Consequently, it is also found out that the efforts of some youths for their own farms provide the local people with more job opportunities and modern techniques of planting as well as inspire other youths to be interested and participate in agro-business so that agricultural sector can be developed. Two examples “Tamoeout Farms” and “Yoma Khun Farms” spotlight these kinds of direct and indirect contributions of youths’ participation in agriculture in Pa-O SAZ.

However, the differences in working on agricultural livelihoods in this study are discussed from the perspectives of age difference. The differences in educational and financial background can also shape how people approach and achieve benefits from agriculture. For instance, it is challenging for a youth working as a manager at Tamoeout Farms to start his own farm like his employer as he is not well-educated and does not have other exposures, networks, and financial background. Hence, there can be different challenges and opportunities for the people in same age due to these

different backgrounds. Then, most of the youths do not have access to land ownership, financial assets as well as policy and decision making level of the region. The younger they are, the less they have access to policy and decision making level in their region. According to the findings it is undeniable that the participation of any youths can contribute to the agricultural development within the region. Among the youths in Pa-O SAZ, “Tamoeout Farms” and “Yoma Khun Farms” are considered as leading examples of the contribution of youths’ participation in agriculture. Therefore, these findings suggest to acknowledge the strengths of youths in attempting the agricultural development and to promote their participation in agriculture and to consider some mechanisms to address the challenges and constraints of the youths to do agro-business.



CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUTHS’ LIVELIHOODS AND FACTORS PROMOTING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE

This chapter tries to answer third sub-question of the research, “*How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihood and what factors are promoting their participation in agriculture?*” This explores the factors promoting youths’ participation in agriculture together with the factors influencing their livelihoods. Findings on Factors Influencing Pa-O Youths in Deciding and Approaching Livelihoods are explained in section 5.1, Factors Promoting Youths’ Participation in Agriculture in section 5.2. followed by agricultural trainings and supports of some organizations and role of access to knowledge capital for youths and the conclusion, Section 5.3., discusses the findings in this chapter. By exploring those factors, this chapter suggests how to support the youths’ participation in agriculture.

5.1. Factors Influencing Pa-O Youths in Deciding and Approaching Livelihoods

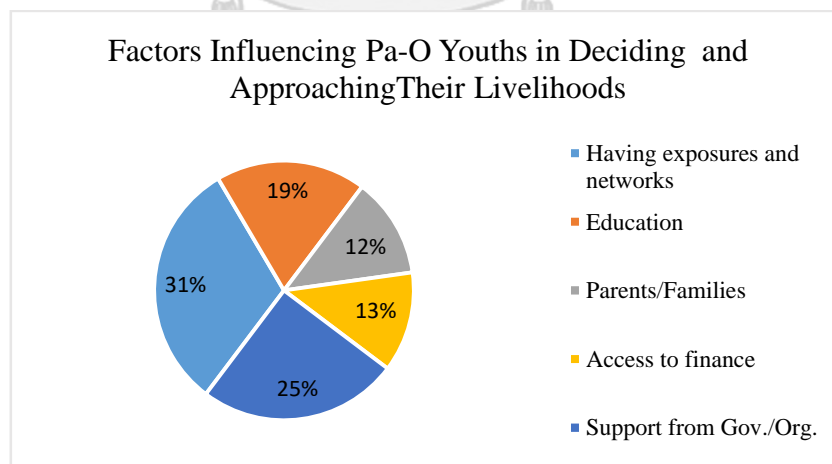


Figure 9: Factors Influencing Pa-O Youths in Deciding and Approaching Livelihoods¹¹

¹¹ This percentage frequency distribution is calculated based on the responses of the respondents to related question in the interviews.

Based on the findings from interviews in this study, the factors influencing Pa-O youths in deciding and approaching their livelihoods include having exposures and networks, education, parents/families, access to finance and their affiliation with some organizations. Having exposures and networks the respondents meant is having experiences in different kinds of works in different places and networks with diversities of people through individual contact or through organizations as well as being familiar with technology such as capability to use social media. Educational levels of youths influencing their decision in livelihoods can be divided into four levels: those who finish lower secondary level, those who finish upper secondary, those who finish higher education, and graduates. The role of parents or families like their livelihoods and economic situation is another factor that influence the youths for their livelihood decision. Moreover, the youths make decision and approach their livelihoods based on their financial background or access to financial support. The supports of government or organization the respondents referred include making effective policies and plans as well as implementing development programs for livelihoods and youths' employment.

All of the respondents in this study said that the youths make decision and approach their livelihoods depending on how much they have experiences and exposures with different types of work in different areas. As they have worked in different sectors, they could learn new skills and build networks with more people from different places. They can learn how to deal with different people through their experiences. In this case, having experiences and exposures that the respondents mean also includes being familiar with technology and having capability to use social media such as Facebook. According to the respondents in this study, only less than half of the youth population have different experiences and exposures to varieties of work as well as technological skills. These skills provide them with some ideas for entrepreneurship or for upgrading their lives through their works. This factor distinguish the youths how they decide and approach their livelihoods despite having same educational level and family background.

