INDIA'S GEO-STRATEGIC KALADAN MISSION IN WESTERN BURMA

Regional Integration, Confrontation, Social Movement,

June Nillian Sang

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RESEARCH REPORT
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Myanmar in Transition

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India's Geo-Strategic Kaladan Mission in Western Burma:

Regional Integration, Confrontation, Social Movement

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RCSD
The Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development
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International Development Research Centre
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Canada

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Foreword

The Understanding Myanmar's Development (UMD) Fellowship program, supported by the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, is designed to the enhance knowledge of Myanmar's development processes, strengthen the capacity of Burmese researchers, and encourage them to actively engage the study of development policy and practice. The fellowship seeks to promote sustainable academic exchange and dialogue among researchers from Myanmar, Thailand, and other GMS countries. Under this program, 30 fellowships have been awarded to midcareer researchers in their respective areas of social and economic transformation, agricultural, environment and climate change, health and health care systems, and social media and innovations.

In this monograph, June Nilian Sang has thoroughly researched the emergence, development and implications of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Linkage connecting India's mainland to its North Eastern Region through Burma. His analysis from various angles—starting from the state-level down to the developers and affected local communities—provides a profound understanding of what is at play at different levels.

His insights about India's attempt to counterbalance China's influence through tightening their relationship with Burma are not only relevant to this ongoing project, but also serve as a framework to interpret future developments taking place in Southeast Asia. The exploration of the non-resistant movement, representing and amplifying the voice of the affected people, has indicated that a precedent has been created in Burma which could potentially model future activism in the region. At the same time, it attests to the valuable contribution of this study to the literature on contemporary social movements.

Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, PhD
Director, RCSD

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I would like to show my deepest appreciation and thanks to all the informants who helped me during my fieldwork. I would like to express my gratitude to the officials from the Indian Embassy in Yangon, the Indian General Consulate in Sittwe, and all the Kaladan Project contractors for sharing their time and information with me. I would like to thank the member organizations of the Kaladan Movement (Chin Human Rights Organization, Arakan Rivers Network and Zo Indigenous Forum), and the Gender and Development Initiative for their cooperation, and for sharing their experience on social movements and knowledge about the Kaladan Project with me. I also would like to thank all the community leaders, Members of Parliament, Burmese government officials, local people and villagers for sharing their opinions and experiences during my fieldwork. Without them, this research would have not been possible. Last but not least, I would like to thank all my classmates, the class of 2018 of the Masters of Arts in Social Science (Development Studies), with whom I have had a fantastic experience and shared knowledge during our coursework.

Nilian Sang

Abstract

The Kaladan Project primarily aims to seek an alternative transport linkage between mainland India and its North Eastern Region through Burma's most remote region – Arakan and Chin State. While seeking to promote economic cooperation with Burma, the Kaladan Project is also understood as a part of India's Look East Policy (LEP) or Act East Policy (AEP), which pursues regional integration with Southeast Asia. This study explores the rationale behind the development of the Kaladan Project at the macro and micro level, caused by a pragmatic shift in India's foreign policy after the collapse of the USSR and to anticipate China's threats in the region. Furthermore, the social movement carried out by local civil society groups in response to the implementation of the project has been researched. While potential benefits for the local people are foreseen, the activists who have been concerned about the immediate impacts and long-term consequences, seek a responsible implementation instead of halting the project. Even though the Kaladan social movement has faced many structural challenges during the ongoing Burmese political transition, the movement has been a pioneer of the non-resistant movement in Burma, and has indirectly contributed to the study of contemporary social movements.

Abbreviations

AA	Arakan Army
AASYC	All Arakan Students’ and Youths' Congress
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEP	Act East Policy
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARN	Arakan Rivers Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCP	Burmese Communist Party
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CHRO	Chin Human Rights Organization
CM	Common Market
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CU	Custom Union
DICA	Directorate of Investment and Company Administration
DoNER	Development of North-Eastern Region
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FPIC	Free, Prior, Informed Consent
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDI	Gender and Development Initiative

GMS	Great Mekong Sub-region
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP	Internal Displaced Person
ILO	International Labor Organization
KMMTT	Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport project
LEP	Look East Policy
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEC	North-Eastern Council
NER	North Eastern Region
NEZ	Natural Economic Zone
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLD	National League for Democracy
NSM	New Social Movement
RI	Regional Integration
RM	Resource Mobilization
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
ZIF	Zo Indigenous Forum

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Note on Terminology

Prior to 1989, the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia was exclusively known internationally as "Burma," the name that British colonizers used after they consolidated the central plains and previously autonomous mountainous regions in the mid-1800s in reference to the country's largest ethnic group, the Burman. The international use of "Myanmar" to refer to the country dates only to 1989, when the country's unelected military rulers of the time announced the change of the nation's name to *Myanmar naing-gan*.

In addition, the official names of many ethnic groups, regions, cities, and villages were also changed, including that of the former capital from "Rangoon" to "Yangon."

The name changes were purportedly an effort on the part of the military regime to remake Burma into a more inclusive, multiethnic country, and to cast off vestiges of the colonial era. However, many critics pointed out that these changes failed to address the root causes of problematic Burman/ethnic minority relations, and historians have shown that both "Burma" and "Myanmar" were used prior to British administration. In addition, the use of "Myanmar" in English presents a grammatical challenge, as there is no conventional adjective form.

While international organizations such as the United Nations and Amnesty International have adopted the use of "Myanmar," journalistic, activist, and academic convention in much of the world continues to favor the use of "Burma," although usage patterns continue to evolve. For this series, the decision of whether to use pre- or post-1989 "official" names has been left entirely to the author of each work, and in most instances the names are used interchangeably with no intended political implications.

1

INTRODUCTION

Research background

In April 2008, India and Burma[1] signed a Framework Agreement to develop a new Multi-Modal Transport Linkage to connect mainland India with its North Eastern Region (NER). The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (hereafter referred to as the Kaladan Project or the Project) accounts for India's largest spending on a project in Burma, costing about 2,904 *crore*[2] rupees or approximately $480 million dollars ("Cabinet clears," 2015). The three-mode transport linkage is set to pass through Burma's least developed Western region (i.e. Arakan and Chin State), and continues through the Indian border state of Mizoram. Hence, three different ethnic minority groups from two countries, namely the Arakan and Chin from Burma, and the Mizo[3] from India, host the entire project's implementation.

---

1. In 1989, the military junta changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar. However, many academics and international media still use "Burma" because they do not recognize the name change that was made without public participation (cf. Al Jazeera English, 2013; J., 2016). Many ethnic groups also prefer to use Burma as it has been claimed that Myanmar linguistically represents the Burmese majority people (cf. "Let's not be," 2012). For those reasons, Burma, rather than Myanmar, will be used throughout this study.
2. Crore is an Indian way of counting money. One crore is equal to ten million.
3. Sometimes the Mizo people call themselves Zo. The province they inhabit is called Mizoram, whereby "ram" means "land". Sometimes they also use Zoram or Zofate, which respectively means "Mizo land" and "Mizo ancestors".

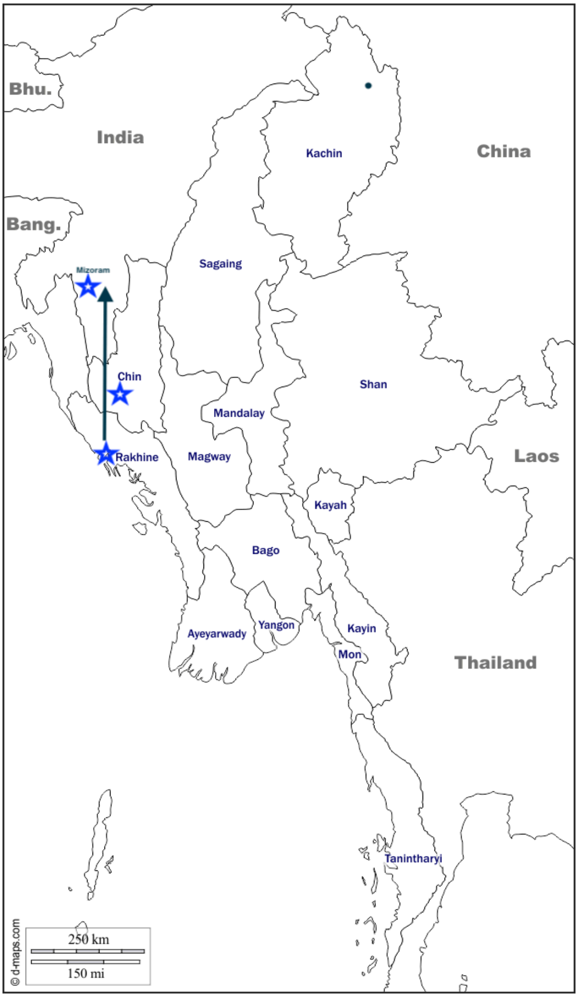
Bhu.
India
China
Kachin
Bang.
Mizoram
Sagaing
Chin
Shan
Mandalay
Rakhine
Magway
Laos
Kayah
Bago
Ayeyarwady
Yangon
Kayin
Mon
Thailand
Tanintharyi
© d-maps.com
250 km
150 mi

Figure 1.1 Ethnic territories hosting the Kaladan Project. *Source: D-Maps.com (n.d.)*

The implementation of the Project has been divided into four phases (Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, 2014). The first three phases are mainly located in Arakan and Chin State, with the fourth phase currently being implemented in Mizoram. The first phase was the construction of a deep seaport in Sittwe, Arakan State, which will host goods carried out by sea, traveling 539 kilometers along the Bay of Bengal from Kolkata, India. The second phase entailed the dredging and widening of the Kaladan river in order to make it navigable for large ships, and the construction of a transshipment station in Paletwa, Chin State. This has linked Sittwe seaport through an inland waterway of 158 kilometers to

Paletwa. The transshipment station will facilitate the transit of goods between river and road routes. The third and final phases are to construct two-lane highways from Paletwa to the Indian-Burmese border, and from the border to Lawngtlai in Mizoram, 109 and 100 kilometers long respectively (Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, 2014).

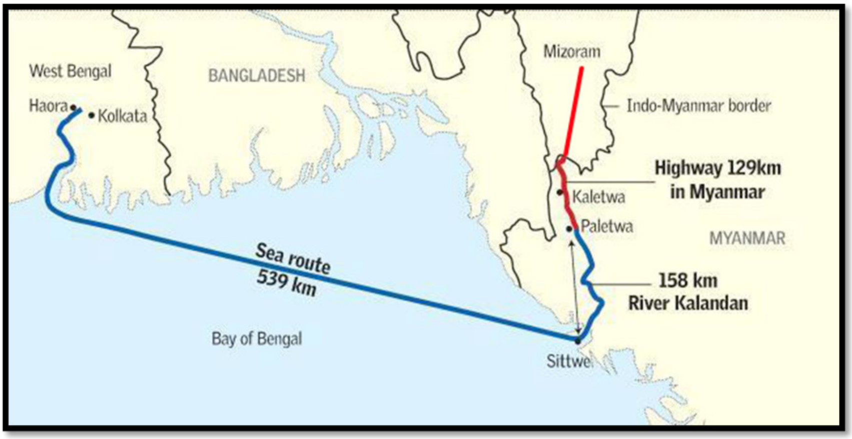
West Bengal
BANGLADESH
Haora
Kolkata
Mizoram
Indo-Myanmar border
Highway 129km in Myanmar
Kaletwa
Paletwa
MYANMAR
Sea route 539 km
158 km River Kalandan
Bay of Bengal
Sittwe

Figure 1.2 Kaladan Project implementation sites *Source: "Kaladan multi modal" (2015)*

This is a government-to-government Project at the Union levels from both countries, with most of the decision-making being conducted at the highest levels. The Project cost is entirely funded by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and is directly handled and monitored by the MEA and Project implementers from India, including the main and sub-contractors (Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, 2014).

There are three major facts that indicate the uniqueness of the Kaladan Project. First, the project is not only central to the Indian economy, but it is also expected to play an important role in Indian-Burmese economic cooperation. Second, the local host communities of this project, especially from the Burmese side, are ethnic groups which have been economically and politically isolated throughout the military regime (1962-2010). They live in the most remote areas of the country. Third, having mentioned that the host community is divided into three different ethnic minority groups, there are diversities and commonalities among them which will be further elaborated in Chapter 4.

As the developers[4] were accused of a lack of responsibility and marginalizing the local people during the Project implementation, several social movements emerged. They have been conducted by different civil society groups asking for social responsibility (Kaladan Movement, 2013). Fifteen member organizations are part of a coalition group called the Kistpanaddi Working Group; and three member organizations are part of another alliance organization, called the Kaladan Movement.[5] This study focuses on the work of the Kaladan Movement because they are the most well-known and active in the Kaladan social movement. The organizations involved are the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), Arakan Rivers Network (ARN), and Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF). Apart from the Kaladan Movement member organizations, I also chose the Gender and Development Initiative (GDI) among the Kistpanaddi Working Group members, because GDI is said to be the most active group among them.

Problem statement

In the early 1990s, India initiated its Look East Policy (LEP) in order to seek new economic and political integration with East Asia (Das, Das, & Ujjwal, 2016). Geographically, India's North Eastern Region (NER) plays a very important role in the implementation of its LEP. Even though India has numerous outreach options towards East Asia via the sea through the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, land connectivity is essential to integrate with other countries in the region. In their pursuit to integrate with the East, India's first course of action has been to promote the economy in the NER, because this region is the only overland gateway to Southeast Asia.

It can be asked why India seeks an alternative trade link to promote its NER. The vast majority of goods and domestic products exported to the NER come from Kolkata, West Bengal, and there is a road linking these two regions through a small connecting area, called the Siliguri Corridor or "Chicken's Neck" (Figure 1.3). Another question raised by analysts is "why via Burma?", or "why not go through Bangladesh?" when it comes to linking Kolkata with the NER, as going through Bangladesh is geographically much shorter than going through Western Burma. Another interesting question is, "why did Burma accept India's offer?" Or in other words, "what are the motivations behind Burma's eagerness to accept this project?" Hence, this study will explore India's geopolitics behind implementing the Kaladan Project, the Burmese motivations to accept the Project, and to what extent the Project relates to the idea of regional integration between India and Southeast Asia.

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[4] The term "developers" in this study refers to all the stakeholders of the Kaladan Project, including the Indian and Burmese government, and the companies which implement the Project.

[5] For the remainder of this study, "Kaladan Movement" with a capital "M" refers to the alliance formed between CHRO, ARN and ZIF; and the "Kaladan social movement" refers to the overall social movement concerning the Project, which includes other organizations such as GDI.

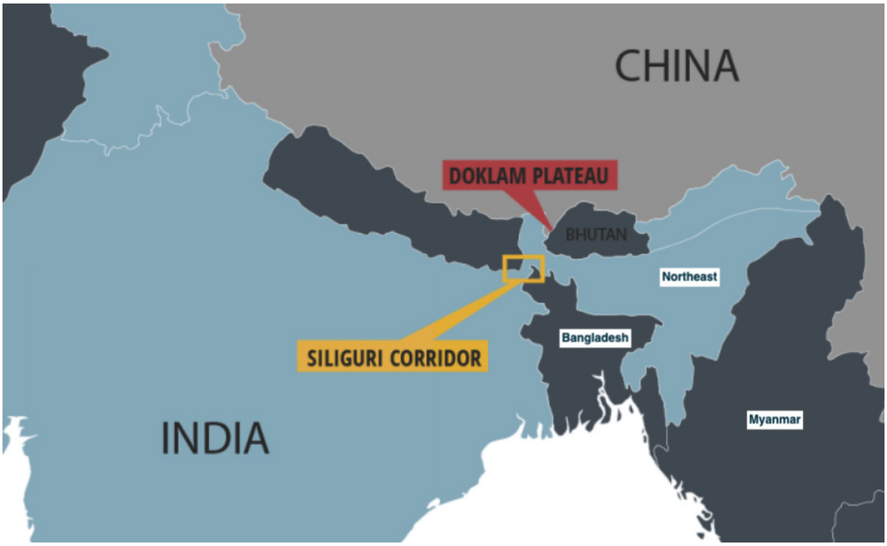


Figure 1.3 Chicken's Neck (or Siliguri Corridor) Between Mainland India and Its NER
Source: "What if China" (2019)

At the macro level, the concept of regional integration functions as a key analytical tool to explore India's endeavor and its confrontations in the region. As India seeks integration with economic and political partners in Southeast Asia, it is unavoidable for India to clash with its neighbor, China. This study thus examines the emergence of the Kaladan Project as a part of India's aim to integrate, which may lead to a confrontation between India and China.

From a micro perspective, both the Indian and Burmese governments expect that this Project will create another international border zone which will allow free movement of people, goods and services between the two countries. This raises high hopes among the ethnic populations living in the borderlands, yet they are concerned about the social and environmental impacts in the short- as well as the long-term. These concerns have led the Kaladan Project to become a driver for local activists to advocate for the protection of indigenous rights, and a responsible and accountable Project implementation.

The social movement against the Kaladan Project began in 2009, a year before the Project started. The question "why and how did the social movement emerge in response to the Kaladan Project implementation?" is addressed in order to uncover the reasons behind the emergence of the movement and how the process of the Project implementation created *referent objects* for the movement. The term referent object is borrowed from the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization. It refers to any threat or risk that the securitizing actors are concerned about in their society, and which "include the state, national sovereignty, national economies, collective identities, and environmental habitats" (Buzan as cited in Emmers, 2003, p. 422). For social movements, referent objects are the sets of problems between the activists and the actors. The activists find that a certain set of problems affects the lives and/or security of the community involved, hence they pursue solutions to the problems (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In this study, the term referent object is used to refer to any claim made by civil society groups in opposing the Project's implementation.

The alliance of civil society groups, or the Kaladan Movement, was able to raise the voice of all ethnic groups in a more concerted effort. This study aims to identify the factors that motivate inter-ethnic social movements and serve to unite civil society groups. Before the Kaladan Movement formed an alliance in 2012, each organization had already raised their concerns about the implementation of the Kaladan Project. This study therefore examines how effective the alliance has been compared to other groups working separately to achieve their goals, but also how the developers and the states respond to the different referent objects raised by the activists.

The ongoing armed conflict that began in 2011 between the Arakan Army (AA) and Burmese Army is another major concern. The AA is an armed group formed in 2009 that publicly announced their fight for self-determination of the Arakan State and their people (Ye Mon, 2019). Interestingly, their clashes with the Burmese Army began in Chin territory, especially the west side of the Kaladan river, an area that remained one of their main areas of movement when I conducted my fieldwork. Although the vast majority of inhabitants are Chin, Paletwa is claimed by the Arakan as their ancestral territory. Consequently, the AA attempts to settle within Chin territory which they claim to be theirs (Thu Thu Aung, 2016). The conflict area intersects with the road construction plan of the Kaladan Project. This study therefore examines the perceptions of local Chin people, activists, developers and government regarding the AA and the conflict. Amid these issues, the ARN and CHRO formed an alliance. Hence, one of the topics of this study is how Chin and Arakanese activists from ARN and CHRO coalesced on these issues and have merged into the Kaladan Movement.

The overarching Kaladan social movement has faced several challenges, resulting in difficulties in maintaining the strong solidarity of the allies and their level of activity while the Project is still ongoing. This study addresses the challenges of the social movement through two dimensions. Firstly, the structural factors will be addressed, such as the political situation that hinders the activities of the organizations; and secondly, the resources available to the activists and their ability to utilize such resources.

Scholars who have studied social movements in Burma have focused on different issues, such as the emergence, process, and outcome of the movement. For instance, Hkawn Ja Aung (2014) in her study of the social movement on the Myitsone hydropower dam project in Kachin State, explored why and how such social movements occur. Middleton and Zaw Aung (2016) studied the social movement in Ka Lone Htar village against the hydropower dam construction. In contrast to Hkawn Ja Aung's (2014) study, Middleton and Zaw Aung (2016) looked at the ability of Ka Lone Htar villagers to mobilize their resources which contributed to the success of the movement. Furthermore, Pollard's (2015) study focused on why non-violent movements are not successful through exploring the factors that doom the movements from the point of view of the activists, as well as the state.

In contrast to these studies, this monograph does not focus on a single dimension of the movement or its outcomes, rather, it explores the multi-dimensional factors that lead to the emergence of the social movement at the macro-level, that both hinder and enhance the process of the movement, and that bring either success or failure to the movement. Most importantly, the rationale for choosing this study is due to the fact that there is little literature on non-resistant movements related to the development Project in Burma. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the concept of non-resistant movement which is rarely discussed in social movement studies, and to clarify how non-resistant movements work in response to contemporary development projects. Specifically, detailed research has not been undertaken on the Kaladan Project.

Research methodology

From June until September 2008, I conducted four months of fieldwork in Burma, India and Thailand. The focus was on the project developers and implementers, especially from India, and the movements formed by civil society organizations (CSOs). Indian diplomats from the Indian Embassy in Yangon and the Consulate General Office in Sittwe, and the contractors were also targeted. For the Kaladan social movement, some of the civil society organizations have located their offices abroad, with some being distant from the project implementation area due to the political condition in Burma. The main movement groups – CHRO, ARN and ZIF – represent different ethnic groups from the implementation area. Their offices are situated in different locations. Hence, based on the availability of the key informants, my fieldwork took place in the following sites: (1) Mae Sot, a border town of Thailand; (2) Yangon, the second capital of Burma; (3) Paletwa, the most southern town of Chin State; (4) Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State; and (5) Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram State in India (see Figure 1.4).

Even though this study mainly focuses on state developers and CSOs, it is also important to look at the individuals in the organizations. Principles and policies are not only adopted and practiced by institutions at the macro level, but also by the individuals in those institutions. For the social movement, these individuals include the participants in the movements such as the supporters, organization leaders or fieldworkers. The non-state developers were also included, such as the contractors and state actors. In this way, the involvement of all stakeholders in the Project implementation and the Kaladan social movement as a whole was investigated.

