

The Look East Policy From Peoples' Perspective

A Study on Mizoram

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Acronym

AEP:	Act East Policy
ASEAN:	Association of South East Asian Nations
BADP:	Border Area Development Programme
BCIM :	Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar
BIMSTEC:	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BRO:	Border Roads Organization
CMR:	Child Mortality Rate
DGHS:	Director General of Health Service
DONER:	Development of North East Region
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
ICCR:	Indian Council of Cultural Relations
ICP:	Integrated Check Post
IDSK:	Institute of Development Studies Kolkata
IIED:	Indian Institute of Enterprise Development
IIFT:	Indian Institute of Foreign Trade
IMR:	Infant Mortality Rate
LCS:	Land Customs Station
LEP:	Look East Policy
NCEAR:	National Council for Economic and Applied Research
NEI:	North East India
NFI:	National Foundation For India
MMR:	Maternal Mortality Rate
PMGSY:	Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojna
PPP:	Public-Private Partnership
PRA:	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RIS:	Research and Information System for Developing Countries
SAARC:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

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About the Project

This is an exploratory study that seeks to demystify the hard notion of trade and governance related aspects of the Look East Policy and to field the study on the border landers at Champhai-Zokhawthar border of Mizoram and Myanmar for understanding the nature of people-to-people contact and the kind of future they foresee under the LEP regime. There are significant commonalities among the border communities of Mizoram and Myanmar which, if cultivated properly, could deepen people-to-people contact, ensure good governance, reduce administrative cost of governance and ease up trade transaction across the border.

Three major research questions were raised in the study::

1. What are the perceptual hiatuses between the state and the ethnic communities and the people within the community in terms of their socio-economic status and location vis-à-vis the Look East Policy?
2. Concomitantly, what are the difference of perception regarding the trade space and the ethnic space in the bordering areas?
3. How do the ethnic communities 'foresee' their future under the regime of the Look East Policy?

The field study was conducted in Champhai and Zokhawthar on the Mizoram-Myanmar border and in Zokhamawii market in Tedim district in the Chin State of Myanmar. The generic value of the study is its holistic nature which seeks to find the peoples' perception (including the gender perception) about the Look East Policy; their perception about market space and people to people co-operation and the way they foresee their future under the LEP regime. This study is a reality check of the LEP after about quarter of a century and almost a decade after the launch of the North East Vision 2020 by the Government of India.

Executive Summary

The Look East Policy (LEP) is a post-1990 construct of the Indian foreign policy that initially did not concern the North East India (NEI). NEI became critical for the LEP only after the proclamation of the North Eastern Region Vision 2020 in July, 2008. The Vision document gave a roadmap for development of the region and became an animated version of the LEP. The rich natural resource endowments of the region, its strategic location and higher potential for economic growth attracted attention of the policy makers and the investors towards this region. Precisely, four aspects of NEI became critical for the LEP: (i) connectivity and physical infrastructure for continental trade facilitation to South East Asia; (ii) trade and investment protocols; bi-lateral / multilateral cooperation and (iii) trade-related governance. The North East Region Vision 2020 factored a new dimension of people to people contact in the LEP. Some modus operandi of people-to-people contact is stated in the Vision but the list can yet be extended to include many others based on field inputs.

This study therefore takes the cue from the 'people-to-people contact' as stipulated in the NE Vision 2020 and makes a reality check of both the LEP and the Vision Document on the eastern-most part of the Mizoram-Myanmar border at Zokhawthar in the Champhai district of Mizoram and beyond the border, in Zokhamawii market (Rikhawdar) in Tedim district in the Chin state of Myanmar. As such, the trade potential on the cross-border region depends not merely on bi-lateral trade agreements but also on the people-to-people contact and ethnic cooperation for better trade facilitation and good governance. People-to-people contact in the border can be promoted largely in the petty trade space which is essentially a community process, not a state process. Such contact on

the border could also strengthen the mega trade regime under the LEP and ensure peoples' participation in trade and governance. The official view on LEP often ignored this fact in the beginning and belittled the community space of Northeast India. The official view was deeply mystified by state fetishism. The NE Vision 2020 attempted to rectify some of these shortcomings by factoring in the community process in the policy in order to ensure peace and governance, economic progress and prosperity. A recent manoeuvring of the LEP has been its re-naming, if not complete re-framing, as the 'Act East' Policy.

In this study, precisely three research questions were raised (i) peoples' perception about the LEP (ii) the perceptual gaps in the region regarding trade space and the ethnic space and (iii) peoples' perception about their foreseeable future under the policy. The study has attended these questions through secondary and primary sources. The process of the study included preparation of a background note followed by a state-level workshop, interviews with the key informants from Trade & Commerce Department, Customs Department, Station-In-Charge Zokhawthar Land Customs Station, structured questionnaire with community members, interview and group discussion with petty traders of Champhai and Zokhawthar (in Mizoram) and Zokhamawii in Myanmar, interview with village leader of Zote village in Champhai, where a Border *Haat* is proposed to be established and interview with the Export-Import Licence Holders in Champhai and Zokhamawii (Myanmar) to get their reflections on the trade process on the border and the practical difficulties associated with it.

Greater role of the women in the local economy is a persistent feature of this region.

They need greater strategic space for negotiation with the LEP that would certainly create avenues for fulfilling their aspirations for a better socio-economic future. Unfortunately, the gender dimension did not attract attention of LEP in Northeast India till the NE Vision 2020 made it explicit. This study has therefore factored in the gender dimension as a critical component.

Our respondents to the questionnaire mainly consisted of Mizos along with Paite, Ralte and Hmar tribes. All the respondents were literate and our sample consisted of youths mainly. Nearly half of the respondents were females. It came out that more than half of the respondents had never heard about LEP. Those who had heard about the policy, related it only with trade and infrastructure building. But their perception of trade and commerce and the gains from these were different from those of the state and the policy framers.

For the community, trade is of informal nature which is rooted in the communitarian ethos of economic and non-economic gains. On the other, trade for the state is strictly continental concept and the gain from it is essentially economic. Such trade is routed through Land Customs Stations. While the people perceived trade as an 'inter' (if not 'intra') community petty trade with ethnic participation and inter-ethnic co-operation, they were sceptic about their gains from continental trade. Their apprehension was that continental trade would benefit the 'Vai's' (non-Mizo or outsiders) to their exclusion although some of them viewed that increase in formal trade with better infrastructure would simultaneously also boost up the informal trade.

The community choice for a more open border with Myanmar was based on their perception about non-economic gains in terms of trans-ethnic co-operation and economic gain in terms of easy availability of petty goods and food grains from across the border. This is amply reflected in responses of the women. Majority of them also considered the Myanmar migrants as their kinsmen from whom they faced no threat. The citizens of Mizoram also gained from the migrant Myanmar who was their

source of cheap labour. On the other, the Myanmar migrants also benefitted as wage labour in Mizoram. Clan patronage played important role in this mutual gain. But there was a simultaneous threat perception of the Mizo people from some of the Myanmar migrants, who, they believe, often get engaged in various unscrupulous activities.

Women respondents, though literate, were unaware about various development schemes in the state. Their participation in community meetings was also very poor. Male dominance in the society being the biggest hindrance to women's participation, a sizeable section among the women opined that this could be overcome through a greater assertion of their right in the public sphere.

Perceptual hiatus on LEP and its projected future created a chasm between the state and the community which could be difficult to meet unless we attend the LEP in consonance with the NE Vision 2020. A common agenda for greater people to people co-operation between Mizoram and Myanmar, otherwise separated by political boundaries, holds the key to it under the LEP regime. But framing a common agenda in the region is yet residual.

Our precise reflections on the study are as below:

1. Contradictory understanding of space as a cartographic reality of the state and that as a clan boundary of the tribes that problematized relation between the state and the ethnics. This in turn also problematized the trade component of LEP across the region.
2. There is a chasm between the container trade that pass through the border and the petty trade on the border. The study focused on petty trade on the border which is performative precisely of two functions: (a) the ideational function in terms of community building people-to-people contact and (b) the economic function for community exchange and commodity exchange.
3. Container trade through the border and its focus on mega-trade would

exclude the community, lumpenise them and impel them either to take a spectator posture or to resort to different kinds of violence leading to mis-governance. This obstructs the process of container trade in a big way. To salvage the situation, the community and the civil society might act as a co-player with the state in peace keeping on the border. Some civil society organisations are trying to do this through constructive work approach. In Mizoram the state-church-society symbiosis is an initiative in this direction that could contribute to people-to-people contact and address the state-community hiatus.

4. The much hyped gender sensitive components of the NE Vision 2020 namely, Gender Sensitive Governance and Gender Responsive Budgets etc. are yet to be addressed and socially grounded. Most of the women are still unaware of the various social schemes and their rights. Their optimism about people-to-people contact is also stymied by different threat perceptions both from the state and from the community. This scenario shows lack of 'fit' between the policy and practice. Peoples' perception about their foreseeable future remained reified with petty border trade only which could in fact, not lift them above mere subsistence.

Methodology

This is a pilot study on Look East Policy through peoples' perspective in a border district of Mizoram. The universe of the study was purposively selected as Champhai district which has the largest land boundary with Myanmar. In the district, our study was located in Champhai and Zokhawthar towns. Champhai town is the districts headquarter while Zokhawthar town borders with Myanmar. The other side of Zokhawthar is Tedim district in the Chin state of Myanmar.

We prepared a background note for understanding the Look East Policy framework including the NER Vision 2020 and the "Act East" before we made the field intervention. Based on this note, the structured perception based questionnaire was prepared (Annexure M). The respondents were selected through a random sampling method keeping in mind the demographic, ethnic and occupational profiles in the two places. 42 per cent of our sample comprised of women as gender dimension was critical in this study.

The study followed a sequential methodological process beginning with a *state level workshop* on the broad theme of the study. The participants were from the

academic and students communities, women groups, civil society organisations and Mizoram Chamber of Commerce (List of participants in Annexure A). It was followed by administering *questionnaire* among the sample population in Champhai and Zokhawthar; *interview* with key informants in Champhai, Zokhawthar and Zokhamawii (List of persons interviewed in Annexure B); *field work* in Champhai and Zokhawthar markets (in Mizoram) and in Zokhamawii market (in the Chin State of Myanmar). The Places visited in this connection are given in Annexure C.

One-to-one discussions were held with the women vendors in the border markets of Champhai, Zokhawthar and Zokhamawii and interactions were made with key informants in all these places. One narrative could be recorded and one group discussion has been conducted with the women vendors for understanding their perceptions about LEP.

Photographic method was adopted in the study.

Analysis of the questionnaire generated data has been undertaken in this report.

Part I

Introduction

A Short Profile of Mizoram

The Resolution I of the Chin Lushai Conference of 1892 intended to bring the whole tract of the Chin-Lushai Hills under one administrative head. But under Resolution 5 of the Conference, the North and South Lushai Hills and some portions of the Arakan Hill Tracts were placed under Assam administration. So, during the colonial rule, the Lushai Hills (later known as Mizoram) remained as a district of the Assam province. The Government of India Act 1935 declared the Lushai Hills as an 'Excluded Area'. In the immediate post-Independence time also, it remained as a district of Assam with Autonomous District status under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.

The democratisation process was set in Mizoram in 1954 with the abolition of the Chieftainship system. In 1972, Mizoram became a Union Territory under the State Reorganisation Act of 1971 and in 1987; it became the 23rd state of the Indian Union, after the signing of the Mizo Accord. The Mizo Accord ended the long history of insurgency and peace returned after a long gap. At present the state of Mizoram has eight districts and three Autonomous District Councils (Chakma Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council and Lai Autonomous District Council) with a total geographical area of 21081 sq. km. The state has a 722 km. long international border: 404 km. with Myanmar in the East and the South and 318 km with Bangladesh in the West. The districts bordering with Myanmar are Champhai (having the largest

border), Serchhip, Lunglei and Saiha. The districts bordering with Bangladesh include Mamit, Lunglei and Longlai. The six-border districts have 26 Development Blocks, out of which 16 are Border Blocks. The state is connected with national highways including NH-44A (Aizawl to Manu, Tripura), NH-54 (Tuipang to Dabaka, Assam), NH-150 (Seling to Konima, Nagaland via Tipaimukh, Manipur) and NH-154 (Kanpui to Dhaleswar, Assam). There is a metre gauge line under the NF Railway at Bairabi on Mizoram-Cachar (Assam) border. The state has one airport at Lengpui connecting Aizawl to Kolkata, Guwahati and Imphal.

The topography of the state is mountainous with precipitous mountain slopes and deep ravines, streams, waterfalls and rivers. The highest peak of Mizoram is Phawngpui (Blue Mountain) which has a height of about 2200m. There are fifteen major rivers out of which seven confluences with Barak River before it enters Assam. The river Koladyne of South Mizoram flows



Map 1: Mizoram

south and enters Myanmar. Kolodyne and Karnaphuli rivers are navigable which lead to the ports of Akyab in Myanmar and Chittagong in Bangladesh.

According to The Statistical Handbook of Mizoram 2014, the total population of the state is 1097206 with 52 per cent of the people residing in urban areas. The growth rate of the population has been similar during 1991-2001 and 2001-11 with a decadal growth of about 23 per cent. Sex ratio in the state is 976. The state is sparsely populated with a population density of 52

persons per sq. km. Mizoram is the second most literate state in India with a gender gap in literacy of 4.3 per cent only.

Mizoram has 15 different tribes with varied demographic sizes. The Mizo or the Lushais are largest in number and comprise more than 72 per cent of the state's total tribal population followed by Chakma, Pawi, Kuki and Lakher tribes. Christianity is the major religion in the state and nearly 88 per cent of the population are Christians followed by the Buddhists (6.93 per cent) and the Hindus (3.55 per cent).

Table 1: Major Schedule Tribes in Mizoram

Name of Tribe	Total	Percentage^	Male	Female
All ST's	10,36,115		5,16,294	5,19,821
Chakma	96,972	9.43	49,958	47,014
Dimasa (Kachari)	96	0.01	63	33
Garos	756	0.07	434	322
Hajong	51	0.00	30	21
Hmar	29,587	2.88	15,029	14,558
Khasi and Jaintia*	1,034	0.10	542	492
Any Kuki Tribes**	45,754	4.45	23,408	22,346
Lakher	42,855	4.17	21,402	21,453
Man (Tai speaking)	1,263	0.12	643	620
Any Mizo (Lushai) tribes	7,34,910	71.44	3,63,397	3,71,513
Mikir	74	0.01	47	27
Any Naga tribes	760	0.07	412	348
Pawi	51,406	5.00	25,577	25,829
Synteng	74	0.01	36	38
Paite	23,183	2.25	11,637	11,546

^ The percentages shown are nearest approximation to total

*including Khasi Synteng or Pnar, War, Bhoi or Lyngngam

**Biate, Biete, Changsan, Chongloi, Doungel, Gamalhou, Gangte, Guite, Hanneng, Haokip, Haupit, Haolai, Hengna, Hongsungh, Hrangkhwal, Rangkhoh, Jongbe, Khawchung, Khawathlang, Khothalong, Khelma, Kholhou, Kipgen, Kuki, Lengthang, Lhangum, Lhoujem, Lhouvun, Lupheng, Mangjel, Misao, Rieng, Sairhem, Selnam, Singson, Sitlhou, Sukte, Thado, Thangngeu, Uibuh, Vaiphei

Source: Census of India 2011

Mizoram has the second highest per capita income in NER. The tertiary sector comprises the largest sector of the state economy in terms of its contribution to the states income. But labour absorption in this sector is only 33.60 per cent of the total work force in the state. More than 50 per cent of the work force is involved in

agriculture although its contribution is less than 20 per cent to the state's coffer. There is thereby a severe mismatch in the economy of the state. This is reflected in the state's import profile vis-à-vis the other states in India which shows that the state is highly dependent on supplies from the other states (Table 2).

Figure I: Sectoral Composition of Mizoram State Economy, 2012-13

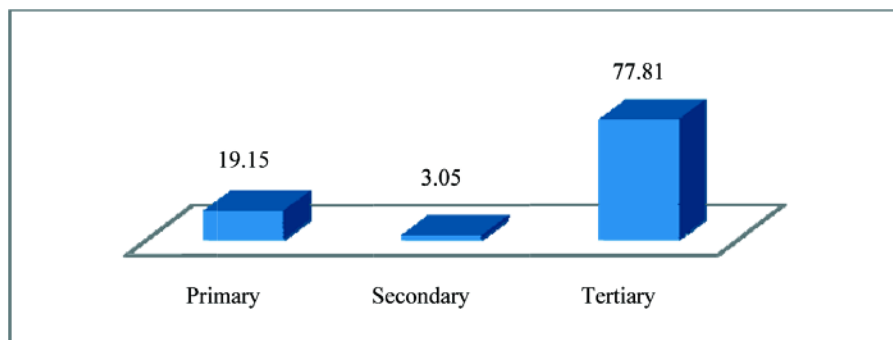


Figure II: Occupational Pattern in Mizoram

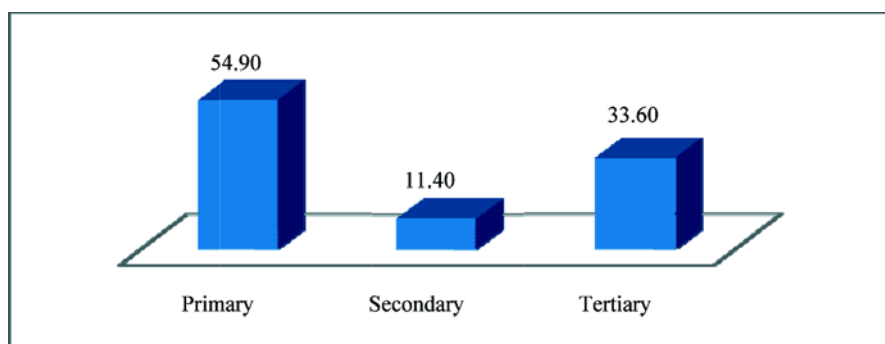


Table2: Import of Various Items in Mizoram From Other States

Sl. No	Items	Unit	2004-05 (in unit)	Approx. market value (Rs. Per unit)	2004-05 (in unit)	Approx. market value (Rs. Per unit)	2005-06 (in unit)	Approx. market value (Rs. Per unit)	2006-07 (in unit)	Approx. market value (Rs. Per unit)	2007-08 (in unit)	Approx. market value (Rs. Per unit)	2008-09 (in unit)	Approx. market value (Rs. Per unit)	Amount (2008-09) (in Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Vegetable	Qtl.	41209	1570	59005	1600	48585	1750	28688	2000	244558	2350	22678	2550	57828900
2	Pineapple	Qtl.	3355	1450	15590	1500	48201	1500	3195	1750	13707	1800	2010	2000	4020000
3	Cattle	No	3585	12000	1334	12000	410	12000	429	14000	5059	16000	3242	17000	55114000
4	Pig	No	6473	10000	4595	12000	6574	12000	85	14000	26	14000	-	15000	--
5	Goat	No	11873	1800	1298	1800	6019	1800	521	2000	4483	2000	5931	2500	14827500
6	Dog	No	502	700	796	700	938	800	1413	1000	No import due to permit cancellation by government				
7	Poultry	Tukri	2389	3000	3130	4000	4070	4000	5932	4200	2141	4200	1989	4800	1591200
8	Fish	Tukri	12373	2000	11613	2300	11201	2500	24639	2500	1194	2500	10971	3000	32913000
9	Betel leaves	Tukri	28753	600	52011	600	42619	700	51638	700	3455	800	29344	2000	58688000
10	Egg	Boxes	90841	400	132462	400	67786	420	31269	450	47244	520	41411	630	26088930
11	Betel nut	Qtl.	24152	1000	27656	1200	51806	1400	33532	1500	22718	1500	29152	1600	46643200
12	Potato	Qtl.	28747	1000	40228	1000	42310	1200	62691	1500	29733	1800	32986	2000	65972000
13	Tobacco	Qtl.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1920	20000	38400000
14	Fruits	Qtl.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	565	5000	2825000
Grand total															404911730

Source: Government of Mizoram 2009

A Short Profile of Champhai District

Champhai is the easternmost district of Mizoram bordering with Tedim district in the Chin State of Myanmar. Both in terms of geographical area (3185 sq. km.) and in terms of population (1,25,745), Champhai is the second largest district in Mizoram. It has a higher sex ratio (984) and lower density of

population (39 per sq. km.) compared to the state. Champhai has a literacy rate of 95.91 per cent with a gender gap of 2.62 per cent. The most numerous tribe of Champhai district is Mizo (85.24 per cent), followed by Paite (13.10 per cent) and other smaller tribes.