Educational level can somehow effect the decision of youths regarding their livelihoods. According to the respondents, there can be differences between their livelihoods depending on different educational level. It is found out that there is

difference of livelihood situation between those in different educational level as mentioned. However, rather than the difference in educational level, the two factors: having exposures and networks and supports from govt. and organizations described in Figure 9. are stronger factors which influence the youths' decision on livelihoods. For instance, the youths in same educational level have different ideas and plans for their livelihoods based on their experiences and exposures (See the comparison in Case 3 and Case 4). Therefore, comparing with the factors: having exposures and networks and supports from govt. and organizations, only 15 out of 25 respondents mentioned about educational level as an influencing factor to youths' livelihoods.

Regarding youths' decision and approach to livelihoods, parents and family backgrounds is said to be another factors influencing them. The youths in Pa-O SAZ come up with the ideas and plans to work on agricultural livelihoods as most of their parents and families work on it. However, not every generation of farmer families earn agricultural livelihoods, some migrate for work. Even though they decide to do it, the ways they approach to it are different from their parents and families. This means that parents and families are not the strong factors influencing the youths on how they approach their livelihoods. They use modern techniques like grafting and organic farms as well as attempt for value-added products not because of their parents' influence but because of the external experiences and exposures and support from the organizations. Hence, only 10 respondents mentioned about the influence of parents and families on youths' livelihoods. All of the youths in this study said that they could decide what they want to do for their livelihood on their own. Nevertheless, some explained that they needed to consider for their parents' situation such as their health and necessity of care. This can be regarded as the emotional influence which is also related with tradition and customs. In Myanmar, parents are not emotionally or physically independent when they get old. At that time, the children need to take care of them by living with them. This situation makes some youths change their initial goal for livelihoods considering for their parents.

A Pa-O girl working at Yangon said, during her return to her parents,

“I am thinking to resign from current work and come back home as my parents are living here alone. I also have intention to do organic farming though I like

working at Yangon.” – (In-depth interview, Young Migrant, 11th July 2020)

The youths in Pa-O SAZ also decide and approach their livelihoods depending on how much they can invest for it and where they can get financial support to invest for their livelihoods. Though not every livelihood needs financial investment, it can support the youths to be educated and equipped with some skills which they need for their livelihoods. However, this factor is much related with the first factor, having experiences and exposures. If the youths have exposures and social networks, it will be easier for them to access to financial support. Therefore, only 10 respondents said that access to financial support is one of the factors influencing the situations of youths' livelihood in Pa-O SAZ.

Another important factor which 20 respondents mentioned is the support from government and organizations for the opportunities of the youths' livelihood in Pa-O SAZ. Being a SAZ, the respondents in this study said that the policies and plans for PNO and central government mattered a lot for their livelihood opportunities, especially for the youths. For instance, as most youths in rural areas of Pa-O SAZ do not finish lower or upper secondary level of education, there should be policies and planning for vocational trainings for Pa-O youths and for access to any work suited with their vocational skills. Also for agriculture, the youths need the support of central government or PNO for access to reliable information on market, land types and techniques. They expect that PNO will implement those activities in collaboration with other organizations like development practitioners. According to the respondents, making strategic policies and plans plays a vital role for strengthening livelihood opportunities for the youths and it can only be done by government or policy-making level with the support of local and international organizations.

The following cases from in-depth interviews are the examples to show how these factors are influencing the youths in Pa-O SAZ regarding their livelihoods.

Case 3: A young farm manager with a dream to have his own farm

“A 24-year-old Pa-O boy is working as a farm manager at Tamoeout Farms for one and half years. He does not finish upper secondary level (matriculation) and is from a poor family from a

village of Hopong Township. He has to maintain about 150-acre wide avocado farm and manage about 20 day labors working at the farms. Though working at a farm is not his initial goal, he is satisfied with current situation. He wanted to be a teacher if he could pass matriculation exam. However, he changed his mind now that he wants to own a farm like his employer. According to him, working as labor and manager at farms is his only experience and he will continue to work at Tamoeout Farms. He still does not have any idea or plan for his ambition for livelihoods to own a farm. As he does not have other exposures and networks to get support from other organizations apart from working at Tamoeout farms, he does not know how to start and plan to set his own livelihood. So, it is just like a dream for him without any tangible plan for the moment.”

Case 4: A girl working at CBO with a plan to start her own business

“A 24-year-old girl from a poor family of a village in Hsihseng Township is working at a CBO named “Seven Star”. This organization is providing local farmers with some modern techniques of plantation and financial support through trainings and micro-finance program. She is living with her mother and does not finish upper secondary level of education (matriculation). She has been working as a focal person or community leader of her village for this organization for two years. She has to manage the process of giving loans in her village and assists to facilitate the trainings for agricultural techniques. She also has her own farms of pineapple which is about two acres wide. She tried to buy those farmlands with the support of loan from micro-finance. She used traditional way for growing pineapple before she joined that organization. After she has joined and worked for that organization, she tries to use organic plantation for her farms due to the trainings and exposures from it. Now, she is also trying to produce home-made pineapple wine and sell it through social media. Her experiences and exposures from working for a CBO and managing her own farms make

her decide to continue both livelihoods as she assures that she gets benefit from both. From the organization, she gets more knowledge on agriculture and builds networks with more people whereas she feels her pineapple farms as her sustainable livelihoods since she can rely on it in the long run. She also has intention to be an entrepreneur and is now on the way to it. Although she does not finish upper secondary level of education and does not have strong financial background like the boy working at the farm, her experiences and networks help her plan to start her own business. She came to have social network and access to loan through her works at CBO.”