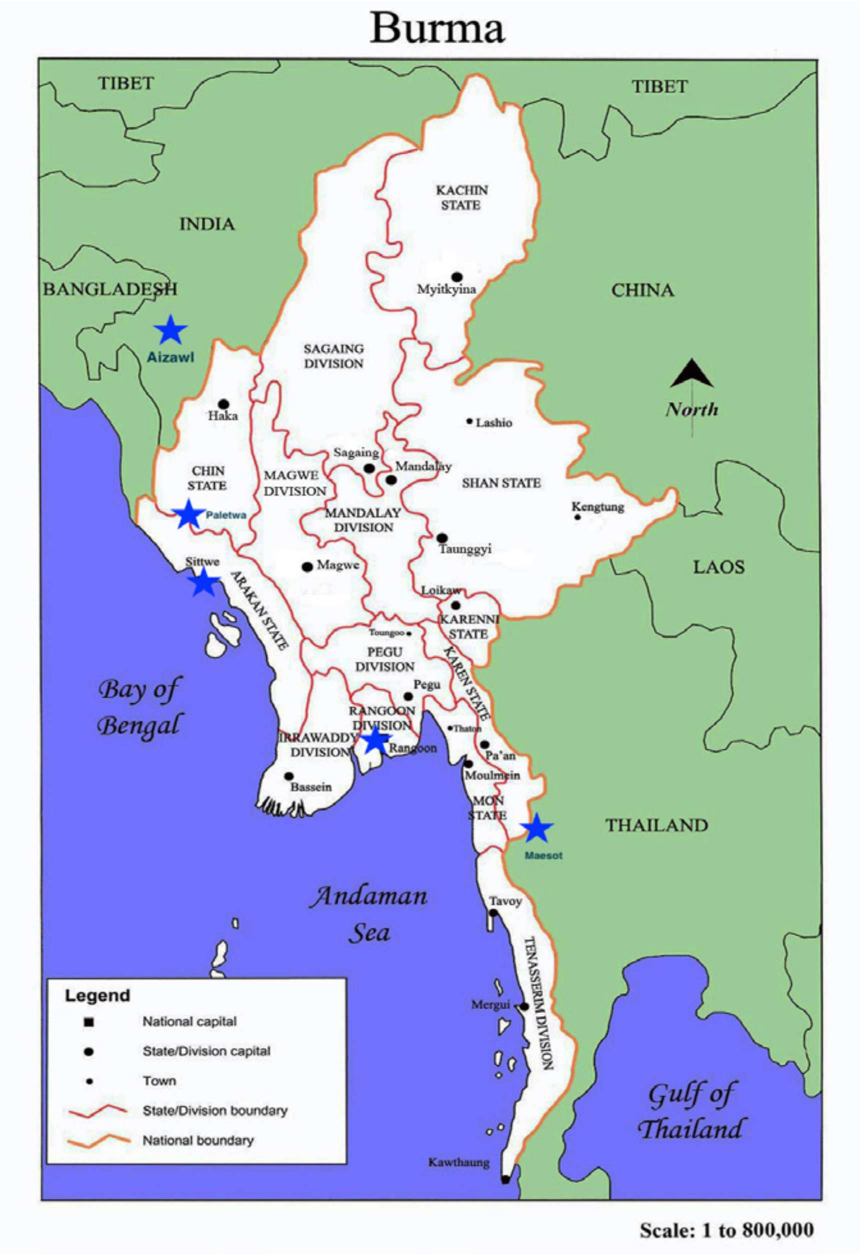

Burma
TIBET
TIBET
INDIA
BANGLADESH
CHINA
LAOS
THAILAND
Aizawl
KACHIN STATE
Myitkyina
SAGAING DIVISION
Haka
Lashio
North
CHIN STATE
Sagaing
Mandalay
MAGWE DIVISION
SHAN STATE
Kengtung
Paletwa
MANDALAY DIVISION
Taunggyi
Sittwe
Magwe
ARAKAN STATE
Loikaw
KARENNI STATE
Toungoo
PEGU DIVISION
KAREN STATE
Pegu
Bay of Bengal
RANGOON DIVISION
Thaton
IRRAWADDY DIVISION
Rangoon
Pa'an
Moulmein
Bassein
MON STATE
Maesot
Andaman Sea
Tavoy
TENASSERIM DIVISION
Mergui
Gulf of Thailand
Kawthaung
Legend
■ National capital
● State/Division capital
• Town
State/Division boundary
National boundary
Scale: 1 to 800,000

Figure 1.4 Research Sites: Yangon, Paletwa, Sittwe, Mae Sot and Aizawl
Source: Maps of the World (n.d.)

Data was collected through key informant interviews, a focus group discussion and life history interviews, whereby semi-structured in-depth interviews were the main method. This allowed the exploration of the participants' point of view, and their role and relationships in the organizations and communities. It also allowed the informants to speak openly and freely about their perceptions of the state-led development project and how, in their view, development should proceed.

Leaders from CHRO were the main focus because they lead the Kaladan Movement. However, leaders of ARN and ZIF were not ignored as they play distinct roles in the Movement. For instance, ARN represents some of the affected communities of the Project, and they initiated advocacy before the emergence of the Kaladan Movement. ZIF is still very active and tries to support the local people regarding land confiscation issues caused by the Project in Mizoram.

From the government side, three officials from the Indian Embassy in Yangon, including the Indian Ambassador to Burma, were interviewed. To learn more about the implementation situation, officials from the main contractor, Essar Project Ltd, were interviewed. Even though local people were not the target group, it was vital to learn about their voice and interactions with the activists and developers. Interviews were therefore conducted with relevant local community leaders who are well-reputed persons, and some affected villagers in Chin State. These interviews gave more understanding about the various local perspectives and the differences among them.

In order to deepen the understanding of civil society movement strategies and choices, participant observation was used. I visited most of the construction sites and workplaces in Paletwa and Sittwe, and spent time with the local community leaders. This helped me to learn about the perceptions of the local people and verify the data from the interviews, and to understand the differences between the Kaladan Movement members in terms of their organization structure, ideas and standpoints.

2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND RELATED STUDIES

Introduction

This study uses four related concepts in order to make sense of the collected data: *regional integration*, *social movement*, *political opportunity* and *resource mobilization*. These concepts are used to explain the nature and context of regional integration at the international level, and the social movements that emerged in response to the implementation of the Kaladan Project in Burma. The concept of regional integration is used particularly to explore India's geopolitics behind the Kaladan Project, not only in a bilateral context with Burma, but also at the Southeast Asian regional level. The other three concepts are interrelated and often used in contemporary social movement studies. These concepts cover the nature of the movement led by civil society during a time of political transition.

The following section analyzes the four concepts by exploring the theoretical discussions on these concepts and their evolution over time. This is followed by reviews of related studies in various regions and contexts, together with an analysis of the existing literature on Burma and the Kaladan Project. The last section elaborates the conceptual framework by exploring how these concepts are applied to interpret and analyze the data.

Literature review

First, the concept of regional integration is discussed and how it serves as an encouragement for the establishment of the social movement related to the

Kaladan Project. Thereafter, the concept of social movement in the context of Burma and the Kaladan Project is analyzed. Lastly, the concepts of resource mobilization and political opportunity are combined by exploring how social movements are driven, fostered, and constrained by political opportunities and available resources, which eventually has an impact on the outcome of the movements.

Regional integration

The definition of the concept integration varies based on its purpose and context. Niekerk (2005) defined regional integration through three dimensions: geographic scope, substantive coverage and depth of integration. The geographic scope thereby stands for the level of involvement of the nation-state in the planning of the integration. The substantive coverage refers to how integration such as trade, labor mobility and macro policies are taken into account between the integrated nations. Finally, the depth of integration addresses “the degree of sovereignty a country is ready to surrender” (Niekerk, 2005, p. 4). A study of regional integration considers “how and why states were to be wholly sovereign, how and why they voluntarily mingle, merge, and mix with their neighbors so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty, while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflicts among them” (Caporaso & Keeler, 1993, p. 12). Regional integration tends to build mutual trust between the stakeholders and contributes to a peaceful environment. It also “avoids the time inconsistency problems typically associated with unilateral trade liberalization, which helps improving the conditions for stable institutions” (Licandro, 2004, p. 8).

Regional integration usually works through an institutionalized agreement between two or more nations. Licandro (2004) argues that trade through institutionalized agreements between countries grows faster than trade without such agreements. He also clarifies the term Regional Integration Agreement (RIA) as “an institutional arrangement, through which two or more countries engage on some common institutions, involving in particular trade and non-trade barriers” (p. 5). Venables (2001) notes that better regional integration can result in trade security flows that have a substantial possibility to attract foreign direct investment and production networks. Baldwin and Venables (1995) present three types of RIAs: Free Trade Area (FTA), Custom Union (CU) and Common Market (CM). FTA is an agreement that aims to remove or reduce tariffs among member nations and create “autonomy in setting their tariffs on trade with non-member countries” (Baldwin & Venables, 1995, p. 1598). CU aims to create shared tariffs structured in order to trade with non-members in the agreement. CM allows free movement of goods, people, services and factors of production.

A good example of regional integration in Southeast Asia is the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), initiated and sponsored by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) since 1992. The major aim of the GMS program is poverty reduction through economic cooperation and integration (Asian Development Bank, 2004). The ADB believes that through a market-oriented integration, the number of open borders can be increased, institutional authority reduced and the capacity of the focused sector improved. However, Oehlers (2006) criticizes the implementation in that it lacks a production-oriented strategy by calling it the “missing link”, and labelling it as a “black box” (p. 473). He argues that “if production is capable of evolving in a sustained manner widening and deepening its structure over time – it will be far more likely goals such as poverty reduction may be attained” (Oehlers, 2006, p. 473).

Moreover, the outcomes of regional integration are not always favorable according to evidence provided by previous research. Baldwin and Venables' (1995) case studies on the European Union’s integration show that regional integration creates more inequalities between regions:

> In Europe, there is a striking inverse relationship between per capita income and proximity to the geographical core of the European Commission. Concerns with continuing regional inequalities have led to a dramatic expansion of EC expenditures on regional policy. (Baldwin & Venables, 1995, p. 1616)

A study on social change and health vulnerability in the newly integrated borderland of Northwestern Laos has revealed that Chinese, Laos, Burmese and Thai local peoples and businessmen have enjoyed positive changes in terms of economic opportunities (Lyttleton et al., 2004). However, at the same time, it has also brought negative social transformations and health issues, such as drug abuse and the spread of HIV/AIDS, which are directly connected to the considerable movement of people in the area.

In some areas, the impacts of regional integration are perceived by the local communities as a challenge to their identity and have negative social implications. Pieck (2011) studied CSOs and the responses of non-government organizations (NGOs) to the Amazon Nations multinational development project in North America. Activists claimed that the state developers were not well aware of, or ignored the interests of the local community, even though they had promised potential benefits for local people. Activists challenged the way developers defined "sustainable development" and "citizenship" (Pieck, 2011, p. 193). The developers viewed the local population as a "source of productivity" (Pieck, 2011, p. 193), whereas the activists argued that the local people should be viewed as active citizens. Moreover, utilizing and extracting natural resources was considered as sustainable development for developers, whereas environmental health and forest preservation were the main concerns of the activists for sustainable development (Pieck, 2011). In this way, regional integration does not always bring beneficial changes for the local communities.

Through the Kaladan Project, India aims to integrate with Burma and Southeast Asia. Hence, regional integration will be studied and analyzed top-down starting from the two states of India and Burma and its effects on the local people, and bottom-up from what the people want and how they perceive the project, up to the developers and the states.

Social movement

Existing literature defines the term social movement as a collective action whereby a group of people act together to achieve a certain goal through their common perspective and understanding (Pekarek & Gahan, 2013; Touraine, 1985). In other words, they not only have the same feelings and concerns, they also have the same understanding and perspective on the issues concerned, and share the same enthusiasm to strive for change (Pekarek & Gahan, 2013). McCarthy and Zald (as cited in Powell, 2008) detailed the characteristics of a social movement as "sets of opinions and viewpoints in a population, which represent preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (p. 17). Thus, social movements perform in "a given type of social production and organization", and turn their main focus on "social, structural conflicts over historical" changes (Touraine, 1985, p. 773).

While social movements function as a catalyst that strengthens marginalized groups, they can also entail unintentional consequences. Social movements try to identify the significant stakeholders within a given society (e.g. affected local people, involved authorities, etc.) because they can both fuel and halt social transformations (Reygadas, Ramos & Montoya, 2009). Hence, social movement actors do not always achieve their goals. On the other hand, some scholars argue that there is no absolute failure in social movements – the actions of the movement itself are achievements for the participants of the movements (Phongpaichit, 2002).

Social movements have been categorized in different ways according to their goals, the means they use to achieve these goals and the extent of change they aim for. Many scholars who have studied social movements compare the traditional social movements (also referred to as the old social movements) with the new social movements. Most of the old social movements are characterized as class-based movements that are focused on structural conflicts, economic classes and class-based identities, such as trade unions, or communist and socialist movements (Phongpaichit, 2002). During the 1960s, the new social movements emerged due to the perspective that societal changes and social transformations cannot be attained by simply addressing social and class differences. These new social movements are more rights-based and are seeking social transformations through advocating for gay, indigenous, ethnic minority, women, student or environmental rights (Phongpaichit, 2002). Hence, most of the contemporary movements are labelled as new social movements because they tend to seek political space instead of challenging class discrimination. Whereas most old movements attempt to improve the quality of life and obtain equal standards; the new movements aim to achieve social and political changes, bring marginalized groups into public policy and obtain equal rights. For instance, the LGBT movements around the globe not only seek recognition of their being in public, but also aim to create political space by demanding legalization of their status and rights. Yates (2015) labels the new social movements as the "politics of identity". These movements aim to "challenge dominant meaning systems and definitions of their group as they seek changes in the state" (Powell, 2008, p. 21). Yates (2015) therefore argues that the emergence of new social movements is a landmark shift in "targets, tactics, and personnel" (p. 18), which refers to the organizations' practices and goals.

Social movements have also been categorized according to the extent of change they are aiming for. Aberle (1966) thereby identified four types of social movements: alternative, redemptive, reformative, and revolutionary. An alternative movement aims for a radical change for a specific group, like certain religious or minority movements. If a movement aims for an even more radical change, it is redemptive. A reformative movement mostly seeks policy changes, like environmental movements. Lastly, a revolutionary movement aspires to change the whole society, such as the communist movement.

Other scholars have classified social movements according to their different methods or means to attain change. Pollard (2015) and Henry (2011) whose work was based in Burma, have categorized movements as violent and non-violent. These movements can have the same goal, but use different means to get there. For example, violent movements would take up their arms or organize riots to attain their goals; whereas non-violent movements rather organize peaceful protests, demonstrations or campaigns.

Social movements have also been categorized as resistant or non-resistant. They differ in terms of their aims, and tactics to attain those aims. Resistant movements usually attempt to turn down the system or event, or undo social change such as the anti-socialist movement. Non-resistant movements work along with or within the system. They are focused on changing policies, like an educational reform movement. The categories resistant/non-resistant and violent/non-violent can be overlapping in terms of their aims and tactics. For instance, violent and non-violent movements that aim to change the government system are resistant movements. On the other hand, non-resistant movements are always non-violent as they try to work along with the authorities. Social movement actors select the form of their movement based on various structural factors, such as the impact of a (development) project, the (development) discourse, the power relations and whether the benefits of the project will be shared or not (Reygadas et al., 2009).

Not all members of the civil society groups who initiate and lead the movement, belong to the directly impacted communities. They rather work on behalf of the local community. The support and recognition of these affected communities need to be taken into account, because the activists' tactics and strategies are very much related to indigenous and local rights. As these movements originated from the concerns of local people, the choices for action are based on the local people's interests. The claims and arguments of the Kaladan Movement make it clear that the movement against the Kaladan Project is non-resistant, unlike many other social movements in Burma (Kaladan Movement, 2013). Hence, this study seeks to identify the reasons why this civil society movement has taken a non-resistant strategy to achieve its aims.

In order to take the relationship between social movements and civil society into consideration, especially in the context of Burma, it is important to delve deeper into the role of civil society and how civil society is defined. In general terms, civil society refers to "a political space where voluntary associations explicitly seek to shape the rules (in terms of specific policies, wider norms and deeper social structures) that govern one or the other aspect of social life" (Scholte, 2001, p. 6). Henry (2011), who has studied non-violent and violent movements in Burma, places political parties and armed groups under the category of civil society. He argues that armed groups and political parties should be regarded as "elements of global civil society", and that "a variety of attitudes and approaches towards violence and non-violence exist within civil society" (Henry, 2011, p. 95). According to Keane (as cited in Powell, 2008), global civil society is a group of people in collective action who operate across borders and which is "beyond the reach of the governments" (p. 29).

When people use the term civil society in Burma, their understanding lends more to Scholte's category. Some member organizations of the Kaladan Movement are considered to be in the category of global civil society because CHRO and ARN are exile organizations. They were originally established in the Thai-Burmese borderlands to achieve social transformations in Burma. The role of these groups is also important to review in order to explore the contribution of civil society organizations during the Burmese transition period, which will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Resource mobilization and political opportunity

"Social movements must have access to and mobilize resources in order to pursue their objectives" (McCarthy & Zald, as cited in Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016, p. 200). Resource mobilization (hereafter RM) is the strategy to employ available resources in order to make political changes, such as policies and legislation, to achieve certain goals (Phongpaichit, 2002). Resources reside in the individual actors and also outside of the movement. However, McCarthy and Edward (2004) argue that the available resources alone do not guarantee the success of a movement. Activists need the ability to coordinate and strategically organize these resources to be able to make use of them.

Sometimes, new social movements (hereafter NSMs) and RM are brought very prominently into debate in social movement studies. This is not only because these concepts are derived from different continents, such as NSM from Europe and RM from America, but also their nature, focus and tactics are different. Phongpaichit (2002) notes that NSMs emerged as a critique of the RM theory. The critical difference between RM and NSMs is that RM theorists are not concerned about the "why" of social movements' occurrence. Instead, they are concerned about the reasons and causes for the achievements and failures of the social movements. On the other hand, NSM theorists are interested in the causes and conditions of society that lead to social movements (Phongpaichit, 2002). NSMs aim to create new political social identities in opposition to the power of the state and market; whereas RM aims to challenge and change the system (Phongpaichit, 2002). Critics of RM argue that the excessive focus on the political and the relationship between state and society, misses the true meaning of social movements

(Powell, 2008). NSM theorists highlight that the weakness of RM is that "present day collective action is not confined to negotiations and strategic calculations to gain political access, rather, movements involve issues of social norms and identity, and the struggles take place in the realm of civil society rather than in the realm of politics" (Phongpaichit, 2002, p. 5).

RM has been preferably used in contemporary studies of social movements due to the fact that scholars tend to look at the processes and outcomes of the movement, rather than the emergence. However, there are similarities and dissimilarities in the way RM scholars apply the theory. For example, both Phongpaichit (2002), and McCarthy and Edwards (2004) agree that the success of social movements depends on the resources available to the movement actors, and their ability to utilize them. However, these scholars have different definitions of what resources comprise. For McCarthy and Edwards (2004), resources can be moral, cultural, social organizational, human, and material; whereas for Phongpaichit (2002), resources only include people, money, and allies. Next to this, Salem Press (2011) categorizes resources of social movement members as material and non-material. The first category thereby includes "money, organizations, manpower, technology, means of communication, mass media", and the latter "legitimacy, loyalty, social relationships, networks, personal connections, public attention, authority, moral commitment, and solidarity" (2011, p.113).

Merely categorizing resources in terms of tangible and intangible resources as does Salem Press (2011) is too abstract. The sub-categories are also problematic as they have overlapping features, such as technology, means of communication, and mass media in the material category; or network and social relationship in the non-material category. This causes difficulties in differentiating the available resources when analyzing the empirical data. On the other hand, the categories identified by Phongpaichit (2002) lack non-material resources which are important in examining the ability of the movement's members. Despite mostly overlapping, the definition of resources adopted by McCarthy and Edwards (2004) is more comprehensive because moral and cultural resources are included. As scholars agree that resources are at the heart of RM, this study prefers to use the most comprehensive definition of resources.

The achievements of contemporary social movements in Burma are also very much related to the available resources and the ability to mobilize these resources. In the case of the social movement against the Myitsone dam, Hkawn Ja Aung (2014) argues that an interplay of multi-dimensional factors such as the coordination among the movement actors, financial support from outsiders, legal support and media coverage, have put the movement onto the public agenda. It instigated an extensive nation-wide involvement, which made the movement "a symbol for other social movements" in Burma, such as the movements against Letpadaung, a copper mining project, and the Salween River dams (Hkawn Ja Aung, 2014, p. 79). In the case of the smaller Ka Lone Htar villagers' movement against the hydropower dam to provide water to the Dawei Special Economic Zone, the success resided in the villagers' ability to mobilize their available internal and external resources. Their strong attachment to their village, solidarity, ability of organizing and networking with outsiders, along with a range of available resources and their ability to mobilize them were the major factors that have led to the success of the movement, and eventually forced the state and Dawei SEZ developers to suspend the project's implementation (Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016).

On the other hand, there have also been unsuccessful social movements in Burma. Some scholars argue that while achievements of social movements partly depend on the resources available to the movement actors, the political opportunity and the degree to which the state and developers are willing to compromise also need to be considered. Reygadas et al. (2009) argue that to achieve the movements' goals, the strength of the social movement alone is not enough, "other factors and stakeholders are needed, as is the evolution of government structures toward adopting a more inclusive approach" (p. 238). Pollard (2015) contends that non-violent movements, such as the democracy movement, are unsuccessful because all civil movements throughout history did not directly achieve their goals. He argues that these movements failed because the actors lacked leadership, leverage and resilience, even though the solidarity of the regime was very strong. The Letpadaung mining project is a good example of a failed movement in Burma. Even though the movement garnered significant public support, similar to the Myitsone dam movement, it did not succeed mainly because of the state and investors' unwillingness to compromise. The case of the Chaiyaphum dam in Thailand also revealed how the state's response can constrain the movement. The state's severe measures to break up the protests was a direct threat that hindered the local people's efforts. On the other hand, the state's severe response can potentially serve as a catalyst that strengthens the movement in terms of solidarity and support (Phongpaichit, 1999).

In the case of the movement against the Kaladan Project, its success or failure may be difficult to measure because the movement has a unique form; that is, without resisting the project, the movement tends to shape the implementation of the project. Hence, the outcomes of the movement should be analyzed through the impact the movement has had on the implementation process, and how successful the activists have been in pushing the developers to take up responsibility. The movement actors have also created a stronger presence by forming an alliance organization, which should normally lead to more success as merging into a bigger organization usually facilitates the mobilization of resources. Hence, the movement actors' ability to network and organize is an important factor in order to find out to what extent this ability helped them to sustain their solidarity. Apart from such organizational resources, the moral, cultural, human and material resources are also examined.