Table 3: Major Schedule Tribes in Champhai District

Name of Tribe	Total population	Percentage [^]	Male	Female
Chakma	3	0.00	2	1
Dimasa Kachari	7	0.01	5	2
Garo	9	0.01	6	3
Hajong	2	0.00	1	1
Hmar	992	0.81	511	481
Khasi-Jaintia	11	0.01	5	6
Any Kuki tribe	561	0.46	300	261
Lakher	3	0.00	2	1
Man (Tai speaking)	75	0.06	42	33
Any Mizo	104758	85.24	52588	52170
Mikir	9	0.01	8	1
Any Naga	120	0.10	69	51
Pawi	246	0.20	116	130
Paite	16103	13.10	8017	8086
All ST	123466		61954	61512

[^] The percentages shown are nearest approximation to total
Source: Census of India 2011

Figure III: Sectoral Contribution in Champhai District

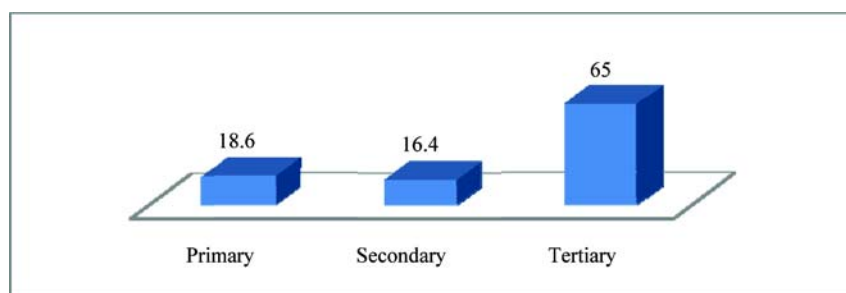
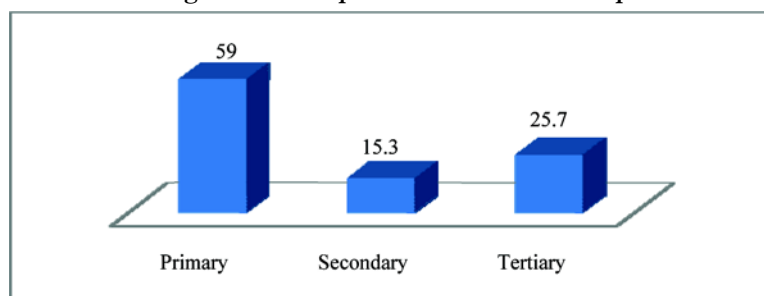


Figure IV: Occupational Pattern in Champhai District



Champhai district has the lowest per capita income in Mizoram. The difference in per capita income of Champhai and Aizawl (the district with highest per capita income) is more than 55 per cent. This reflects the poor economic condition of the district. Tertiary sector contributes 65 per cent of income to the district's economy followed by the primary sector (18.6 per cent) and the

secondary sector (16.4 per cent). But primary sector involves 59 per cent of the district's workforce. Despite being the highest contributor to the district's income, tertiary sector employs only 25.7 per cent of the workforce in Champhai. So, the skewed nature of sectoral income and employment patterns as evident in the state are also noticeable in the district.

Map 2: Champhai District



Map 3: The Bordering Districts in Mizoram-Myanmar



Map 4: The Chin State Bordering Mizoram



Part II

LEP and NE Vision 2020: A Background Note

Looking towards the East was a pre-colonial aphorism of the North East India's trade and cultural and civilizational connectivity with South East Asia. Looking East was started in the colonial period for raw material extraction and market expansion to South East Asia. In the colonial and immediate post-colonial period, Northeast India (NEI) was an anthropologists' paradise; in the 1960s, the region came to be seen through 'security prism' in the context of China-India war (1962); in the 1970s, the region became a hotbed of politics and down the decades the region became a proposed hot spot of development till the Look East received a Policy (LEP) shape in the 1990s. The Policy drew attention of the Indian state when economic reform was at the doorstep of India in the latter half of the 1980s. The geographical proximity of the region and its continental link with Southeast Asia made the former more relevant than ever for regional cooperation, cross-border trade and for

peace keeping. Considering this, the LEP re-imagined the once sensitive border region of Northeast as a prospective economic zone. Contrary to the security prism in the 1960s, in the era of globalization, the Indian policy makers re-portrayed the region as having huge geo-economic potentials and made it the gateway for trade and co-operation with India's immediate neighbours in the East and with the countries of South East Asia. NEI became really relevant to the LEP only after the NE Vision 2020 was formulated in 2008. The policy tended to use the states in the region (including Mizoram) as a trade corridor to Myanmar and Bangladesh. India also tended to showcase the resource base of North East India while all the states of NEI including Mizoram remained largely as agricultural states, *not* as manufacturing states. Nevertheless, considering the natural resource endowments, NEI became a prospective destination of the foreign as well as the domestic investors.

Table 4: Major Items in India-Myanmar Trade

India's Major Exports to Myanmar	India's Major Imports From Myanmar
Pharmaceutical product	Edible vegetable and certain roots
Electrical machinery and equipment	Wood and articles of wood
Mineral fuel, mineral oil and products	Sugar and sugar confectionary
Rubber and articles thereof	Products of animal origin
Plastic and articles	Coffee, tea, meat and spices
Machinery and mechanical appliances	Raw hides, skin and leather
Cotton	Edible fruit and nuts, peel or citrus fruit
Articles of iron and steel	Miscellaneous manufacturing articles
Residues of waste from food industries	Oilseed and fruits, miscellaneous grains
Source: Expansion of North East India's trade and investment with Bangladesh and Myanmar: An Assessment of the opportunities and constraints, October 2011	

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) viewed the region as having the potential to develop into India's economic powerhouse. This region is a vibrant source of energy, besides being endowed with India's largest perennial water system in the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries. The region offers unlimited tourism opportunities with rare flora and fauna, scenic beauty, unique performing arts, and varied cuisine and handicraft. Mineral resources like coal, uranium, limestone and the forest resources of NEI also provide larger scope for trade. Infrastructure is also getting improved in the region; new trade routes are being opened; many of the old routes are being developed to facilitate the container trade both between NEI and the rest of India and across the borders to Myanmar and Bangladesh. Bilateral trade agreements have been made with these countries. Thus this region became ideal for a development hub for dealing with India's eastern neighbours. LEP thereby made the way for re-orientation of NER in the post-Soviet world order. This was also supposed to help moving out of its post-colonial *territorial trap* since the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947.

Without any white paper, the LEP became a sounding board of the policy makers, and development administrators. But the focus on trade-related governance and infrastructure as per the LEP stymied the cultural and civilizational connectivity of NEI with South East Asia and re-envisioned the region in the strict political economy frame. NEI so far understood as a border region with security threat suffering regional imbalance in economic growth, became really relevant to the Indian state when this region was re-discovered as a lucrative trade space. P. V. Narasimha Rao, the then Prime Minister of India promulgated a new strategy in the Indian Foreign Policy through the LEP in September 1994. The East Asian growth model and prosperity of the 'Tiger' and 'Dragon' Economies did provide the source for India to emulate trade-related growth. Precisely, three aspects of LEP, namely, trade, regional cooperation and governance became critical in the policy.

Closer economic integration with South East

Asia and regional/ sub-regional cooperation energized the NER to make appropriate policy and legislative reforms and institutional restructuring so that the region could be a more lucrative investment destination. At the same time newer continental connectivity with the immediate neighbours of Southeast Asia, the Near East neighbours like Bangladesh and Myanmar and even beyond, like Thailand, Laos, Cambodia boosted up the regional cooperation and the continental trade process. The geographical proximity of NER with Southeast Asia required the former to play critical role in regional cooperation, cross-border trade and in peace building in the region.

For trade point of view, NEI became critical **only for "Border Trade" and "Border Haats"** rather than for container trades in goods and services. While infrastructure development and other facilitation measures were a long drawn process in opening up lucrative trade avenue with the neighbouring nations, in the short run, people to people contact through social exchange and exchange of goods and commodities at the border market could become a more viable option. The historic border trade of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, carried out through the marts, were located at the foot-hills of the Himalayas and at the foot-hills bordering Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar) and Tibet. These age old trade ties were subsequently ruptured by international borders and the people residing in the border areas found themselves isolated from their traditional market centres. The international borders not only fractured the economies of the region but also left the people bewildered. Due to this there was once lot of hue and cry in Meghalaya in general and Khasi dominated areas in particular about opening of Border *Haats* to benefit the people on either side of the border, as the commodity basket in Border *Haats* alone could situate the people of NER in the overall framework of the Look East Policy.

It is a matter of great debate among the researchers, administrators and policy makers concerned with NER as to how the people of the region would derive benefit from such a policy initiative. There is already a growing scepticism among the people about the

prospects of development of the region after more than sixty years of Independence and about the LEP that may rather use the space of NER mainly as a conduit of foreign trade instead of meeting the aspirations of the border people. This created perceptual hiatus on border trade between the nation state and its peripheral people. To the nation state, border is a spatial marker that separates the two nations. But to the tribal people, separated by political border, it is a space where they could meet and do social exchange with their ethnic counterparts unbound by political border. Secondly, the trading activities of the nation-state are a case for border trade, embedded in the paradigm of international trade while for the local community; it is a traditional practice of exchange of their surplus goods and commodities. This scenario is common among many border communities around the world and this is more so on the borders in various places in NEI. Thirdly, in the national and in the international trade contexts, the concept of Border Trade represents a micro market of limited tradable items, limited buyer constituency and limited trade-scale. The tradable commodities are by and large the local produce; the consumer constituency is also limited and is more or less fixed. The border trade concept thus is too small an initiative for too big a project of economic integration of NER with Southeast Asia. Fourthly, Border Trade could comfortably supplement the otherwise subsistence economy of the border-landers and could provide a meeting space of the ethnic brethren to do the bridging function between the cross-border communities, rather than between the regional and the national/global markets.

Border *Haat* is a state created artefact and an administratively controlled trade space. It is a product of formal agreement between the sovereign states which is too sensitive to the diplomatic relation and caprice of one state with the other. For example, Myanmar prefers to import food grains from Australia even at higher price rather than from India at lower price. This hinders people-to-people transaction and mutual contact. Thus situating Border *Haat* in the overall policy framework

of LEP and container trade is an uphill task. Many important unresolved bilateral issues are needed to be addressed before economic and diplomatic efforts through border *haats* are made (Pandey 2010). Contrary to border trade as embedded in the paradigm of international trade, the concept of '**Border Haat Plus**' needed to be pushed ahead where border school, border hospital, border cinema hall and entertainment park could be established. These would enhance interaction of people with different cultures and help better understanding and appreciation of each other. The people to people contact through exchange of commodities at the Border *Haat* could also yield good dividend in terms of peace building and governance. The hard policy of trade expansion and trade-related infrastructure under the LEP did not so far register the importance of people-to-people contact and its role in peace building, governance and trade. It was not until the declaration of the NE Vision 2020 in 2008 that people-to-people contact and the cultural aspects received a policy space. The NE Vision 2020 became thus an animated version of LEP that identified the problems of the region in the post-partition peripheral trap. The LEP received a NER perspective in this document and became important for promoting economic ties of NER states with the neighbours. Due to close geographical proximity, the people of the NER states came to share common cultural ties with the neighbouring states. Thus, LEP needed an integrated approach encompassing cultural, security, economic and administrative dimensions for realistic development of NER.

The NE Vision 2020

The official view of the LEP with its focus on trade, investment-led growth and regional cooperation created perceptual hiatus between the state and communities. The NE Vision Document found that poor infrastructure and governance, low productivity and market access, seeding of ethnic and cultural identities, frustration and dissatisfaction from seclusion, backwardness, and remoteness provided fertile grounds for

insurgencies that played Junker roles in trade expansion, regional cooperation and peace on the borders. Prof. Lianzela echoed the NE Vision 2020 of good governance; peace & security; good infrastructure; high quality education and healthcare facilities; development of primary sector of the economy and tourism as vital for development of the region (Lianzela 2015). The NE Vision 2020 pulled up these soft aspects and factored those in the broad policy parameter of LEP. These soft approaches were problematized in the study in three dimensions of the NE Vision 2020:

1. Cultural Dimension

The NE Vision document appreciated the historic cultural links between NER and the people of the neighbouring countries like Myanmar, Northern Thailand and their cusp with Yunnan. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram share a 1,643 km long border with Myanmar. Considering this the document felt that cultural links, as a part of the LEP, must be urgently facilitated by people-to-people contacts between NER and the neighbouring countries. This could be done by promoting interaction in musical, sporting and other such events in which neighbouring countries could be invited to participate. (NE Vision 2020 Vol. 2). The DONER Ministry made efforts to promote cultural exchanges between North Eastern States and the neighbouring countries. ICCR empanelled several performers and troupes from the NER. By MDONER's effort in 2009, a cultural troupe from Myanmar performed in the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, as well as in Imphal and Guwahati. These were only sporadic efforts and the actual cultural, sport or literary interactions between the NER and neighbouring countries remained yet residual. The process of such interactions are hedged both by external relations between the neighbouring nations and by the internal threats of peace and law and order.

FDI-linked growth, infrastructure, trade, institutional reforms, security issues, and regional/sub-regional cooperation were the five major contours of the LEP that broke the older and the essentialist ethnic explanation of history, society and culture.

Trade-related securitization apart, the other categories of conflict appeared in this region under the nomenclature "Complex Emergency" to describe the phenomena of ethnic conflicts (Senanayak 2005, Ray 2005). This threatened the state constructed foreseeable future of NER through trade and FDI routes alone. On the other hand, the soft routes of foreseeable future of the region, peace building and governance under LEP were explored in the Vision 2020 document through cultural diplomacy and cultural exchanges. This was expected to enhance people to people relations between the two countries. The LEP could thus also be a 'step towards fulfilling the promises to legalise border trade, bring back the old routes of mobility in NER, create social bonds and age-old ties among the cross-border tribes under the Mizo Accord' (Datta 1994, Haokip 2010).

2. Peoples' Dimension

The document articulated peoples' aspirations for peaceful, strong and confident future, economic, social and cultural progress and well-being, participation in governance, resource allocation and public services. Six development components were critical in the Vision document namely: self-governance and participatory development; creation of development opportunities; developing sectors with comparative advantage; capacity building of people and institutions; creating hospitable climate for investment and building infrastructure through public investment. This Document for the first time acknowledged business creation based on local economies and enabled passage of people besides goods side by side with border trade and exports of primary products. It put forward inclusive strategies for development such as: peoples' empowerment and participatory planning; development of agro-processing industries and sericulture, investment in manufacturing units based on *in-situ* resources, hydro-power generation and tourism services for employment generation; maximising self-governance; augmenting communication infrastructure and public investments in infrastructure for private participation to create an enabling environment for investment flow. Expansion of economic

activities in the region included agriculture, horticulture, social forestry and agro-industry. Catching up with the rest of the country in terms of income and distribution; structural transformation of the economies; poverty eradication; maximising self-governance; harnessing natural resources for peoples' benefit; effective (inclusive) governance (for peace and harmony) were some of the critical aspects for peace building and prosperity of the region. Inclusion of local people also became critical because it is only the local people who could state the ground difficulties and could suggest what could be done for intensification of cross border interaction based on their daily experiences. In the DONER Ministry's view the local nationals of both sides could stay in the other country for 3 days within a radius of 16 km on either side without visa (Government of India 2011) is only trade-related. It can be stretched to a **Trade+concept** to provide larger scope to the people to move beyond the border for a closer people-to-people exchange to attain ideational benefits and their future expectations.

3. Gender Dimension

The Vision Document gave specific attention on Gender Sensitive Governance as key to Inclusive Growth. Thus local government reforms needed women's effective participation, gender equality including exercise of rights, social control, access to decision making and public voice to defend rights. A Gender Responsive Budget could address the persistently high MMR; feminization of poverty and economic exploitation of women in the unorganized sector. Re-prioritization of public spending through 'bottom up budgets' needed to address the statistical invisible unpaid 'care economy' managed by poor women. The Vision 2020 in appreciation of this, highlighted equality & efficiency dimension to transform macro-policies to become women friendly.

From "Look East" to "Act East"

The Look East Policy of the 1990s took a dramatic turn when the Prime Minister of India in the East Asia Summit at Nay Pye Taw on November 13, 2014 promulgated

the Act East Policy (AEP). This was intended to correct the deficit of LEP and to make it more pro-active and innovative foreign policy. In fact, generating economic hubs in NER remained problematic even after more than 20 years of the LEP despite presence of trade and communication infrastructure, border *haats*/ border trade on the Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangla borders. The oscillation of LEP to "Act East" happened by commissioning of trilateral highway (India, Myanmar and Thailand) as the gateway of Southeast Asia and NER. Focus was laid on generating economic hubs in NER by linking with Southeast Asia. The External Affairs Ministry spelt out the strategic role of the states of NER in fructifying the Vision 2020 and the LEP felt the need to factor in the points of view of foreign and defence policy, internal security and international trade (The Sentinel 15.11.2014). "Act East" thus became a new aphorism of a reoriented India's foreign policy towards building stronger ties with Southeast and East Asia and better integration of NER with the rest of India and with its international neighbours. The initiatives under the "Act East" would include, in the words of the DoNER minister, a comprehensive **tourism plan** for the region with a brand ambassador to personify the "heritage and identity of the Northeast". In the long run, the initiative would seek to promote exclusive Northeast expertise in tea processing, organic farming, food processing, wind power generation, AYUSH and wellness therapies like spas by encouraging private investment. To develop the region as a destination for investors and tourists, the mega circuit and mega destination projects of the tourism ministry would be pursued. The ministry also upheld the role **film industry** to make them aware about the vast potential of Northeast. Such films could be shot without travelling abroad (Epao: 2015).

The 'Act East' is however still open to accommodate the specific activities that one could realistically suggest. This might well include constructive work and voluntary action; pro-active media; border *mela*, fairs, sports or cultural events; student exchange programme/ fellowship programme so as to deepen people-to people contact in

addition to trade, infrastructure and good governance. The Voluntary initiatives like Re-instate India Movement (RIM) can be extended among the ethnic brethren beyond the border.