These two cases can be compared to highlight the influencing factors of having experiences and exposures as well as support from government and organization to the youths’ livelihoods. The youths in these cases are in similar age and in same economic and educational background. The difference between them is that a girl has joined and worked with a CBO and exposures with social media. Moreover, as she got support from micro-finance program, she could buy small acres of farmlands. For the boy, he does not achieve such experience and support for his livelihoods. Consequently, despite his ambition, he does not have practical plans yet for his livelihood due to the lack of supports from organizations to get external experience, exposure and networks.

5.2. Factors Promoting Youths’ Participation in Agriculture

Based on the interviews and observations, it is explored that Pa-O youths’ participation in agriculture can be promoted through some ways such as agricultural trainings, support for value-added products and access to information on market, finance, types of soil and crops, value-chain and social networks. This study interviewed and observed two organizations which give agricultural trainings and supports to local farmers as well as explored the role of access to knowledge or information for youths’ livelihoods from the interviews with all of the respondents.

5.2.1. Naung Kham Development Center



Figure 10: Farms at Naung Kham Development Center (Photo Credit: Author)

Naung Kham Development Center located in Hopong Township was first founded by Metta Development Foundation in 2002. With the collaboration between Metta Development Foundation and PNO, there were trainings on farming techniques and value-chain process named ‘Farmer Field School (FFS)’ as well as capacity buildings for local people in Pa-O SAZ. They also gave Training of Trainers (ToT) in order to that those who finish ToT can be involved in later trainings as the facilitators or the trainers. All of these programs are funded by LIFT and Denmark through the technical and administrative support of Metta foundation.

Over the years, FFS could produce about 60 to 70 trainers who could later work at that program as moderators, coordinators and trainers. The managers said that there were over 200 trainees for agricultural trainings and over 300 trainees for community facility trainings. In 2018, Metta development Foundation handed over the training center and the programs to PNO as they agreed at the beginning. When they started to collaborate to organize those trainings, they agreed to hand over the center and training program to local organization after 10 years. However, after 10 years in 2013, they both agreed to run the programs under the administration of Metta foundation more five years. Therefore, PNO started to lead the center and run the program on its own starting from 2018.

When PNO started to manage the center, they faced many challenges as all of the trainers and moderators from former programs left the center and continued working with Metta foundation. This is because PNO could not give salary as much

as Metta foundation did and those young trainers needed to have regular income. Therefore, as PNO could not keep those trainers, they had to hire other youths from the community who could volunteer at the center. Moreover, they also have challenges to get fund from NGOs and INGOs like before. Despite the challenges, PNO prefers to manage and run the center on its own as a local organization. Hence, they try to continue some agricultural trainings as much as they can share. Then, the center also provides accommodation services to other organizations and companies for their trainings or retreatment programs. They also support the community for value-chain. Now, the manager of the center is trying value-chain for coffee in cooperation with Myanmar Coffee Association (MCA). They also have Facebook Page named “Naung Kham Development Center” on which they share information of services fees for accommodation and other activities at the center.

5.2.2. Naung Kar Community Development Center



Figure 11: Naung Kar Community Development Center (Photo Credit: Author)

Naung Kar Community Development Center located in Naung Kar village of Taunggyi Township gives trainings on agriculture and livelihoods for the local farmers and the youths. This center was founded with the cooperation of Terra People Association (TPA) from Japan and Department of Development of Border Areas and National Races (Na Ta La – the common short term of the department name in Burmese) in 2005. TPA provides the center with financial and technical supports. Though the center is not in Pa-O SAZ and is for every ethnic minorities from rural

areas, most of the trainers and trainees in that development center are Pa-O people from Pa-O SAZ.

There are three types of trainings: three-day trainings which they go to the villages and give trainings on organic livestock farm to the villagers, seven-day trainings which they call for applications from any places without restrictions of age and educational level and three-month trainings for the youths from any rural areas with at least upper secondary level of education and between the age of 18 and 25. All of the trainings give techniques for organic livestock farm and only three-month trainings include providing other livelihood skills such as sewing machine for girls and mechanic skills for boys. They organize seven-day trainings seven times a year and three-month trainings three times a year. Therefore, there are ten times of trainings they organize in the center as camp. There is no fixed number for three-day trainings which they give at the villages that invite them. They accept around 20 trainees for seven-day trainings and 10 trainees for three-month trainings. The applicants for three-month trainings have to sit oral interviews and those for seven-day trainings do not need to do that. The organizers close the application after 20 to 25 applicants and they defer the rest of the applicants to next trainings. Also, they try to have gender balance for every trainings. Each trainee has to give 10,000MMK for seven-day trainings and 30,000MMK for three-month trainings. These training fees are for the costs of their meals and other expenses. All of the trainees have to stay at the center during the training periods.