The relationship between RM and political opportunity (hereafter PO) can be demonstrated both theoretically and practically. While RM determines the outcome of social movements, PO determines the challenges and harmony which also determines the success or failure of the movement. Powell (2008) separates RM into two related parts – PO, which suggests that the political condition shapes the scope and limitations of the movements; and cognitive liberation, which implies that "social actors become conscious of situations in society that need to be changed as a first step towards undertaking social movement activities" (p. 19). The combination of RM and PO is helpful to comprehensively explore the overall factors that shape the emergence, process, and outcome of a social movement.

Specifically, the PO approach assists in understanding the emergence, process, and outcomes of social movements from the structural point of view. Meyer and Minkoff (2004) categorized the model of PO into a structure and signal model. The first model is related to the changes in policies, while the second model is related to the changes in political conditions or environments. Meyer, Whittier and Robnett (2002) noted that PO plays an important role, not only as an opportunity to facilitate the movement process, but also as a constraint. While positive structural changes in state policy can provide favorable opportunities for movement actors to reach their goal, it can also create a shift in the movements' choice in terms of tactics and goals. Social movement actors can choose "issues, tactics and allies", but cannot do so all the time and in every situation (Meyer et al., 2002, p. 12). In other words, the political condition has much influence on the movement's strategies. The movement's goals are set, and its claims are made according to the movement actors' objectives and their potential of attaining a positive outcome. The state is the creator of a collective identity because they can determine the structural challenges that the movement actors have to deal with, while they can also set "the boundaries of a dissident collective" action (Meyer et al., 2002, p. 13).

Phongpaichit (2002) suggests that the PO approach allows us to analyze "the success or failure of movements in terms of the opportunities available" (p. 4). She argues that the stronger the state tends to repress, the smaller the PO becomes which results in unsuccessful movements. However, Meyer et al. (2002) argue that changes in policy and political situation do not automatically mean a high chance for success or failure of the movement. They contend that there can be circumstances where policy changes are welcomed by the activists. Positive changes can result in the end of the movement and these changes do not necessarily need to come as a result of the movement. While negative changes in state policy and political situation can be used as a strong tool for upcoming movements (Meyer et al., 2002).

PO not only shapes the movements' choices and goals, sometimes the power of discourse or the quality of the movement actors' rationale also fosters solidarity among the activists. Heng's (2004) study revealed that Vietnamese movement actors chose to work within the system, instead of opposing the state because the communist government system does not allow the same freedom to protest as in democratic countries. Similarly, Phongpaichit (1999) studied civil societies' confrontation with the state regarding a dam construction in Northern Thailand. She revealed that civil society groups had lost their faith in the state and provided a "discourse against dams in the international literature on environmentalism" (p. 7). The movement in this case originated from the affected community, while the response of the state fostered the involvement of civil society groups. She concluded that the Thai state does not compromise, but stands firm to secure their control over civil society and the public (Phongpaichit, 1999). The power relation between activists and the state actors matters a lot in this case. The Thai state's way of handling the issue is both constraining and facilitating, because it invited more activists, while at the same time tried to stop the movements.

Many scholars argue that non-violent movements in Burma have failed because these movements could not take the system down. Pollard (2015), who studied the 1988 Students' Uprising and the 2007 Saffron Revolution, points out the strong solidarity of the regime as one of the major hindrances to the success of the movements. On the other hand, many believed that as a result of the movements, the Burmese dictators deliberately compromised their power for the sake of democracy. I argue that these movements were not an absolute failure because they enhanced the international community's concern about the regime, leading to increased external pressure through political and economic sanctions. The 1988 and 2007 movements cannot be considered simply as events; in fact, the democracy movement in Burma has been a continuous process. Advocacy to the international community by exiled political leaders was a key in raising concerns and encouraging international engagement in Burma's political issues. Moreover, those movements have alerted many people in Burma to the political situation and the need for change. Hence, even though movements such as the Saffron Revolution did not directly change the system at the time, the movement itself became a catalyst to bring political change (Huang, 2013).

Due to the positive transformation of the political situation, the form of the social movements and the role of civil society in Burma have changed. During the military regime, both civil society and local communities could not enjoy the right to oppose or protest against any kind of development project. Despite many political changes, civil society and the public in Burma still suffer from a lack of freedom to protest and freedom of expression. This causes many social movements to fail, though there are also some successful movements. Whereas the old social movements during the military regime, whether violent or non-violent, aimed to change the system, end the regime and transform it into a democratic government; the current movements are based on rights promotion, such as indigenous rights, rights to property, rights to access, and rights to enjoy livelihoods and participation. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the political opportunities for the Kaladan social movement are both facilitating and constraining.

Conceptual framework

To understand the social movement against the Kaladan Project, this study employs the following theories and concepts: regional integration, social movement and the combination of resource mobilization and political opportunity.

The concept of regional integration helps understand the developers' perception of the developmental impact on the local people. It also enables exploration of the integration between India and Burma from a top-down and bottom-up point of view. The economic cooperation and political relations between Burma and India are thereby important factors to examine. While the implementation of the Kaladan Project serves India's geo-strategic mission, this study also examines China's reaction to India's attempt to integrate with Burma and other Southeast Asian countries. In addition, the regional integration perspective serves as a guide to investigate how India's attempt to connect with Southeast Asia leads and shapes the social movement, and is used as a tool to challenge the Project.

The social movement theory examines the overall nature of the movement, while also exploring the meaning and implication of the movement in its specific context. This study explores how the Kaladan movement is unique from other movements in Burma, and other related studies on social movements. This new social movement is more engaged, as it is a rights-based social movement. Furthermore, the form of the movement is analyzed, and how the activists choose their tactics and goals.

Resource mobilization and political opportunity provide the conceptualization of the emergence, process and outcomes of the movement. The progress and outcomes always depend on the activists' available resources and their ability to utilize them (Phongpaichit, 2002). This study adopts five categories of resources (moral, cultural, social organizational, human and material) that the activists can mobilize to establish a successful movement. In this way, the study examines how civil society groups work with, and represent the local people when they confront the government and developers. Political opportunity is conceptualized as the constraining and facilitating factor of the "what" and "how" of the social movement, while focusing on the emergence of the movement. The political situation in Burma before and during the movement not only explains the emergence of the movement, but also its progress and outcomes. To explore these aspects, the political situation is categorized into two periods: the pre-transition and transition era.

Figure 2.1 provides a visual overview of the selected theories and concepts. The relationships between the concepts demonstrate the diverse factors that affect the emergence, process and outcomes of the social movements against the Kaladan Project.

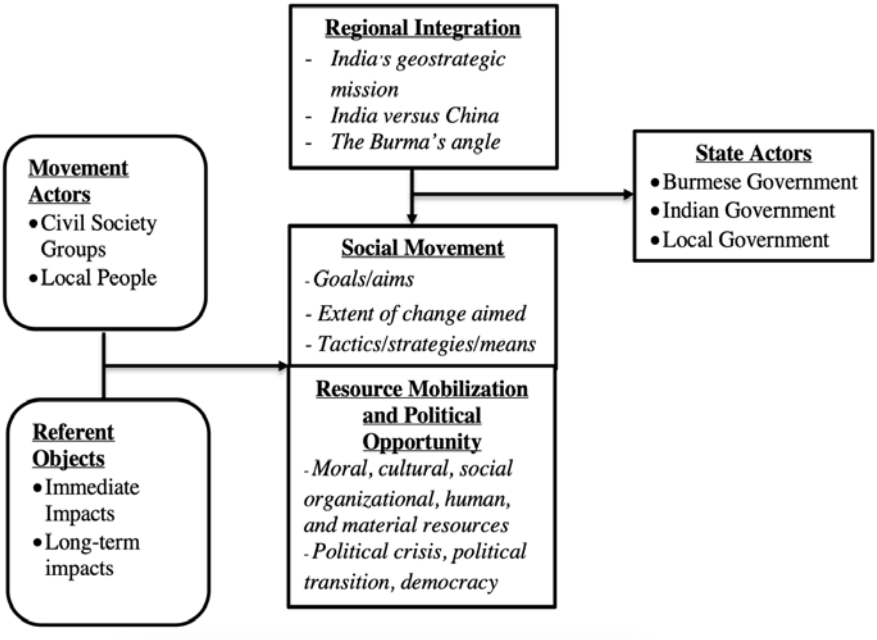

Regional Integration
- India's geostrategic mission
- India versus China
- The Burma's angle
State Actors
• Burmese Government
• Indian Government
• Local Government
Movement Actors
• Civil Society Groups
• Local People
Social Movement
- Goals/aims
- Extent of change aimed
- Tactics/strategies/means
Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity
- Moral, cultural, social organizational, human, and material resources
- Political crisis, political transition, democracy
Referent Objects
• Immediate Impacts
• Long-term impacts

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

3

INDIA'S GEO-STRATEGIC MISSION AND ITS COLD CONFRONTATION

Introduction

This chapter aims to address the interconnection between India's rationale of pursuing regional integration with Southeast Asia and reviving its relation with Burma through providing a detailed overview of the events leading to the development of its Look East Policy (LEP), Act East Policy (AEP), and eventually the Kaladan Project. Three factors are considered as the core of India's restoration of its long-lost bilateral relations with Burma and as the driver behind the implementation of the Kaladan Project: the collapse of the USSR, India's concerns with the Chicken's Neck caused by China, and the conflicts with Indian armed groups. Furthermore, the obstacles that India is facing during this pursuit are examined. To understand the threats to India's regional integration, this chapter analyzes the central role of China in the region. The rivalry between these two superpowers is labeled as a "cold confrontation" because of the indirect clash between China and India in Western Burma through the armed conflict between the Arakan Army (AA) and Burmese military. The word "cold" is derived from the expression "Cold War" whereby the powerful Western and Eastern Block were competing on an ideological dimension instead of confronting each other directly.

The next section will address India's foreign policy with the USSR and Burma during the Cold War. This will be followed by a delineation of China's presence in, and relation with Burma. Next, the emergence of India's Look East Policy (LEP) and the revival of the Indian-Burmese relations will be discussed. Subsequently, an overview will be provided of the rivalry and the threats between China and India, being played out in Burma. Thereafter, India's objectives and potential achievements from the Kaladan Project will be outlined. It will become clear that India thereby aims to hit three birds at the same time. After this, Burma's position in the Kaladan Project and its motivations behind accepting the Project will be discussed. Next, an analysis will be provided of the armed conflict in the area of the Project's implementation, which is perceived as a new threat to India's regional integration. The final section will then discuss the current Indian-Chinese competition on a diplomatic level and their differences in bilateral cooperation with Burma.

India's foreign policy during the cold war

Throughout the Cold War period, the Indian economy depended heavily on trade relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereafter referred to as USSR or Soviet Union). Following the Indian independence, the reciprocal visits of higher officials from India and the USSR tightened their relation and resulted in India's adoption of the Soviet economic model. The first trade agreement signed in December 1953 became significant for the start of the Indo-Soviet relationship that lasted for almost four decades (Mansingh, 2016). The initiative was soon followed by several bilateral agreements and a strong cooperation between the two countries. In his visit to the USSR in 1955, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru expressed that he felt like "a kid in a candy store" ("What there is," 2017). He was highly impressed by the Soviet model, and hence accepted the Soviet military equipment, aid and expertise to improve the relationship ("What there is," 2017). Consequently, the USSR was the second biggest source of foreign aid to assist the economic development in India (Mansingh, 2016). In 1981, the USSR became the biggest trading partner of India, with exports totaling about 1,084 million Ruble ($14,633), and imports totaling about 1,334 million Ruble ($18,000) (Reshma, 1989).

The first decade after the independence of Burma and India, in 1948 and 1947 respectively, both countries had made a good start to establish bilateral relations (Gottschlich, 2015). They joined the Non-Aligned Movement, whereby they committed themselves not to align with other power bloc countries which enhanced their close economic and political relations (Routray, 2011). On the day Burma got independence, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru even officially expressed India's interest to maintain good relations with Burma:

> As in the past, so in the future, the people of India will stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Burma, and whether we have to share good fortune or ill fortune, we shall share it together. This is a great and solemn day not only for Burma, but for India, and for the whole of Asia. (as cited in Routray, 2011, p. 310)

This declaration even resulted in India providing military assistance to Burma and cooperation in other sectors (Kanwal, 2010).

However, during Ne Win's military regime (1962-2010), India's attitude to Burma became far from friendly. There were two main reasons why India backed away from the relation with Burma. First, Burma had changed from a democracy to a military dictatorship, which was followed by the introduction of a socialist system. The 1962 military coup had led to Burma's inactiveness in the Non-Aligned Movement in which India was playing a leading role (Routray, 2011). Hence, India had no choice but to distance itself from its unstable neighbor. Another factor was Burma's hostility to India's diaspora and the Muslim community. Even though Ne Win's 1962 military coup did not directly target the country's Muslim minority, the Buddhist majority's treatment of the Muslims turned for the worse, leading to a revival of the Muslim insurgency (Aye Chan, 2015). Ne Win's "Burmanization" policy also affected many Indians living in Burma, causing an estimated 300,000 people being deported between 1962 and 1964 (Dabas, 2017). As such, there is no record of any reciprocal visits of high-level officials between the two countries for many decades, causing the diplomatic relations to sour.

This reveals that the main reasons for India's attitude change towards Burma had nothing to do with the diplomatic relationship between the two countries. The turning point was based on the ideological perspective that a democracy and a dictatorship are incompatible. Burma's hostility to its Indian diaspora further deteriorated the diplomatic relationships between the two countries.

China's Presence in Burma Before and After India's Absence

During the first decade after Burma's independence, the country's political situation and foreign relations were stable. In other words, no country had turned their back on Burma, including superpowers like China and India. However, Burma did have some apprehension towards China in the beginning (Fan, 2012). When China declared itself a Communist state in 1949, Burma was the first non-communist country to officially recognize the Communist government (Kleiven, 2011). Researchers noted that this recognition was only out of fear for a possible Chinese invasion as China might have tried to expand its communist movement to its neighboring country (Fan, 2012; Kleiven, 2011; Pettman, 1973; Steinberg & Fan, 2012).

During the early post-independence period, around the 1950s-1960s, China had a strategic interest in in their democratic neighbor Burma (Fan, 2012). In order to counter Western influence, and more specifically the US liberal hegemony, China wanted its neighboring countries to block US endeavors (Steinberg & Fan, 2012). On July 8, 1954 Mao Zedong, the then most prominent Chinese communist leader, announced the country's diplomatic course of action which directly impacted its Southeast Asian neighbors, including Burma:

> Begin to establish a Southeast Asian peace zone, effect and develop cooperation in the zone, and sign non-aggression pacts or collective peace treaties, unite all peaceful forces (including government), isolate and split up US International Peace and United Front. (as cited in Steinberg & Fan, 2012, p. 30)

Meanwhile, Burma had embraced a foreign policy focused on neutralism and non-alignment in 1951 (Steinberg & Fan, 2012), which was reaffirmed when Burma feared a Chinese invasion. China's attempt to counter the US liberal hegemony, together with Burma's neutral foreign policy paved the way for a smooth relationship between China and Burma.

Diplomatic relations progressively improved until mid-1967 when an anti-Chinese riot, known as "26.6", broke out. The Chinese government had started to spread propaganda about Mao's ideology of Cultural Revolution through the distribution of the "Little Red Book", and through their embassies around the world (Fan, 2012; Steinberg & Fan, 2012). The Chinese community in Burma was influenced by this propaganda, causing Chinese students to wear Maoist badges. The Burmese government reacted by forbidding the Maoist badges, however, more and more students started to wear the badge which ultimately resulted in anti-Chinese riots on June 26, 1967.

The incident impacted the diplomatic relations between the Ne Win-led government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-led government. The Chinese state media repeatedly condemned and criticized the Burmese government's way of handling the riots. Following the incident, the CCP publicly supported the Burmese Communist Party (BCP), a Burmese insurgent group at that time. According to Steinberg and Fan (2012), the CCP had already backed the BCP behind the scenes, however, they publicly disclosed their support after the CCP had lost control over their propaganda attempt in Burma, which further deteriorated the already sour diplomatic relations between the two countries.

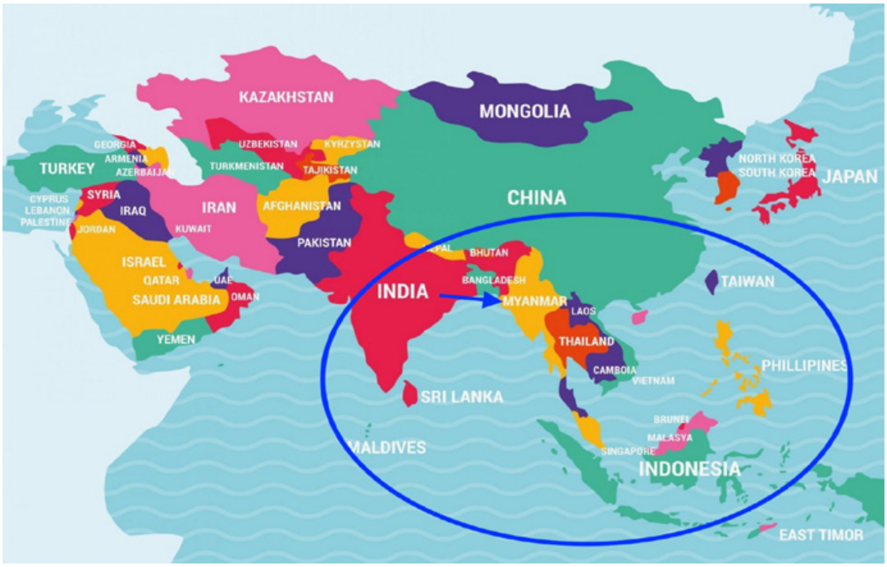
By 1969 the bilateral trade value had fallen to $4,000, which was 93% lower than the previous two years, before the riots (Steinberg & Fan, 2012). This depreciation remained constant until 1971 when the diplomatic relations were normalized again. That year the bilateral trade increased threefold compared to 1966 (Steinberg & Fan, 2012). Since the relationship has been normalized, the reciprocal visits and bilateral cooperation were also consistently increasing. From then onwards, China has been the only superpower neighbor that has directly backed Burma during its politically isolation from the rest of the world. Consequently, China has become the biggest investor in Burma since the 2000s. Only in 2019, Singapore had surpassed China slightly as their investment value totaled $20,840 and $20,500 million dollars respectively (Oh, 2019).

India's LEP and the revival of Indian-Burmese relations

The political and economic instability of the USSR in the late 1980s signaled the need for economic reforms in India. The decrease in USSR economic assistance on which India had depended for many years, forced India to adopt a free-market economy and pursue new economic partners and markets in other regions. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 signaled the end of India's economic dependency on its trade. The tragedy prompted Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao's administration to design the "Look East Policy" (LEP) within the same year, which is aimed to seek an alternative economic and political integration in East Asia (Sundaram, 2013).

LEP's initial priority was to integrate via sea links with East Asia and mainland Southeast Asia. However, India later realized the need to create a regional integration through land connections, especially with ASEAN countries. From the mid-1990s, India attempted to get into dialogue with ASEAN as an initial step of its LEP (Ghoshal, 2007). The attempt did not work well because its closest neighbor, Burma, was not part of ASEAN at that time. The entry of Burma into ASEAN in 1997 was therefore a big opportunity for India to step forward towards the East, and more specifically, Southeast Asia (Ghoshal, 2007). Since then, Burma has become India's strategic interest for its LEP implementation.

Hence, India's choice to restore its long soured diplomatic relations with Burma can be considered as a result of its pursuit for an alternative integration. However, some scholars pointed out that it was caused by the pragmatic shift in India's international politics, along with the rapid growth of its regional rival, China (Routray, 2011; Kumar, 2017; Kanwal, 2010; Gottschlich, 2015), which will be discussed in more detail in the later sections. Whatever view is closer to the truth, India's interest for Burma is obvious, not only in terms of cooperation, but also to put its LEP into action.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CYPRUS
LEBANON
PALESTINE
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IRAQ
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JORDAN
KUWAIT
PAKISTAN
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
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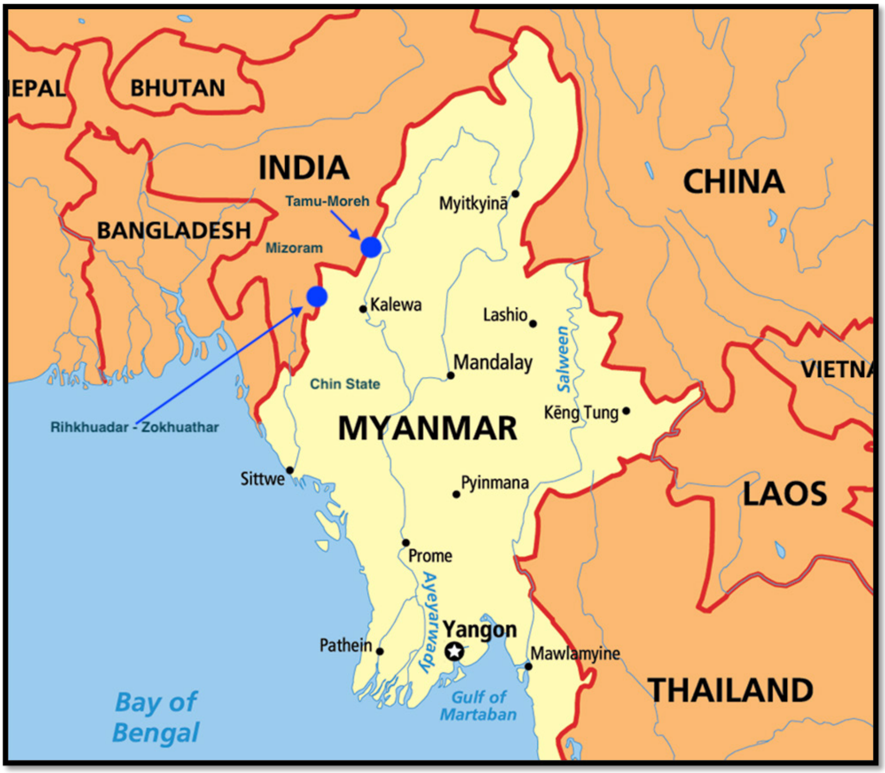
OMAN
INDIA
BANGLADESH
MYANMAR
TAIWAN
LAOS
THAILAND
YEMEN
CAMBOIA
VIETNAM
PHILLIPINES
SRI LANKA
BRUNEI
MALASYA
ALDIVES
SINGAPORE
INDONESIA
EAST TIMOR

Figure 3.1 Burma is India's only land border with Southeast Asia
Source: Hu Zhengyue & Zhou Xinyu (2020)

Since then, the resurgence of reciprocal visits of high-level officials and the establishment of bilateral agreements indicated the revival of India-Burma relations in the mid-1990s. The first border trade agreement was signed on 21 January, 1994, which officially resumed the India-Burma bilateral relations (Yhome, 2008). The agreement was meant to legalize the existing informal cross-border trade at two border points: Rihkhuadar-Zokhawthar, shared by Chin state and Mizoram; and Tamu-Moreh, shared by the Sagaing Region, Burma, and Manipur State, India. The trade posts were officially opened and operational in April 1995 (Yhome, 2008).