This study therefore intends to demystify the stereotypes of trade, infrastructure and governance incipient in the LEP and re-views the policy from the peoples' perspective rather than from the perspective of the "Hinge State" alone. It looks into the peoples' perspective and gender dimensions in the LEP as per the NE Vision 2020 that could act as a shock absorber against many challenges of trade, infrastructure building and peace, political stability and conventional/ non-conventional threats facing the region. The non-conventional security threats in Mizoram include, among other things, sudden communication breakdown, road blockade, land slide (due to human and natural reasons), supply-linked turbulences like sudden skyrocketing of prices, black market, shortage of goods and services, inflow of narcotic drugs, drug use, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking etc. All these might create public discontentment and affect the process of continental trade between Mizoram and Myanmar. The petty trade on the border and people-to-people contact could absorb these shocks to a great extent and could scale down many of the non-conventional security threats facing the community.

Secondly, there is always a hiatus between the continental trade as a state process and petty border trade as a community process, which in Mizoram, is largely manifested in border trade and inter-community exchange of goods, *rather than in border Haat*. In contingent circumstances, the community process of border trade might prove stronger than the state process of continental trade in providing immediate safety-net to the borderland community, building community confidence and ensuring lasting peace on the cross-border.

Peoples' perspective also includes the gender perspective which is extremely significant both in the trade process and in the peace process, which, if co-opted in real spirit by the government, would add a human face

to trade and development, create social inclusion, sustain peace on the border and settle many bilateral issues, otherwise difficult by political negotiations and diplomatic means.

This study investigates into the perceptual gap between trade space under LEP and ethnic space in the border region of Northeast India; the foreseeable future of the ethnic communities (including the women community) under LEP and the possibilities of people-to-people contact between Mizoram and Myanmar for lasting peace and prosperity in the Mizoram-Myanmar border.

LEP and Mizoram

The pre-state trade relations between the Mizos and the neighbouring Bengali and Manipuri traders from the present day Bangladesh and Manipur and with the Chin Hills of Myanmar (Burma) were well known. Different Bazaars like *Bepari Bazaar* in the North and *Kasalong Bazaar* in the South of Chittagong border were the spaces of foreign traders to sell different commodities (Vanlalhruaia 2013: 137-139). Such trades were initially based on trust of the Mizo chiefs although they were deceived and suffered trade imbalance due to barter system. (Laldinpuii 2013: 137-139). The trust and social capital, accumulated in the pre-state trade process could not be retrieved though, its spirit could be a propelling force of the LEP, the NE Vision 2020 and the 'Act East' Policy.

Mizoram became critical for LEP precisely for three reasons: relative political stability of the state; higher literacy and Bangladesh' refusal to grant transit permit to India. The multimodal Kaladan project intended to offer multiple opportunities to Mizoram including investment and employment, connectivity and opening NER to the Bay of Bengal so as to transform Mizoram into a major transit route in the region. The border trade post at Zokhawthar in Champhai district has the potential to be a significant port of entry for goods from East and Southeast Asia that could portray the state as the "model North-eastern state", with the capability to receive the Look East Policy.

Box 1: Export Potential of the Products Produced in Mizoram

Spices; fruits; vegetable serial & oilseed (paddy, beans, cowpea, soyabean, cucumber, maize, arum, sesame, mastered, sugarcane and cotton); cash crops, medical herbs and plants; essential oil, small scale cottage industry/handicrafts (cane & bamboo handicrafts; minerals (mainly building materials).

Source: Lianzela, Ratna R.S. and Vanlalchhawna edited (2012), India-ASEAN Economic Integration, Macmillan, Delhi

The state of Mizoram has the advantage of being exposed to the outside world as it has 722 km long international border with Bangladesh and Myanmar. There are road connections although the road condition is not good at many places. A proposed railway connection between Silchar in Assam and Sittwe port in Myanmar is supposed to go through the full length of Mizoram. Other infrastructures include LCS in Zokhawthar (presently constructed and inaugurated) and Zorinpui LCS (when completed would be

connected by road and rail from the capital city of Aizawl and Sittwe port in Myanmar). These would also provide access of Mizoram to South Asian countries and NER as a whole. The Trade & Commerce Department is assigned the task to promote and regulate trade, agricultural marketing infrastructure, and collect toll tax on Indo-Myanmar Border Bridge over the Tiao River. The department has established District Offices at Lunglei, Champhai and Kolasib districts to administer and manage trade and commerce. Trade permits for agricultural goods both within and beyond the state are issued by this department and it opened check gates for movement of agricultural goods without permits at Virengte, Kanmun, Baibari and Mualkawi (Directorate of Trade & Commerce, undated).

Box 2: The Border Trade Points in Mizoram

- The Land Customs Station at Zokhawthar in Champhai district.
- The proposed Integrated Check Post at Khawrpuchhuah, to be constructed by RITES Ltd.
- The proposed LCS at Zorinpui (Lawngtlai district) along Kaladan Multi-model Transport Project on Indo-Myanmar border.
- Inland Water Transport & Port component (for developing Sittwe Port) the construction was started in 2010.
- Border Road Development including 2-laning of National Highways, 4 more proposals for 2 laning, and national Highways among others.

Source: Status note on Border Trade in Mizoram from the Chief Secretary to the Secretary (Coordination), cabinet Secretariat, Government of India

The Continental Link

The continental link between India and Myanmar became an added advantage for regional cooperation with East and Southeast Asia. The Border Trade Agreement of 1994 however put a cap on the number of items to be traded through local trade points. The items were increased in 2012.

Mizoram has continental link with Myanmar and Bangladesh that opportuned the geographical spread of international trade. The LEP gave the opportunity by increased engagements of NER with the regional forums. The region is continentally connected with South Asia and Southeast Asia that would facilitate movement of people and commodities across the border and would raise hope to unite with the ethnic cousins

across the borders. This is frequently expressed in the folk media and literary writings of the region. On the other hand, India and Southeast Asia have pledged the goal of a process of East Asia community building to derive ideational benefit out of that. However community building without unbounded mobility of people, goods, services and their inter-dependence seems superficial. The evolution of the East Asian community thus requires an in-depth and well-connected geographical mass comprising the entire South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia before common ideational values could be cultured to ensure growth of the region towards a "Community" (Chakraborty and Ray 2014). Here, the state process needs to be expedited by enhancing the people-to-people contact.

Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Affinities

The people in the Indo-Myanmar border belong to the Indo-Mongoloid racial stock and Tibeto-Burman linguistic group. The cultural, linguistic and religious affinities of the cross-border people of Mizoram-Myanmar are enormous as they once lived in one contiguous land space in the historical times. A not so smooth relationship between the two countries could not blur the ethno-cultural bond that created a value-based proximity of the communities.

Table 5: Tribes Separated By International Border Between NEI And Myanmar

State	Tribes in North East India
Arunachal Pradesh	Konyak, Nocte, Thangsa, Wangchoo
Manipur	Kuki, Paite, Tangkhul
Mizoram	Mizo, Paite, Chin
Nagaland	Chakhesang, Sangtam, Khyaniungam, Konyak

Box 3: The Zomi Movement

In the First World Zomi Convention, held in Champhai in Mizoram during May 19-21, 1988 there was a great hype of unification of the Zo people across the border: It was declared that:

“We, the people of Zo ethnic group..... are descendants of one ancestor. Our language, our culture and tradition and no less our social and customary practices are clear evidences of the ethnological facts.....our historical records and footprints, both written and unwritten in the sands of time testify the truth of our common ancestry.....”

Source: Prism of the Zo People

There also emerged a voice for clan-based solidarity in Mizoram under different nomenclatures from time to time which contested the notion of the territorial state and its homogenisation project. This was the root of trade-off between the official view on LEP and the community perception about it. The value-based proximity of the Mizos with their counterparts in Myanmar is cemented by mythology of their migration and the belief system that they migrated from eastern Burma and entered through the Vengchhia gateway to the Indian subcontinent. Thus, Vengchhia is considered as a historically sacrosanct location. Moreover Rih Dil, now located at Tedim district of Burma, once belonged to Mizoram and thus the eastern connection of the Mizos well surpasses the state constructed cartography. The NE Vision 2020 gave a new scope to the border tribes for people-to-people contact.

The cultural landscape of NER represents a synthesis of Southeast Asian and Indian cultural traits. This region may thus be called **‘interstitial zone’** where cultural hybrid, racial convergence of the proto-Australoid, Australoids, Indo-Aryan and Indo-Mongolian have taken place and different language groups like Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Mon-Khmer etc. have come to exist together. The traits of these are found in the lore and community festivals

during which the members of these communities still sneak into the neighbouring countries illegally in the exercise of right by the people upon their cultural space. This **‘interstitial zone’** has been infringed upon by the political state (Sharma 2012). Cartographic division obstructed the conventional trade process, value-based proximity and social capital and people-to-people contact in the cross-border region.

Part III

Trade and Related Infrastructure

Composite Land Customs Station in Zokhawthar



Indo-Myanmar Border Trade Township at Melbuk

In 1994 the Governments of India and Myanmar signed the 'Border Trade Agreement' to formally establish border trade relations. As a result a Land Customs Station (LCS) was established at Zokhawthar on the face of the bridge over the Tiao River. On the way to Zokhawthar, one

comes across the Indo-Myanmar Border Trade Township at Melbuk on Tiao road, just 5 km before reaching Zokhawthar, the border town in Champhai district.



Road linking Champhai and Zokhawthar widened by BRO

Zokhawthar is connected by a 29 km long Tiao road which is now a single lane and in a dilapidated condition. This road is now being upgraded to two lane by the BRO. The road from Zokhawthar to Kalemyo *via* Tidim-Falam in Myanmar is equally bad single lane *kutcha* road that hinders movement of people, goods and services and trade promotion in larger scale. Besides the border people use to cross over to Rih Dil (a lake about which there are folklores

of the Mizos and other tribes in the region) in Myanmar on foot. Large scale informal trade is a common practice on this route. These areas till date did not grow as major trading points due to trader unfriendly customs restrictions and security reasons. The construction of Rih-Tidim road and Rih-Falam road in Myanmar might enhance trade and travel links between Myanmar and Mizoram and optimize investment made in the Zokhawthar LCS.

The population composition of Zokhawthar is a mix of Mizos from both side of the border. The place is dotted with Assam Type houses, tin-walled constructions and few RCC buildings. The Tiao River marks the natural boundary between Mizoram and Myanmar at Zokhawthar. A small iron bridge connects Zokhawthar in Champhai district on the Indian side and Zokhamawii in Tidim district of Chin state of Myanmar through the Rihkhawdar Check Post.



Check Post on the Myanmar side of the Border at the approach of the Tiao Bridge

There are 38 LCS in NER as per MODNER, out of which more than a dozen are still non-functional. There are 3 LCS along the India-Myanmar border namely at Pangsu Pass in Arunachal Pradesh (non-functional), Moreh in Manipur and Zokhawthar in Mizoram. There are plans for constructing more LCS along the Mizoram-

Myanmar border. One such is Tlabung in Lunglei district of Mizoram which is yet to be processed by the concerned authorities.

The LCS in Zokhawthar is a Composite LCS constructed on about 18.50 *biga* of land. The Border Trade Agreement of 1994 opened trade between Moreh in Manipur with adjoining Tamu in Myanmar. As per the Agreement, customary exchange of locally produced commodities was allowed. In the 1994 agreement, the number of trade items was only 22. In 2008, 18 more items were added to the list and in 2012; the list included further 22 items. Total number of trade items stood at 62 (as agreed in the minutes of the first meeting of joint committee on Border *Haats* between Myanmar and India at Nay Pye Taw on 18th October 2012 and issued as Public notice from the Office of the Commissioner of Customs (Prev), NER, Shillong dated 16.11.2012). Some of the trade targets of Mizoram government included equipping Zokhawthar for transaction of normal trade and upgrading it along with Talbung, into an ICP (Integrated Check Post); transit trade with Thailand/China through Myanmar; using the existing LCS and developing number of Border *Haats*.

The Composite LCS in Zokhawthar is located at the face of the border bridge over Tiao River. This is an iron bridge which is far from an ideal condition. No big and loaded truck is allowed to pass through this bridge from either side. The Champhai Transport Union and Zokhawthar Welfare Association made an agreement that no loaded truck in excess of 15 tons weight would be allowed to cross from either side of the bridge; the trading items were to be unloaded prior to the approach way of the bridge and then the goods were to be brought to the LCS or moved out by the vendors in carts. Then the goods were to be re-loaded in the trucks to move towards their destinations. Besides, the daily vendors could also bring the trade items like vegetable loaded in motor bikes (called as 125 due to their engine capacity) fitted with wooden carriers.

For operationalizing the Zokhawthar LCS, construction of two Bailey bridges on the



The Zokhawthar LCS at the face of Tiao Bridge on the Indian Side



The Myanmar Side of the Tiao Bridge

Table 6: Land Customs Station in Mizoram

Name of LCS	Name in Neighbouring Country	Country	Status
Kawrapuchiah	Thegamukh	Bangladesh	Functional*
Demagiri	Rangamati	Bangladesh	Functional
Zokhawthar	Rih**	Myanmar	Functional

*Functional but not yet notified

**At present the nearest town in Myanmar which is functioning as LCS is Tiddim, approximately 75 kms from the border village of Zokhawthar. Government of India is proposing to assist Myanmar to build the Rih Tiddim Road. In order to facilitate proper functioning of border trade, the Government of Mizoram has requested Government of India to request Government of Myanmar to open a counterpart LCS near the border, say, Tiau or Rih (Rihkhawdar-II)

Source: <http://www.mdoner.gov.in/node/1474>, accessed on 08-05-2015



A passenger loaded vehicle with tradable goods at Zokhawthar Market, Myanmar

Tiao River for border trade facilitation have been proposed to be constructed under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP). The Composite LCS in Zokhawthar was officially inaugurated by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Government of India on 25th

March 2015, just two days before our visit to the Composite LCS. This composite LCS accommodates the Agriculture, Central Customs, Police and Immigration Departments and a branch of State Bank of India. The reported facilities available in the Composite LCS are as follows:

Table7: Availability of Facilities at Zokhawthar LCS*			
Facilities	Availability	Facilities	Availability
Warehouse	Y	LoC facilities	N
Cold storage	N	Photocopier	N
Weigh bridge	Y(NF)	Parking place	Y
Food testing facilities notified by DGHS	L	Transshipment platform	N
Electricity	Irregular	Transit shed	N
Telephone	Y	Vehicle service	N
Internet	Y	Food canteen	N
Post office	N	Drinking water	Y
Fax	N	Rest room	Y
Bank	Y (N/F)	Health facility	N
		Hotels	Y (One)
		Entry and exit gates	Y
Source: Fieldwork, *Table based on (RIS 2011)			
Y-Yes, N-No, NF-Non-functional, L-Limited to Vegetable, Apple, Water melon, Quarantine in small quantity			

Though the required export/import infrastructures are in place, many of these lie in non-operational mode. These include, (besides what is not listed in Table7), inadequate road infrastructure and connectivity between Zokhawthar and the district headquarters at Champhai and beyond, skilled workforce and manpower

resources, non-availability of food testing facilities notified by DGHS both in Zokhawthar on Indian side and Rih on the Myanmar side. The connecting roads in the Myanmar side of the border are also very poor. The road from Zokhawthar and Kalembo via Tedim-Falam is a single-lane *kutcha* road in dilapidated condition. Transportation of bulk commodities is not possible through this road. The major tradable commodities like betel nut and fruits are brought to the Myanmar side of the Tiao Bridge on mini buses and mini goods carriers, manually offloaded and then carried in hand pulled carts through the bridge to the LCS by the local vendors.



Cart loaded with Betel nut Brought from Zokhamawii to Zokhawthar LCS over Tiao Bridge

Boder Haat in Mizoram

In Mizoram border *haats* are yet to be constructed and established. At present in Champhai border there is *border trade*, not *border haat*. The government has proposed

the following names for construction of Border *Haats* in Mizoram:

Table 8: Sanctioned Border *Haats* in Mizoram

Border <i>Haat</i>	District in India	Location in Myanmar
Hruitezawl	Lawngtlai	Varang
Hnahlan	Champhai	Darkhai
Vaphai	Champhai	Leilet
Chakhang	Saiha	Nviaphia

Source: Mr. Mhathung Kithan, Comissioner & Secretary (Industries & Commerce)'s letter No.IDB/TRC-1/1987(Pt)(Vol.II) dated 31.3.2011) <http://www.mdoner.gov.in/node/1485>, accessed on 09-03-2015

According to the agreed minutes of the first meeting of Joint Committee on Border *Haats* between Myanmar and India, October 18, 2012, there was in-principle agreement to set up Border *Haats* in these following places and a MoU on Border *Haat* across India-Myanmar border was signed. The first five places on Indian side fall in Champhai district of Mizoram.

Free Trade Zone (FTZ) plays an important role in boosting border trade and providing access to various commodities in the border areas. In the Moreh-Tamu border in Manipur there is an FTZ that adds to the process of border trade. But this is not the case in Zokhawthar. According to the local people, a FTZ similar to Moreh-Tamu can augment the processes of border trade and people to people co-operation in the Zokhawthar border.

Petty Trade on the Border

The tribes who were separated by the international border between India and Burma (Myanmar) are found in the Chin and Karen states and in the Sagaing region in Myanmar and in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland in India. The territorial division between the two countries however did not totally stop the economic, social and cultural exchanges of the tribes in the borders with their counterparts in Myanmar. There is a hiatus between the state perspective and

Box 4: Other Trade Infrastructures under Construction in Mizoram

- Integrated Check Post at Kawrpuichhuah with an area of 224.99 bighas. It is seven km. away from Tlabung town
- Integrated Check Post at Zorinpui
- Kaladan Multi model Transit Transport
- Inland Water Transport & Port
- Inland Highway
- Establishment of Mizoram Agricultural Marketing corporation (MAMCO) Ltd
- Processing and marketing of Tung oil.
- Construction of markets under Mini Mission III for streamlining marketing system of agro-products

Table 9: Proposed Border *Haats* in Mizoram

Sl. No.	Myanmar's side	India's side
1.	Khin Man	Behhiang
2.	Lei Let	Vaiphai
3.	Dar Khai	Hnam Lan
4.	Thau	Pangkhua
5.	Fartlang	Zote
6.	Somara	Avakhung
7.	Yangkyon	Pangsha
8.	Ponnyo	Chemoho
9.	Khampat	New Somtal

Table10 : Land Customs Station in NER with Myanmar

State	Name of LCS	Name in NC	NC	Status
Arunachal Pradesh	Nampong	Pangsu	Myanmar	NF
Manipur	Moreh	Tamu	Myanmar	F
Mizoram	Zokhawthar	Rangamati	Myanmar	F
Nagaland	Avankhu	Somara	Myanmar	NF

Source: <http://www.mdoner.gov.in/node/1474>, accessed on 08-05-2015

community perspective on border trade. The state views that border trade *sans* community while the community sees it as a social construct.