There are about eight trainers for seven-day trainings and 12 or 13 trainers for three-month trainings. Most of the trainers are alumni of the previous trainings and they are not permanent staff at the center. Some from TPA, agriculture department and Na Ta La are also involved as trainers for the trainings. All of the trainers are supporting the trainings as volunteers. Both type of trainings include the course works and practical activities for organic farming. For practical activities, the trainees are allowed to plant what they like to test on the farms of the center during the trainings. Then, they check the progress of the plantation, brainstorm the causes of failed plantation and find solution for it together with the team. There are also assessments to follow up the impacts of the trainings. They find out that about 60 percent of the trainees apply the techniques of organic livestock farms. Most of the elder people who

joined seven-day trainings cannot actually adapt with the new techniques and prefer to their traditional ways which they feel more comfortable and easier. Therefore, they do not find that the use of chemicals for farming is decreased. To meet with that target, they need more participation of youths in their trainings and agriculture. According to the manager of the center, TPA will stop funding in 2021. However, he said that they would try to continue the trainings in cooperation with Pa-O youth organizations for technical and financial supports.

5.2.3. Role of Access to Knowledge Capital for Youths' Livelihood in Pa-O SAZ



Figure 12: Group Discussion with Yoma Khun Farms Owners
(Photo Credit: Hnin Su)

Access to knowledge capital is the most common thing that the respondents in this study talked about regarding its challenges and opportunities for the youths' livelihoods in Pa-O SAZ. As explained in section 3.2.6., the support for the knowledge capital is the major necessity for the youths as it is important for them to know how to attempt for access to market, what to plant on which soil, which technique to use to get good-quality products and how to approach value-chain of agricultural products. This is also related with the influencing factor *'having*

experiences and exposures’ discussed in section 5.1. as the youths can get a lot of information on livelihood opportunities through those experiences and exposures. Vice versa, the knowledge such as ‘know-how’ can also provide them with the accesses to have more experiences, exposures and connect with more people.

Currently, the most common sources for the youths in Pa-O SAZ to get knowledge is social media such as Facebook and Viber as well as agricultural applications like Green Way. Although not every youth can access to internet and social media, according to the respondents, this stand as the most common channel for getting knowledge or information not only in Pa-O but also in most of the regions Myanmar. The most popular social media in Myanmar is Facebook. Also in Pa-O SAZ, the youths can get rich of news and information which are supportive for sufficient knowledge and make networks with diversities of people. Moreover, the young farm owners and entrepreneurs can advertise their agro-products, services and activities on Facebook. There are also Facebook groups where the youths can connect with one another and share information, e.g. “The common space for Pa-O people” and “Pa-O Youth Generation Network”.

“If we want to be entrepreneurs, we need to have enough data and information or knowledge about our businesses such as where we should start it, what others are doing about it, how it is demanding in the market, etc. Knowledge is the weapon in this age.” – (Group Discussion, Young Entrepreneur 1, 4th July 2020)

Although the information about what is happening in their region can flow fast to the community through social media, there is no guarantee that all of the information they get from social media are right and reliable if it is not from the source of official news media. They said that having access to rich information could not be regarded as getting right information because media or digital literacy has been quite low in Myanmar, especially in rural areas. Hence, not all of information can be supportive to have access to knowledge capital. In addition, they cannot get the exact and technical data such as the types of crops and soil in their region from social media. Especially, the youths who attempt for agro-business in modern ways complain that they do not have enough knowledge with right data and information

about their business. According to the youths in this study, it will be better for them if government can provide them with such kinds of data and information for respective livelihood knowledge through official mechanism such as websites or monthly report through televisions of newspaper for those who cannot access to internet and websites.

5.3. Conclusion

Based on the findings from section 5.1. Factors Influencing Pa-O Youths' in Deciding and Approaching Their Livelihoods, the factors of having experiences and exposures, support from government and organizations and education are stronger than the factors of parents and families and access to finance. Hence, depending on how much experience they have, what kind of support they get from government and organizations and their educational level, there are differences of livelihood choices and approaches between the youths from similar family and financial status. The findings from interviews and observations show that the youths having those three stronger factors decide to do two kinds of works at the same time, meaning that they prefer to livelihood diversification rather than relying on only one type of livelihood. They also want to extend their livelihoods as much as they can. However, it is also explored that these factors influencing the youths' livelihoods do not stand separately, they are quite related to one another.

In addition to the factors influencing youths' livelihoods, this chapter explores the factors promoting their participation in agriculture as the relative findings from the interviews and observations. The promoting factors found out in this study are the supports from government, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and the private sectors for trainings on agriculture and for providing financial and technical supports. According to the managers of training center, most of the trainees for agricultural trainings are youths though most trainings do not limit the age. On the other hands, the youths interviewed in this study said that only those who already do farming should join the agricultural trainings. Sometimes, the community or the organizations assign some youths to join the trainings with quota system. However, if those youths are not enthusiastic to work on agricultural livelihoods, what they have learnt from the trainings will be just in

vain. Therefore, the findings suggest that the selection process for the trainings should be more specific.