EPAL
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INDIA
CHINA
BANGLADESH
Tamu-Moreh
Mizoram
Myitkyinā
Kalewa
Lashio
Mandalay
Salween
VIETNA
Chin State
Rihkhuadar - Zokhuathar
MYANMAR
Kēng Tung
Sittwe
Pyinmana
LAOS
Prome
Ayeyarwady
Yangon
Pathein
Mawlamyine
THAILAND
Bay of Bengal
Gulf of Martaban

Figure 3.2 India-Burma official border points *Source: Gotev (2015)*

This initiative was perceived as positive for the livelihood of the people living in the borderlands. The trade agreement initially allowed up to 22 items that could be traded through official channels. It further stipulated a limit on the trade value of locally[6] produced goods to not exceed $1,000; the trade of "locally produced commodities consisting of agricultural and minor forest products" were allowed up to $20,000; and, all the cross-border trade had to take place under the "Letter of Credit System" (Kumar, 2013, p. 97). This system allows free trade through an authorized letter from the traders' bank which provides a guarantee of payment (Kagan, 2020; Das, 2016). In 2015, India and Burma held the Fifth Joint Trade Committee meeting during which more agreements to improve the border trade were signed. It resulted in the conversion of the existing border trade point Tamu-Moreh into a "normal" trade zone (Das, 2016). The Indian Ambassador to Burma indicated that this enabled traders from both countries to travel and trade without any border provisions. The traders were allowed to cross the border with their vehicles up to 14 kilometers from the border with a land permit. The Committee also resulted in an increase in the number of items allowed to be traded from 22 to 40 at the Rihkhuadar-Zokhawthar trade point, and the opening of another border trade point in Nagaland (Das, 2016).

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[6] Locally is thereby defined as "traditionally exchanged goods between the indigenous people residing within 40 km on either side of the border" (Kumar, 2013).

However, these agreements did not include the improvement of the movement of people. People from both sides had to cross the border without proper documents. At the Rihkhuadar-Zokhawthar border, people used to cross the border by showing their National Identity card and paying 1,000 Kyats or 200 Rupees (approximately $1) to enter Burma or India. This system worked, except when there were intercommunal conflicts between the two sides, especially in Mizoram. During these times of conflict, Chin retailers and migrant workers were often threatened or faced deportation. So, the bilateral trade cooperation had produced economic opportunities for the local people, but did not guarantee the safety of the people. The official border pass was only legalized on August 8, 2018. It allows people from both sides to cross the border and travel up to 14 kilometers from the border with a temporary border pass. This will likely ease the border activities at both sides. The Indian ambassador to Burma noted during an interview that the improvement of the border movement has really brought India's LEP into action.

Next to the trade agreements, the revival of the bilateral relations between India and Burma also restored long-lost military cooperation between the two states. In 1992, the preliminary talks to resume the relation were held and resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 1994, which was the first time in many decades. This MoU included cooperation on security issues such as preventing illegal drugs, trafficking and ethnic insurgency. The agreement was followed by other bilateral agreements including economic cooperation, educational assistance, technological and industrial assistance, investment, trade, military training and cooperation (Gottschlich, 2015).

As a result of the military cooperation between the two countries, India and Burma conducted two major joint military operations in the border area to bring down ethnic armed groups. The first operation was called "Operation Golden Bird" and was conducted in April-May 1995. The aim was to stop and defeat the Indian armed groups[7] who attempted to smuggle weapons via Chin state to India's NER. Reports from the Indian intelligence agencies claimed that the Chin National Front (CNF), the political wing of CAN, helped the Indian insurgent groups by providing information and rations (Dahiya, 2016). The chairman of CNF at the time of the operation, Pu Thomas Thang Nou, denied these claims during an interview. He explained, "for this specific claim, we did not apparently help them smuggling the arms. Instead, we even had a plan to apprehend them when they would pass through Chin territory."

According to him, they had their own operation called the "Panther Operation" which also targeted to apprehend the northeastern arms smugglers. This means that the two operations, Operation Golden Bird and Panther Operation, were coincidently taking place at the same time and with the same aim. The former CNF chairman explained the reasons for conducting the Panther Operation:

> In fact, these Indian ethnic armed groups [referring to NSCN, ULFA, PLA and ATTF] came to us and asked to help them to smuggle the weapons as they had to cross our territory. We agreed to help them under some conditions. However, they disregarded our agreement and tried to smuggle without our consent. That is why we decided to conduct the operation to stop them, because we cannot let them cross our territory without our consent. At that time, we did not even know about the India-Burma joint operation. We started our own operation, but we encountered both the Burmese and Indian army as they were also carrying out an operation.

According to Dahiya (2016), the operation killed 58 insurgents, with 44 others surrendering and several weapons being seized. The Chin Army (CA), another Chin rebel group not affiliated with CNF, reportedly helped Operation Golden Bird by providing information about the activities of the Indian insurgent groups.

In 2019, a second joint operation called "Operation Sunrise" was conducted. It targeted both Burmese ethnic armed groups based in India, and Indian rebel groups based in Burma. It was conducted in two phases. The first phase mainly took place in the tri-junction area of India-Burma-Bangladesh, where Arakan Army's (AA) camps are based. The operation apparently aimed to kick out the AA. The second phase took place at the border between Sagaing Region in Burma, and Manipur state in India. The target groups of the second phase specifically included the Indian insurgent groups[8] ("India, Myanmar conduct," 2019, para. 5).

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[7] The groups include "National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) of Assamese groups, the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) from Manipur, and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) from Tripura" (Dahiya, 2016, p. 6).

Kaladan versus Kyaukphyu: the "fear-led" projects in Western Burma

Even though the competition between India and China in global politics has been long standing, their rivalry has recently been increased in Burma and has extended to Southeast Asia. China's "string of pearls" policy, which aims to spread military bases to almost every region around the globe and to control the oceans, has caused India to be the most vulnerable country in the international community (Kumar, 2017). India also considers itself as a possible victim of China's "string of pearls." In response, India is attempting to promote its relations with its neighboring countries. India's concerns regarding China are not only about their external affairs, but also their internal affairs, such as the direct and indirect threats to its national security and economic prosperity (Dutta, 2017).

India has been involved in a territorial dispute over Doka La at the Doklam Plateau, situated at the border between India, China and Bhutan, and which has been claimed by both China and Bhutan ("China and Bhutan," 2018). Doka La is quite close to India's Sikkim state and is guarded by the Indian Army. Tensions between India and China have recently increased when the Indian Army tried to stop the road construction carried out by the Chinese in Doklam. In response to the Indian Army, the "Chinese troops […] entered Doka La and destroyed some Indian bunkers, leading to the face-off" (Gurung, 2018, para. 3). India's involvement in the dispute is not only because Bhutan is one of its closest allies, but also to ensure its national security and safeguard its economy.

This territorial dispute has been a threat to India's northeastern economy as Doka La is only three kilometers away from the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the Chicken's Neck, a small connecting area between mainland India and

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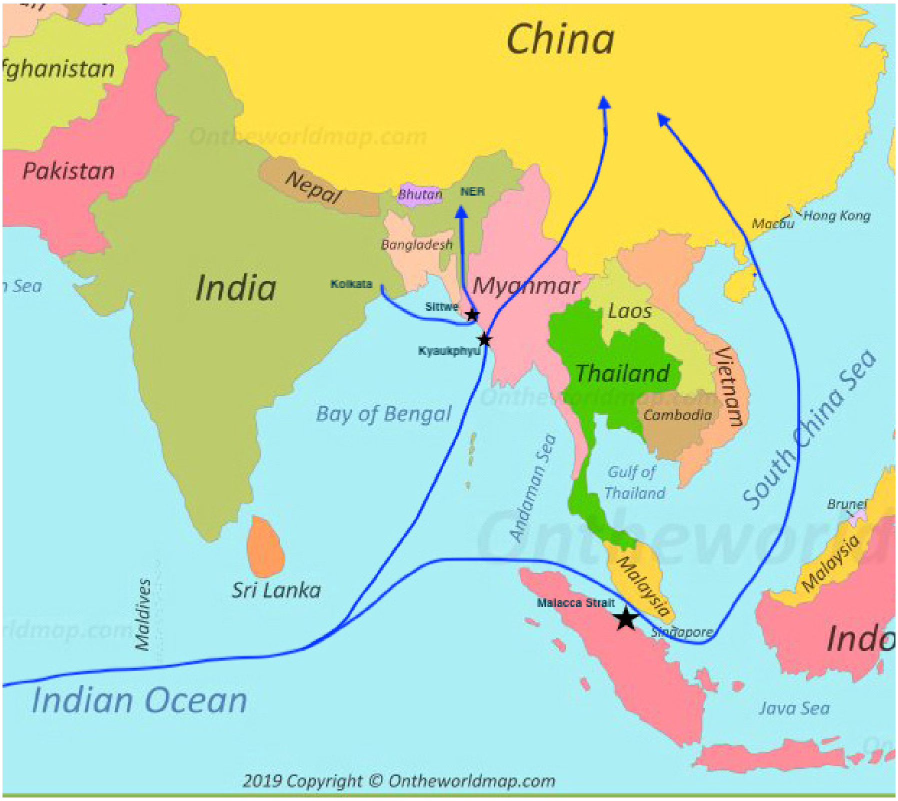
8. the "Kamtapur Liberation Organization, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), the United Liberation Front of Assam (I) and the National Democratic Front of Boroland ("India, Myanmar conduct," 2019, para. 5).

its NER (see Figure 1.3). This area is very important for the flow of goods to the NER, and its trade relations with Bhutan. In times of conflict with China, which can happen at any time, this connecting area could be blocked and choke the flow of goods and movement of people between mainland India and the NER (Gurung, 2018). With the goods supply being cut off, the whole NER comprising eight states with more than 45 million people (Dikshit & Dikshit, 2014), would be severely affected. Due to these concerns, Indian leaders had to come up with an alternative trade linkage to the Northeast.

India had two options to create an alternative linkage, though the first option to negotiate with Bangladesh was quickly deemed unviable as Bangladesh rejected its proposal (Sikiri, 2009). The Minister of the Indian Embassy in Yangon explained during an interview that the relationship with Bangladesh was not close in the 1990s. According to him, the Kaladan Project might have looked very different if the current amiable relationship between India and Bangladesh would have existed back in the 1990s. The second, and only other option open to India, was to connect through Western Burma. In 2003, India had already undertaken a preliminary survey in Western Burma (Ramachandran, 2016). After much deliberation and discussion with Burma's military junta, India decided to enter into a partnership. The formal negotiation and agreement, named the Kaladan project, was signed in 2008 between the two governments. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the origin of the Kaladan Project was a direct result of India's fear from China's threats to block the Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck).

China has encountered a similar dilemma that has resulted in seeking another connection through Burma. China imports oil and gas from the Middle East, representing about 80% of their total demand, and transports it from the Indian Ocean through the Straits of Malacca (Sternagel, 2018). Similar to India's Siliguri Corridor, the Malacca Strait is a small area situated between Indonesia and Malaysia, connecting the South China Sea and Indian Ocean (see Figure 3.1). The vulnerability of the Malacca Strait is caused by piracy and threats of the West, especially the United States of America (USA) (Sternagel, 2018). Piracy in the Strait causes severe concerns to all countries that depend on this shipping linkage, including China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. In the field of international geopolitics, USA and its allies have multifaceted interests and influences in Southeast Asia, and have hence been competing with China. The USA also has a strong political influence on the Four Asian tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) and other East Asian countries. The combination of these two factors has resulted in China pursuing an alternative road connection through Burma, as a part of its Belt and Road Initiative.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Vietnam
Cambodia
Macau
Hong Kong
Sea
Bay of Bengal
Andaman Sea
Gulf of Thailand
South China Sea
Brunei
Malaysia
Sri Lanka
Maldives
Malacca Strait
Singapore
Indo
Indian Ocean
Java Sea
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Figure 3.3 India's solution for the chicken's neck dilemma runs across China's solution for Its Malacca Strait dilemma *Source: On the World Map (n.d.)*

Although India and China have different fears, it has instigated both of them to look for an alternative connection through Burma. China's response to its fear was to negotiate the building of a deep-sea port and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Kyaukphyu, costing about $3 billion dollars[9] (Sternagel, 2018). This is at least six times bigger than India's response to its fear – the negotiation and implementation of the Kaladan Project in Sittwe, Arakan State. As the impact of China's project is much bigger than India's, it has attracted considerable national and international attention. Kyaukphyu is only 50 kilometers away from Sittwe, where India's Kaladan Project is situated. While India's project will cross just a small part of Western Burma, China's project is

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9. The original cost of both projects was $9.5 billion dollars, however, as the Burmese government feared to enter a debt trap, they negotiated with China to reduce the budget to USD 3 billion (Sternagel, 2018).

to cross through the heart of Burma, connecting the West to the East. Despite the difference in size, the two projects have been compared as they add to the Chinese-Indian competition in the region. India's pursuit for an alternative connection due to its fear of China seems to lead to another Chinese threat, as China comes very close to their project in Western Burma.

Hitting three birds with one stone

As mentioned earlier, the primary aim of the LEP was to seek integration with East Asia through the NER. Therefore, India's first step was to promote the NER's economy and the people's prosperity (Das et al., 2016). Furthermore, India needed Burma to launch its LEP as India could only establish a land link with Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and other ASEAN countries through Burma. Hence, India needed to improve the infrastructure of its NER and Burma. This caused a transformation from the "Look East Policy" (LEP) to the "Act East Policy" (AEP), which focuses mainly on ASEAN (De, 2016). During the Indian-ASEAN Summit in 2014, PM Modi talked for the first time with the international community about the shift from LEP to AEP (Bhatia, 2016). The aim was to bring the LEP into "action", hence it was named "Act East Policy". Thirdly, India's LEP/AEP had to serve as a counterbalance to China's influence in the region in order to achieve its integration with the East.

In November 2014, PM Modi expressed his great will to promote the economic prosperity of the NER during his visit to four northeastern states, covering Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, and Tripura (Goswami, 2015). He thereby coined the new term "NEZ", meaning Natural Economic Zone, and "called for the region to be developed through economic corridors to Southeast Asia" (Goswami, 2015, p.79). Thongkholal (2015, p. xiii) notes that the NER is "the gateway to the East" for the LEP/AEP. Over the past few years, the development of the NER (see Figure 3.4) has become a part of the Indian national development strategy, and has been incorporated in the "conduct of India's relations with other countries" (Thongkholal, 2015, p. xiii). The Indian government has handed the NER the responsibility to create relations with Southeast Asia through the formation of local state institutions, such as the North-Eastern Council (NEC) and the Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER) (Goswami, 2015). The significance of the NER's economy for India demonstrates that the Kaladan Project is of vital importance for the New Delhi administration to secure and promote its connectivity with the NER, and is therefore "their first bird to be hit".

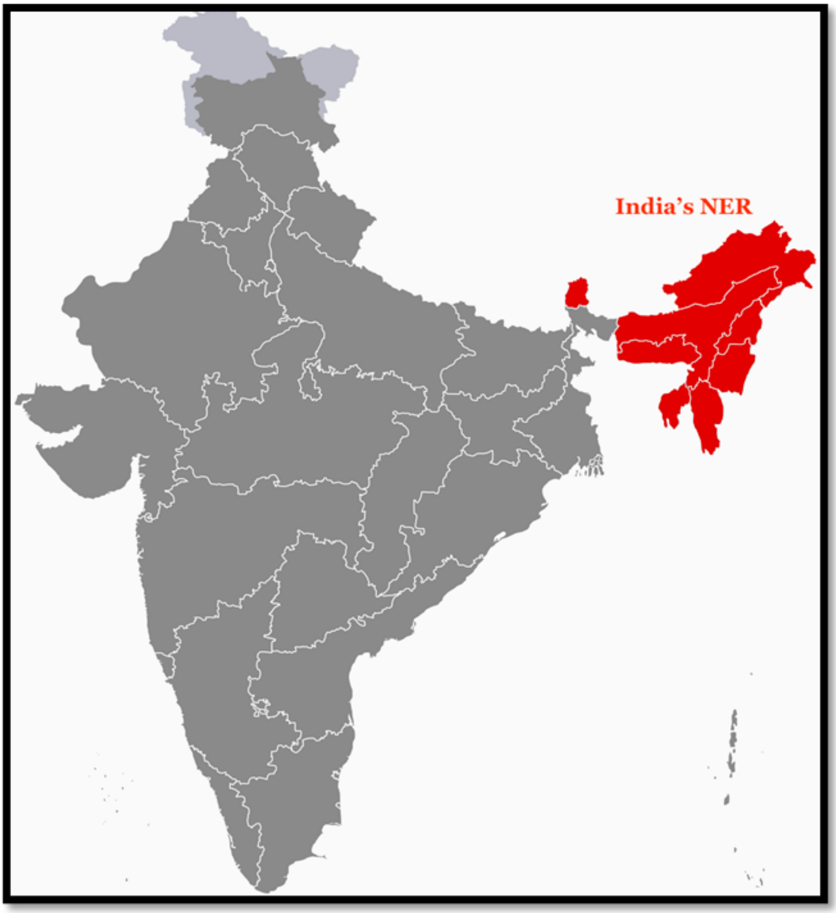

Figure 3.4 Map of mainland India and its NER. *Source: Loitongbam (2018)*

Promoting the NER economy is also important to achieve better integration with Burma. Hence, India can "hit another bird with the same stone". The implementation of the Kaladan Project was the biggest step India has taken since the development of its AEP. The Kaladan Project is not only India's biggest expenditure in Burma, but also its largest expenditure on infrastructure in a foreign country. My key informant from the Indian government confirmed that the Kaladan Project has a clear connection with AEP and that Burma is the priority for India:

> All of these projects are in that sense a part of the Look East Policy, I mean when we say Look East, we basically look at all of our neighbors who are East, and Burma is naturally the first neighbor we look at because it is the only country in South

> East Asia with which we share a land border. Of course, we share a maritime border in the Bay of Bengal as well. So, for us, I would say that Burma is at the junction of our Look East Policy, our first neighborhood policy. And of course, it is the big priority for the current government

Following the development of the Kaladan Project, India has also advanced its diplomatic relations and cooperation with Burma. Prime Minister Modi's first visit to Burma in 2014 resulted in a fivefold budget increase for the Kaladan Project, from 535 crores Rupee (about $7 million dollars) to 2,904 crore Rupee (about $40 million dollars) ("Cabinet clears," 2015). The visit also provided a green light to expand the cooperation between the two countries in other sectors such as healthcare, education and poverty reduction. Currently, India gives $5 million dollars in annual aid to Chin State and Sagaing Region.

State-backed institutions, jointly formed by the two governments, have become an important tool to improve cooperation. On 14 October 2015, India and Burma held the third Joint Trade Committee meeting during which more agreements to improve cross-border trade were signed (Das, 2016). The Indian President's visit in 2018 to Nay Pyi Daw has also brought improvements to the bilateral relations. Most importantly, the two governments agreed to appoint a private operator for the Kaladan Project. The Indian government also increased the free movement of people in the border area. On 8 August 2018, the two governments officially opened the two-existing official borders – Tamu-Moreh and Rihkhuadar-Zokhuathar – to allow people from both countries to pass with valid passports. According to an Indian official, it is another move to implement India's AEP:

> When we speak about the AEP policy, and today's inauguration of these two check-posts is really Act East in action. We are taking concrete measures to connect people much better towards the East. The creation of these kinds of corridor (Kaladan Project, Trilateral Highway), the bridges we are building on the Tamu-Kalaywa road, all of these are part of the Act East Policy. All of them are part of developing infrastructure and raising standard of development in Burma, and hoping to bring our two countries and people closer together in a quest for development.

Besides the importance of the NER to integrate with Burma, Burma itself is also of vital importance to India in order to "hit the third bird with the same stone", that is, to counterbalance China's presence in the region. Indian politicians and scholars clearly noted that India's AEP includes the attempt to counterbalance the Chinese influence. All policies and actions made by India in regards to Burma and Southeast Asia also imply competition with China, as India seeks to expand its engagement in the region. There are several reports revealing Indian leaders' concerns about China's presence in Southeast Asia. In 2010, the former Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh was reported as saying:

> China would like to have a foothold in South Asia and we have to reflect on this reality. We have to be aware of this. There is a new assertiveness among the Chinese. It is difficult to tell which way it will go. So, it's important to be prepared. (as cited in Scrutton, 2010, p. 3)

Former Indian Defense Minister A. K. Antony added his opinion in a press conference held at the same time:

> We want to develop friendly relations with China. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that China has been improving its military and physical infrastructure. In fact, there has been an increasing assertiveness on the part of China. We are taking all necessary steps to upgrade our capabilities (as cited in "'Assertive' China," 2010, para. 6)

Despite these common claims, Vikram Misri, who has now become the Indian Ambassador to China ("Vikram Misri takes charge," 2019) refused to comment on the Indian-Chinese competition in Burma and surrounding regions during the interview he had with me.

Moreover, according to the Kaladan Movement report, the Project initially aimed to extract oil and gas from Arakan State (Kaladan Movement, 2013), a claim denied by Mr. Vikram Misri, who stated that there is no other program from this Project. However, the former Indian Ambassador to Burma, Mr. Rajiv Sikri, who served before Mr. Vikram Misri's tenure, said that "The decision of Burma to sell gas to China from the fields where India has made an investment, was a disappointment for India as they had hoped that the gas would have been sold to them" (as cited in Lian Bawi Thang, 2014, p. 11). This statement indicates that whether or not it is a part of the Kaladan Project, India apparently attempted to buy oil and gas from Burma, but China has hijacked such attempt.