The tariff and price differentials, currency valuation and/or trade barriers of formal trade often hedge the formal trade in goods and services which is well augmented by informal trade. Transaction cost of informal trade is lesser than that of formal trade. Lack of infrastructure, high rate of corruption and

rent-seeking also adversely affect formal trade process across the border which is avoided in informal trade in NER in general and in the border areas in particular. On the other hand, there are historical patterns of institutional mechanisms of trade and commerce among the communities which is exploited by the informal traders. Formal trade by involving the communities can also take advantage of such measures.

Given that border trade has the potential to initiate the process of economic opening up, enhancement of local livelihoods, cross

border confidence and fraternity building can also yield good dividends to formal trade. Certain degree of autonomy in border trade could well forge people-to-people contact and ensure better connectivity with the trans-border neighbours. The NER in general and Mizoram in particular have relative advantage to forge people-to-people connectivity both within the states and with those in the neighbouring countries because of the ethnic connections across the border. Institutionalization of such connectivity would meaningfully integrate the NE states including Mizoram with the LEP.

Table 11: Indo-Myanmar Border Trade Items

Sl. No.	Old items (DGFT (Public Notice No. 289(PN)/92-97 dated 10/04/1995))	Sl. No.	Additional items (DGFT Public Notice No. 106 (RE-2008)/2004-2009 dated 07/11/2008)	Sl. No.	Additional items (Commissioner of Customs Public Notice No. 30/2012 dated 16/11/2012)
1.	Mustard/rape seeds	1.	Bicycle spare parts	1.	Agricultural Machinery
2.	Pulses and beans	2.	Lifesaving drugs	2.	Bicycle
3.	Fresh vegetable	3.	Fertiliser	3.	Bleaching powder
4.	Fruits	4.	Insecticide	4.	Coal
5.	Garlic	5.	Cotton fabrics	5.	Edible Oil
6.	Onion	6.	Stainless steel utensils	6.	Electric &Electrical Appliances
7.	Chillies	7.	Menthol	7.	Fabricated Steel Product
8.	Spices (excluding nut-meg, mace, cloves and cassia)	8.	Agarbatti	8.	Garments/readymade/cloths
9.	Bamboo	9.	Spices	9.	Handlooms and handicrafts
10.	Minor forest produce (excluding teak)	10.	Cosmetics	10.	Hardware/minor construction materials & electrical fittings
11.	Betel nuts and leaves	11.	Leather footwear	11.	Lime
12.	Food items for local consumptions	12.	Paints and varnishes	12.	Medicines
13.	Tobacco	13.	Sugar and salt	13.	Milk powder, tea, edible oil, beverages
14.	Tomato	14.	Mosquito coil	14.	Motor cycle & spare parts
15.	Reed broom	15.	Bulb	15.	Electronic/musical instruments, stationery item, torch light
16.	Sesame	16.	Blade	16.	Plastic items, water tank, buckets, chairs, plastic pipes and briefcase
17.	Resin	17.	X ray paper and photo paper	17.	Rice, Wheat, Maize, Millets & Oats
18.	Coriander seeds	18.	Imitation jewellery	18.	Scented tobacco
19.	Soya bean			19.	Semi-precious stone
20.	Roasted sunflower seeds			20.	Sewing machines
21.	Katha			21.	Textile fabrics
22.	Ginger			22.	Three wheelers, cars below 100cc

Part IV

Voices From the Field: I

A State Level Workshop

A state level workshop on the study theme was held in Pachhunga University College on 24-03-2015. Academicians from Mizoram University, Pachhunga University College, Kamlanagar College, Aizawl Theological College along with representatives from the Mizoram Chamber of Commerce, Voluntary Organisation, Women and the Student Organisations participated in the Workshop. (List of participants are given in Annexure A)

The major issues that emerged from the workshop are as follows:

The participants were of the view that Look East Policy (LEP) is basically a foreign policy instrument. NEI did not initially figure in the policy. NEI became relevant to the LEP only after the launch of NER Vision 2020 in 2008. The LEP tended to view Mizoram as a trade corridor to Myanmar and Bangladesh. India also tended to showcase the resource base of NEI to attract investment and tourist flow. But the states in the region including Mizoram remained largely agriculture based and not manufacturing hubs. This disabled the region to reap the benefit from export based trade regime.

Perception about the LEP

The LEP has become a common concern not only of the state but also of the civil society organisations, academic community, political leaders and the policy makers in the state. But all of them have different perceptions and interpretation of the LEP. The political leaders and civil society organisations so far did not make deep academic analysis of the policy as to who

framed the policy and how it would affect the ordinary tribal people of the region, particularly the tribes in the bordering region. All the programmes under this policy were sought to be politicised. Some leaders interpret LEP as an initiative of their respective political parties and attempts to influence public awareness related to LEP. Peoples' perceptions were thereby divided and there emerged divergent views regarding the inclusive nature of the policy. There was also divided perception about the probable peoples' benefits from the policy. Ordinary people were confused as to whether LEP was about the commoners of the region or an instrument of security of the state or an agenda for the development of NEI. Most people apprehended that the road infrastructure that goes in the name of



Consultative Workshop on “*The Look East Policy from Peoples’ Perspective*” at the Conference Hall of Pachhunga University College, Aizawl

development might be actually used for mobility of security personnel thereby providing little *in situ* benefit to the tribal people. In the larger strategic and diplomatic contexts, infrastructure building was also understood as making way to South East Asian nations under the FDI regime of globalisation. The bureaucrats and the diplomats tended to hide these facts of the LEP before the people.

Threat Perception

There is also great perceptual gap between the people of Aizawl and the people of South Mizoram on the Kaladan Multi Modal project in South Mizoram. The residents of South Mizoram have historic perception of relative deprivation vis-à-vis those of North Mizoram and only a small section of the people viewed this Project as an opportunity to connect themselves with the development programmes perceived to be built into the LEP. But a deeper analysis reveals a threat perception of the people about the project.

proper clarification of the purpose of monitoring by this ministry and adequate social policy measures be undertaken for the people affected by Kaladan project.

The people in South Mizoram also feel threatened by the construction of the 47 km. long Chawngte Road connecting Chawngte and Chumkhum within Mizoram. Similar voices were raised in North Mizoram too particularly in Champai district bordering Myanmar. The widening of the 29 km. long Tiao Road from Champhai to Zokhawthar border has generated threat perception that this road would offer scope to the anti-social activities including narcotic smuggling from Myanmar. It would also cause entry of the Indian Army that would constantly threat the villagers, destroy people-to-people contact and create inter-village/inter-community rivalry.

Development Paradigm

The trade-induced development in the LEP paradigm seeks to make NEI more attractive to the foreign direct investors and the corporate bodies. Therefore development of infrastructure, trade promotion and institutional restructuring programmes were taken up in a big way in Public-Private Partnership mode. Great hopes were generated on development in terms of road connectivity, export of agricultural and organic products, opening up of the border and border connectivity, human resource development and trade facilitation through Land Custom Station (LCS). Diplomatic efforts and policy restructuring were also made to widen the prospect of border trade.

But all these activities did not contribute to social development of the people of Zokhawthar. The participants particularly the academicians were of the view that although the literacy rate in the state is one of the highest in India yet the quality of education imparted in the state does not create employable skill and thus they cannot contribute extensively to the productive process. Their capability to participate in development programmes and international trade is also questionable. This might generate threat perception of the local people about the trade and development processes initiated in the LEP regime. Moreover although

Map 5: Proposed Roadways from Kolkata to Kaladan Connecting Sittwe Port



Source: (Bhattacharyya Chakraborty: 2009)

The task of monitoring of the project under the Ministry of External Affairs raised serious suspicion in the minds of the people of South Mizoram about the exact purpose of the project. The ordinary people of South Mizoram, who are already affected by this project are circumspect about the involvement of Ministry of External Affairs as monitor instead of Ministry of Home Affairs. It was therefore felt that the threat perception of the people be removed by

Mizoram is one of the highest literate states, the literacy standard of the border tribes is still low and the petty traders in the border markets are not comparable to those of Aizawl and the state in general.

As such, most of the activities under LEP, as the local people perceive, are performed by outsiders (known as *Vai's* in Mizo) that leaves little stake for the local people. They cannot expect to get any *in situ* benefit from the international trade process either. The agricultural produce and various fruits (like passion fruit and kiwi) might be abundantly produced in Mizoram, but there is hardly any market available to dispose these items. There is no warehouse to store the perishable goods and little transportation facility in the mountainous terrain to bring the commodities to the big markets in Aizawl, Champhai or Zokhawthar. During rainy season particularly, land slide and road blockade on Silchar-Aizawl road often interrupt and delay the transportation of items. In these circumstances, the big traders capture the consumer market and fix prices arbitrarily. Moreover, lack of phyto-sanitary test centres are a threat to proper maintenance of quality in the state.

In order to enhance the trade process in Mizoram several shortcomings are required to be overcome. These include communication and banking infrastructure, currency exchange, social provisioning for the people, decentralised and participatory decision making along with awareness creation of the people about the benefit from the trade process.

People-to-people Contact

While the policy documents advocate for people-to-people contact, the peoples' perception about it is different within Mizoram. This difference is felt not only by the people within the state, such as between South and rest of Mizoram but also between the Mizo's and *Vai's* as well. The apprehension is that this difference in perception may soon lead to a threat to the ethnic identity of the Mizos in the state. The people also apprehend that the larger chunk of trade gain would be appropriated by the outsiders who would repatriate their profits outside the state. Simultaneously, the local

community also feel threatened of being lumpenised resulting in loss of moral values in this process. The threat perception in people-to-people contact is manifested in three ways:

1. Infrastructure building and highway construction are a threat to the smaller tribal communities and their resource base. The Mizo farmers cannot do big trade, nor can they influence the big trade decisions. They cannot capture big market either. Ginger cultivation in Mizoram failed some ten years' back as a result of lack of market and market linkages. In this context, the ordinary people of Mizoram feel threatened by the trade infrastructure being built in the LEP regime.
2. Construction of road infrastructure generated apprehension of infiltration of outsiders, loss of landscape, ambience and ethnic bondage. Therefore the contemporary Mizo society prefers to remain within the protection of Inner Line Regulation (ILR) and avoid transgression beyond this regime as happened in the volatile past in their society.
3. The control regime of the Indian state through the instrument of AFSPA and transfer of finance from the Central government have generated simultaneous threat and dependency on the state which are very difficult to overcome in the present circumstances. On the other, this dependency also mute the voice of the state to question any policy of the Union Government. The lack of an *in situ* decision making and development model in the state always generate apprehension in the minds of the people despite a higher per capita transfer of resources from the Central Government.

On the other hand, there is also the scope of enhancing people-to-people co-operation if it is made through the communitarian channels.

1. The common lineage of the ethnic community in the 'East' (read South East and South Central Asia) and their migration to present day Mizoram

provided the Mizos with some perceived ideational benefits when the Look East was initiated. But whether such ideational benefit was transformed into reality is yet a big question? The Mizos are generally open to trade ties with their counterparts in Myanmar and others in South East Asia as they belong to the same Mongoloid group. So trade within the communitarian trade paradigm exhibited the potential for people to people contact and co-operation. That is why an open border with the perceived extended ethnic space is well received by the Mizos.

2. On the other, there is also a feeling amongst the civil society organisations that initiative must be taken to transform the mind-set of the people by coming out of their ethnocentric cells in order to gain from the development process as initiated under LEP.
3. However, at the policy level, the participants in the Workshop also pointed to a contradiction on the part of the state. They were of the view that the recent reduction of the radius (from 20 km to 16 km) of stay of the local nationals with permit (but without visa) on both sides of the border for three days has sent a wrong message to the border communities. They feel that this measure has squeezed the social space of the ethnic communities.
4. The trade line is disrupted by occasional road blockades at different points of the region for human or natural reasons. These often cause price rise and food insecurity in Mizoram. In this circumstance, if the petty traders in local market are allowed to fetch food grain from the immediate neighbouring state of Myanmar, it might provide a safety net to the People of Mizoram in general and the border communities in particular in their time of crisis.

Gender Issue

It is important to note that the petty traders in the India-Myanmar borderland are women. Petty trade therefore became a women issue in these areas. But women issue within the Vision document and within the

LEP frame remained vexed as the gender parameter within these policies were too stereotyped, not diversity sensitive. The pessimism is that as borders are open for trade in goods and services, the population flow from either side of the border might wipe out the Mizo women traders who occupy the border markets. The other pessimism is that the women petty traders might be relegated to trade agents that would threaten their livelihood and identity. Moreover, market economy under globalisation came to allure the Mizo girls and women to migrate to Singapore and Thailand to work as domestic help. This made them vulnerable. They are recruited through various placement agencies in Aizawl. These agencies makes advertisement for recruitment with the promises of lucrative salary but it seems that this is at the cost of well-being and human dignity of the Mizo girls working in foreign land.

The optimism for the women petty traders is that there is high demand for Chinese and South East Asian products in the border markets as well as city markets of Mizoram. The women traders in border areas procure these products through the trade intermediaries beyond the border. Although a large number of items are stipulated in the trading list, India does not seem too keen to take adequate steps for export of these goods. Among the imported goods, blankets and bed-sheets are in high demand. These can be transported elsewhere in excess of local consumption. Moreover if the trade policies are made women friendly, adequate social provisioning for them are to be made and social agenda are to be included in the trade agreements of India with Myanmar. This might increase their business and social opportunities from their petty trade in the border. The opening of the borders would then be an added advantage to the women traders in directly procuring these goods for sale.

Foreseeing the Future

The participants in the workshop felt that presently that the people in the state are largely indifferent about foreseeing a bright future ahead under the LEP regime. The people are optimistic where there are more people

to people contact on both sides of the international border (Myanmar) but they are not hopeful of a bright future in terms of development gains accruing to them in an open border trade regime. Most of the traders in Tahan (nearest trading centres in Myanmar) belong to the Mizo community. It is easier for them to build community relation with their counterparts in Mizoram through communitarian channel which might in turn provide ideational gain to them.

The other ideational gain from opening up of border is new opportunity to reunite the ethnic brethren, separated by partition, border and boundaries. This might in turn reduce the Chinese threat perception that looms large in the region.

The workshop concluded with a note of optimism that the present study in Mizoram will highlight certain relevant findings which may throw light on the perceptual hiatus of the policy framers and the people regarding LEP.

Meeting the Trade & Commerce Department Officials at Aizawl

On 24th March 2015 we fixed a meeting with the Trade and Commerce Department at Aizawl. The broad research issues were discussed there. Some basic information on trade and commerce was obtained from this office. This was just one day before the LCS at Zokhawthar was to be officially inaugurated.

Orientation of Field Investigators at Champhai

On 25th March we reached Champhai from Aizawl by travelling a distance of 193 km on the mountainous NH-154. Three field investigators (two males and one female) were selected to administer the questionnaire among the select sample people in Champhai and Zokhawthar. They were oriented with the questionnaire in the late evening of 24th March.

Visiting Champhai

We visited the office of Trade & Commerce office and met the District Marketing Officer Mr. Zoramchhana to discuss the major research questions. We also discussed with him about the border market at Champhai



Discussion with Mr. Zoramchhana, District Marketing Officer, Champhai

and Zokhawthar run by the women traders and the modus operandi of such trade. He was optimistic about the prospects of people-to-people contact which could be promoted only through petty trade on the border where people from different communities come and meet. But there were some major constraints such as opaque procedures of custom clearance, immigration permits, hassles at check points, lack of political will of Government of Myanmar for infrastructure building and connectivity. On the India side government took some measures including policy measures, infrastructure building (widening of the NH-54; construction of LCS and Border *Haats*) etc. There was a felt need of opening more border *haats* as the visible spaces of people-to-people contact between the sellers and buyers. But he stated that the shortcomings on the Myanmar side affected trade flow across the border. There is also a silent threat of the border markets being flooded by third country goods that reduce the scope for marketing Indian products. Due to poor road infrastructure in Myanmar, the border traders living within 25 km. radius inside Myanmar depend more on border market at Zokhawthar and supplies from Champhai.

The Myanmar government has less political will for construction of infrastructure

on the border region inside Myanmar because the region is insurgency prone where the Chin National Army (CNA) is active. The CNA activists collect money (locally known as taxes) for resource mobilisation, hassle the traders and the vehicle drivers carrying trade items and create governance problem in the Myanmar border region. On the other, the regulatory mechanism on the border in Zokhawthar in Mizoram is not trader-friendly either. The security agencies, custom and police check posts make undue demands from both the petty traders as well as from the big traders. If these regulatory mechanisms are not reformed and made trader friendly, things would remain bleak as it exists now. Besides, the Zokhawthar border is also a drug route which affects the normal trade flow across the border.

There is a felt need of enhancing cultural interaction among the Mizos on both sides of the border. A NGO named Zofa Global Network took initiative for building up people-to-people and community-to-community relations by organising cultural events. In November 2014, Zofa Global Network organised cultural festival at Zokhawthar where many performers from Mizoram and Myanmar participated. TV set, dish antenna, music system and music players were given to the Myanmar participants as a gesture of good will. The NGO plans to organise similar events in different border areas in near future to build community-to-community network that would do the bridging function of social capital.

Rashiveng Market at Champhai

We visited Rashiveng market at Champhai. It is an alternate day market. The vendors in the market are a mix of the Mizo and Myanmar communities. Local sellers are

more in number. It is however difficult to identify their differences unless one interacts with them for a longer time. It is an all-women market. In this market vegetable, fruit, fish (fresh, dry and fermented), meat, pulses, soya bari, garlic & ginger, oyster, ajinomoto, green tea, baby food, livestock (now restricted), footwear and dress materials etc. are sold. The products are both local and from rest of India as well as from Myanmar and third country products from China, Thailand, Singapore and others. This market opens in the early morning and closes before noon.

Interacting with a Licensed Trader in Champhai and Zokhamawii

There are about 30 Import-Export licence traders in Champhai. Mr. H.B Manhleia is one of them, stationed at Champhai. He is an office bearer of the Export-Import



Interviewing Mr. H.B Manhleia,
Licensed Trader, Champhai

Syndicate, Champhai. He has undertaken export and import business mainly from Myanmar, the imported items from Myanmar are betel nut & reed broom and the exported items from Mizoram is Soya bari. In 1994, he sent Reed Broom from



Women sellers at Rashiveng Market, Champhai

Myanmar worth Rs. 20 lacs to Hyderabad and sent an equivalent value of Nutrela to Myanmar. He tried to explore trade opportunity in Mizoram-Bangladesh border at Chittagong with three other trade partners. This however did not work out.

He mentioned several problems associated with licensed trade with Myanmar which include barter trade (not cash trade); hassles in obtaining certificate of country of origin for imported items like betel nut; hassle in obtaining phyto-sanitary test certificate from Myanmar; lack of road infrastructure in Myanmar; deposition of tax money to the State Taxation Department for export items; too many illegal traders; high taxation imposed by Champhai Transport Union, donation demanded by local people; levies and restrictive rules. These have squeezed the space for interaction among the exporters and importers. Earlier, the Export-Importers used to have meeting with their counterparts in Myanmar every two months at Tiao in Myanmar and at the Customs building in Mizoram. Such meetings have not been convened this year.

Interview with a Container Trader in Zokhamawii

Mrs. Mah Pi is a Burmese Muslim (of Indian origin) residing in Zokhamawii border bazar area for about last 30 years. She is an Export-Import Licence holder and is the owner of a Guest House and Restaurant called the *Rhi Shwe Pyi Company* at Rih Khaw Dar in the Chin State of Myanmar. As a licensed Importer-Exporter, she is permitted to trade with 12 items- betel nut, fertilizers and pharmaceutical goods being the major ones. Presently, she is involved in export of betel nut to India. The trade exchange is done both through barter and through cash, depending on the demand from her trade counterparts in Aizawl. The traders in the Myanmar side are mostly of Indian origin and only few among them are from mainland Myanmar.