Also, current situation of Pa-O youths for access to knowledge is also discussed as one of the promoting factor for their livelihoods and agriculture. According to the findings, it can be said that most youths can access to rich information about what is happening in their regions and connect with one another through social media. On the other hand, the challenge to access to knowledge capital for livelihoods is mentioned as the most common one in section 3.2.6, based on the findings. Despite of rich information, the youths face the challenges of lack of knowledge which is a combination of exact and technical data as well as information regarding the entrepreneurships they want to do. Therefore, it is found out that the role of government and policy-making body is important to create the mechanisms for access to sufficient knowledge on each sector of the regions.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This chapter offers a conclusion with the discussion and recommendation based on the analysis of the findings throughout the thesis. The section 6.1., summary of findings and analysis, is followed with discussion of the analysis on the findings in the section 6.2. in order to answer the main question of the research, “*How can sustainable livelihood opportunities be enhanced by promoting youths’ participation in agriculture in Pa-O self-administered zone (SAZ)?*” The section 6.3. contributes the reflection on the application of SLA in studying rural livelihoods. Finally, the section 6.4. provides recommendations for further research in the field of youths, agriculture and sustainable livelihoods.

6.1. Summary of Findings and Analysis

This thesis explores how sustainable livelihood opportunities can be enhanced by promoting youths’ participation in agriculture by focusing on the youths in Pa-O SAZ. With the use of SLA which is regarded as a holistic tool in analyzing rural livelihoods, this study examines the challenges for Pa-O youths regarding their livelihoods, their strengths and contributions to agricultural development and the influencing factors to them in deciding their livelihoods as well as the promoting factors in approaching agricultural livelihoods.

In Chapter 3, the challenges that the people in Pa-O SAZ face for their livelihoods are explored and analyzed based on the five livelihood assets described in SLA; natural capital, financial capital, physical capital, social capital and human capital. Among those five capitals, the findings show that the access to social capital is the least challenging for both elder generation and younger generation in Pa-O SAZ. While the access to financial capital is the most challenging one for the elders, the access to financial and natural capitals are the most challenges for the youths. The result shows that the youths face more challenges for natural capital and less challenges for physical, social and human capitals than the elders. According to the findings in this study, it can be analyzed that except the access to financial capital, the

challenges for other capitals of SLA can vary for the people depending on their age and exposures. In the meanwhile, it can be said that the access to financial capital is not related to age and exposure, but related to family background and support of the outsiders such as government or non-government organizations. The other significant finding in Chapter 3 is the lack of knowledge which is a combination of right and reliable information or dataset on market access, market price, land or soil type for growing the right vegetables and fruits on it as well as policies and programs regarding agriculture and livelihoods. The access to knowledge stands as the most demanding and challenging one both for the elders and the youths in Pa-O SAZ. Then, the findings on the impacts of Covid 19 on rural livelihoods in this part results the change in perspective on the role of migration and remittances. The remittance is no more a reliable and sustainable income source for the Pa-O youths who migrate unofficially to bordering countries and work as unskilled or random labors. Therefore, the analysis on the findings in Chapter 3 highlights the challenges or weakness for the youths to have access to natural capital, especially access to land tenure and ownership, access to financial supports, and access to knowledge through effective mechanisms of reliable information in approaching their livelihoods.

Chapter 4 examines the differences in attitudes, experiences, approaches, capacities and skills between the youths and the elders to understand on their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges while working on agricultural livelihoods and making this sector developed. The findings in this part highlights the significant and vital roles of the youths in developing the agricultural sector in Pa-O SAZ. The strengths of the youths in working on agricultural livelihoods are having more exposures, capabilities to adapt with new techniques of planting, innovative ways for market access and value chain of agro-products as well as to connect with varieties of people from day labors to CSOs and NGOs. Moreover, the way they see agriculture is also different from the elders that they see it as their business or entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the youths have less experiences on farming and less access to land ownership as they cannot own or inherit the farmland until they can buy it or their parents pass away. Moreover, it is more challenging for the youths than for the elders to participate in policy and decision making level in their region. Although there is Pa-O Youth Organization under PNO, their voices are not well

counted as contribution for policy making in PNO. This chapter focuses on the differences in working on agricultural livelihoods from the perspectives of age difference. However, the findings suggests that the differences in educational and financial background can also shape how people approach and achieve benefits from agriculture. While Chapter 3 suggests how to reduce the challenges for the youths to work on agriculture, Chapter 4 highlights the youths' contribution to agricultural development and livelihood enhancement in Pa-O SAZ. The findings on the weakness of youths comparing the elders also suggest to support them with more experiences and ownership sense for farming and with the chance to participate in decision and policy making process. Understanding the strengths and weakness of the youths as well as their contributions to agricultural livelihoods supports the argument that their participation should be promoted to enhance sustainable livelihoods and provides more consideration on how to support them.