Furthermore, the difference in investment in Burma between China and India seems to be one of the motivators for Indian leaders to increase their development projects in Burma. According to statistics shown by the

Directorate of Investment and Company Administration of the Burmese government [DICA] (2019), on March 31, 2019, China's investments in Burma totalled $17.68 billion dollars while India's total investment counted for only $0.2 billion dollars. Therefore, in order to challenge the Chinese presence in the region, Burma has become India's priority to increase its presence in terms of aid and investment, as evidenced in recent agreements following official visits between government leaders.

Scholars and activists in Burma understand that while the development of the Kaladan Project is primarily aimed to develop the NER, it is obvious that cooperation with Burma to contest China is intended. Therefore, Bangladesh's rejection of India's proposal to connect to the NER might not be the only reason why India opted for Burma. Choosing Burma is also a part of India's paradigm shift in its international politics and foreign policy, following the collapse of USSR and the emergence of India's AEP. In short, as a stone, the implementation of the Kaladan Project is projected to "hit three birds at once": the development of the NER, the promotion of the India-Burma relations, and to counterbalance Chinese influence, as depicted in Figure 3.5.

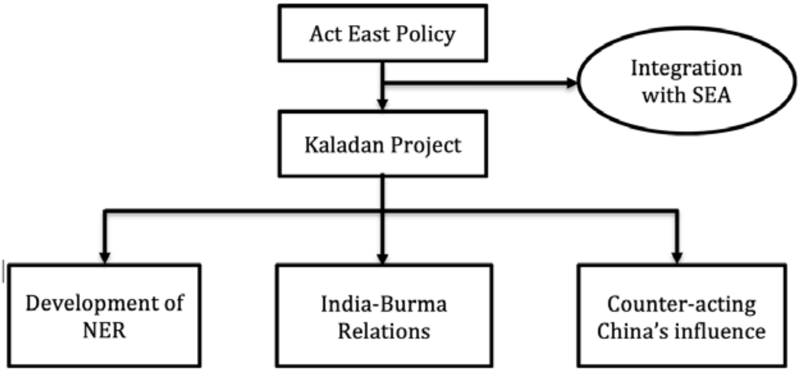

Figure 3.5 The Kaladan Project's potential achievements

Burma's position in the Kaladan project

When Burma was politically and economically isolated by the West and its neighboring countries, including India, China saw its opportunity to step forward and expand its influence over Burma. They increased aid and investments and consequently became a stronghold of Burma's economy. Meanwhile, many Burmese politicians and government officials saw the presence of China and its influence over Burma as a threat. They therefore considered India's attempt to restore relations as a chance for Burma to balance its foreign influences. Pant (2013) argues that, not only Burma, but also other states in the region are "looking to India to act as a balancer in view of China's growing influence" (p. 15). A Burmese well-known economist, Dr Maung Aung, who now serves as the Secretary of Yangon Region Transport Authority, stated that compared to China, Thailand and Bangladesh, India's bilateral trades with Burma are still behind. However, "this new link [of the Kaladan Project] should put an end to that problem" (Juliet Shwe Gaung, 2010, p. 5).

The growth in bilateral trade during the development period of the Kaladan Project is also interesting. In the late 2000s when the Kaladan Project was initiated by the New Delhi administration, there was a steady increase in bilateral trade between Burma and India. The growth rate was even more rapid in 2008-2009 when the two governments signed the Framework Agreement for Kaladan Project (see Table 3.1). Looking from the perspective of India's AEP mission, it can be argued that the increase in bilateral cooperation happening simultaneously with the start of the Kaladan Project, cannot be a coincidence. In other words, India seems to have convinced Burma to participate in the Project through the promotion of bilateral cooperation. On the other hand, as India started to promote bilateral cooperation by changing its attitude towards Burma, it created a window of opportunity for Burma as the country also sought to promote its foreign relations, even more so with its neighbors. Thus, while the Project's initiation is rooted in India's interest, Burma's motivation to host the transnational transport linkage is to serve its own ends.

Table 3.1 Burma and India's bilateral trade from 2005 to 2011
Source: Kumar (2009); Mujtaba (2007)

Year	Total Trade Cost in US Dollar
2010-11	1.3 billion
2009-10	1.2 billion
2008-09	951 million
2006-07	650 million
2005-06	557.68 million
2004-05	341.40 million

Even though Indian officials told me that the Kaladan Project is a government-to-government project, there is little information available about the Burmese government's role in the implementation stage. This is mainly because the Project is directly funded and handled by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) who hired only Indian companies to implement the Project in

Burma. As Article 5 of the 2008 Framework Agreement states, the Burmese government's responsibility for implementation is to provide the land and waterfront areas for the construction, and security for the Project personnel during the implementation process (Ministry of External Affairs, n.d.). According to the statement of the Indian Embassy in Bangkok in 2013, the Burmese authorities are involved in the implementation through the Working Committee for the Kaladan Project formed by the Burmese Government, the Nodal Officer from Burma's Port Authority and the local Government of Arakan State. However, when I visited the Burma's Port Authority in Sittwe, Arakan State, the Chief Officer said that the authorities took no role in the implementation:

> There is no part taken from us in the implementation. India said they will hand all the facilities to us when it is fully implemented. When they hand it to us, then only we will have responsibility. So far, nothing is discussed yet for the use of facilities. Employees and maintenances are yet to be confirmed.

A new threat to India's Kaladan Project

There are also some challenges concerning the cooperation between Burma and India. A major challenge comes from armed conflicts in the borderlands at both sides, especially from the Arakan Army (AA). Since the early 2010s the AA has been actively conducting their activities in the area where the Kaladan Project is implemented. It is therefore worthwhile to explore if the Indian government perceives the presence of the Arakan Army (AA) as a threat to the Kaladan Project. Moreover, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, the Arakan people have different views about the Project compared to the other ethnic groups such as Chin and Mizo. I have raised the question to three different Indian government officials in Yangon, but they voiced no concern. In 2018, the Indian ambassador Mr. Misri said during an interview,

> We are aware that there are groups operating in the vicinity of the Kaladan Project, and we hope that there is no untoward impact that takes place in the Project's area because the Project is meant for the benefit of the people in that area.

However, within two years after this conversation, the armed conflict took a turn for the worse and not only displaced several local people, but also directly affected the Kaladan Project implementation. As the AA started to extend their armed activities inside Burma, there have been several clashes with the Burmese military. The clashes resulted into people fleeing their homes in Paletwa and more than 11,000 being trapped in Paletwa with no access to food and communication channels (Chin Human Rights Organization [CHRO], 2019). According to a report of CHRO (2019) there were still approximately 4,000 Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Paletwa township in December 2019. Moreover, Project workers were being abducted or detained which has resulted in the suspension of the Kaladan Project road construction since early 2019. On March 30, 2019, the AA detained 13 Project workers who were constructing the road between Paletwa and Zorinpui. AA spokesperson, Khaing Thu Kha, claimed that some of the detainees worked for the Burmese military intelligence, and that their detention did not mean the AA wanted to disturb the road construction (Chan Thar, 2019). Eight months later, on November 3, 2019, the AA apprehended 10 passengers of two speed boats travelling from Paletwa to Kyauktaw. Five of them were Indian citizens who worked for the Kaladan Project, and one of them was a Member of Parliament from Paletwa township. One of the five Indians died of a heart attack during the abduction, and the other four were released later (Naqvi, 2019). The Indian government did not respond to the incident.

The first phase of Operation Sunrise took place from February 17 to March 2, 2019, just before the first incident with the Project workers. Several Indian media reports stated that the operation was conducted to protect the Kaladan Project because India perceived the AA's presence in the corridor as a threat to the Project ("India and Myanmar jointly", 2019; "India, Myanmar conduct", 2019; Bhalla, 2019; NewsX, 2019). In an online media interview with Chin Cable Network Channel, AA's Chief General Htun Myat Naing also alleged that India, in cooperation with the Burmese army, was trying to stop their movement. Even though Indian media claimed that Operation Sunrise was successful and destroyed 12 temporary AA camps along the border (NewsX, 2019), the AA was still active in the Project area, especially inside Burma, and the Kaladan Project road construction had not been restarted yet at the time of this study's revision in 2020.

There are also some doubts about the intentions of the AA. Even though they have publicly declared they do not oppose the Project, a new road connectivity is always a threat to an armed group whose activities are mainly underground. At present, many of the AA's temporary camps are based in hard to reach locations with no road connection. Local leaders therefore suspect that the AA are opposed to the Project. Amid this rumor, on 9 December 2019, the AA Chief General Htun Myat Naing promulgated that developers must seek their consent to implement the Project, and that from 2020 onwards they [AA] would tax large projects and investments in Arakan and Chin states, including the Kaladan Project (Nan Lwin Hnin Pwint, 2019). He also said,

> We are planning to send letters to the Indian Embassy and Indian companies. They can carry out their work, but they must inform us of their plans. And they must avoid engaging in any activities that resemble military operations. If they are only undertaking projects, they need to make sure they look like projects. They must negotiate with us with respect. (as cited in Nan Lwin Hnin Pwint, 2019, para. 8-9)

Whether the AA directly opposes the Kaladan Project or not, it is clear that their statement is a response to the Indian military actions. In other words, the AA claims that India has been threatening their movement, which has led to AA's hostility towards the Indian government. General Htun Myat Naing expressed their views and feelings about India as follows:

> It would be difficult to smooth as their project is being implemented in the conflict area. They implemented in others' territory where there is instability. So, there will be a lot of thoughts and speculations amidst this instability. If there would have been a proper negotiation between us and them [India], this misunderstanding might not have happened.
>
> At the same time, it also depends on India's policy and their standpoint. Presently, there are several cooperations between Indian and Burmese militaries. From before 2019, they [India military] were involved in arresting and disturbing our soldiers. In 2018, we have clashed several times with the Burmese military. At that time, some of our injured soldiers got arrested when they went to hospitals in India. The worst are the Assam Rifles who arrested and handcuffed our injured soldiers at the hospitals.
>
> That is why our relationship with them has already soured. And what is more, back in 1998, February 11, they arrested and assassinated our leaders who were not even armed. It is literally a lawless action. From that time onwards, the perception and feeling of the Arakanese about them [Indian government] has not been good. And again, when we started our revolution, their actions against us have been very unpleasant. In 2019, they

> [Indian military] cooperated with the Burmese military, and cut all the access to food, communication and transport. Moreover, they have threatened and tortured the villagers, and warned them not to communicate with us. They think that they can do whatever they want and be disrespectful to us as long as they have a good relationship with the Burmese military.
>
> Nevertheless, we do not look at them like the enemy. I am just saying what they do and our feeling about it. But there is a saying, “hatred does have reflection as much as compassion does.” About their project, we have said many times that we do not oppose it, but we request them not to cooperate and travel with the Burmese military. If they do so, they might be affected. (Htun Myat Naing, cited in Chin Cable Network Channel, 2020).

Furthermore, both India and Burma claim that China is involved in the AA behind the scenes. About 95% of AA’s financial expenses would allegedly be funded by China (“China supplying weapons,” 2020). Moreover, the AA was reportedly founded in Kachin State with the help of the Kachin Independent Army (KIA) and China in terms of arms equipment and training. They are allegedly operating along the India-Burma border and are “trying to take out this very important corridor [Kaladan Project]” (NewsX, 2019).

During his visit to the Russian Federation, the Burma’s Commander in Chief, General Min Aung Hlaing, claimed that the “terrorist groups” are backed by international “strong forces” (“Myanmar’s Generals Aren’t happy,” 2020, para. 2). Later, the Burmese military spokesman explained that the General was “referring to the Arakan Army and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA)” when he was talking about the terrorist groups (Gupta, 2020, para. 3). Even though the General did not mention a name, the media and political analysts speculated he referred to China when he said “strong forces” (Gupta, 2020; “Myanmar’s Generals Aren’t happy,” 2020). The AA Chief’s public condemnation of a superpower like India could also arguably lend validity to the claims about China backing them. Nevertheless, AA chief General Htun Myat Naing denied China’s involvement, “China did not give us even one bullet until today. If they would have given us, we would have conquered and occupied Naypyidaw. If they would give us, of course we would be happy to receive it” (as cited in Chin Cable Network Channel, 2020).

Regardless of whether China is involved in threatening the Kaladan Project behind the scene or whether the AA directly (or indirectly) opposes it, it is apparent that the armed conflict in the vicinity of the Project implementation area has become another dilemma for India.

The India versus China question

The rivalry for power between India and China being played out in Burma in order to dominate the region has already been discussed in the earlier sections. Specifically, the meeting of China and India in Western Burma through the implementation of the Kyaukphyu Deep Seaport and the Kaladan Project serves as a good example to show their hostility towards each other. This is not only because the rivalry between these two superpowers in the region was pre-existing, but also because India's response to China's Kyaukphyu project and its gas pipeline has revealed India's troublesome feeling about China. Amid this situation, questions have been raised among the general public about who will be going ahead. Even the believers in India's "game challenging" moves wonder if India will really be able to counterbalance China's influence on Burma and Southeast Asia. To answer this question, it is interesting to examine the different approaches of India and China in terms of their foreign policy towards Burma since the country's independence.

For China, the "dual track" policy has been the key of its foreign policy towards Burma. This policy means that while the Chinese government is promoting its bilateral cooperation with Burma, they also serve the needs of insurgent groups who are against the Burmese government. Steinberg and Fan (2012) revealed that the CCP had already adopted this policy during early post-independence in order to help the Burma Communist Party. Even nowadays, several sources have revealed that China has been helping Burmar insurgent groups who are based along the China-Burma borders (Aung Zaw, 2019; NewsX, 2019), whereas the insurgent groups denied such reports in public.

Unlike China's dual track policy, India's foreign policy has been inconsistent. Since early post-independence Burma had joined the India-led neutralist movement, also known as the Non-Aligned Movement. Hence, India had better diplomatic relations with Burma compared to China during the 1950s. As mentioned earlier, Burma had some apprehension of China during that time making their relationship somehow difficult, whereas the India-Burma relation steadily grew. However, when Burma turned into a military regime in 1962, India disengaged itself from Burma until the end of the Cold War. Many studies suggested that India's isolation of Burma during this period was due to the fact that India embraced genuine democratic values (Routray, 2011). However, India restored its diplomatic relation in the early 1990s, while Burma was still ruled by a military dictatorship. This indicates the inconsistency in India's foreign policy, and that their pretext of embracing democratic values was false.

What is more, despite not practicing the dual track approach, India supported Burma's revolutionary movement, including the pro-democracy movement and armed movement. Even though India had detached itself from Burma on a diplomatic level, the country did provide help to the democracy movement while at the same time supporting ethnic armed groups. An (anonymous) confirmed source from the Chin National Front said during an interview,

> When we started our armed revolutionary movement, the Indian government approved our temporary settlement in India. We even received financial support from them.

Routray (2011) also revealed that KIA leaders admitted receiving such support,

> Several reports indicate that India provided financial and material support to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Karen National Union (KNU) that had joined the opposition to the military regime. One of the KIA leaders admitted having been a party to such generosity. (p. 303)

When India's paradigm shift began in the early 1990s, the armed groups receiving financial and material support have faced a lot of challenges, especially the groups based at the India-Burma borders such as the CNF and NSCN. As discussed earlier, the Indian government restored its relations with the Burmese military government, while disengaging with the armed groups it had once supported. During a personal conversation Pu Thomas Thang Nou, the former CNF Chairman from 1995 to 2008 and the current Chief of Justice, admitted that India's revival of the India-Burma relations, especially their joint military activities, has had a lot of impacts on their survival.

What makes China and India different when it comes to their relation with Burma, is their respective political situation at their border with Burma. China has no communal conflicts in its border region with Burma, which is one of the advantages that allows China to enact its dual track policy. Meanwhile, India has many insurgent groups, especially in its NER. India and Burma thus have a more or less similar ethnic conflict crisis, so practicing a dual track policy is almost impossible for India, as Burma could respond in a similar way because most of the NER insurgent groups are settling in the India-Burma border region. Therefore, even though India and China are rivaling each other, they cannot practice the same approach.

Both India and China have recently promoted their bilateral cooperation with Burma, however, since their approaches are different, their focus areas are also different. For instance, most of China's cooperation with Burma takes place in terms of direct investment, especially in the energy sector and business sector; whereas India is only the fifth largest investor in Burma. On the other hand, India has extensively contributed to Burma's service sectors such as health care, education, technology, and military training. In other words, India focuses more on in-kind cooperation with Burma instead of its business sector.

At the same time, the Burmese government still embraces the principle of neutralism as its foreign policy. It implies that Burma needs to be cautious in balancing the power of these two superpowers, which is what the Aung San Suu Kyi-led government has been striving for. Over the years, Burmese leaders have been arguably sticking to this principle of neutralism. The NLD declared in its *2015 Election Manifesto* that they pursue an "active and independent policy" (National League for Democracy, 2015, p. 8). Aung San Suu Kyi also indicated during her first visit to China, soon after her party took over the government, that Burma still embraces the Non-Aligned Movement (CCTV Video News Agency, 2016). However, some argue that the Burmese version of neutralism is far from genuine. Aung Zaw (2019), the well-known Burmese journalist and the editor-in-chief of the Irrawaddy argued in his editorial commentary article,

> Indeed, today Myanmar exercises a neutral foreign policy, but definitely not from strength—rather the opposite. This is dangerous. While Myanmar exercises a neutral and independent policy, how many times have powerful countries and neighbors interfered in Myanmar's affairs over the past few decades? (par. 3-4)

Aung Zaw (2019) continued to discuss how the Burmese government has lost control over the ethnic armed conflicts that are reportedly backed by China. The dual track approach thus allows China to maintain their domination over Burma's economic reforms and political transition; whereas India considers itself as the victim of China's proxy war (NewsX, 2019). The ethnic armed groups considered to be China's proxies are among the most powerful groups in terms of armed equipment and political voice. Their role in Burma's peace process is apparently vital. Therefore, it might not be wrong to argue that China, ahead of other powerful countries including the West and its neighbors, plays a protagonist role in switching Burma's political situation. Meanwhile, India is struggling, especially in Western Burma, to clear the mess caused by an armed group that is reportedly backed by China. Therefore, China still has more potential than India to be the dominant power, even in the near future, and regardless of its past and present monopoly.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that the Chin's interference in the ethnic conflict issues seem to have annoyed the Burmese military, which might impact the relations with its neighbors. Min Aung Hlaing's comment on the Burmese conflict issues during his visit to the Russian Federation has revealed that the Burmese military is no longer pleased with China ("Myanmar's Generals Aren't Happy," 2020). According to the military officials, they have seized several Chinese-made arms caches and equipment from the ethnic armed groups. This indicates that the Burmese military are directly concerned about the Chinese involvement in the armed conflict issues. Meanwhile, India has been promoting its military cooperation with Burma in terms of equipment, training, and major joint military operations to defeat both Indian and Burma's armed groups. Hence, even though China has a lead, the interesting game will be continued as India has committed to counterbalance China's presence and the Burmese military is starting to react against the Chin's interference.

4

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The Kaladan Project implementation can be viewed from two different perspectives, i.e. the developers' and the locals' perspectives. As it is a transnational development project, the developers' perspective tends to focus on issues related to regional integration, international and economic development, and international and bilateral relations. In another words, it is a macro perspective with a state-centered approach to development. However, real human development should be both people-oriented and centered rather than state-centered (Korten, 1984). Hence, in order to achieve development in line with the concept of human development, the Project developers should "wear the locals' shoes" and consider the public interest in the given local context. Instead, it will become clear how the Project developers have attempted to achieve state-centered development by using the locals' interest as a tool.

The following section will describe the Project's implementation process, outline the contractors and authorities responsible for the implementation, and discuss why and how the implementation has been delayed. Thereafter, general information about the regions hosting the Project, including Chin state, Arakan state and Mizoram will be provided, followed by an examination of how the developers make the people believe in the Project, and the expectations of the local communities. The final section will provide an overview of the perspectives of the local community and their responses.

Project implementation

India started to develop the idea of the Kaladan Project in the early 2000s. They conducted a preliminary survey on the ground in 2003 which they presented to the Burmese government; however, it took them five years to come to an agreement with Burma. The Indian and Burmese governments signed the Framework Agreement to implement the Kaladan Project in 2008 (Ramachandran, 2016). As per the agreement, India would finance the entire Project and Burma would provide the land and security for the Project personnel during the implementation.

Article 4 of the Project Framework states that India has the responsibility to appoint the main contractors and consultant firms from India for the entire Project (MEA, n.d.). Essar Projects Ltd was appointed as the main contractor for the port construction in Sittwe and Paletwa. Along with Essar, the MEA also appointed URS Scott Wilson India Pvt. Ltd., a consulting company to check the quality of the construction. According to URS Scott Wilson India Pvt. Ltd officials, their main task is to make sure the buildings and equipment are duly checked before, during and after the construction. The Inland Waterways Authority of India has dredged the river between Sittwe and Paletwa. For the road construction from Paletwa to Zorinpui, Ircon Infrastructure was hired by the MEA as a consultant, and C&C Constructions Ltd and Engineering Projects (India) were awarded the contract for the construction. Local companies were appointed for smaller tasks, such as painting and pouring cement.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the implementation has been divided into four phases. At the time of my fieldwork, the first two phases or the seaport construction and dredging of the Kaladan river had been completed; whereas the road construction phase was still ongoing. I had the chance to visit the port as officials from Essar Projects Ltd and URS Scott Wilson India Pvt. Ltd. brought me to the construction site for a tour during my field trip. I noticed that the seaport has been constructed at the outskirts of Sittwe. Most of the equipment, including office material, forklift trucks, storage room, power and water supply, had already been set up at the port facility. According to employees of the Essar Projects company, India will build an additional container terminal before the operations will be started.

I also had the chance to visit the transshipment station or Interland Water Terminal which has been built in the same area, but is located at the opposite side of the Kaladan river. The transit station will transport goods from Kolkata to Sittwe, and from Sittwe to Paletwa. The goods coming from Sittwe will arrive with the cargo vessels, and then be transported to the India-Burma border with cargo trucks. The station was finished and ready to operate at the time of my research. However, the transshipment station looks at least three times smaller than the Sittwe seaport. The station has enough space for goods storage, but seems to have limited space for containers. To my knowledge, India has not planned to build another container terminal.