She was optimistic about higher possibility of people-to-people-contact between the Myanmar traders of Indian origin and the Indian traders. But illicit trade in drugs and other narcotic substances acts as dampener to formal trade as well as cordial



Interacting with Mrs. Mah Pi, a licensed trader at Zokhamawii, Chin state, Myanmar

trader-to-trader contact. The trade process in the border under LEP might have the potential to benefit the people, but it is a big task and is yet to be accomplished. She stated that the trade-induced change process is extremely slow here and the *modus operandi* of trade on the border is very traditional which does not create the enabling condition for container trade.

While the mega projects of road construction and widening of Tiao road connecting Champhai and Zokhawthar township are undertaken in the Indian side, there is no such initiative on the Myanmar side. Both road condition and transport system are very bad there. The trading route to Zokhamawii is a *kutcha* road where pony is generally used as carrier. Moreover, according to her the market is mainly flooded with Chinese products which reduce the transaction of local goods. As more border people are engaged in producing the local goods, the 'third country goods obstructs the local people in producing those. Therefore in Zokhamawii market, one can find more agent-petty trader business contact, rather than people-to-people contact.

Interview with the President, Village Council, Zote

Zote village is connected to Champhai by a motorable road constructed under the BADP and is now maintained by the Village Council. Besides, there is a shorter route (pathway) from this village to Myanmar



Interacting with Mr. Rodina, President, Village Council, Zote

border which the villagers travel by foot. Earlier, pony-loaded or head-loaded petty goods like *gutkha*, sugar, rice, cotton, sewing machine etc. as well as drugs like Pseudo-ephedrine and other varieties were carried to Myanmar. With worsening of road conditions and lack of subsequent road repairs, trade through this road has reduced substantially. Only small scale exchange of goods takes place now with the neighbouring villages in Myanmar.

We visited Zote village where a Border *Haat* is proposed to be set up and met Mr. Rodina who is the President of the Village Council since 2012. He was unaware of any Border *Haat* to be constructed in this village and he received no official communication about the proposed border *haat* either. No land area was acquired or demarcated for construction of the Border *Haat*. No other Border *Haat* infrastructure was visible at Zote village.

Mr. Rodina stated that the people of Zote maintain good contact with the people in the neighbouring villages in Myanmar (like Bulfek, Fartlang etc.) The contact is made mainly through the church. People of Zote village helped in construction of the Church building in several villages in Myanmar. They also bought surplus rice from Myanmar which is sometimes contributed by the church members in Myanmar as offering.

He is optimistic about increase in border trade. He felt that this village, situated in a convenient location near the border, would benefit more from border trade. Zote is a suitable trade post where exchange of goods could be done. This would bring more people to this village as well as the

surrounding villages. In the trade post, there would be more cash flow and provide wider opportunity to the local people for income and employment. Transporters will also benefit in this process.

He believes that the inter-mixing of people may not be a threat at the moment, but if the border opens up there is apprehension of heavy influx of outsiders that might disturb the ethnic groups of the village, its administrative structure and the cultural values. In the past the Chin National Army (CNA) had a camp (in Myanmar) in areas adjacent to Zote. This did not create any law and order problem. But problem arose once when the CNA forced levies upon the traders who travelled through these areas for petty trade. The matter was however resolved after a meeting of the community members and CNA commander. Again in 2006, the CNA closed the trade routes leading to Zokhawthar. The blockade continued for a while and despite of the best efforts of the state administration there was little relief. It was after the community level intervention was made in which Mr. Rodina took active part, that the situation became normal. He was of the view that community level understanding worked better in conflict resolution in these areas whereas the state intervention yields little result. People-to-people contact on both side of the border and community level participation were very important factors for maintenance of peace in these borderlands.

Discussion with the In-Charge of Composite Land Customs Station, Zokhawthar

We visited the Composite LCS at Zokhawthar just a day after it was officially inaugurated on 26th March, 2015. We met Mr. B. Vanlalvena, the Inspector In-charge of the LCS and discussed with him on different issues relating to border trade. He said that although the station is officially inaugurated, there is lot of work yet left for completion. Limited container trade passes through this station. Bulk of the exchange is done through the system of barter. This is because there is in no proper banking facilities here and no Letter-of Credit (LOC) systems in place in this LCS.



Discussion with Mr. Vanlalvena, In-Charge of LCS, Zokhawthar



Women sellers at Zokhawthar Market

Some people still have the perception of an open border between Champhai and the Chin state of Myanmar. The petty traders tend to by-pass the LCS with their goods, although they are supposed to report to the LCS first before going beyond. There are also drug traffickers and illegal traders who sneak into each-other's territory. The petty traders consist of the Mizos of Mizoram and the Myanmar-Mizos. Some petty traders are from Myanmar. Almost all of them are women. They are bi-lingual people and are almost similar in their dress, food habits etc. So, it is difficult to ascertain their nationalities. As such there is no visible tension among the petty traders.

Visiting Zokhawthar Market

On 27th March we visited Zokhawthar border market. This market is located within the Zokhawthar Township by the side of the township road. This market has a proper infrastructure including two 50 meter RCC sheds, Community Sanitation Complex for male and female, constructed by PHED and piped drinking water facility. But drinking water and community sanitation Complex are not clean. One room of the sanitation complex is occupied by a petty shop. This market is under the administrative control of the Department of Trade & Commerce, Government of Mizoram.

In this market the traders are a mix of Mizos of Mizoram and Mizos of Myanmar origin. All the traders are women. But the buyers are largely from Mizoram. The petty trade items in this market are brought by the Myanmar traders and include cabbage, apple, watermelon, mustard leaves, garlic & green spices, green tea, betel nut, processed peanuts, fresh water fish,

fermented fish, watermelon, turmeric powder, leafy vegetable etc. Clothes, dress materials, Ajinomoto etc. are third country products sold by both the Myanmar and the Mizo petty traders. The local trade items include potato & onion, fresh fish, chicken, pork, pulses, banana, spices and minor forest produce. The transaction in this market is made in cash. Both Indian Rupee and Myanmar Kyat are accepted in transaction. The price difference of these items between Aizawl market and Zokhawthar market is 2:1. The local traders can trade on both sides of the border within a radius of 40 km on obtaining a receipt from Immigration Department but they are not allowed stay at night on either side.

People to people contact takes place in this market. But as stated by the Myanmar traders, they suffer from some sense of inferiority when they visit the Indian side. Sometimes they also feel that they are discriminated by the local traders. There is a common perception in Zokhawthar that the Myanmar people use to indulge in illegal trade and are more prone to criminal activities. This perception of the Mizo traders on the Indian side creates a feeling of alienation in the minds of the Myanmar traders. This apprehension has to be removed before enhancing the process of people to people co-operation in these areas.

Group Discussion with the Traders at Zokhawthar Market

A group discussion was conducted with the traders of Zokhawthar market. All of them were women. They mainly sold fresh vegetable. Some amongst them also sold variety of pulses, seeds, spices, fish, meat and a few also dealt in garments. A mix-group

of six respondents was identified for the group discussion: three were from Zokhawthar and the other three were from the adjoining Zokhamawii village in Myanmar.

Amongst these six vendors, three sat outside the market shed for selling their items, amongst them two were from Zokhamawii. They were unaware about the authority

Table 12: The Participants in Group Discussion

From Zokhawthar, Mizoram	From Zokhamawii, Chin State
Lalmangaihsangi	Lalnuntluang
Suineihthali	Suineihthali
Lalthanchhungi	Chinneihkimi

which controlled the market but paid a levy of Rs 5/- per day to the market authority. The other three vendors transacted under the market shed. These vendors paid a daily levy of Rs. 10/-. All these women identified themselves as the sole bread earners in their families. They could not depend upon their husbands' income because they never earn on a regular basis and whenever they earn, they never contribute anything for the upkeep of their family and children.

The women sellers are also to do all the household chores before they leave their home to the market. They were of the opinion that rarely their husbands took care of their children when they came for business to

Zokhawthar market. But their general complain is that they are ill-treated by their husbands at home and they have nowhere to go for seeking justice. This is a common story of all the three women vendors. They also narrated that Zokhawthar market is the only place where they sit, interact and share their everyday life and struggles. This Bazar gives them a social space for interaction and sharing also. They earn an income of Rs.100 to 150 per day, which according to them, was not sufficient to maintain their families and children. Their biggest problem as stated by them was lack of working capital to run the petty trade. In this regards, these vendors did not see much gain from the opening of border trade although they were in favour

of more regular contacts with their counterparts on either side of the border.

Visit To the Border Market in Zokhamawii

There is a border market in Zokhamawii on the Myanmar side located at the face of the bridge over River Tiao. This market area is big and spread wide. Here betel nut (from Myanmar) is unloaded for transportation to Zokhawthar (India) by manual carts. The other side of the road is the market place where there are restaurants, a few tea vendors, hardware shops, motor garage, and not the least, one stationary shop.



Group Discussion with Women Sellers at Zokhawthar Market



Women Sellers at Zokhamawii Market, Chin State, Myanmar

There is a vegetable market where the petty traders sale consumer goods (third country products), fresh vegetable, different varieties of meat, fish, green spices, pulses, green tea,

gur, noodles, soya beans, energy drink, footwear and dress materials, foot wear, candy etc. Almost all these items are third country products and only some of these are from Myanmar and India. Third country products mainly include ajinomoto, umbrella, battery, electronic goods, garments and ladies wear, footwear, tinned fish, tinned meat etc. The Myanmar products include different varieties fresh vegetable, dry fish, fermented fish, fresh fish, dry meat, pork, beef, chickens, deer meat, green tea and package tea, local candy, processed peanuts, spices of different varieties, noodles, betel nuts etc. The Indian products include candy, packaged spices, soya bari, instant noodles etc. All the petty sellers in the border market of Zokhamawii are women sellers who mostly belong to Chin tribe. They speak Mizo language as lingua franca for market transaction although they have their own dialects and accents. Due to these commonalities and ethnic proximities with the Mizos, the Myanmar women traders in Zokhamawii do not have any threat perception about the Mizos.

Rih Dil Lake

It is a common saying in Mizoram that *Rih Dil* (*Dil* means Lake) is the largest lake of Mizo's, but it is in Myanmar. This lake occupies a vast area of land in the foothills and is an important part of the folk-life of the Mizos and other tribes of the region such as the Paites, Hmars and the Kukis. In the pre-Christian belief, the Mizos believed that the departed souls passed through the *Rih Dil* to go to *Mitbi Khua* or *Pialral* (Deadman's village). According to the folklore hens (*Rih Ar*) were available in and around the lake. But no one could take away the hens or eggs from this area. It is said that once a group of hunters tried to collect the hens. The group got struck and could not reach the *Khua* or *Pialral*.

Being conveniently located near the border of Mizoram and Myanmar, this lake has enough potential for tourism. The lake view attracts many tourists both from Myanmar and Mizoram. Many college and university students from Aizawl and other districts of Mizoram come to this lake on educational tour. Many families with children also come to this lake. There is a motor boat service



View of the Rih Dil in Myanmar

for the tourists to go round the lake. There are two Myanmar restaurants with local cuisines by the side of the lake along with four tourist lodges. The bank of the lake is a beautiful natural lawn where the tourists can relax. The Lake is not only an ideal tourist place beyond the border but also a congenial space for people-to-people contact beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation states.

Interaction with the YMA Personnel at Aizawl

On 30th March 2015, we interviewed Mr. Vanlalruata, the General Secretary of YMA at Aizawl. He narrated the history of YMA which was organised as Young Lushai Association in June 15, 1935 and was later renamed as the Young Mizo Association (YMA) in October 7, 1947. It is the oldest NGO in Mizoram having 750 branches and about 2.5 lakh members. YMA is engaged with various constructive work programmes including education, public health & sanitation, forest conservation, self-employment and income generating activities for the Mizo youths and games & sports. YMA played a great role in ensuring governance, controlling drug and fostering people to people contact in Mizoram. It followed constructive work approach for governance and peace building and worked for containing post-Accord extremist politics of



Interaction with Mr. Vanlalruata the General Secretary of YMA, Aizawl

Box 5: Views of Administrators

Rualzakhuma, IAS (Rtd)-Good governance is the key to development. Good projects have been undertaken on paper but they have not been fruitful due to corruption. Thus, an independent group must ensure the proper utilisation of funds. The commitment of government officials is essential.

M. Manzuala, IAS (Rtd)-It is necessary to have laws, rules and good systems for the proper functioning of government organisations. Mizos lacked good leadership, a suitable work culture and ethics, thus they require a leader who puts the interest of people before self and the interests of the political party.

F. Lalremsiama, IPS (Rtd)- The narrow ethnic community extremism has resulted in the Mizos losing their national identity thereby hindering progress. Maladministration has resulted in corruption, failure of law and order, increase of crime. Peace, security, law and order are the prerequisite to improve the quality of life. Anti-corruption measures must be taken by monitoring public finances and providing time frames for projects.

(Extracts from the Report on the Public Hearing in Aizawl, Mizoram, 7 November 2007: NE Vision 2020)

the Chin National Army, Zo Revolutionary Army in the border region of the state and fought drug menace through the 'Reconstruction of Social Life' programme.

The central committee of YMA formed the 'Central Anti-Drug Squad' (CADS) which seized drugs including *Ganja* worth Rs. 1,17,46,760 between July 2011 to April 2012. It also undertook awareness building programmes against drug menace throughout the state and networked with other NGOs on this issue. Central YMA also received National award for outstanding services for drug and alcohol prevention in

2013. (YMA Newsletter September 2012 & October 2013). It took other programmes to stop human trafficking in the cross border areas and took active interest in checking Inner Line Permit (ILP) to stop infiltration of outsiders in the state. (YMA Newsletter, October 2014). He stated that the infiltrators show fake birth certificate to obtain citizenship and occupy land in Mizoram. Many Arakanese and stateless people are staying in South Mizoram. The Myanmar side of the border is controlled by the Assam Rifles while the Bangladesh border is manned by Border Security Force. But these security agencies have failed to control infiltration effectively. YMA is playing an active role in stopping infiltration. However in the campaigns against drugs, alcohol and infiltration this organisation is blamed of committing 'excess' (Pudaite 2010).

Regarding people-to-people contact, YMA has a reserve stand. It is not much concerned with pan-tribal and beyond the state unification. It is much focussed on the Mizos of Mizoram and in Zokhawthar, YMA is engaged in spreading literacy along with the Presbyterian Church.

The foreseeable future of the Mizo people, according to him, is rooted in state-church-society symbiosis, which if cultivated properly in the LEP regime, could lead Mizoram to peace, progress and prosperity.

Box 6: Custom Office, Aizawl

The Commissioner of Customs, Aizawl stated that Government of India has undertaken extensive spade work to make the LEP a success. Trade promotion, construction of trade related infrastructure and roads linking the NER states for trade and commerce with neighbouring countries have been progressing at a fast pace in the region. However, there is lack of reciprocity from Myanmar. The political situation in the Chin State holds Myanmar back from reciprocating. Perhaps the dominance of China both in governance and day to day activities in Myanmar is an inhibiting factor in this direction.

Formal trade is very limited between Mizoram and Myanmar. During 2013-14, formal trade was of the tune of Rs 15,11,594 which increased to Rs 73,93,398 in 2014-15. During 2013-14, 140 MT of goods were imported from Myanmar which increased to 602 MT during 2014-15. While 29 MT was exported to Myanmar in 2013-14, during 2014-15 there was no export from Mizoram. As a detailed commodity wise traded list was not available, the customs office informed that exports to Myanmar mainly included Soya bari and processed flour (Maida) while India's imports consisted of Dry Betel Nut and Reed Broom.

Informal trade is a major issue at the Mizoram-Myanmar border. It not only includes goods and commodities but also consist of huge quantities of drugs and narcotics smuggled into Mizoram from Myanmar. Citing from the customs seizure data, the Commissioner stated that there is wide fluctuation from one year to another in terms of the number of cases and value of goods seized. But whatever the quantum of seizure, narcotics and drugs are always much higher in value terms than other ceased goods and commodities. During 2013-14, there were 91 cases of goods seized, worth Rs 1,44,91,611. During the same year, only 4 cases of narcotic and drugs seizure were there which amounted to Rs 5,03,22,714. Similarly, during 2014-15, there were 67 cases of goods seizure worth Rs 72,81,169 while only 3 cases of narcotic seizure was worth Rs 1,00,30,000. These figures are much higher than those of the other goods seized during the last two year.

Voices From the Field: Part II

This part of the Report is based on the analysis of quantitative data collected through questionnaire. We have sequenced our analysis in 7 sub-sections based on the questionnaire namely, select profile of the respondents, perception about the LEP, views on international trade, understanding about border markets, issues related to cross border people to people contact, the gender dimension and how do the respondents foresee their future under LEP.

Select Profile of the Respondents

In this sub-section our analysis includes gender, age, marital, occupational, educational and ethnic profiles of the respondents. In terms of gender, 42 per cent of the respondents were females who were proportionately higher in Champhai (45.71 percent) compared to Zokhawthar (33.33 per cent). The Tables related to this section are in Annexure D.

More than half of our respondents were in the 20-30 years age group. In other words, more than 85 per cent of the respondents were below the age of 40 years, which was similar to the state average of 77 per cent (2011 census). This shows that the youths form an overwhelming majority both in the population of the state as well as in our sample.

Mizoram with 91.58 per cent literacy is the second most literate state in India. The gender gap in literacy is 4.3 per cent in the state which is 16.68 per cent at the national level. All the sample population in our study were literates. Nearly 38 per cent of the total male respondents studied up to Class XII. Proportionately, Graduate (23.81 per cent) and Post-graduate (14.29 per cent) respondents were higher amongst the female.

Amongst the respondents, 30 per cent were outside the work force who comprised of students and housewives. Amongst the respondents available for work, 34 per cent was in business followed by 26 per cent in service. Those who were without any occupation for a recall period of last one month were included as unemployed (20 per cent). Others included retired persons.

The Census 2011 shows that Mizo's constitute nearly 85 per cent of the population in Champhai district followed by Paite and Hmar and other Kuki groups.