In section 5.1., factors influencing Pa-O youths in deciding their livelihoods and factors promoting their participation in agriculture are explored to understand how to promote youths' participation in agriculture. In exploring factors influencing Pa-O youths in deciding and approaching their livelihoods, it is found out that the factors of having experiences and exposures, support from government and organizations and education are stronger than the factors of parents and families' background and access to finance. Therefore, there can be differences in livelihood choices and approaches between the youths from similar family and financial status, depending on how much experience and exposure they have, what kind of support they get from government and organizations and their educational level. The findings of this chapter, however, show that these factors influencing the youths' livelihoods do not stand separately, they are quite related to one another. The findings on influencing factors are analyzed based on the concepts of structures and processes of SLA. The promoting factors for Pa-O youths' participation in agriculture found out in this study are the supports from government, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and the private sectors for trainings on agriculture as well as for providing financial and technical supports. The another promoting for their participation in agriculture is the access to knowledge which also stands as the most common challenge in terms of livelihood capitals as described in chapter 3. The findings in chapter 5 show that most youths can

access to rich information about what is happening in their regions and connect with one another through social media. However, as most of rich information through social media are not verified well, it does not guarantee the access to reliable knowledge. Hence, the youths still face the challenges of lack of exact and technical data and information regarding the entrepreneurship they want to do.

Addressing the livelihood challenges for the youths, exploring their vital role and contributions to agricultural development and reflecting the influencing and promoting factors for the youths regarding the agricultural livelihoods in Chapter 3, 4 and 5, the findings suggest that agriculture stands as a sustainable livelihood in Pa-O SAZ and the youths take major role for developing agricultural sector and enhancing more sustainable livelihoods there. Therefore, the challenges for them to access to natural, financial and knowledge capitals should be reduced through policies and plans in cooperation between government and non-government organizations such as INGOs, NGOs, CSOs/CBOs, entrepreneurs and experts.

6.2. Discussion

According to the findings from the interviews and observations, it is obvious that the agricultural sector can be developed through the youths' participation in it. This is because the old generation do not prefer to change the farming practices and the modern techniques are also out of their reach. In Pa-O SAZ, those who are attempting the value-chain, new techniques for farming (E.g., Avocado plantation) and extension of market areas are only the youths, not the elders. The agricultural sector there has been developed only in those ways. Relatively, developing agricultural livelihoods is also a way to enhance more livelihood opportunities in rural areas. For instance, having more farms can employ the local people in rural areas. Moreover, as agriculture plays a vital role for eco-tourism which can be popular business in rural areas in the future, most youths working on agricultural livelihood aim for eco-tourism as their long-term business plan in Pa-O SAZ.

According to Chambers and Conway (1992), sustainable livelihood is defined as follows.

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A

livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in short and long term. (Chambers and Conway 1992)

From the perspectives or narratives of the respondents in this study, sustainable livelihoods can be simply defined as the livelihood on which they can rely on for regular income and well-being in any situation as well as having guarantee for their next generations. Before the time of pandemic, migration was one of the most reliable income sources for them. In terms of wages, it is not deniable that the remittance is much more reliable than the profit they get from farming. However, due to the pandemic, they come to understand that there will not be no job security only if they rely on migrating to work abroad unofficially. They start to consider to do farming which they think they cannot get fired and lose job easily. Therefore, the sustainable livelihood is not only about having regular and enough income but also about job security in the long term. Based on the analysis of the findings, the agriculture remains as a sustainable livelihood for the local people in Pa-O SAZ despite some weaknesses such as not having monthly income, needs of physical hard works and insecure land ownership. Therefore, the results of this study also show that the diversification; working on agriculture as a main livelihood together with other side jobs like working at companies or organizations and migration at the same time, is the most preferred livelihood strategy for the local people in Pa-O SAZ.

The Pa-O youths also prefer diversification strategy for their livelihoods. However, as they want to work on agricultural livelihood as their main and sustainable one, the barriers and challenges for the regarding agriculture should be well addressed and reduced. They are not confident to fully rely on agricultural sector as a promising livelihood for them despite their willingness to work on it. This is because of such challenges as difficult access to land ownership and financial support as well as the limited access to knowledge capital which combines rich and reliable information. The analysis of the findings shows that having exposures, network and knowledge on agricultural livelihoods is the main influencing factor to the youths in

deciding their livelihood strategies and approaching their livelihood outcomes. According to the youths in this study, the most necessary support for them is the knowledge 'know-how' on their preferred livelihoods which should be regarded as one of the capitals for enhancing sustainable livelihoods in rural areas.

One of the objectives of sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) is to improve poor people's access to information (DFID 2000). On the other hand, 'information as a resource' is not just affected by its environment, but is itself an actor affecting other elements in its environment (Martin 1995). Knowledge is said to consist of data or information that have been organized and processed to convey understanding, experience, accumulated learning, and expertise as they apply to current problem or activity. In this study, the findings on the challenges for the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods are the evidences to show that knowledge 'know-how' plays a significant role to properly work on their preferred livelihoods. Hence, this study suggests to focus on the access to knowledge as a separate capital, not only as one of the elements of human capital.

The result of this study argues that agriculture is the main and sustainable livelihood in Pa-O SAZ and diversification stands as the most preferred livelihood strategy in the region. Based on the analysis of the findings, it can be said that youths' participation contributes a lot to agricultural development. Consequently, more sustainable livelihoods can be enhanced through the development of agricultural sector in the region. In addition, when this sector is developed, it will enable to accommodate the reliable wages or income for the youths in rural areas. Therefore, promoting youths' participation in agriculture is a must not only for agricultural development but also for enhancing the sustainable livelihood opportunities and providing the employments for the youths in rural areas.