The last two phases are still ongoing in Burma and India. For the third phase—the final phase to be implemented in Burma—Ircon Infrastructure began road construction from Paletwa in March 2019 with two Indian sub-contractors who hired some local companies. Essar officials told me that the road construction was expected to be completed by the end of 2020, however, the construction has been suspended due to armed conflicts between the Arakan and Burmese army. The final phase, which is the construction of a road from the border to Lawngtlai in Mizoram, is still ongoing.

As a part of the Project, the Indian government has gifted six general cargo vessels to Burma. These vessels cost $81.29 million in total. They are 45m long, 9.5m wide and have a capacity of 300 ton (see Figure 4.4). According to media reports, the vessels were constructed in 2016 in Burma by the Inland Water Transport authorities, along with the Myanmar Department of Marine Administration (Xinhua, 2017; "India to Hand Over," 2017). The vessels arrived at Sittwe seaport in March 2017, after its completion. The reception ceremony was organized in April 2017 by the Burmese government. According to the Indian Ambassador, the vessels were provided for the purpose of being used between Sittwe and Paletwa on the Kaladan river.

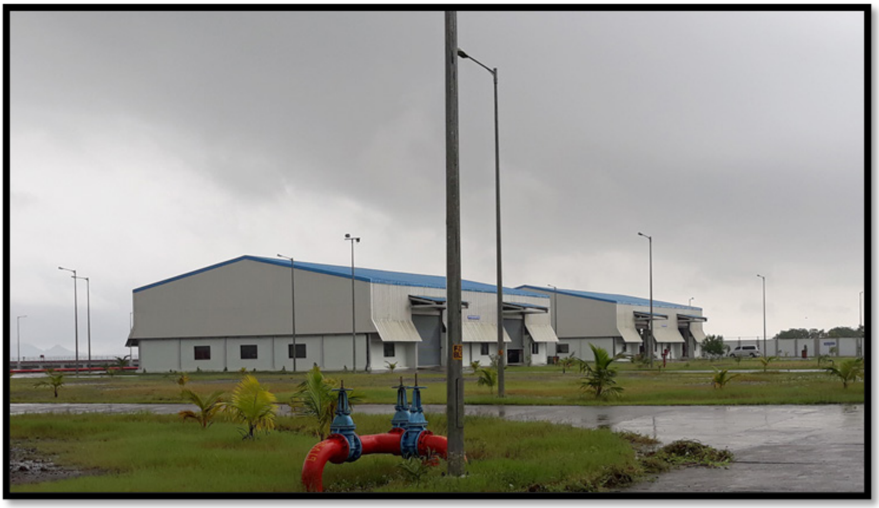

Figure 4.1 Sittwe seaport *Source: Author*

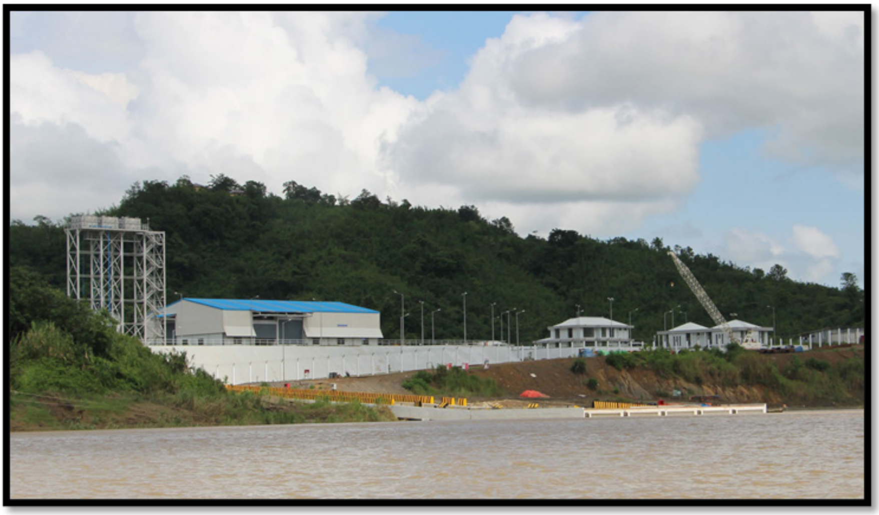

Figure 4.2 Paletwa transshipment station *Source: Author*

Figure 4.3 Forklift trucks at Sittwe seaport *Source: Author*

Figure 4.4 Cargo vessels handed to Burmese government by India *Source: "Cargo vessels handed" (2017)*

The Project implementation has been quite sluggish though. The initial deadline to complete the Project was at the end of 2014. Due to various factors hindering the implementation, the deadline was postponed to the end of 2017, which according to key informants has been further postponed to the end of 2019, and then 2020. In August 2020, at the time of this study's revision, there was no official information available about when the construction will be restarted or the estimated deadline to finish the Project.

India blames Burma for delaying the Project because of their complex bureaucracy as the developers need to wait for approvals from every administrative level (Bose, 2018). During an interview, Mr. Misri pointed out three reasons why the Project has been delayed: first, the work was interrupted because of the long monsoon and cyclonic season in Western Burma; second, due to the political transition in Burma, India needed time to familiarize the new Burmese administration with the nature of the Project; finally, as this is a government-to-government Project, every step of the implementation process needs to get permission and approval from the Burmese administration.

Some media reports also note that India has had its own difficulties to maintain the Project's schedule. For example, the Indian government faced budget difficulties due to the economic instability caused by the increase in oil prices in 2013 (Bose, 2018; Study IQ education, 2017). Moreover, Prime Minister Modi's cabinet had to increase the budget tenfold in October 2015. According to Mr. Misri, the Project's administrators had underestimated the alignment and cost of the road construction, resulting in a budget shortfall. He pointed out that the underestimation of the budget was also due to Burma's climate and geographical conditions.

Nevertheless, the reasons for the delay given by Mr. Misri are highly questionable if compared to other projects. For instance, China, who faced the same political situation in the same period and region, was able to implement the Kyaukphyu Deep Seaport and SEZ, which is five times larger than the Kaladan Project.

Knowing the region

The main implementation of the Kaladan Project takes place in an area where three ethnic groups reside. They live in different states which are geographically connected. Mizoram is the most northern located state of the three, Chin State is in the middle, and Arakan State is the most southern located state (see Figure 1.1). As this study covers the social movements in response to the Kaladan Project implementation, it is important to understand the background and context of the groups that host the Project.

Chin State

Chin State is situated in upper Western Burma and shares international borders with Bangladesh on the west, and India on the north and upper west. It also shares domestic borders with Rakhine state in the south, Magwe Region in the lower east, and Sagaing Region in the upper east. Hakha is the capital of Chin State. The state covers an area of 36,072 km^2 and has a population of 478,801 people, which equals to a density of 13.3 people/km^2 (Ministry of Immigration and Population, 2015a). It is the second least populated area in Burma as more than two-thirds of the Chin population live outside of the state.

About 79% of the state's population live in rural areas (Ministry of Immigration and Population, 2015a). Chin State is one of the most politically and economically isolated regions in Burma as it is a mountainous landlocked region and claimed to be poor in natural resources compared to other states. This has led Chin State to be the second most remote and least developed region in Burma (Myanmar Information Management Unit, n.d.(a); Su Phyo Win, 2017). Chin people are also the most diverse group among Burma's ethnic groups, with 53 subgroups as per the Burmese government census. The vast majority of the Chin people (in Chin State and outside) are Christian.

Arakan State

Arakan State, currently known as Rakhine State, is situated in the lower Western part of Burma and borders with Chin State in the north, Magwe Region from the upper east, Irrawaddy Region in the lower east and Yangon Region in the south. The only international land border is with Bangladesh. The state has a 740 km long coastline that links to the Bay of Bengal, making it one of the few states that has access to the sea (Zöckler, Delany & Barber, 2013). Arakan State covers an area of 36,778 km^2, is home to 3.19 million people, and has a population density of 86.7 people/km^2. The capital of the state is Sittwe and is situated at the coast. Despite its rich national resources and sea link, Arakan State is one of the least developed regions in Burma as 83% of the population lives in rural areas (Ministry of Immigration and Population, 2015b; Myanmar Information Management Unit, n.d.(b)).

Mizoram

Mizoram (state) is located in the most southern part of the NER. It is a land locked state that borders with Burma on the east and south, and with Bangladesh on the west. In India, it also borders with Tripura State on the upper west, and Assam and Manipur states in the north. Mizoram covers a land area of 21,087 km^2. It is home to 1.1 million people and is the second least populous state in India and the NER, after Sikkim State (State Portal of Mizoram, n.d).

Mizoram used to be a part of Assam until 1972, when it was put under the Union Territory. It only became a separate state on February 20, 1987. The name “Mizoram” is a fusion of the words “Mi” (people), “Zo” (lofty place, such as a hill) and “Ram” (land), hence Mizoram means “Land of the hill people” (State Portal of Mizoram, n.d, para. 1). Mizo is widely used as the common language and is one of the official languages, along with English and Hindi. The state is also home to a host of other ethnic groups such as the Lushei, Lai, Mara, Ralte, Hmar and Thadou.

Kaladan River

The source of the Kaladan river is situated in Chin State, it then flows through Mizoram, turns back into Southern Chin State, and continues to the Bay of Bengal. The river ends near Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State. Even though the river is predominantly called “Kaladan”, it has its local names according to the region it passes through. In Chin State, it is called “Bawinu”, and in Mizoram, it is called “Chhimtuipui”. In Paletwa township, the southern part of Chin State, it is predominantly called "Kaladan". In Arakan State, they call the river "Kispanada", which is derived from Pali language. The river is approximately 350 km long and "cut[s] a narrow valley through the mountains of Chin State and empt[ies] into the Bay of Bengal at Sittwe in Arakan State" (Burma Rivers Network, 2008, para.1). The local people from the three ethnic groups that host the project are widely dependent on the river for food, agriculture and transportation.

A colorful trick by India

Looking at the 2008 Framework Agreement, which comprises 21 Articles and includes many important points, it can be noticed that the Project lacks a people-centered approach. The agreement mainly details how the Indian and Burmese governments should cooperate during the implementation. It does not mention any procedure to include the local people or the public in the decision-making and implementation processes. Moreover, even though the agreement contains conditions for the security of the Project personnel, there is no article about taking responsibility for the threats or risks local people might encounter, such as land confiscation, environmental damages and loss of livelihoods. Besides this, while social and environmental impact assessments are usually an important part of the planning of development projects, the agreement does not include such procedures. Fieldwork has also revealed that the people involved in the Project remain confused about what the Kaladan Project is exactly aiming for, and for who it will be beneficial. Unambiguous information about the Project is important as it can increase understanding about the nature of the Project and foresee possible impacts of the Project. However, the research has indicated that there are different understandings among the people about the Project's intention that seem to have been caused by the Indian government's way of presenting the Project.

Indian media and scholars often present the Kaladan Project as the linking of mainland India with the NER, and as a part of the AEP implementation, whereas they hardly mention the India-Burma trade relations ("Cabinet clears," 2015; Catch News, 2015; Zotinkhuma, 2016). This indicates that even though this is a transnationally implemented Project, Indian understanding of the Kaladan Project is limited to domestic matters. The knowledge of the people from Burma, on the other hand, varies. As far as my study is concerned, the Burmese authorities consider the Kaladan Project as a means to promote India-Burma relations, while most of the activists and local leaders with whom I talked during my fieldwork insisted that this Project serves nothing more than India's own interests. The leader of Arakan Rivers Network said, "India used this Project to connect their mainland with the landlocked Northeast. They pretend to help Burma, but actually it is for them. Anyway, local people should not incur the negative impacts."

In the initial stage, the Project was named "Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project". "Multi-Modal" means connecting different modes of transport – sea, river and road links – from mainland India to the NER, through Western Burma. Recently, posters were displayed at the Sittwe seaport using the term "Friendship Project" (See Figure 4.5). However, the local people still use different terms to refer to the Project. For example, the 2013 Kaladan Movement report mentioned that the local residents in Sittwe refer to the newly built seaport as the "Indian Port". During my recent fieldwork, most of my informants in Sittwe and Paletwa also widely referred to the Project as "India's Project".

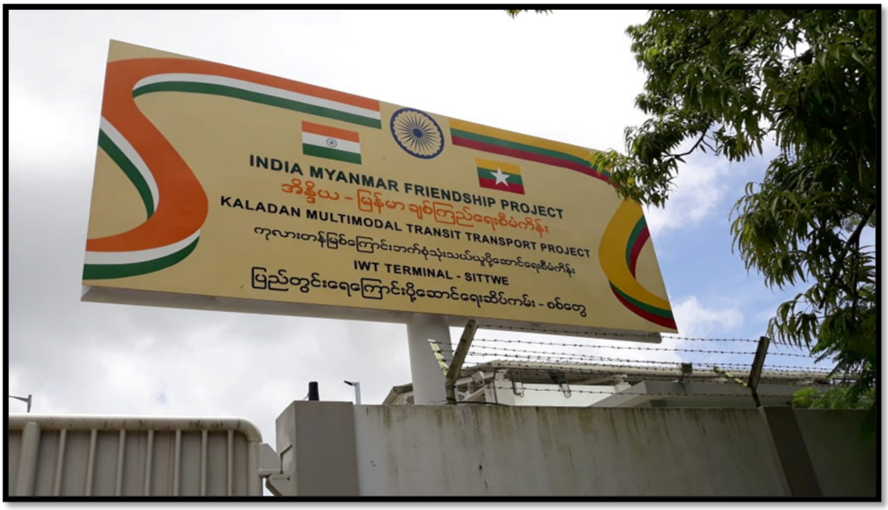
INDIA MYANMAR FRIENDSHIP PROJECT
KALADAN MULTIMODAL TRANSIT TRANSPORT PROJECT
IWT TERMINAL - SITTWE

Figure 4.5 "India-Myanmar Friendship Project" sign at Sittwe seaport *Source: Author*

This shows that the Indian government presents the Project differently in India and Burma. They convey the message in India that the Project is to develop the Indian economy; whereas their propaganda in Burma presents the Project as promoting trade relations with Burma, and improving local people's prosperity. An informal conversation with Indian officials provided yet another point of view. They claimed that the intention of the Project is to develop both Burma and the NER, because Indian-Bangladeshi relations have changed in the last two decades. Even though India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as an independent country following its separation from Pakistan in 1971, the country experienced barriers when they wanted to promote their relations with Bangladesh (Dutta, 2010).

Another big difference rests in the understanding of the funding and the nature of the Project. Many local community and civil society leaders considered the Project as an investment. However, interviews with the Ambassador in Yangon, the Honorable Consul in Sittwe and three company employees from the implementers, learned that they do not view the Kaladan Project as an investment. Instead, they see the Project as development aid to the Burmese government. They emphasized that the entire cost (except compensation for land confiscation during the construction, which is borne by the Burmese government) is incurred by the Indian government and upon completion, the ownership will be transferred to the Burmese government. In this way, the money spent on this Project is not an investment, but development aid to the Burmese government and its citizens.

This argument is questionable because the total budget spent on the Project also includes road construction and facilitation in India, for instance, building the road from the border through Mizoram State. Meanwhile, the entire Project operation, such as river dredging, and port and road construction is handled by the Indian government and Indian contractors. Moreover, neither the Burmese, nor the Indian government could confirm who will operate the ports and all the transport facilities. During the recent Indian President's visit to Burma in December 2018, it was announced that a private operator will be appointed (Chaudbury, 2018). However, at the time of writing, it was still not clear whether an Indian or Burmese company will be the operator of the transport facility.

The validity of India's aid and Friendship Project claims thus remains questionable because the Project means much more for the NER and India's AEP. In this context, redefining the word "aid" would be necessary because the nature of this Project is quite different from other aid to Burma and the surrounding region. Furthermore, merely changing the Project's name from "Multi-modal Transit Transport Project" to "Friendship Project" does not seem to convince the local community, especially their leaders and those who have awareness and knowledge about their rights, as will be discussed in the following section.

India's disinformation about the Kaladan Project can therefore be regarded as a colorful trick to create a patron-client relation. As discussed earlier, the original intention of the Kaladan Project is to solve India's security dilemma and to implement its AEP, which is, however, presented differently at the local level. With Arakan and Chin State being the most remote regions, India seeks the support of the local community by highlighting the potential benefits for them, while keeping their original intention and the impacts of the Project out of sight. In short, it can be argued that India tries to gain the people's support by creating a patron-client relation through their colorful trick of disinformation. Nevertheless, the people (especially the local) knowingly accept the trick in order to seek a win-win result.

Perspectives of the host community

This section will identify how and why the Chin, Arakan and Mizo community have different opinions and perceptions on the Project. Regional integration usually aims to achieve prosperity and economic development, especially when it comes to new connections between countries. India has been propagandizing that the Project will bring new economic opportunities and development for the local people in the corridor, leading to different expectations among the local communities. As will be discussed in more detail, the Arakanese do not welcome the Project as much as the Chin, while the Mizo are the most optimistic.

Arakan Community

The Executive Director of Arakan Rivers Network (ARN) stated the following about the Arakanese people's opinion on the Kaladan Project:

> The majority of the people do not like it. We did a survey for the Kaladan Movement report published in 2013. The problem is that the general people do not have much knowledge about the Project. How can they have expectations if they do not even know about it? But as far as I am concerned, those people who have knowledge about this Project in Arakan State, do not welcome this Project.

One of my key informants, who worked for ARN during the survey, also claimed that the Arakan local residents do not welcome the Project.

The major difference in opinions on the Project seems to be on the availability of different transport facilities. For instance, Sittwe in Arakan State already has a government run sea link through the Bay of Bengal for many years. Most of the goods consumed in Arakan State are transported by sea from Yangon to Sittwe. The vast majority of Arakan State is flat, so even remote villages have good access to the city through well-developed road links. Unlike Chin State, where the Kaladan Project is building roads where previously there were none, the Project is only bringing an extra seaport to Arakan State, for which there is no need according to the local people.

The Chinese and Indian investments in Arakan State have made the Arakanese feel insecure. While the Arakan do not expect many benefits from the Kaladan Project, the Chinese investment in the Deep Seaport in Kyaukphyu has caused a lot of social and environmental impacts, resulting in a strong opposition by the local community. An Arakan State Parliament member explained that the Arakanese people feel they are the victim of a new Cold War between China and India, mainly because the revenues of the project are not shared with the local people:

> We, the Arakan people, do not see any potential benefits for us. China and India come here to compete with each other. We rather feel a victim of this competition because the government policy does not even provide the sharing of the revenues with the local and indigenous people.

Mizoram Community

Several Mizo local media reports revealed that the people and leaders of Mizoram hold high expectations as they foresee economic opportunities from the Kaladan Project (Zosangliana, 2011; Zotinkhuma, 2016). A well-known Mizo journalist Zotinkhuma (2016) explored how the Kaladan Project could enhance the Mizoram economy and the people's prosperity. He insists that the Project is a windfall for Mizoram, and that it is by far the biggest development project in Mizoram. He argues that whether they like it or not, the south gate [referring to Zonrinpui at the border] will be the new entry and exit for Mizo people, and it is important for the Mizo people to prepare to make use of it.

Even though the provincial level governments from both India and Myanmar are not given control or authority over the Project implementation, the Mizoram government and law makers seem to be eager for the Project implementation. The former Chief Minister of Mizoram often spoke about the Kaladan Project and the Project implementation. In early 2015, the Mizoram Legislative Assembly discussed the importance of the Kaladan Project, and how it should be implemented in a responsible way (Zotinkhuma, 2016). On December 3, 2015, some members of the Mizoram Assembly Estimates Committee visited Paletwa and Sittwe to observe the implementation of the Kaladan Project in Burma ("Estimates Committee," 2015).

One of the reasons for the Mizo community to welcome this Project is because of its transport opportunities. Zotinkhuma (2016) points out that the shortened distance to mainland India from Mizoram is a big opportunity for the people of Mizoram. Among the NER's states, Mizoram is the furthest away from mainland India, resulting in higher prices for imported goods. They do have access to cheaper goods coming from Burma through Chin state, though. Once the Project is fully implemented, Mizoram will be the first state to receive a wide variety of goods transported from Kolkata, and there will be an increase in the goods received from Burma as well. The road link will cut at least three days off the travel time, compared to the existing link through the Chicken's Neck. Hence, many Mizo people see this Project as an opportunity to enhance the Mizoram economy.

Nevertheless, some activists expect an increase in illegal migration. At present, the Mizoram government has the advantage of controlling illegal migration, not only because they are in the most northeastern part, but also because the government has the "Inner Line Permit" system. Anyone who wants to enter Mizoram from mainland India needs to get the Inner Line Permit. There are concerns that this policy could be threatened by the new connection, as the Kaladan Project will make Mizoram the NER's gateway to mainland India. Hence, the potential influx of migrants from mainland India to Mizoram is a significant concern for many. Apart from these negative social and environmental impacts, activists think that all the opportunities will be seized by Indian businessmen. The ZIF Director said during an interview that, "For the local people there is only the highway package. However, economically, it will be a transit point for Indian and Southeast Asian businessmen. Opportunities will go to them."

The local activists also raised their concerns about the militarization in Mizoram and other parts of the NER, which is apparently related to India's foreign policy and the Project implementation.

> There is an idea of militarization at both sides [Burma and India]. Recently, the militarization in the Northeast, including Mizoram, has increased due to the Indian government's security concerns. There are 11 airport projects to be built in Arunachhal Pradesh alone. These are not people-oriented, instead it is a state policy implementation which targets China. Therefore, it is interesting to do more against militarization because since there will be modifications of the land, this will be followed by checkpoints and militarization. There have always been problems when the army and civilians live together.

Chin Community

The ethnic Chin community both embraces and criticizes the Project. As the Project comprises the construction of a brand-new transport link between India and Burma through Western Burma, there are certain issues that have gained the Chin people's attention.