Figure V: Age Profile

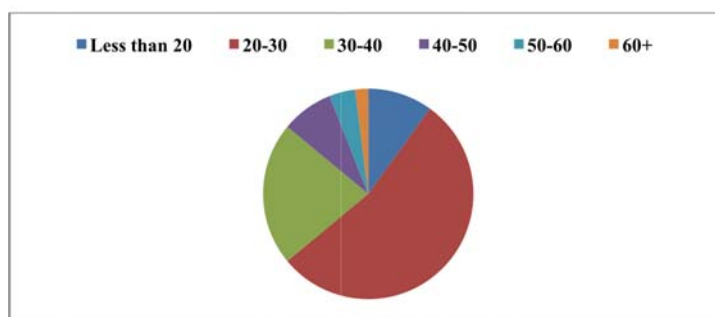


Figure VI: Marital Status

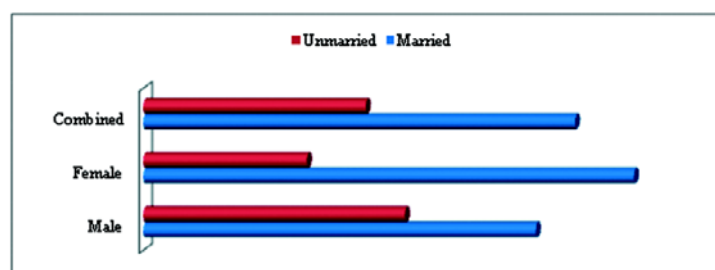


Figure VII: Educational Profile According to Gender

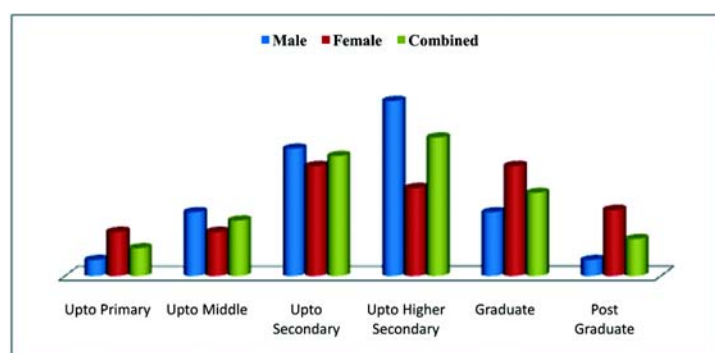


Figure VIII: Occupational Profile

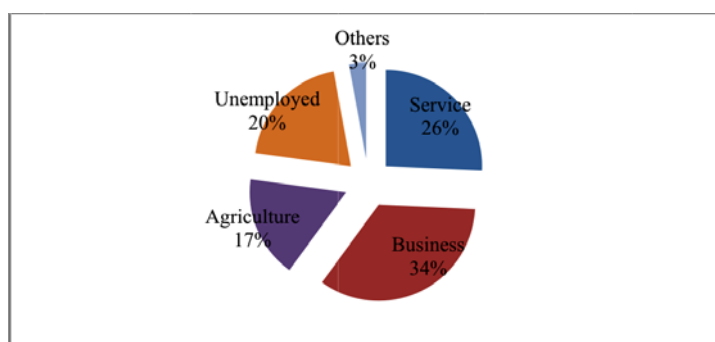


Figure IX: Tribes Represented in the Sample

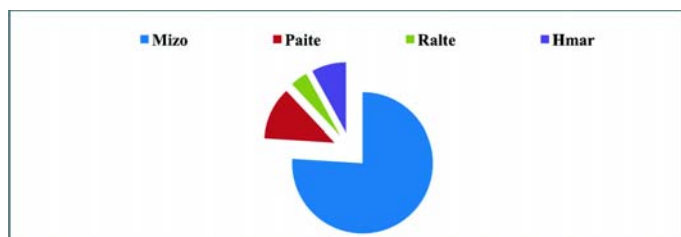


Figure X: Perception About Content of LEP

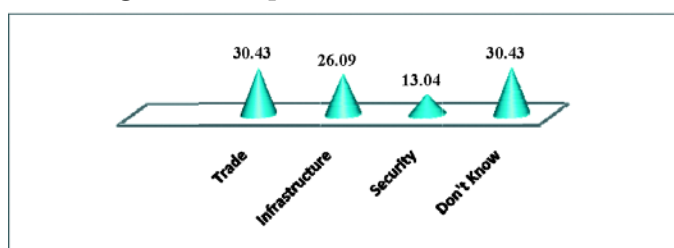


Figure XI: Perception About Benefits From LEP

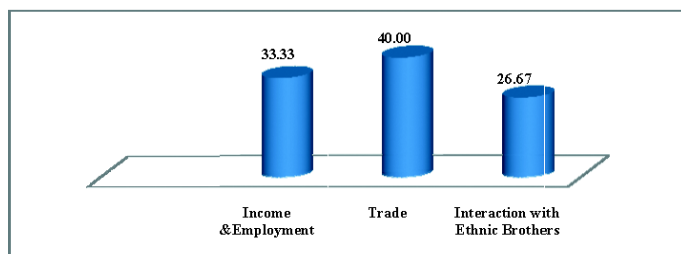
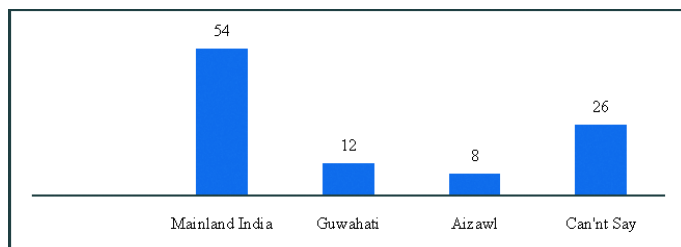


Figure XII: Perception About Traders Involved in International Trade



Our respondent profile also depicted similar picture. The Mizos comprised 76 per cent of our respondents followed by the Paite and the Hmar tribes.

Perception about Look East Policy

There is a general perception among the people that LEP is an emerging policy or rather a policy without a white paper. The NE Vision 2020 document of 2008 folded the region in the larger scope of the LEP. Moreover, the recent manoeuvres of transforming 'Look East' to 'Act East' have made the matter further intrigued. Under this situation, the selective perception based questions were set for the respondents to take a stock of their understanding about the policy. Framing of the policy, content and expected benefits from LEP were points of enquiry. The Tables related to this section are in Annexure E.

The ordinary people are still less informed about the policy. When they were asked whether they have heard about a policy called the Look East, majority (54 per cent) of them responded in negative. The response patterns were similar in both Champhai and Zokhawthar. The respondents, who had heard about LEP, had no clear understanding about the agency that framed the policy. More than 60 per cent respondents were of the view that this policy was framed by the Central Government while 17 per cent thought that big business houses were instrumental in framing this policy. One third of the respondents, who have heard about and were also aware of the agency that framed the LEP, expressed ignorance about the content of the policy. Another one third of the respondents said that the policy was related to trade while 25 per cent respondents linked the policy with infrastructure building.

There is an expectation of benefit amongst the respondents from the LEP. More than 56 per cent of the respondents were positive about benefits accruing from LEP. The expectation was proportionately higher in Zokhawthar compared to Champhai. One probable reason for higher expectation in Zokhawthar can be related to the recent construction and inauguration of Land Customs Station in Zokhawthar, which the media has portrayed as a process in operationalization of the LEP. This has generated high hopes for the people of Zokhawthar.

Increase in trade opportunity is perceived as the biggest benefit under LEP. This expectation is proportionately higher in Champhai which is a bigger trading centre compared to Zokhawthar. Income and employment opportunities are perceived as the most important benefit at Zokhawthar. Zokhawthar being a border town, any increase in economic activity with Myanmar generates a perception of hope. Interaction with the Myanmar, whom the Mizos regard as their ethnic brethren, is another important perceived social benefit in the LEP regime.

Perception on International Trade

LEP intends to bring in an era of container based continental trade. The perception of the respondents about international trade was ascertained through select questions. The information so obtained has been analysed here. The Tables related to this section are in Annexure F.

62% of the respondents replied that international trade would involve big traders only from 'mainland' India and the gains from such trade would accrue mainly to them. 4% responded felt that the Aizawl traders would benefit from international trade and 8 per cent of the respondents perceived that the traders from Aizawl might get some leverage in this trade process. They were of the opinion that neither Champhai nor Zokhawthar based traders would be equally involved in this trade process.

The respondents were asked about their perception regarding the expected scenario from an enhanced process of international trade. Surprisingly, 38 per cent responded that it would simultaneously increase the process of informal trade. When asked to explain the reasons, they stated that better infrastructure and larger scope of formal trade would simultaneously enhance the preference pattern of the informal traders who are more acquainted with the terrain than the formal traders. This may also enhance strategic cooperation of the formal and informal traders. The most noteworthy perceived gain was however *non-economic*. 16 per cent of the respondent cited that international trade would also enhance greater cultural links with the people of Myanmar.

When asked whether they believed that gains from international trade would accrue to the locals, 38 per cent said that they were not sure about it while only one third of them gave positive response. 32 per cent of them did not expect any gains from an enhanced trade process. This shows that international trade related aspect of LEP is yet to capture the imagination of the border people in Mizoram.

The respondents were asked to identify the bottlenecks for increasing international trade. Equal number of respondents (44 per cent) cited lack of proper road infrastructure and lack of government initiative as the major bottlenecks for enhancing international trade through the Zokhawthar border.

Border Markets

Border markets are spaces for petty trade in goods and services for day-to-day use of the local inhabitants. These markets are located along the border areas and engage the border people both as buyers and sellers. We visited three border markets namely Champhai, Zokhawthar and Zokhawmawi (Myanmar). The perception of the respondents dependent on these markets, were collected

Figure XIII: Perception About Gains to Traders Involved in International Trade

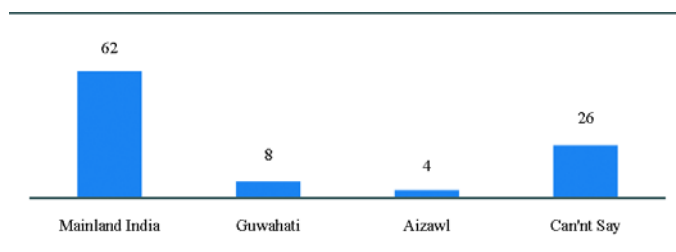


Figure XIV: Expected Scenario From International Trade

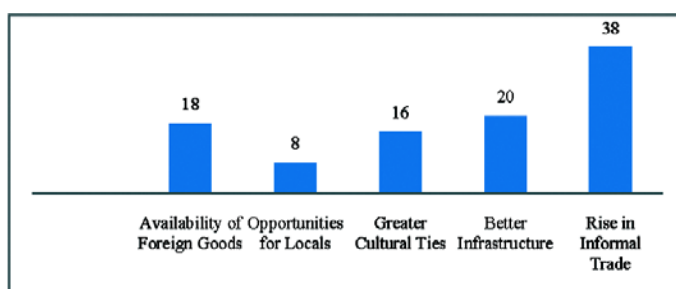


Figure XV: Bottlenecks For Enhancing International Trade

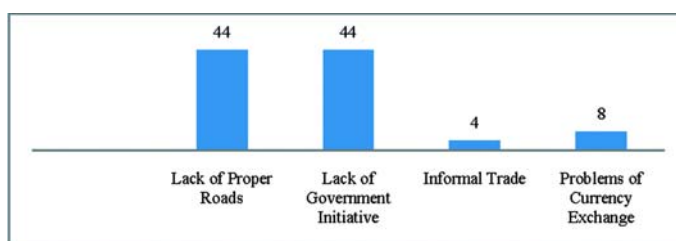


Figure XVI: Perception About Agency Establishing Border Markets

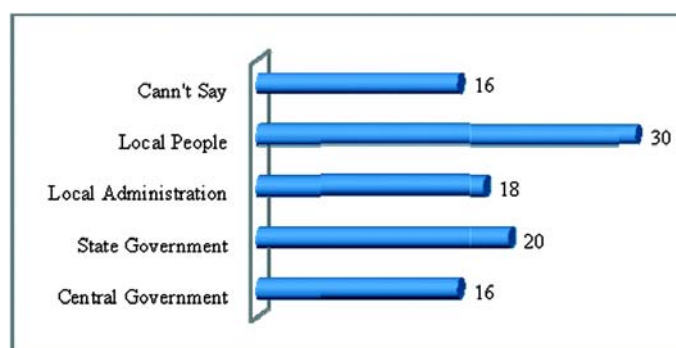


Figure XVII: Communitarian Gains From Border Markets



Figure XVIII: Who Benefits From The Border Markets

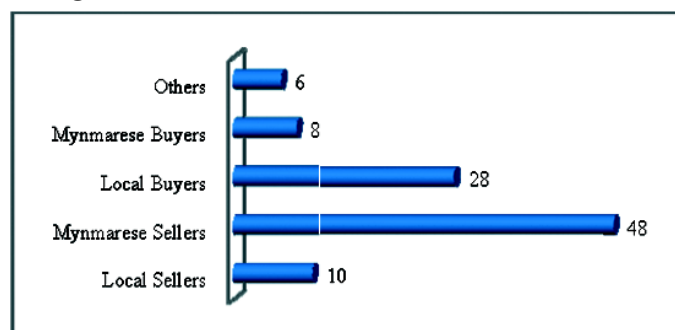
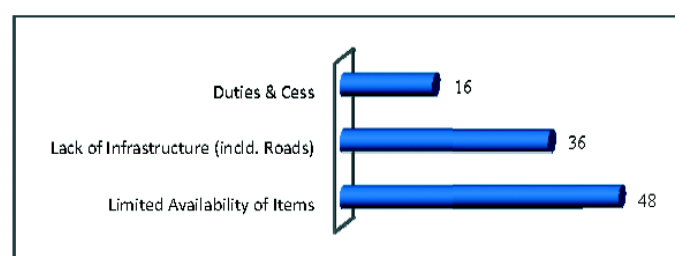


Figure XIX: Problems Associated With Border Markets



through the questionnaire and analysed here. The Tables related to this section are in Annexure F.

The respondents perceive that the border markets were established by the local people for meeting their household requirements. A third of the respondents ascribed to this view. 54 per cent thought that government agencies were involved in establishing the border markets, majority them perceived the State Government (20 per cent) as prime mover. This perception was similar in both Champhai and Zokhawthar.

When asked about the perceived gains of the community from the border markets, about a half of the respondents stated that it was access to more consumer goods and services. A visit to these markets revealed that these goods and services were either from Myanmar or what is called, the third country goods from China, Singapore and Thailand. Increased access to food grains was the second biggest expected gain to the community from these markets. Majority of the respondents were of the view that lack of transport and communication infrastructure and frequent disruption in the Silchar-Aizawl highway (through which all the major items were brought in from outside the state) often caused food shortage, scarcity of essential goods and services and price rise. Such threats could to some extent be minimised by supply of food grains and vegetables from Myanmar. Therefore the importance of border markets both during road blockade and during normal times is significant. The non-economic gains in terms of socio-cultural interactions with their kindred in Myanmar were also an important communitarian gain from the border markets.

The respondents were of the view that amongst all the groups involved in these markets, the sellers from Myanmar benefit most. About a half of the respondents subscribed to this view. When asked whether they felt aggrieved about the gains going to the sellers from Myanmar, their answer was negative, as they considered the Mynmarese sellers as their fellow ethnic brethren. Local buyers also gained in the process and 28 per cent of the respondents cited this reason to be important in the border markets. Only 6 per cent thought that the transporters and suppliers were the biggest beneficiaries from the border markets. They were clubbed as 'Others'.

It was due to these benefits that 92 per cent of the respondents favoured opening up of more border markets. When questioned regarding their preference for greater quantum of international trade vis-à-vis more number of border markets, more than 90 per cent of respondents favoured the later rather than the former.

Limited availability of items was the biggest problems in the border markets. Half of the respondents were of the

opinion that these markets could become more vibrant centres of trade if more varieties of goods and commodities were made available. During our field trip to these markets it was observed that other than limited stock of food grains and vegetable, majority of the items were brought from Myanmar and other countries which had no regular supply. Moreover despite the permission to sale 60 odd items in the border markets there is palpable fear amongst the sellers regarding harassment by customs, revenue as well as security personals in the bordering areas. This limits regularity of supply of items to these markets. Lack of infrastructure (36 per cent), specifically roads, was cited as a major impediment to the functioning and growth of border markets.

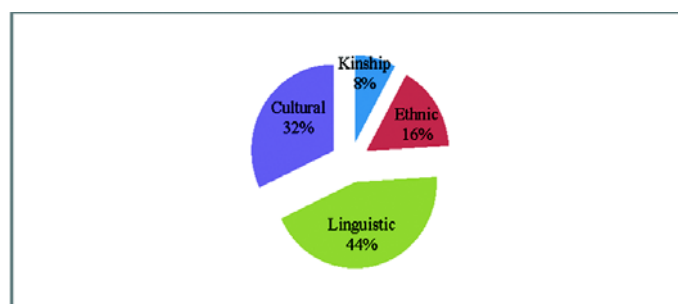
People to People Contact

The NER 2020 Vision Document highlighted the need for people to people contact and co-operation and in this study it is an important component. How do the communities residing in the Indian side of the border perceive contacting people on the other side? What are the commonalities amongst them? Do they have any contact mechanism beyond the state mechanism? How do these communities perceive each other in the trade regime? We included these questions in our questionnaire and collected data from the respondents. A brief analysis is provided here. The Tables related to this section are in Annexure G.

The respondents were asked to mention the community who they think reside on the other side of the border in Myanmar? Three fourth of the respondents said that it was the Mizo community. 20 per cent replied that it was the Paites. Although we could not verify the ethnic profile of the Chin state (Myanmar) adjoining Mizoram, yet our probing with local people authenticate these responses. At the ideational level, Mizos in Champhai and Zokhawthar regard their kindred in Myanmar as their ethnic brethren with similar language and religion.

Asked about the commonality between the communities of the people residing in either side of the border, the responded replied that language was most common between these two communities, 32 per cent ascribed

Figure XX: Perceived Commonalities Between the Bordering Communities



cultural affinity while the rest highlighted ethnic and kinship commonalities.

When asked if these commonalities had the potential to enhance contact between these communities, 36 per cent responded that these helped them in their business while 32 per cent replied that it encouraged the cultural contacts. 14 per cent respondents had no contact with their counterparts in Myanmar while an equal number of them had matrimonial relation with them. Such commonalities of the people in the border undoubtedly created avenues for greater economic and socio-cultural contacts. Due to this reason nearly three fourth of the respondents favoured a more conducive border regime that might enhance co-operation between these two population groups residing on both sides of the border.

Figure XXI: Trans-border Contacts

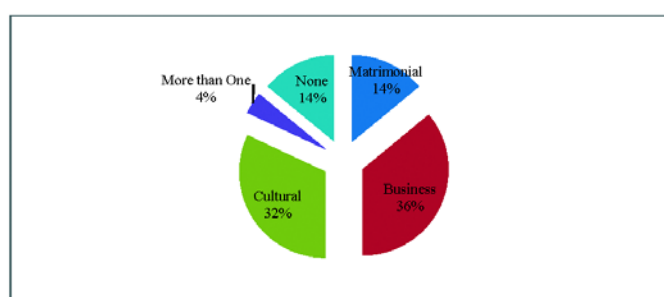


Figure XXII: Opinion about People Coming from Myanmar

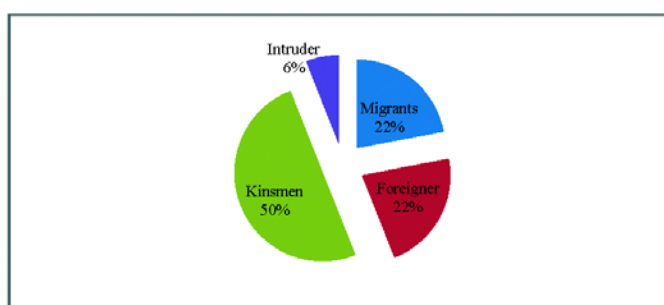
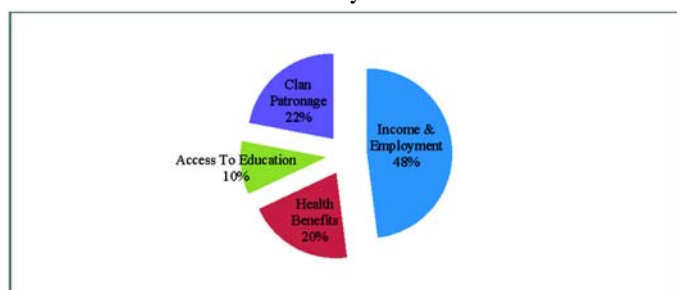


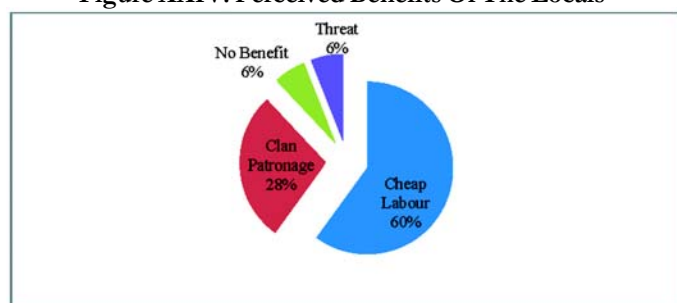
Figure XXIII: Perceived Benefits of The People Coming From Myanmar



When asked about their perception about the people coming from Myanmar, half of the respondents perceived them as their kinsmen, 22 per cent considered them as migrants from across the border and about 28 per cent identified them as foreigners or intruders. This shows that majority of the respondents did not view the Myanmar people as immigrants and were apparently not apathetic to their migration to Mizoram.