6.3. Reflection on the Application of SLA in Studying Rural Livelihoods

By exploring and analyzing the livelihood conditions and challenges based on the concepts of SLA, this study also raises the issues of some limitations in the use of SLA for rural livelihoods, especially in ethnic minority areas. When the findings in Chapter 3 are analyzed based on five capitals of SLA, it is found out that not every challenge mentioned by the respondents can be distinguished and categorized under

five capitals as they are related to more than one type of capitals. For instance, the need of knowledge and information is said to be an outstanding capital rather than being a part of social or human capital. Another example is the challenge for market access which includes the issues of market instability and exploitation of the crop traders (brokers). This issue is also related to the lack of sufficient knowledge and information. Such kind of issues are challenging to be categorized as an issue for specific capital. In addition, as many other critics, SLA does not well provide to understand the underlying reasons why the people in rural areas face these challenges to access their livelihood capitals. Nevertheless, this study explores those reasons despite of some limitations.

In the ethnic minority area with the history of armed conflicts like Pa-O SAZ, it is necessary to take consideration of structural contexts in order to understand the livelihood conditions there. However, the SAL does not provide the study with the specific focus on structural contexts such as the impacts of armed conflicts on socio-economic conditions of the local people. This is said to be another limitations of the application of SLA for studying rural livelihoods. Relatively, SLA has less focus on differences in diverse social classes. With the application of SLA, it is limited to emphasize on the intersectional issues of youths with different conditions in terms of family backgrounds, educational level, access to finance, etc.

Overall, the sustainable livelihood framework is said to be more about the process of how livelihood outcome is achieved through specific strategies with accesses to the capitals under transforming structures. It has less focus on the relation between livelihoods and human agencies like why and how people choose to do certain livelihoods. Livelihoods are at least as much about the social and cultural bases of life and living, as the material ones (Rigg 2007). Social and cultural contexts of the rural people cannot be neglected in studying rural livelihoods. As the intention of SLA is to reduce poverty, it should also be modified in order to explore and understand the causes of poverty like why they lack access to livelihood capitals. In addition, it should also examine the livelihood challenges beyond the limited access to capitals. To understand the rural livelihoods, therefore, it is necessary to explore what kinds of people choose to do what for their livelihood as well as why and how they approach to it.

6.4. Further Research

This study focuses on Pa-O self-administered zone having some significant features such as having its own autonomy and government body which is in same level with district level of union government, strong and united community and geographical strengths. Therefore, the results from this study cannot reflect or represent the situations in other rural areas of Myanmar. In addition, as this is based on SLA and focuses the communities (the youths) as the unit of the study, there should be other similar studies focusing on the intersectional issues among the youths from different backgrounds and situations. As this study highlights the vital role of knowledge capital for livelihoods, there should be more detailed studies on how it can contribute to rural livelihoods and how it can be promoted through social networks or the use of digital platforms such as Websites, Facebook, Viber, and Applications. The result of this study also points out that agricultural sector can be developed youths' participation in it. Therefore, the transformation of agricultural techniques from traditional way to innovative or modern way through youths' effort such as the specific cases of organic farming, mechanization and value-chain. To understand more comprehensive picture of the youths' participation in agriculture and their contribution to enhancing sustainable livelihoods in rural areas of Myanmar, suggestions for further research are described as follows.

- Youths' participation in agriculture for enhancing sustainable livelihoods: Case studies of rural areas in delta and dry zone of Myanmar
- Understanding the intersectional issues of youths and rural livelihoods: how the youths are conditioned in approaching their livelihoods in rural areas
- Knowledge as a capital for strengthening rural livelihoods in Myanmar: Studies on the use of social networks and digital platforms for getting right and reliable knowledge and information
- Agricultural transformation from traditional to modern technique in Myanmar: Case studies of youths' attempts for organic farming, mechanization and value-chain



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APPENDIX

Sample Questions

Questions for Key Informant Interviews (Pa-O National Organization)

- Date:
 - Duration:
 - Name:
 - Organization:
 - Position:
 - Age:
 - Sex:
 - Contact Number (optional):
 - Address (optional):
1. How is Pa-O National Organization working for the sectors of youths and agriculture in Pa-O self-administered zone?
 - What is the autonomy of Pa-O National Organization to make development policies and plans in this area?
 - Which organizations do you cooperate with in working for development of this area?
 - How are you implement the development plans especially for the youths and agriculture and what kinds of challenges do you have in doing so?
 - Please explain about those plans or supports: how to implement, how to share the information to targeted people, challenges, and who get benefit for what.
 - How do you think the outcomes/impacts of those programs or supports on the youths' participation in agriculture?
 2. What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people in Pa-O SAZ and why do they have those challenges?
 - What are the challenges for the people in rural areas regarding their livelihoods (including the challenges due to covid-19)? And why are they facing those challenges?
 - What are specific challenges for them to work on agricultural livelihoods?

How do the youths contribute to agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?

- How do you think the changes in agricultural sector when youths come to involve in it?
- What are the differences between the youths and the elders in working on agricultural livelihoods?
- What kinds of programs or supports does your organization implement for agricultural development in this area? What is their goal?

4 How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihoods and what factors are promoting their participation in agriculture?