First, the tri-junction between India, Burma and Bangladesh will become an integrated border area due to the Project. This means that even though Bangladesh is technically not included in the Project, its closeness to the Project's location will increase the movement of people in the corridor. The meeting point of Phases III and IV, where the road from the India and Burma will connect (see Figure 1.2), is only at five kilometers from the border between India and Bangladesh. Hence, the activists and community leaders are concerned about potential illegal migration and activities. Despite the lack of existing connectivity among the villages on either side, local people believe that the geographical closeness will attract people from the other side to migrate to the corridors. Lian Bawi Thang said, "Mostly, it would be the problem of migration and drugs trafficking. It would not be nice to mention those people who will come by name, but it is obviously a concern."

Regardless of the potential migration threats, the remoteness of Paletwa, unlike Arakan State, is one of the factors that has influenced local people to accept the Project. Among the nine townships in Chin State, Paletwa is the most populated with 64,971 people in 401 villages (Department of Population, 2017). The villages are small in size, with an average of 30 to 50 households. There is no road link between the villages for vehicles; small road links are locally constructed for foot travel only. As the vast majority of the villages are situated near the Kaladan river and her tributaries, the villagers mostly use boats for their daily transport in order to meet their basic needs. There are only a few people who can afford a Honda boat (a small boat with an engine), so most villagers depend on the public ferry, or self-made wood and bamboo boats for their transport. Great hopes are held by these villagers, especially in Paletwa Township, for a modern road that will connect the villages to each other and to town in order to access supplies, health care and education. Pu Kyaw Ngein stated,

> This project is good somehow. This will link Mizoram. It will be good for our local people for movement and business activities because we will have opportunities for that regardless of the potential negative impacts.

Despite the inadequate transport infrastructure, Paletwa has very fertile land because it is surrounded by a river and the terrain is flat. Several seasonal fruits are grown such as banana, mango, apples, pineapple, papaya, oranges and beans. Due to the lack of roads linking Paletwa to the outside world, it is very difficult for villagers to export their products and make profit. Before the communal crisis in Arakan State, farmers could export their crops to Bangladesh and other parts of Arakan State. However, the Arakan Muslim crisis of the last few years has blocked the access to the market. Hence, with the new integrated corridor zone, the local people and villagers expect to reap benefits from their seasonal crops. Pu Kan Theih stated,

> If this project is implemented, we can send our seasonal fruits to India, both to the Northeast and mainland India. That is the benefit. We cannot sell the local products now because the Bangladesh border is closed because of the Arkanese-Rohingya communal crisis. If there is road link, we can send them and it will be good for the local people from Paletwa. If we send them to mainland India, directly to Kolkata, it would enhance the benefits.

At the same time, concerns have been raised by the local leaders about the fear of losing their culture and practices due to the emergence of migration. Pu Kan Teih continued:

> There could be unnecessary social issues. There will be more movement of people, especially from India. In the past, people from Chin State had to sell their products, or work in Mizoram. They used to experience discrimination and racial issues. If the road link is there, people from Mizoram will come here to do the same as our people did. If that happens, the same racial issues could happen in return.

Nevertheless, there are many villagers with no knowledge about the Project goals, and what benefits it would bring. One of the focus group discussion members from Meeletwa village said, “It will depend on the situation. We cannot say too much in advance because we do not have any idea now. We have to see what happens first and what they do with this project.”

Table 4.1 The perceptions of the local community

Community	Expectation	Concerns
Chin	Infrastructure development Job opportunities Economic opportunities Conflict reduction	Migration Militarization (in contrast to conflict reduction)
Mizoram	Reduction of travel time Reduction of supply cost and time	Migration Militarization Opportunities seizure
Arakan	No expectations mentioned	Migration Resource exploitation

5

THE EMERGENCE OF THE KALADAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

Since the military regime in Burma, several foreign and state-led development projects and investments have caused controversies. These controversies are mainly due to the inadequate—or lack of—rules and regulations that guarantee transparency and accountability. Even though these controversial projects took place nationwide, most of them were implemented in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Development in Burma has also been complicated by political crises, ethnic conflicts and civil wars which have lasted for more than seventy years. The current Burmese government still lacks adequate policies on resource and revenue sharing to meet the demands of the armed movements, who aim to achieve self-determination in their respective states.

This has resulted in the emergence of new activists. Currently, there are several movements against state and non-state led projects. While at the macro level, ethnic armed movements are the major tool to achieve self-determination for ethnic minority groups; at the micro level, social movements against state and non-state development projects and investments are the tool to change the system and policies from the bottom up. Even though the means of these movements are different – armed movements are violent, and civil society movements are non-violent – the root cause and aim are technically the same. The aim of armed conflict is to obtain an absolute political change in terms of constitutional reforms, whereas CSOs at the micro level attempt to shape the policy in their respective field.

Apart from the policy angle, the social and environmental concerns are the motivators and referent objects for most movements against development projects in Burma. For instance, in the case of the Myitsone dam, the risks of losing many animal species in the Irrawaddy river, the loss of livelihood for people living along the river, the potential risk of floods and threats to the river dwellers were the main concerns, and more importantly, the Irrawaddy river is valued as cultural heritage by the people. Another good example is the case of the Mwe Taung copper mining project in Chin State where the local activists claimed that the project would cause the loss of widespread farmlands and the risk of health issues (Ei Ei Toe Lwin, 2013).

Similar to other movements in Burma, the Kaladan social movement raises social and environmental concerns about the Project; however, the movement has a different form or uses different means. The following section will give some background information on the organizations involved in the Kaladan social movement. Thereafter, the motivations of the activists who lead the social movement will be analyzed. Next, the referent objects of the activists will be discussed, followed by an examination of the reasons for their choice to be a non-resistant social movement. To end, the activists' point of view of how the Project should be implemented will be explored.

Organizations involved in the Kaladan social movement

The Kaladan social movement started in 2009 by exiled and local CSOs. The organizations selected for this study include three member organizations from the Kaladan Movement, because they represent three ethnic groups of the host communities from Chin State, Arakan State and Mizoram, and one organization from the Kistpanaddi Working Group. They were chosen because their interests and goals concerning the Kaladan Project are similar.

The Kaladan Movement

The Kaladan Movement was formed in 2012. The three groups merged into an alliance because they had the same interests and concerns with respect to human rights, and the economic, social and environmental impacts of the Kaladan Project. The alliance's core members are the Chin Human Rights Organization, Arakan Rivers Network from Burma, and Zo Indigenous Forum from India (Kaladan Movement, 2013).

Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)

CHRO was originally established in exile at the India-Burma border by a group of Chin activists in 1991. Being a human rights organization, CHRO is committed to promote democracy and human rights in Burma. Although being formed in India, they are legally registered in Canada, and operate in Burma, Thailand, India and Malaysia. Until 2013, CHRO actively operated from Chiang Mai, Thailand. At that time, they moved to Burma and set up their head office in Yangon, and their sub-offices in Kalay and Hakha. Their main activities are human rights documentation, advocacy, awareness raising and human rights education. CHRO has produced documentation on "extra-judicial killing, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, rape and sexual violence, land and property confiscation, violations of religious freedom, military conscription and the use of child soldiers, and forced labor in its bi-monthly publication Rhododendron News" (CHRO, n.d.).

Arakan Rivers Network (ARN)

Arakan Rivers Network (ARN) is also an exile civil society organization based at the Thai-Burmese border town of Mae Sot. They were founded in 2009 by the All Arakan Students' and Youth Congress (AASYC) in response to the dubious foreign investments and state led development projects in Arakan State. ARN's vision is "a future where the people of Arakan have the knowledge and the right to protect their rivers from destruction, enjoying total sovereignty over their main source of food and means of travel" (Arakan Rivers Network, 2009). ARN started to raise their concerns about the Kaladan Project even before the implementation started. They are actively involved in the alliance since 2012.

Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF)

Founded in 2009, the Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF) is an indigenous people's organization based in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram State, India. The organization was founded by young Mizo activists, who wanted to achieve equal rights for the majority ethnic groups in India. ZIF works for the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly concerning socio-economic and cultural rights of the Zo (or Mizo) people in India. Its main activities include human rights education, awareness raising of indigenous peoples' and language rights, promotion of local and traditional knowledge, women's empowerment, child and labor rights, and the management of natural resources.

Gender and Development Initiative (GDI)

The Gender and Development Initiative (GDI) is a non-government organization based in Yangon, Burma, which mainly works on sustainable development, gender equality, justice, and peace. GDI's mission is "to promote awareness of gender equality, indigenous people's rights, peace, and sustainable development; to build and strengthen the capacity of civil societies and various stakeholders on gender and conflict sensitive programming, and to execute evidence - based advocacy for social transformation, in collaboration and coordination with other like-minded national and international agencies and organizations" (Gender and Development Institute., n.d.). GDI is a member organization of the Kistpanaddi Working Group, which is different from the alliance of the Kaladan Movement.

Activists' motivations for social movement

As this chapter explores the emergence of the Kaladan social movement, it is important to delve into the motivations of the actors behind the movement. They are based on structural factors, such as international standards related to indigenous people's rights, and the legal situation in Burma.

International standards

The ethnic people who live in the implementation area, such as the Chin, Arakan and Mizo are indigenous to their respective territories (Kaladan Movement, 2013). These ethnic people used to have their own kingdoms, government system, independent territory, customs and regulations. Hence, they are entitled to full ownership of their land according to indigenous rights. In order to fortify their claims about violations of their indigenous rights, the Kaladan Movement embraced the international standards detailed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 by 144 member states, among which India and Burma. The most important principle, encapsulated in Article 19 of the UNDRIP, is the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which ensures that for every issue related to indigenous people and their property, state and non-state actors should protect the rights of indigenous people:

> States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. (United Nations, 2008, p. 8)

The Kaladan Movement argues that if any state led development project ignores or rejects local indigenous people's participation, such action is in breach of the UNDRIP's Article 19. The concept of FPIC is vital to ensure that the rights of indigenous people are protected; "it has become the global best practice for state-led infrastructure development projects" (Kaladan Movement, 2013, p. 40).

In order to push for responsible implementation, the Kaladan Movement also highlights other international agreements and conventions that the Burmese government has signed and ratified, such as the 1948 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Rights to Organize Conventions, and the 1930 Forced Labor Convention. Besides this, the Burmese government has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Labor Organization (ILO), which includes a commitment to eliminate forced labor in Burma by 2015. Activists of the Kaladan social movement use these conventions to point out labor violations in the implementation of the Kaladan Project. The Burmese government has also ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) and the Kyoto Protocol (1998), an extension from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992). The Kaladan Movement member organizations argue that the Burmese government should comply with the principles of these conventions and protocols during the Kaladan project's implementation (Kaladan Movement, 2013).

Legal situation in Burma

Since the transition to a democracy in 2010, Burma has stepped forward in making policy reforms related to environmental conservation and investment. These reforms include the aim to protect people from environmental harms, caused by state and non-state led development projects. However, the policy implementation has been slow, resulting in more civil society activism.

In 2012, the Union Parliament enacted the Environmental Conservation Law, which was later followed by the Environmental Conservation Rules in 2014, and again improved by passing the Environmental Impact Assessment

Procedure in 2015. These legislations aim to recognize the interests of the general public, and the rights of the local community by requiring companies to conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), before the start of any development project. For instance, Section 16.1-i of the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure stipulates that public participation is required during the EIA process. This paves the way for public involvement in the decision-making process, which can have an influence on whether or not a development project can be carried out, and how to carry out such a project in a responsible way.

In 2012, the Burmese government formed the Investment Commission under the Myanmar Investment Law. The objectives of this Commission are "to safeguard environmental conservation; to deeply emphasize on social impact; to practice accounting and auditing in accordance with international standard in financial matters including transparency and accountability; to create job opportunities; to support corporate social responsibilities" (DICA, n.d). During his tenure, the former Burmese President U Thein Sein, vowed to adhere to the principles of the Myanmar Investment Commission for responsible investment in the country (Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016).

Nevertheless, as activists have pointed out, these policies are just paper and words. State and foreign led projects or investments continue to ignore the public's interests and voice, and do not allow for public participation. A recent example in Burma is China's Kyaukphyu Deep Seaport and Special Economic Zone project, which cost about $9.5 billion. The project received high international attention as it had a lot of social and environment impacts, and most crucially, the project had the potential to get Burma into China's debt trap. The project also triggered public concern as local people were not consulted, and public participation was not respected during the decision-making process. This disregard of established legal procedures has instigated activists to react each time there is a new development project in their area. According to the Kaladan Movement, regardless of the immediate impacts of the Project, the movement is necessary because there have been lessons learned in Burma where many foreign and state led investments and projects have been implemented with a lack of transparency and public participation. Related to this issue, the leader of ARN shared during an interview:

> We started the movement because, first, we saw a lot of immediate and potential negative impacts of Kaladan Project, and second, in the past, we have seen a lot of similar projects that are implemented by undermining the interest of the local people.

Referent objects of the Kaladan social movement

By referring to international standards on human and indigenous rights and the existing legal instruments in Burma, activists highlight the problems affecting the local people living along the Project implementation area, and urge the developers to find solutions. Such problems are the immediate and long-term socio-environmental impacts, which will be adopted in this study as the referent objects of the Kaladan social movement.

Social impacts

This sub-section will detail the human rights violations of the developers, and the people's feelings of insecurity caused by the implementation of the Project, which comprise both immediate impacts, such as marginalization of local people, labor discrimination, land confiscation and inadequate compensation; as well as long-term impacts such as migration and armed conflicts. This study will specifically look at the armed conflicts in the Project implementation area, causing both negative and positive impacts.

Marginalization of local people

In November 2011, the Gender and Development Initiative (GDI) and Arakan Coastal Environmental Conservation (RCA) conducted a survey of 140 local residents called the "Kaladan Listening Project" in Sittwe, Ponnayun and Kyautaw Township of Arakan State, and Paletwa Township of Chin State (Cherry Thein, 2011). In early 2012, the Kaladan Movement conducted a baseline survey of 621 people living along the Project implementation area. Both surveys aimed to understand the local people's knowledge about, perceptions of, and expectations from the Kaladan Project. Among the 621 interviewees, "not a single interviewee reported being involved in any public consultation process regarding the Kaladan Project" (Kaladan Movement, 2013, p.3 8). The Kaladan Listening Project also found that only a few people had heard about the Kaladan Project, because there was no public consultation with the local communities (Cherry Thein, 2011). A local fieldworker from ARN shared his experience during the survey in Arakan State:

> When I ask people from Kyauktaw [an Arakanese town through which the Kaladan river passes], about their knowledge of the Kaladan Project, no one could answer me properly. Few people told me what they heard from others, but even that is very abstract.

The Kaladan Movement insists that due to the lack of consultation, the local communities do not have knowledge about the negative impacts and potential outcomes. According to them, Burma's Ministry of Transport and Port Authority had distributed a pamphlet in 2011 about the Project in Burmese language. They criticized the pamphlet as largely ineffective because Burmese is not widely spoken in the local communities where it was distributed, and the distribution area was very small. The 2013 Kaladan Movement report revealed that none of the survey respondents received the pamphlet. Besides this, a public meeting was organized in Sittwe by the Indian Embassy in 2012, however, some activists from the Kaladan Movement have claimed that they were not invited. A key ARN informant said,

> I attended the meeting in person. Actually, they did not even invite us for the meeting. I just heard it from other sources. I attended because I thought that we, the local community leaders, should attend that kind of meeting. I do not think it was a public meeting, because they only invited some selected government officials and a few community leaders. They explained all the possible benefits for Myanmar and the local people. But they did not talk about the negative impacts, and how to prevent those impacts.

Former GDI Executive Director Salai Isaac Khen said that he attended the meeting and was provided the opportunity to talk about the Project. Apart from that meeting in Sittwe, there is no evidence that any other public consultation has been conducted on the ground so far. This lack of consultation remains a significant issue among activists.

Labor discrimination

On 8 August 2012, 40 Arakan workers from the Sittwe construction site went on a strike against Essar Projects Ltd (Kaladan Movement, 2013). Essar Projects hired laborers from both India and Arakan. The strike was called in protest of the unfair treatment and discrimination among the laborers, such as the higher payment for Indian laborers. According to the Kaladan Movement (2013) report, the workers made four demands. First, the local workers would like to receive a minimum wage of at least 5,000 Kyats per day because the Indian workers get approximately 23,000 Kyats per day. Second, Essar should pay the wages in a timely manner. Third, local workers should get the pay raises as promised when they were hired. Finally, local workers should get proper work clothes, such as a boiler suit like the Indian workers. According to the report, the Burmese Army threatened the protesters during the strike with a machine gun and tried to disperse them. However, this research was unable to get any information on the final outcome of the strike.

In response to my question about labor discrimination, an Arakanese work supervisor at the construction site of the Paletwa transshipment station, who also said he had previously worked at the Sittwe port, dismissed claims of discrimination and unfair treatment. He added that the workers are paid a much higher salary than any other construction worker in Burma. However, he avoided my question about the amount of payment, and any comment regarding wage differences between local and Indian laborers. During my visit to Meeletwa village, I interviewed a villager who had worked for three years at the Paletwa construction site. According to him, they worked from 7.00am to 6.00pm with a one-hour rest at noon. The local workers were paid 8,000 Kyats per day (about $5). If they worked on a Sunday, they received an extra payment of 2,000 Kyats (about $1.5). The informant said that they often experienced payment delays, and the treatment between Indian and local workers was different:

> Many times, it was not easy. Sometimes we get scolded when we did not understand the instructions and the language. At the workplace, Indian workers were treated differently by the supervisors. They did not need to work too much, but they still got a higher salary than us. Many times, our wage payment was delayed. We would get the money after two to three months.

Land confiscation and inadequate compensation

Land confiscation is the biggest problem faced by local people, especially in Chin State. Per the Framework Agreement, the Burmese government would provide land free of charge. In order to build the Sittwe seaport, the Burmese government provided six hectares on the Sittwe outskirts, a coastal area on which local fishermen and boatmen heavily depend for their livelihoods. In Paletwa, three hectares of public land were provided for the transshipment construction, which was previously used for growing crops such as beans, peas and banana. The plot of land is nearly the size of Paletwa town (Kaladan Movement, 2013). The Project still needs more land for the 109 kilometers of road that will be constructed from Paletwa to the Burma-India border.

No compensation in kind, or in cash was given to the local people for this seizure of the land. Paletwa villagers and farmers, who were subject to displacement through confiscation of their land, received some compensation, however, only a few were satisfied with the terms and amount of payment. According to the Deputy Director of Paletwa Township Administration, surveys were conducted by the Forest, Land and Planning Departments under his administration, and the findings were used to determine the amount of compensation. However, according to the community leader in Paletwa, the government did not go to the villagers located far from the town, and the provided compensation was based on estimation.

Data gained from the Government General Administration in Paletwa Township, indicated that nineteen villages were directly affected by the road construction. Most of the affected areas are farmlands. Some households also had to relocate as the new road is set to pass through their village. The compensation was distributed in three parts, with local villagers receiving the payments during a special ceremony in Paletwa. The first part covered 39 houses from five villages that received a total amount of 226,100,000 Kyats (approx. $150,000) on October 26, 2017. The second part was for 248 farmers from nine villages, who received a total amount of 502,700,000 Kyats (approx. $333,000) on August 6, 2018. The third part will be compensated in 2019 according to the local government administration in Paletwa. The estimation was based on the quality of the houses they had to vacate; therefore, the amount of compensation varies. During my focus group discussion with some Meeletwa villagers, a participant said that he got 2,600,000 Kyats (approx. $1,720), which was the highest amount among the eleven affected householders. The group said that there is one household that only got 300,000 Kyats (approx. $200). All the participants confirmed that the amount of compensation was a unilateral decision by the government. A displaced villager said,

> The amount seemed to be predetermined. As far as I am concerned, nobody in this village could negotiate, or was consulted about the amount of payment. They just came here, saw our house and went back. Later they informed us to get the compensation money in Paletwa.

According to the Deputy Director of Paletwa Township administration, there has been a lot of complaints about the amount of compensation, and terms of payment after the payment was done. However, he insisted that the government is trying to solve all the problems as good as they can.

Militarization

The 2008 Framework Agreement also states that the Burmese government should ensure the security of the Project personnel during the implementation. During the initial stage, one of the activists' concerns was that the implementation would lead to excessive military presence in the implementation area, which could further restrict the free movement of the local people. This was a valid concern because since the Project began, the militarization has increased. It has impacted the free movement of the people, and has resulted in armed conflicts. As mentioned before, the Arakan armed (AA) group is trying to settle in Paletwa Township, where the Project's is being implemented. This has prompted the Burmese Army to subvert the attempts of the AA in order to protect the Project personnel. Since 2012, several skirmishes have occurred between the AA and the Burmese military, resulting in thousands of Chin villagers being forced to flee their villages and live as IDPs in jungle areas. As has been demonstrated earlier, the militarization in Paletwa Township is not only about counter-insurgency, but also about guaranteeing the security for the Project, which has a direct impact on the freedom to move and livelihoods of villagers in the area.

Unintended consequences as long-term social impacts

Unintended consequences can happen when actors have limited knowledge about their actions and possible outcomes (Tucker Jr, 1998). For unintended consequences, Tucker Jr (1998) gives an example of a Western development project in America which aimed to help the poor by providing housing. The project caused the opposite effect as a result of the landlords' refusal to comply "with [the] government housing standard", by "turning residential housing into non-residential buildings" (Tucker Jr, 1998, p. 86). Unintended consequences do not have to be necessarily "unforeseen, unexpected or unanticipated" (Baert, 1990, p. 208). In other words, actors may foresee the impacts, but might not necessarily intend them.

The possible long-term unintended consequences of the Kaladan Project that concern the local people and activists, involve drug trafficking, illegal migration and an increase in armed conflicts. After the implementation, the new India-Burma official border is expected to be an area of free movement of goods and services. The goods from heartland India will be transported to its northeast provinces via the multi-modal transport link, with Burma and India reaping the trade benefits. However, this area will also potentially suffer from the negative consequences. Burma and India share three official borders, two of which (Rihkhuadar and Tamu-Moreh) are quite desirable for drug traffickers. There are concerns that the drug trafficking activities will expand to the soon-to-be opened border. Lian Bawi Thang, who formerly worked for CHRO and actively participated in the Kaladan Movement said,

> Now the Burmese police are already well aware of the drug trafficking activities in existing border areas and the traffickers also know about this. Therefore, if this project is implemented, the trafficking activities could shift from the old to the new [border areas]. This is one of our concerns. (as cited in Sang, 2017, p. 56)

The migration concerns relate to the geographical connection between Arakan and Chin States. The area where the Arakan people currently face a communal crisis with the Muslim minority is very close to this, and Paletwa Township is also connected with Bangladesh from the other side. Therefore, activists believe that when this Project will be finished, the objective of the Project could result in opposite consequences by becoming an area of crime, violence, and illegal activities. They also fear that the area would become unsafe and generate a general insecurity, especially for the local Chin community.