When asked how Myanmar people benefit by migrating to Mizoram, nearly half of the respondents viewed that they get greater employment and higher income options, access to better health facilities in Mizoram. Clan patronage was also an important pull factor that attracts these people to the state. By virtue of this the Myanmar people perceived that they could intermingle with the local population which could help them to search for better livelihood option and social opportunities in Mizoram.

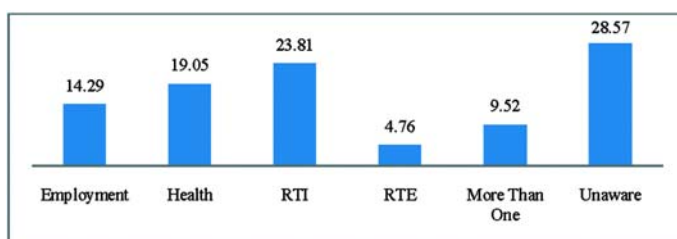
Figure XXIV: Perceived Benefits Of The Locals



Gender Issues

Select questions on issues related to women were asked to the respondents and based on their replies we highlight some important gender related aspects. Mizoram being a state with high human development scores, it is but obvious that women consciousness and participation in all walks of life should also be high. This section tries to analyse gender related issues in Champhai and Zokhawthar. The Tables related to this section are in Annexure H.

Figure XXV: Awareness About Schemes & Rights



We asked about the awareness of the respondent women about various existing schemes and rights, one third of them replied that they were unaware of any rights or schemes. Among those who were aware, Right to Information (RTI) was most common. The main agency to create their awareness about RTI was media. The respondents replied that they learnt about this Act from both print and electronic media although they seldom used RTI. 19 per cent were aware of NRHM while 14 per cent only heard of MGNREGA.

The respondents were asked if they participated in any meeting of village councils or community organizations during last six months. Less than half (42 per cent) of them said that they had participated. This shows that despite of a higher literacy, female participation in community and public affairs remained significantly limited.

Figure XXVI: Perception about Factors Important For Gender Equality



When asked about the most important issue discussed in the last village council meeting in which the respondent attended, surprisingly, 44 per cent responded that the issues were related to women's security. They were then asked about their views regarding important factors that could enhance gender equity and participation of women in the public sphere. More than 42 per cent of the respondents were of the view that until and unless women exercise their rights themselves there cannot be greater gender participation.

Higher income and greater employment opportunities were cited as the second most important factor to enhance gender participation in the Mizo society.

The respondents were asked to identify the major hurdles to gender equity in their society. More than half of them cited male dominance to be the single biggest hurdle. Lack of participation of women (23.81 per cent) was also an important hurdle to gender equity along with lack of awareness and knowledge (19.05 per cent).

When asked if people to people contact and co-operation could enhance female participation, nearly 42 per cent of the respondents stated that people-to-people contact would positively contribute to higher gender equity. More than one third of the respondents were not sure whereas 23.81 per cent were sceptical about it.

Similar was the perception regarding increasing border trade and perceived benefits accruing from the trade process. 47.62 per cent of the respondents were hopeful that border trade would create more opportunities to the women community. Availability of food was the most important benefit that the respondents expected from an enhanced border trade along with greater availability of consumer goods, especially foreign goods. One fifth of them expected greater income, employment and business opportunities.

The respondents felt that they were not apprehensive if a more open border regime could replace the present Zokhawthar-Myanmar border. More than 66 per cent of the respondents were positive about a more open border. It was observed that people at Zokhawthar were less apprehensive about an open border compared to those of Champhai. Zokhawthar being located at the border, the people there are in constant touch with their Myanmar counterparts in their daily lives, which is not the case in Champhai, a settlement comparatively well off and situated nearly 30 kms away from the border.

Those respondents who expressed their apprehension about a more open border perceived the main threat of crime committed by the migrants from Myanmar. They were of the opinion that the miscreants from across the border would get greater access to Mizoram and greater scope of escape from the area after committing a crime if border is open. The propensity to indulge in women related crime is higher among these migrants from Myanmar vis-à-vis other population groups in Mizoram. Nearly a third of the respondents cited the threat of increased drug peddling from an open border. Since Myanmar is notorious for availability and trafficking of drugs, an open border would further boost the drug peddlers- a threat for the people, particularly for the women and children in Mizoram. Others had a threat perception of black magic and sorcery as a result of opening the border.

Figure XXVII: Perception About Major Hurdles to Gender Equality

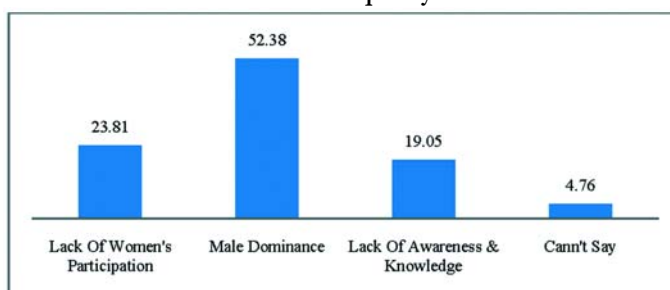


Figure XXVIII: Perception about Benefits Expected From Enhanced Border Trade

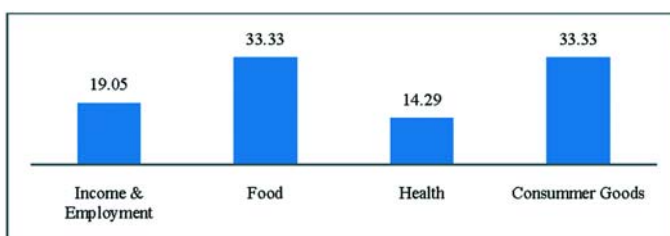
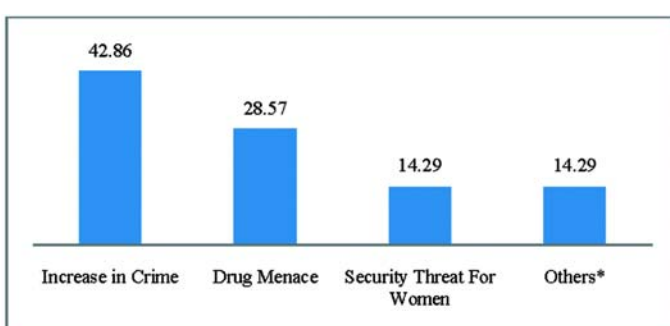


Figure XXIX: Threat Perception From An Open Border



We had further investigated the threat perception through an experience sharing by a village woman.

Box 7: Women Feel Insecure: Narrative of a Village Woman

I Ms. X (name not disclosed) reside in Zote village of Champhai district. Our village is situated at a close distance from the border villages of Myanmar. Many women like me are engaged in petty trade on these border villages of Mizoram and Myanmar. We carry the tradable goods as head-load or pony-load and prefer to travel by foot through the hills to reach the border villages for trade. We avoid passing through the formalities of the LCS of Zokhawthar (although we are not to pay customs duty) and harassment of police & security check posts on the way. As women, our feeling of insecurity on the border is manifold. In the domestic sphere our male folk have no productive employment. They remain largely unemployed and many of them indulge in illegal liquor trade and drug trafficking. This breaks family peace and threatens the social security of the women and our children at the household level. Tobacco, drug and liquor consumed by the male folk's results in furthering our financial crisis which further jeopardize our food security. Many families here are unable to continue children's education due to irresponsible behavior of our male counterparts. This has a high social cost.

We face still bigger external security threats from the militant groups, the security personnel and from the Myanmar migrants. The Chin National Army (CNA) is a militant outfit that is active in this area. The activists use to take shelter in our village and extract donation from the households. This is a source of perennial threat to us and our children. Following them the security personnel come to our village. Their presence in the village is uncomfortable and unpleasant. Occasional encounters of the security personnel with the militant groups affect our civic life and free movement. During such disturbances, our economic activities are often affected. The President of the Village Council of Zote village took some bold initiatives to negotiate with the CNA militants. These initiatives proved successful for the time being but the problem seems to be perennial.

The Myanmar migrants sneak into the unprotected borders of Mizoram and mix up with our Mizo society. They are not easily identifiable amidst the Mizo society. Although we take them as our ethnic brethren, many of them get involved in illegal and immoral activities like drug and human trafficking that affect our social life and harmony. The *kutcha* route leading to Myanmar is also an undeclared drug route. Human trafficking also goes on through this route. Many women and girls got involuntarily entangled with the drug and human traffickers. As petty traders, we have no protection on the way to Myanmar. In the male dominated Mizo society, we are also deprived of taking any decision either at household or in the larger political body of the village council. Our involvement in major political issues of the village community is also out of question. Although we are the bread earners, our voices are seldom heard in our male dominated Mizo society.



Foreseeing the Future

There were two perception based questions on foreseeing the future under LEP. One was about perceived expectation about future

gains and the other was related to foreseeing their future under LEP. The Tables related to this section are in Annexure I.

Nearly half of the respondents were not sure about a better future under LEP. Only one third were optimistic about a better future and 22 per cent suffered from pessimism. This exposed a serious disconnect between the expectation of the policy framers and the perceived benefits of the people in Northeast India.

When asked to judge their priorities in foreseeable future under LEP, an interesting picture emerged. Border trade emerged as their biggest priority and 42 per cent of the respondents foresaw a future where border trade would flourish if LEP fructifies in a manner where the people are included as important stakeholders. 22 per cent foresaw their future in trans-border ethnic integration with their brethren in Myanmar. Equal number of respondents (14 per cent each) foresaw a better network of physical infrastructure and greater cultural integration under a successful LEP while 6 per cent respondents wished an increase in tourism.

Figure XXX: Perception about Future Expectation Under LEP

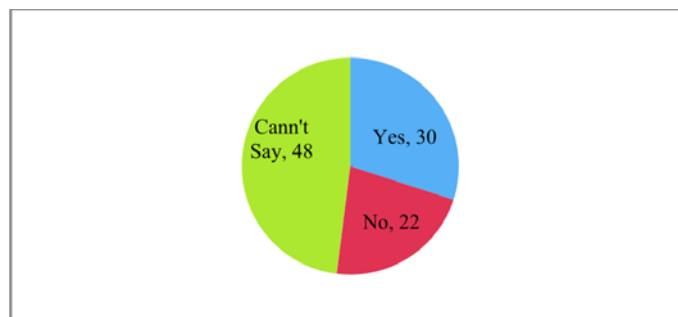
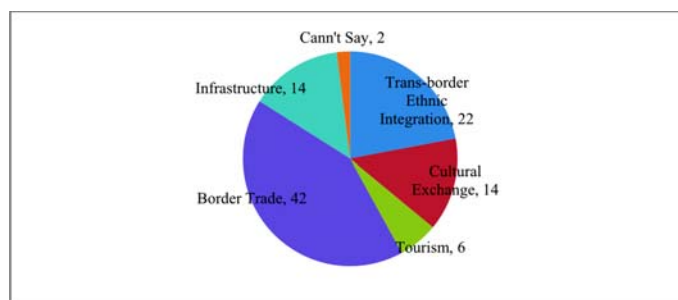


Figure XXXI: Foreseeing Their Future Under LEP



Part V

Reflections

Border and boundary drawn by the cartographers of the nation state intersected the pre-existing clan boundaries into intersections that polarized the state and the ethnics and created perceptual hiatus between the two. The state-constructed borders 'otherised' the people of the same stock living beyond the border while to the community, the state-constructed border was an alien concept. To them the clan boundary as a social construct was of primary importance which produced a sensory proximity (or distance) among the people standing in some relationship to one another.

Thus viewed, all the border tribes of Mizoram-Myanmar are found to have more proximity value and trans-border affiliation with their kindred in the Myanmar part of the border. Thus their primary allegiance invariably goes towards the trans-border 'ethnic' groups rather than towards the 'state'. This hiatus is further widened due to the anthropological understanding of space which envisions a future akin to Bourdieu's concept of 'social field' (Hilgars and Mangez 2015) - governed by values and approaches distinct from those of the state. The 'social field' is manifested in the patriotic penumbra of cross-border affiliation of the border tribes of Mizoram and Myanmar.

It is found that formal and container trade on the border is under the monopoly control of the licensed traders. This kind of trade turns the borderland tribal communities into wage-based labour as cart pullers and coolies. This trade does not give social space to them. Informal trade (petty trade) as a community process, is beyond the purview of the state and gives to the people more social space than what the formal trade can give. It

resonates with the Knight-Herskovits' anthropological model of trade as a critique of the market model of the West (Eranbawm 2005). Informal trade on the border is thus performative precisely of two functions: (a) the *ideational functions* in terms of community building, social spacing and revival of the trading link beyond the border. These in turn build social capital, people-to-people contact and engage them in extra-border affairs of peace-building fellowship creation in the cross-borders of Mizoram-Myanmar. The civil society initiatives in offering the *ideational benefits* to the border communities are quite promising here. These benefits are in terms of clan patronage and lingua-cultural affinities are also common both to the Myanmar migrants in Mizoram and to the Mizos of Mizoram. These might well construct the foreseeable future of the border people of Mizoram and Myanmar. (b) The economic function of border market is virtually petty trade where people from different communities come together for exchange of goods. Given the limited goods and limited buyer-seller constituency, border market provides a micro-space for both personal economic gain as well as for social exchange to different communities. In other words, border market is both a social space for community exchange and an economic space of commodity exchange. That is why it is border trade, not 'Border *Haat*' which is the dominant discourse among the border tribes of Mizoram-Myanmar.

Therefore, if border trade is captured by mega-trade, it would be at the cost of exclusion of the border communities. In which case they would take either a spectator posture or resort to occasional insurgency,

drug trafficking and gun running resulting in community distrust and mis-governance. The presence of the Chin National Army in Zokhawthar is a case in point. To salvage the situation, the community and the civil society could act as co-players with the state in trading activities, social capital building and in peace keeping on the border. The civil society organisations like YMA and Zofa Global Network are playing this role through constructive work approach.

An interesting paradox in the border region of Mizoram is the simultaneous presence of threat perception and opportunity perception about the state and LEP that seem difficult to resolve. For a smaller society as exists in Mizoram, there are reasons of having threat-opportunity perception and the Vision Document needs to clarify and resolve this paradox if people-to-people contact is to be made realistic.

The much hyped gender sensitive components of the NE Vision 2020, namely, Gender Sensitive Governance, Gender Participation in the decision making on gender issues like drug menace, human trafficking, Gender Responsive Budgets etc. are yet to be addressed in the state in order to realistically ground the policy commitments. The macro-policies in this regard are yet to be formulated and pursued in their real spirit. In fact, the state still plays the hegemon in policy making, regulation, budgeting and governance on trading activities. The civil societies, active in Mizoram, are striving to build partnership and make their space in these activities and in some aspects they could build partnership with the state in controlling drug menace, promoting sports and in enhancing cultural activities. But in vital matters of decision

making, women empowerment and participation, the civil society in Mizoram is yet to go miles ahead. As a result the mimicry of the poor women in the male dominated Mizo society still persists. These factors need be looked into in the Vision 2020 document, which, otherwise looks more abstract in nature.

The society remains highly dependent on the women's trading activities and income. But neither the state nor the male community do fully recognise this dependency. Most of the women are still unaware of the various schemes and their rights although they are apparently aware of RTI due to media exposure. Therefore, although the women community was optimist about people-to-people contact and gender equity, their threat perception from the state and community stymied their optimism.

This scenario exposed serious lack of 'fit' between the policy commitments and the benefits perceived by the people from the Look East Policy. Their foreseeable future were reified petty trade on the border that would in fact give them hardly anything more than their subsistence. This needed the attention of the NE Vision component of people-to-people contact.

The state-church-society symbiosis in Mizoram could well contribute to people-to-people contact but infiltration of outsiders with fake citizenship certificate was a threat to it. The state-society hiatus on the issue of infiltration (a state constructed concept) and the free movement of the clan people within clan boundary beyond the cartography of the state (a social constructed concept), is still a problematic in the border region of Mizoram and Myanmar.

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Annexures

Annexure A: Workshop Participants

Sl. No.	Name of participants	Institution
1.	Dr. J. Doungel	Head, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl
2.	Lallianchhuhga	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl
3.	J.C. Zomuanthanga	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl
4.	Prof. J.V. Hluna	Vice Principal, Pachhunga University College, Aizawl
5.	Ms. Lalthanpuui Sailo	Guest Lecturer, Pachhunga University College
6.	Dr. Rohmingmawii	Assistant Professor, Pachhunga University College
7.	L. Lalrinkima	Assistant Professor, Kamlanagar College
8.	L.H. Rawsea	Faculty, Aizawl Theological College, Durtlang
9.	Mr. C. Lalremruata	Zo Indigenous Forum
10.	Gorky Chakraborty	IDSK, Kolkata
11.	Mr. Vanlalruata	President, PRISM, Aizawl
12.	Dr. Asok Kumar Ray	Kolkata
13.	Dr. H. Lalzuihanghi	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Hrangbana College
14.	Mr. C.N. Tluanga	Member, Mizoram Chambers of Commerce.