- How will you define the youths in the context of Pa-O self-administered zone? (age, characteristics)
- What factors are influencing the youths in deciding their livelihoods (e.g., parents' influence, the economic condition of their families or educational background)?
- Why do you think the youths in rural areas are or are not willing to do agricultural livelihoods?
- What are the challenges for the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods in comparison with other livelihoods?
- What factors are promoting or strengthening the youths' participation in agriculture in Pa-O SAZ?

5. How can youths' participation in agriculture be promoted and supported in order to enhance sustainable livelihoods in rural areas?

- In your opinion, what is the most sustainable livelihood for the youths and for the rural areas?
- How does youths' participation in agriculture effect on enhancing sustainable livelihoods here? Please give example.
- How can the youths be supported to be able to work on agricultural livelihood if they are willing to do it?

Questions for Key Informant Interviews (CSOs, NGOs)

- Date:
 - Duration:
 - Name:
 - Organization:
 - Position:
 - Age:
 - Sex:
 - Contact Number (optional):
 - Address (optional):
1. How is your Organization working for the sectors of youths and agriculture in Pa-O self-administered zone?
 - Which organizations do you cooperate with in working for development of this area?
 - How are you implement the development plans especially for the youths and agriculture and what kinds of challenges do you have in doing so?
 - Please explain about those plans or supports: how to implement, how to share the information to targeted people, challenges, and who get benefit for what.
 - How do you think the outcomes/impacts of those programs or supports on the youths' participation in agriculture?
 2. What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people in Pa-O SAZ and why do they have those challenges?
 - What are the challenges for the people in rural areas regarding their livelihoods (including the challenges due to covid-19)? And why are they facing those challenges?
 - What are specific challenges for them to work on agricultural livelihoods?
 3. How do the youths contribute to agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?
 - How do you think the changes in agricultural sector when youths come to involve in it?
 - What are the differences between the youths and the elders in working on agricultural livelihoods?

- What kinds of programs or supports does your organization implement for agricultural development in this area? What is their goal?
4. How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihoods and what factors are promoting their participation in agriculture?
- How will you define the youths in the context of Pa-O self-administered zone? (age, characteristics)
 - What factors are influencing the youths in deciding their livelihoods (e.g., parents' influence, the economic condition of their families or educational background)?
 - Why do you think the youths in rural areas are or are not willing to do agricultural livelihoods?
 - What are the challenges for the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods in comparison with other livelihoods?
 - What factors are promoting or strengthening the youths' participation in agriculture in Pa-O SAZ?
5. How can youths' participation in agriculture be promoted and supported in order to enhance sustainable livelihoods in rural areas?
- In your opinion, what is the most sustainable livelihood for the youths and for the rural areas?
 - How does youths' participation in agriculture effect on enhancing sustainable livelihoods here? Please give example.
 - How can the youths be supported to be able to work on agricultural livelihood if they are willing to do it?

Questions for In-depth Interviews and Group Discussion (Respondents working on agricultural livelihoods)

- Date:
- Duration:
- Name:
- Organization:
- Position:
- Age:
- Sex:
- Contact Number (optional):
- Address (optional):

1. What are the livelihood and agricultural challenges for the people in Pa-O SAZ and why do they have those challenges?

- What are the challenges for the people in rural areas regarding their livelihoods (including the challenges due to covid-19)? And why are they facing those challenges? **How about for you in working on this agricultural livelihoods?**
- What are specific challenges for them to work on agricultural livelihoods?

2. How do the youths contribute to agricultural development in Pa-O SAZ, in contrast to the elders?

- How do you think the changes in agricultural sector when youths come to involve in it?
- What are the differences between the youths and the elders in working on agricultural livelihoods?
- **What is your strength to work on agricultural livelihoods and do you have any success story for farming? Could you please explain me that?**

3. How do the youths in Pa-O SAZ usually make decision regarding their livelihoods and what factors are promoting their participation in agriculture?

- How will you define the youths in the context of Pa-O self-administered zone? (age, characteristics)

- What factors are influencing the youths in deciding their livelihoods (e.g., parents' influence, the economic condition of their families or educational background)?
 - Why do you think the youths in rural areas are or are not willing to do agricultural livelihoods?
 - What are the challenges for the youths to work on agricultural livelihoods in comparison with other livelihoods?
 - What factors are promoting or strengthening the youths' participation in agriculture in Pa-O SAZ?
 - **Why did you decide to do this? How long have you been doing this?**
 - **Have you ever done other non-farm works? If yes, what is that?**
 - **How is it different from agricultural works? What do you prefer and why?**
 - **Have you ever joined those programs or got the supports? If yes, which programs or supports? How is it supportive for your agricultural livelihoods?**
 - **How do you think the outcomes/impacts of those programs or supports on the youths' participation in agriculture?**
4. How can youths' participation in agriculture be promoted and supported in order to enhance sustainable livelihoods in rural areas?
- In your opinion, what is the most sustainable livelihood for the youths and for the rural areas?
 - How does youths' participation in agriculture effect on enhancing sustainable livelihoods here? Please give example.
 - How can the youths be supported to be able to work on agricultural livelihood if they are willing to do it?

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