Annexure B: Particulars of Persons Interviewed

Name	Community	Position
H.B. Manhleia,	Mizo	President, Champhai Importers & Exporters Guild, Champhai
Mr. Rodina	Mizo	President of village Council, Zote
Mrs. Mah Pi	Burmese-Muslim	Licensed Trader of Myanmar
J. Haokip	Haokip	Commissioner, Customs Division, Aizawl
Rev. L.H. Rawsia	Mizo	Professor, Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl
B. Vanlalvena	Mizo	Inspector In-charge of composite LCS, Zokhawthar
Prof. J.V. Hluna	Mizo	Vice Principal, Pachhunga University college, Aizawl
Mr. Zoramchhana	Mizo	District Marketing Officer, Champhai
Mr. Vanlalruata	Mizo	General Secretary, YMA, Mizoram

Annexure C: Places Visited during The Study

Aizawl	• Dept. of Trade & Commerce • Pachhunga University College • Customs Office • Aizawl Theological college
Champhai	• Melbuk (Champhai) • Dept. of Trade and Commerce • Champhai Market • Zote Village
Zakhwathar	• Composite LCS • Zokhawthar market
Myanmar	• Zokhawmawi market • Rih Dil Lake

Annexure D: Tables on Personal Details of the Respondents

Place/Gender	Male	Female	Total
Champhai	19	16	35
Zokhawthar	10	5	15
Combined	29	21	50

Marital Status of The Respondents	Male	Female	Total
Married	18	15	33
Unmarried	12	5	17

Distribution of Tribes Amongst The Respondents	Male	Female	Total
Mizo	21	17	38
Paite	2	2	4
Ralte	3	1	4
Hmar	3	1	4

Educational Profile	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Upto Primary	1	3.45	2	9.52	3	6
Upto Middle	4	13.79	2	9.52	6	12
Upto Secondary	8	27.59	5	23.81	13	26
Upto Higher Secondary	11	37.93	4	19.05	15	30
Graduate	4	13.79	5	23.81	9	18
Post Graduate	1	3.45	3	14.29	4	8

Age Group	Combined
Less than 20	5
20-30	27
30-40	11
40-50	4
50-60	2
60+	1

Occupation	Service	Business	Agriculture	Unemployed	Others	Total
Respondents	9	12	6	7	1	35

Annexure E: Tables on General Perception About LEP

Response	Have You Heard About LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	17	48.57	6	40.00	23	46
No	18	51.43	9	60.00	27	54
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Agency	Framing of LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Central	11	64.71	3	50.00	14	60.87
State	4	23.53	1	16.67	5	21.74
Business	2	11.76	2	33.33	4	17.39
Total	17	100.00	6	100.00	23	100.00

Related To	Content of LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Trade	4	23.53	3	50.00	7	30.43
Infrastructure	5	29.41	1	16.67	6	26.09
Security	2	11.76	1	16.67	3	13.04
Don't Know	6	35.29	1	16.67	7	30.43
Total	17	100.00	6	100.00	23	100.00

Response	Do you Expect Any Benefits From LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	9	52.94	4	66.67	13	56.52
No	8	47.06	2	33.33	10	43.48
Total	17	100.00	6	100.00	23	100.00

Benefits	Expected Benefits From LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Income & Employment	2	22.22	3	50.00	5	33.33
Trade	4	44.44	2	33.33	6	40.00
Interaction with Ethnic Brothers	3	33.33	1	16.67	4	26.67
Total	9	100.00	6	100.00	15	100.00

Annexure F: Tables on Respondents Perception About International Trade

Hailing From	Traders Involved					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Mainland India	21	60.00	6	40.00	27	54
Guwahati	3	8.57	3	20.00	6	12
Aizawl	2	5.71	2	13.33	4	8
Can't Say	9	25.71	4	26.67	13	26
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Hailing From	Traders Gain					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Mainland India	23	65.71	8	53.33	31	62
Guwahati	2	5.71	2	13.33	4	8
Aizawl	1	2.86	1	6.67	2	4
Can't Say	9	25.71	4	26.67	13	26
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Expectations	Expectations From Enhanced Trade					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Availability of Foreign Goods	7	20.00	2	13.33	9	18
Opportunities for Locals	2	5.71	2	13.33	4	8
Greater Cultural Ties	4	11.43	4	26.67	8	16
Better Infrastructure	5	14.29	5	33.33	10	20
Rise in Informal Trade	17	48.57	2	13.33	19	38
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Reasons	Bottlenecks For Enhancing Trade					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Lack of Proper Roads	14	40.00	8	53.33	22	44
Lack of Government Initiative	17	48.57	5	33.33	22	44
Informal Trade	2	5.71			2	4
Problems of Currency Exchange	2	5.71	2	13.33	4	8
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Response	Expectation About Gains Accruing To Local People					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	7	20.00	8	53.33	15	30
No	11	31.43	5	33.33	16	32
Can't Say	17	48.57	2	13.33	19	38
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Annexure G: Tables on Respondents Perception About Border Market

Agency	Who Established The Border Market					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Central Government	7	20.00	1	6.67	8	16
State Government	8	22.86	2	13.33	10	20
Local Administration	5	14.29	4	26.67	9	18
Local People	9	25.71	6	40.00	15	30
Can't Say	6	17.14	2	13.33	8	16
Total	35	82.86	15	18.10	50	100

Communitarian Gains	Perceived Communitarian Gains					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Acess to More Goods & Services, Myanmar	19	54.29	5	33.33	24	48
Increased Availability of Foodgrains, Myanmar	12	34.29	7	46.67	19	38
Interaction with People from Myanmar	4	11.43	3	20.00	7	14
Total	35	100	15	100.00	50	100

Groups	Who Benefits From Border Markets!					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Local Sellers	4	11.43	1	6.67	5	10
Mynmarese Sellers	17	48.57	7	46.67	24	48
Local Buyers	10	28.57	4	26.67	14	28
Mynmarese Buyers	2	5.71	2	13.33	4	8
Others	2	5.71	1	6.67	3	6
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Others includes Transporters, Suppliers etc.

Views	Views About Opening New Border Markets					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	32	91.43	14	93.33	46	92
No	3	20.00	1	6.67	4	8
Total	35	111.43	15	100.00	50	100.00

Problems	Problems Associated With Border Markets					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Limited Availability of Items	19	54.29	5	33.33	24	48
Lack of Infrastructure (incl. Roads)	10	28.57	8	53.33	18	36
Duties & Cess	6	17.14	2	13.33	8	16
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100

Annexure H: Tables on Perception About People to People Contact

Tribe	Name The Tribe On The Other Side of The Border					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Mizo	26	74.29	12	80.00	38	76
Paite	8	22.86	2	13.33	10	20
Can't Say	1	2.86	1	6.67	2	4
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Commonalities	Commonalities Amongst The Bordering People					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Kinship	2	5.71	2	13.33	4	8
Ethnic	5	14.29	3	20.00	8	16
Linguistic	16	45.71	6	40.00	22	44
Cultural	12	34.29	4	26.67	16	32
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Contacts	Trans-border Contacts Amongst The Respondents					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Matrimonial	2	5.71	5	33.33	7	14
Business	14	40.00	4	26.67	18	36
Cultural	13	37.14	3	20.00	16	32
More than One	1	2.86	1	6.67	2	4
None	5	14.29	2	13.33	7	14
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Opinion	Opinion About A More Open Border					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	26	74.29	11	73.33	37	74
No	9	25.71	4	26.67	13	26
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Opinion	Opinion About People Coming From Myanmar					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Migrants	6	17.14	5	33.33	11	22
Foreigner	9	25.71	2	13.33	11	22
Kinsmen	18	51.43	7	46.67	25	50
Intruder	2	5.71	1	6.67	3	6
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Benefits	How Do Myanmarese Benefit By Migrating To Mizoram					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Income & Employment	18	51.43	6	40.00	24	48.00
Health Benefits	8	22.86	2	13.33	10	20.00
Access To Education	3	8.57	2	13.33	5	10.00
Clan Patronage	6	17.14	5	33.33	11	22.00
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Benefits	Benefits Accruing To Locals Due To The Myanmarese Migrants					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Cheap Labour	20	57.14	10	66.67	30	60
Clan Patronage	9	25.71	5	33.33	14	28
No Benefit	3	8.57		0.00	3	6
Threat	3	8.57		0.00	3	6
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Opinion	Do You Feel Threatened By Myanmarese Migrants					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	4	11.43	3	20.00	7	14
No	31	88.57	12	80.00	43	86
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Annexure I: Tables on Perception About Gender Issues

Awareness	Awareness About Select Rights & Schemes					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Employment	2	12.50	1	20.00	3	14.29
Health	3	18.75	1	20.00	4	19.05
RTI	4	25.00	1	20.00	5	23.81
RTE	1	6.25		0.00	1	4.76
More Than One	2	12.50		0.00	2	9.52
Unaware	4	25.00	2	40.00	6	28.57
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Response	Do You Participate In Community Meetings					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	7	43.75	2	40.00	9	42.86
No	9	56.25	3	60.00	12	57.14
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Issues	Issues Discussed At Community Meetings					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Income & Employment	2	28.57	0	0.00	2	22.22
Education	1	14.29		0.00	1	11.11
Health	2	28.57		0.00	2	22.22
Women's Security	2	28.57	2	100.00	4	44.44
Total	7	100.00	2	100.00	9	100.00

Response	Will Increased Participation of People Enhance Women's Participation					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	7	43.75	2	40.00	9	42.86
No	4	25.00	1	20.00	5	23.81
Can't Say	5	31.25	2	40.00	7	33.33
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Factors	Opinion About Factors Important For Gender Equity					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Income & Employment Opportunities	4	25.00	2	40.00	6	28.57
Exercise Of Women's Rights	7	43.75	2	40.00	9	42.86
Involvement In Decision Making	3	18.75	1	20.00	4	19.05
Can't Say	2	12.50	0	0.00	2	9.52
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Hurdles	Opinion About Hurdles To Gender Equity					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Lack Of Women's Participation	4	25.00	1	20.00	5	23.81
Male Dominance	8	50.00	3	60.00	11	52.38
Lack Of Awareness & Knowledge	3	18.75	1	20.00	4	19.05
Can't Say	1	6.25		0.00	1	4.76
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Opinion	Will Border Trade Create More Opportunities					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	7	43.75	3	60.00	10	47.62
No	5	31.25	1	20.00	6	28.57
Can't Say	3	18.75	1	20.00	4	19.05
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Hurdles	Benefits Expected From Enhanced Border Trade					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Income & Employment*	3	18.75	1	20.00	4	19.05
Food	5	31.25	2	40.00	7	33.33
Health**	3	18.75		0.00	3	14.29
Consumer Goods	5	31.25	2	40.00	7	33.33
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

*includes Business Also

**Health includes Traditional Medicines

Opinion	Do You Feel Threatened By An Open Border					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	6	37.50	1	20.00	7	33.33
No	10	62.50	4	80.00	14	66.67
Total	16	100.00	5	100.00	21	100.00

Reasons	Reasons Cited As Threat To A More Open Border					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Increase in Crime	3	50.00	0	0.00	3	42.86
Drug Menace	2	33.33	0	0.00	2	28.57
Security Threat For Women		0.00	1	100.00	1	14.29
Others*	1	16.67		0.00	1	14.29
Total	6	100.00	1	100.00	7	100.00

*Others include: Black Magic, Social Conflict, Lack of Laws etc.

Annexure J: Tables on Perception About Foreseeing The Future

Issues	Foreseeing The Future Under LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Trans-border Ethnic Integration	8	22.86	3	20.00	11	22
Cultural Exchange	5	14.29	2	13.33	7	14
Tourism	2	5.71	1	6.67	3	6
Border Trade	18	51.43	3	20.00	21	42
Infrastructure	1	2.86	6	40.00	7	14
Can't Say	1	2.86		0.00	1	2
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Opinion	Future Expectation Of Benefits Under LEP					
	Champai	%	Zokhawthar	%	Combined	%
Yes	11	31.43	4	26.67	15	30
No	9	25.71	2	13.33	11	22
Can't Say	15	42.86	9	60.00	24	48
Total	35	100.00	15	100.00	50	100.00

Annexure K: Trade With Myanmar

Sl. No.	Year	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
1	EXPORT	98,472.88	1,45,903.12	2,64,450.60	2,96,070.66	4,80,568.13
2	%Growth		48.17	81.25	11.96	62.32
3	India's Total Export	8,45,53,364.38	11,36,96,426.38	14,65,95,939.96	16,34,31,828.96	19,05,01,108.86
4	%Growth		34.47	28.94	11.48	16.56
5	%Share	0.12	0.13	0.18	0.18	0.25
6	IMPORT	6,10,794.46	4,65,115.40	6,61,401.33	7,70,118.21	8,39,148.23
7	%Growth		-23.85	42.2	16.44	8.96
8	India's Total Import	13,63,73,554.76	16,83,46,695.57	23,45,46,324.45	26,69,16,195.69	27,15,43,390.74
9	%Growth		23.45	39.32	13.8	1.73
10	%Share	0.45	0.28	0.28	0.29	0.31
11	TOTAL TRADE	7,09,267.34	6,11,018.52	9,25,851.93	10,66,188.87	13,19,716.36
12	%Growth		-13.85	51.53	15.16	23.78
13	India's Total Trade	22,09,26,919.14	28,20,43,121.96	38,11,42,264.41	43,03,48,024.65	46,20,44,499.60
14	%Growth		27.66	35.14	12.91	7.37
15	%Share	0.32	0.22	0.24	0.25	0.29
16	TRADE BALANCE					
17	India's Trade Balance	-5,18,20,190.38	-5,46,50,269.19	-8,79,50,384.49	-10,34,84,366.72	-8,10,42,281.88

Source: <http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/ecntcom.asp>

Annexure L: NER's Share in India-Myanmar Trade

Year	Export to Myanmar	Import from Myanmar	NER Export to Myanmar	NER Import from Myanmar	NER's Share	
	\$ US Dollars				Export	Import
2000	48.05	179.18	1.23	2.75	2.56	1.53
2001	53.05	197.81	0.26	1.61	0.49	0.81
2002	71.53	345.64	1.03	2.43	1.44	0.7
2003	86	390.77	2.02	1.9	2.35	0.49
2004	104.71	400.05	1.43	1.19	1.37	0.3
2005	111.32	495.95	0.88	1.18	0.79	0.24
2006	132.72	718.4	13.52	0.59	10.18	0.08
2007	174.02	802.79	0.75	3.26	0.43	0.41
2008	212.23	893.92	1.06	1.79	0.5	0.2
2009	209.78	1195.26	1.47	2.12	0.7	0.18
Average**	120.34	561.98	2.36	1.88	2.08	0.49
CARG %	75.96	115.83	-14.51	-194.96		

Source: MODONER, 2011

Annexure M: Questionnaire For Respondents



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A study funded by National Foundation for India (New Delhi)

Confidential

Titled

*Collected information will be used for
research and preparation of Report*

The Look East Policy from People's Perspective: A Study on Mizoram

Questionnaire for Respondents

We would appreciate if you kindly participate in this survey. Whatever information you provide to us, including your name and identity, shall be strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

May I please begin the interview now?

I Personal Details

Name:						
Habitation	Gender	Age	Education	Marital Status	Occupation	Name of the Tribe

II Look East Policy: General Perception

(Tick one option, if necessary; write a note in the blank space provided in this page)

- Do you know about Look East Policy (LEP)?
a. Yes b. No c. Partly
- Who framed this policy?
a. Central govt. b. State govt. c. District council d. Business houses
- What does this policy deal with?
a. Trade b. Governance c. Infrastructure d. Security
- Do you expect any benefit from this policy?
a. Yes b. No c. Do not know
- If yes, what are those?
a. Income b. Employment c. Health d. Education e. Skill development

II LEP: Trade (Tick one option, if necessary write a note in the blank space provided in this page)

- Do you think that LEP has a trade component?
a. Yes b. No c. Cannot say
- This trade include goods and services from:
a. Rest of India b. Northeast c. Aizawl d. Champhai
- Who are the traders involved?
a. Indian trader's b. Guwahati trader's c. Aizwal trader's d. local traders
- Are you aware about the traded items?
a. Yes b. No
b. If yes, what are those:
- Who will gain more from this trade?
a. Govt. of India b. Aizwal city dwellers c. Local communities' d. Cannot say
- What do you expect from this trade?
a. More local goods sold b. Opportunities for locals c. Inclusion of locals in trade decisions
d. Rise in informal trade e. Improvement in health & education f. Improvement in cultural ties

7. What development opportunities have been created by the Government for the border communities like yours?
- a. Agro-processing units b. Seri-culture c. Manufacturing units d. Tourism
e. Capacity building f. Increase in income and employment
8. What are the bottlenecks for enhancing trade with Myanmar?
- a. Poor road communication b. Lack of govt. initiative c. Informal trade d. Lack of proper facilities at LCS
e. Others (specify)
9. Do you think that the gains from trade should be shared for the development of the border regions?
- a. Yes b. No.
10. If yes, how

III LEP: Border *Haat* (Tick one option, if necessary write a note in the blank space provided in this page)

1. Do you know about the existence of border *haats* in Mizoram? **a. Yes** **b. No**
2. What is your nearest border *haat*? Write the name
3. When was it established? Mention year
4. Who established this *haat*?
- a. Central Govt. b. State Govt. c. Local administration d. Local people e. Do not know
5. Who are the traders involved in this *haat*?
- a. Indian trader's b. Guwahati trader's c. Aizwal trader's d. local traders
6. Can you name the major items traded in the *haat*? (Please note down the name of items)
7. Did you ever visit the *haat* in the last 6 months? **a. Yes** **b. No**
8. If yes, mention
- | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|---------------|------|-------|
| Item/s sold | Barter | Against Money | Unit | Price |
| Item/s purchased | Barter | Against Money | Unit | Price |

9. What do you think is more profitable for you?

a. Transacting at the *haat*

b. Visiting the local market

10. What benefits do you think that the community derive from the border *haat*?
- a. Access to more goods & services b. Availability of goods from Myanmar c. Access to more food grains d. Social exchange
11. Who do you think benefit maximum from the *haat*?
- a. Locals b. Traders from Myanmar c. Traders from Mizoram d. Local consumer's e. Others (specify)
12. Should there be more such *haats* in the border areas? **a. Yes** **b. No**
13. What are the problems in proper functioning of the *haat*?
- a. Limited number of items traded b. Limited number of days for trading c. Lack of market infrastructure
d. Others (specify in the blank space below)

IV LEP: People to People Contact/Co-operation

(Tick one option, if necessary; write a note in the blank space provided in this page)

1. Do you know who/which ethnic group reside beyond the borders? Name
2. What is/are common between border tribes of Mizoram and Myanmar?
- a. Kinship ties b. Ethnic affinity c. Linguistic affinity d. Cultural affinity
3. What contact/s do you have with them?
- a. Matrimonial b. Business c. Cultural d. Games and sports e. None
4. What programmes/schemes have been undertaken by the government of India for people to people contact? Name
5. Do you consider that the borders should be more open?
- a. Yes b. No
6. If yes, what are the reason(s)

If no, what are the reason(s)

7. What do you think about the people coming from across the border?
 - a. Migrants
 - b. Foreigners
 - c. Kinsmen
 - d. Intruders
8. What benefit the migrants derive by coming to Mizoram?
 - a. Higher income
 - b. More employment opportunities
 - c. Better health facilities.
 - d. Better education
 - e. Clan patronage
9. What benefits do you derive from such migration?
 - a. Cheap labour
 - b. Clan patronage
 - c. Others (specify)
10. Do you feel threatened by their migration?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
11. If yes, what are those?

V LEP: Foreseeing the Future

(Tick one option, if necessary; write a note in the blank space provided in this page)

1. How do you foresee your future prospects under the LEP?
 - a. Trans-border ethnic integration
 - b. Cultural exchanges
 - d. Tourism
 - e. Games & sports
 - d. Border trade
 - e. Better infrastructure
2. Do you feel that you and your community will be better off in the future due to LEP?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. May be
 - d. Do not know

Signature of the Investigator with date