On the other hand, there may also be positive unintended consequences. As stated, the armed conflict between the AA and the Burmese Army has been very intense along this border area. As the militarization keeps increasing, the armed conflict could also increase if the AA does not give up their plan to settle in the area. However, some activists believe that the new connectivity could result in the AA abandoning their plan to settle in the area:

> Theoretically, the new connectivity helps the government to counter insurgencies in the frontier area. That is what we expect from the Kaladan Project. We do not expect the AA's settling in our territory. I think, if this Project is finished, the AA will have no chance to survive in this area.

Environmental issues

The environmental issues are another referent object for the Kaladan social movement because the environmental damages and risks caused by the implementation of the Project are threatening the lives of the local people who live near the Project area. They include river exploitation, environmental risks, and the destruction of cultural heritage. Another issue, related to the environment is the lack of impact assessment before the Project started.

Lack of impact assessment

Before the Kaladan social movement began in Burma, no Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SIA/EIA) was conducted by either side of the government. Even though the entire Project is implemented by the Indian government and its contractors, the Indian government initially cleared itself from the responsibility to do a SIA/EIA in Burma. Meanwhile, impact assessments were conducted in Mizoram by the Indian government, before road construction started. The Kaladan Movement thus argues that "different standards are being applied in Burma and India" (Kaladan Movement, 2013, p. 42). As mentioned earlier, the 2008 Framework Agreement does not include specific conditions to conduct a SIA/EIA. During my informal conversation with the first secretary of the Indian Embassy in Yangon, he said that when the implementation started, the Burmese government did not have a law that requires SIA/EIA. This is why they had not planned to conduct one. Contrarily, civil society groups claimed that:

> As there is no clear requirement for Environmental Impact Assessments in Burma's law, India should defer to its own 2006 Notification on Environmental Impact Assessment which would require an Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Clearance for an infrastructure development project such as the Kaladan Project. (Kaladan Movement, 2013, p. 43)

Even though an EIA of the Kaladan river was conducted in 2016, failure to conduct such an assessment prior to the Project implementation in Burma has become one of the Kaladan social movement's concerns.

River exploitation

The Kaladan river originates in Mizoram, flows through Chin State and continues into Arakan State. The river is intensively used by the local people for their transport, agriculture and fisheries. One study suggested that the Kaladan river is rich with 42 different species of freshwater fish (Allen, Molur & Daniel, 2010). According to the Kaladan Movement report (2013), approximately one million people depend on the river for their livelihoods, and 90% of the local residents depend on riverbank cultivation and fishing for their livelihoods. The activists' concern is that the local livelihoods will be at risk due to river dredging and river "bank erosion caused by waves of large cargo vessels". The EIA report by My Asia Consulting in 2016, after the dredging work was done, stated that there are no impacts on the river and its species. However, the validity of the report is questioned by civil society groups saying the assessment lacks transparency and public participation. During my fieldwork, some local people raised their concerns by saying that the daily flow of barges up and down the river would cause more loss of species and increase congestion, which will hinder and threaten the safety of the small boats used by villagers.

Figure 5.1 Fishermen on the Kaladan River *Source: Author*

Impacts of the road construction

Before phase two of the road construction in Paletwa started, civil society groups claimed that the construction could cause "the degradation of areas of lowland wet evergreen rainforest, which is known to be one of the most species-rich ecosystems in Burma" (Kaladan Movement, 2013, p. 35). The area accommodates several animal species and plants upon which the local people depend for their livelihoods. The Kaladan Movement (2013) highlighted the importance of forest protection, and argued that the "protection of forests in Burma is particularly important now, considering that the country had the fourth most rapid annual net loss of forest areas globally between 1990 and 2010" (p. 35). Clearance of the land for the 109 kilometers long road has caused deforestation, especially in Chin and Mizoram States. Western Burma is the most mountainous area of Burma and is located in a cyclonic zone with a long monsoon period from May to September. Heavy rains during this season often cause landslides and floods across Chin State, which the local people and activists believe will increase in intensity and cause more damage due to the environmental impacts of the deforestation.

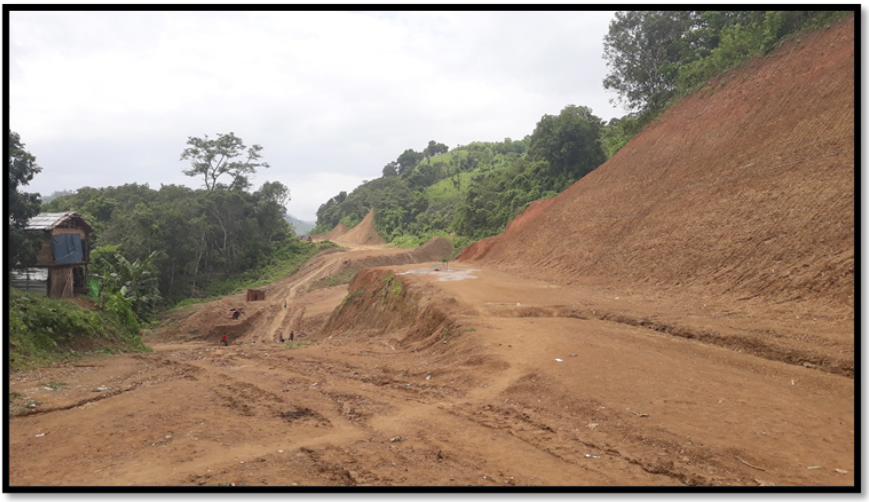

Figure 5.2 Kaladan Project's initial road construction *Source: Author*

Destruction of cultural heritage

Another concern of the Kaladan social movement is the destruction of local cultural heritage and religious buildings due to the Project. The seaport construction has destroyed the valuable Arakanese Royal Reef in Sittwe harbor. The reef was said to be built by an Arakan king hundreds of years ago. According to the Arakan Rivers Network (ARN), the government and Indian developers were advised and well aware of this cultural heritage, however, the construction was carried out as planned. Also, two mountains which were culturally significant for Ngwe Taung and Shwe Taung village in Arakan State were destroyed when stone was mined to use for the Sittwe port construction. According to ARN, these small mountains were valued and respected by the Arakanese people as ancient monuments. The ARN leader, U Htun Tha Sein, said that King Saw Mwan built monuments for the Lord Buddha on these mountains in AD 792, and dedicated them to the Arakanese kingdom:

> The Kaladan river is very important for the Arakan people, not only in terms of economic perspective, but also in terms of historical and cultural perspective. According to the Arakanese legend, our Buddha Myat-sua phayar came on foot from India to the Te Law Gi Re mountain, which is just at the right side of the river. The Buddha has dwelled and meditated there for 7 days and 7 nights. So culturally, it is valuable to us.

According to the Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF), the road construction in Mizoram has destroyed a number of churches and a cemetery. The affected villagers received compensation to rebuild the churches and transfer the cemetery. However, some villagers were unwilling to move the cemetery because they are culturally and emotionally attached to their late relatives.

Non-resistant movement

As the Kaladan social movement does not resist the Project implementation, I would like to bring back the concept of non-resistant movements in order to make sense of the uniqueness of the Kaladan social movement compared to resistant movements. Social movements in contemporary times do not necessarily attempt to confront the system, or refuse state led development projects as has been discussed through many case studies by different scholars (see Yates, 2015; Hecht, 2011; Reygadas et al., 2009; Powell, 2008). Hence, it is worthwhile to ask the questions of how and why non-resistant movements differ from resistant movements. The differences between these types of movements can give insight into the nature of these movements, and how their choice of goals and tactics are made. Based on the existing literature (cf. Pieck, 2011; Reygadas et al., 2009), some movements are not resistant because the activists foresee positive outcomes for the affected community. On the other hand, activists from resistant movements consider the outcomes of the project as unbearable for society, hence they want to halt the project. The choice whether to resist or not resist, will be further explored through some case studies in Burma and Thailand.

In the case of the Myitsone dam movement in Burma, activists raised their voice because they considered the immediate impacts to the local community to be severe, while the vast majority (90%) of the benefits from the dam were expected to go to China (Hkawn Ja Aung, 2014). More importantly, the majority of the people in Burma shared these concerns because they culturally value the Irrawaddy river and the upstream rivers of the dam. Kirchherr (2018) noted that the major reason behind the success of the movement against the dam was the “emotional framing” of the project as a threat to national cultural heritage, which instigated the ethnically divided people to unite as a whole. Hence, the resistance to the Myitsone dam was due to the severe concerns about the impacts, the unequal sharing of the benefits, and threats to their cultural heritage, which could not be compromised.

Another example of a resistant movement was the anti-Kaeng Suea Ten dam movement in Thailand. The government developed the project in 1980 as a flood mitigation project in Sukhothai province. The dam's capacity was 49 MW, costing $100 million dollars, and would cause the displacement of 2,960 local people in the implementation area (Kirchherr, 2018). With these severe social impacts, the local people allied with the activists from the NGOs to oppose the project. Even though the primary reason for opposing the project was due to social impacts, such as the burdens of relocation, the involvement of the NGOs also added another referent object to the movement – the environmental concerns. Activists were able to convince the local people of the potential environmental impacts. Hence, similar to the Myitsone dam movement, the social movement against the Kaeng Suea Ten dam aimed to stop the project due to the undesirable social and environmental impacts, which were considered as threats to the people's lives and their survival. Kirchherr (2018) noted that a "system of protest" was the right choice for the movement against the Kaeng Suea Ten dam, and the key for the movement's success.

The Kaladan social movement differs from the above two cases in terms of the movement's goals. Their choice of tactics was also shaped by the potential consequences of the project, but unlike the above cases, the Kaladan social movement expects socio-economic benefits from the Project for the local people. As they did not want to ignore the negative impacts, the activists pursued a strategy of bargaining in order to make the Project developers responsible. All the organizations and activists involved in the movement agree that if the Kaladan Project is implemented as per the international standards and in a responsible way the Project's implementation does not necessarily have to be halted.

A people-centered approach

Korten (1984) notes that real human development should not only be people-oriented, but also people-centered. Philips (2014, p. 573) notes that individual needs should come first, before the "luxury of social responsibility." Korten (1984) concurs with Philips when he argues that "to achieve the desired improvements in human well-being, development would need to become […] truly people-centered, a creation of peoples' initiative, and based on the resources which they control" (p. 324).

The movement of local civil society groups does not simply aim to stop the entire Kaladan Project. Their main objective is to push the developers to recognize the rights of the local and indigenous people, and to guarantee that the local people can benefit from the project through better infrastructure and livelihoods. The Kaladan Movement (2013) suggests that unless the governments of Burma and India implement the Project responsibly, by guaranteeing the security of the local people and better livelihoods, the implementation should not continue. In other words, the activists' arguments make it clear that the Project should be implemented in a way that the interests of local people are taken into account. Hence, the Kaladan social movement's idea to make the Project developers responsible is in line with the people-centered development approach, because they expect and demand guarantees to ensure benefits for the people.

6

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND OUTCOME ASSESSMENT OF THE KALADAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

Social movement theorists note that movements need reliable resources in order to achieve their goals (McCarthy & Zald, as cited in Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016). Political opportunities can determine the availability of such resources and the activists' ability to mobilize them. Under a democratic system, social movements have more possibilities to achieve their goals because of the easier access to resources. On the other hand, a strong centralized political system constrains the activists' choice and tactics, hence their access to and ability to mobilize resources are confined (Phongpaichit, 2002). Even if social movements aim to change the political system, the political situation still plays a crucial role as it then becomes the referent object of the movement. Political opportunities are therefore always directly or indirectly used as an indicator for the outcomes of the social movement.

The experiences of the Kaladan social movement exemplify how political opportunity determines resource mobilization and the social movement itself. This chapter will explore how Burma's political transition has impacted the Kaladan social movement, and more importantly, the movement's resource mobilization under such circumstances. The following section will give an overview of how the Kaladan activists formed their goals, and which tactics and strategies they use to achieve these goals. Thereafter, the political opportunities in Burma will be discussed, including the process of political transition and the role of civil society. This will be followed by an analysis of how the Kaladan Movement mobilizes their resources. Next, the theoretical literature will be examined in order to strengthen the data related to the five necessary resources in a social movement. The last section will then highlight the impacts or outcomes of the civil society movement involved with the Kaladan Project.

Formation of the Kaladan social movement's goals, tactics and strategies

As mentioned before, the Kaladan social movement's goal is to make the Project developers responsible. All civil society members I have met during my fieldwork said that the movement's aim is not to stop the Project. Instead, they want the implementation of the Project to be carried out in the right way. Questions can be raised as to what exactly is the right way of implementation, or what exactly is a responsible implementation for the Kaladan social movement? To answer these questions, it is useful to look at the activists' claims and demands. The 2013 Kaladan Movement report has six recommendations to both the Burmese and Indian government:

1. To conduct fully-participatory consultations with local people;
2. To prevent human rights abuses;
3. To conduct Health, Environmental and Social Impact Assessments and make results public;
4. To identify and develop mitigation plan for potential negative health, environmental, social and economic impacts;
5. To prioritize economic development for local residents;
6. To prioritize employment opportunities for local residents (Kaladan Movement, 2013, p. 6).

These recommendations indicate that the interests of the local people in the implementation area are central to the Kaladan social movement's goals. By referring to international standards that protect indigenous rights, such as the UNDRIP, the Kaladan social movement demands an implementation that guarantees local people's prosperity and their human security.

McCarthy and Zald (1977) noted that some movements use the strategy of negotiation, persuasion and bargaining in order to lobby their opponents or authorities to make changes. As the Kaladan social movement does not aim to halt the Project, its actions mainly take place through negotiations, lobbying and awareness raising. The Kaladan Movement's tactics can be divided into four parts. The first tactic is forming an alliance of three different civil society organizations who represent different ethnic groups. The second tactic is working in the host community through educating the local people on human rights, indigenous rights, land rights and knowledge about the Kaladan Project. The third tactic is confronting the developers through negotiations and lobbying, such as head to head meetings with the governments and private developers, as well as written statements. The final tactic aims to attract the attention from outsiders, such as other ethnic groups at the national level, as well as the international community. The activists raise awareness and lobby in order to gain attention for the Kaladan project implementation.

Table 6.1 shows how the activists of the Kaladan Movement form their goals, and use different tactics and strategies to achieve their goals.

Table 6.1. The Kaladan Movement's goals, tactics and strategies

Goals	Tactics	Strategies
Responsible implementation Public participation Inform the local people No human rights abuses, Social and environmental impact assessment Ensure employment opportunities for the local people People-centred development Prepare for long-term social impacts	Merging into an alliance	One organization from each ethnic group (CHRO for Chin, ARN for Arakan, ZIF for Mizo)
	Working in the local community	Education on human rights, indigenous rights and land rights Providing knowledge about the Kaladan Project Gaining local people's support
	Confrontation with the developers	Negotiation and lobbying Meeting with the governments and contractors Written statements
	Spreading concerns to outsiders	Report about the current situation on the ground Report about related cases in Burma

Political opportunity in Burma

It is important to briefly discuss the role of civil society to understand the challenges and opportunities of social movements in Burma. Not only has the role of civil society changed in Burma, but also the term referring to civil society. The most prominent civil society groups used to be the student groups, political parties, and religious based organizations (Pollard, 2015). However, following the 1988 uprisings, the vast majority of the political parties and student's organizations were declared unlawful under the 1908

Unlawful Associations Act. As such, the role of civil society was severely restricted during the military regime.

Following the preparation for the 2010 General Elections and the enactment of the Association Registration Law in 2014, people have been allowed to form movements and demand policy reforms within the Parliament, as well as in public. Most of the armed movement actors now have the opportunity to participate in the political negotiations of the peace process. Moreover, many new prominent movements by civil society that seek social changes and policy reforms have emerged, such as the LGBT movement, educational reform movement, indigenous people's rights movements, women's rights movements, and movements against state-led development projects.

The political transition has also been a facilitator for the Kaladan social movement. The duration of the Kaladan Project covers both the era of the military regime and democratic transition in Burma. The Framework Agreement between the Indian and Burmese government was signed during the military government tenure, while most of the implementation took place during the era of semi-civilian government. Even though civil society groups have raised their concerns during the initial stage of the Project development, the political situation constrained their agency because they had little chance to exercise their rights under the military government. After 2010, the political shift from dictatorship to democracy facilitated the movement to some extent.

The former Burmese President's U Thein Sein call for the return of political exiles and refugees, and amnesty to blacklisted activists prompted many political and rights groups to move back to the country (Shwe Thite Taw, 2012; Francis Khoo Thwe, 2012). On the released list of blacklisted activists and rebels were two CHRO top leaders: Salai Bawi Liang Mang and Za Uk Ling. Despite offering the freedom of movement in Burma, CHRO had to conduct a preliminary research to ensure that the situation really guaranteed freedom of movement and activities for rights groups. Za Uk Ling explained,

> We were still reluctant to enter. So, we had to go inside and conducted an observation to really know the situation inside. We met other rights groups, civil society groups and community-based organizations in Burma. We met high-level government officials. Only then we decided to move our office from Chiang Mai to Yangon.

Even though Burma is heading to a democracy which has changed the role of civil society, politicians and scholars often argue that the country needs to do a lot more in order to achieve a real democratic system. They perceive that the excessive presence of the army in politics is a constraint for political reforms (Wilson, 2017). Moreover, despite the many legal changes, rights groups still face several challenges to carry out rights-related activities due to the inadequate rule of law and the state's poor transparency. The CHRO's Executive Director said that when his organization applied for registration at the Department of General Administration, which was under the Home Affairs Ministry[10], they had to list all the objectives of the organization related to rights-based activities. He deemed such inquiry as unfair, and pointed out that the so-called civilian government led by the National League for Democracy (NLD) fails to implement the principle and fundamentality of democracy. This indicates that the Burmese political transition still needs ideological and policy reforms at the macro level. Consequently, civil society organizations and rights groups encounter barriers to access information and to negotiate with state-backed developers in the case of state-led development projects.

Also, ARN's reason for staying in Thailand is an indicator that the Burmese political situation still does not fully provide freedom of movement for activists. ARN was initially based in Chiang Mai and moved their office to the Thai border town of Mae Sot. When asked why they did not move to Burma, the leader of ARN, Ting Oh, said,

> You know the situation of Burma. The situation is still not stable. Especially in Arakan, there are many issues to be concerned about. We do not feel secure. It is better to stay here. Even here, we live low-profile, you know what I mean?

Resource mobilization

Social movements need relevant resources in order to achieve their goals. Resource mobilization theory inspects the structural factors, including the available resources for the movement's members and their position in society, to analyze the process and outcomes of the movement. As discussed before, this study will adopt McCarthy and Edwards' (2004) five categories to examine the Kaladan social movement's resources and their way of utilizing them.

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[10] The Department of General Administration has recently been shifted to the President's Administration.

Moral resources

Moral resources include the recognition of the activists' existence, and the moral support and solidarity from the general public (Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016). Normally, such resources are derived from outside the social movement, however, the movement actors utilize these resources as a motivator to conduct the movement. In the case of the Kaladan social movement, the activists are not only recognized by the two governments, but also receive support from the local community.

In 2012, the Indian Embassy in Yangon and the contractors organized a public meeting on the Project in Sittwe. Some members of the Kaladan Movement and the GDI leaders also attended the meeting and had a chance to express their concerns about the social and environmental impacts. As a result, the Burmese government promised to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Even though the activists were not fully satisfied with the response from the governments, it does indicate that the governments recognize the social movement. The CHRO Deputy Executive Director, Za Uk Ling, said,

> We are happy that our voices are heard. We feel that the movement has a meaning and some impact, despite the fact that there is still a lot to change. If we had not established the movement, they might have carried out the Project in whatever way they wanted.

On June 11, 2013, the Kaladan Movement released their report with a press conference in Bangkok, Thailand. The report documented the process of the Project implementation, and provided an empirical assessment of the potential positive and negative impacts. The event was attended by a representative from the Indian Embassy in Thailand, who reportedly gave clarification on the report and claims made by the locals. Soon after, the Indian Embassy in Bangkok also released a statement in response to the report. Furthermore, during my visits to the Indian Embassy in Yangon, the officials gave their opinions about the local civil society groups who are involved in the movement. They also said they have invited Kaladan Movement members for an informal meeting on different occasions. This indicates that the existence of the social movement has alerted the developers to act responsibly, which is evidenced by the changes that have been made to the implementation process. In other words, it is the acknowledgement of the activists' claims and demands about the Project that indirectly stimulates the movements to continue.

Other international organizations and civil societies in Burma have also acknowledged the Movement and their concerns. In September 2015, a two-day international conference called “India-Burma Relations – Looking from the Border” was organized by the Heinrich Boll Foundation (India) and Burma Center Delhi (BCD) in New Delhi. The conference invited representatives of the three member organizations of the Kaladan Movement to present their survey findings about the impacts of the Project, and express their demands and concerns. Each representative spoke about the immediate impacts of the Project, and the long-term potential consequences. Besides this, community-based organizations and ethnic political parties, mostly from Chin State, are aware of the Kaladan social movement and have provided them with moral support. These external supports are another resource for the activists in the Kaladan social movement.

Cultural resources

Cultural resources are intangible resources that movement’s members possess or have access to, such as technical know-how, educational skills and talents (Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016). These resources help the activists or movement’s members to choose the goals of the movement, and the actions that need to be taken. For example, language and educational skills can be used in lobbying, advocacy, negotiations and awareness raising in the society where the movement takes place; technical know-how helps the movement’s members to utilize any means of communication and media.

The language skills possessed by the Kaladan Movement members are extremely useful because the represented ethnic groups speak different languages. Moreover, as the Kaladan Movement is a transnational movement, other languages are required for the interactions among the movement members and during negotiations with their opponents. In Burma, the common language is Burmese, hence the Arakan and Chin normally communicate in Burmese. The Chin and the Mizo can understand at least 50% of each other’s language. However, Arakanese is quite different from Mizo and Chin, so English is required for the communication between the Mizo and Arakanese. As the leaders from these organizations speak and write English well, they have no problem interacting between different organization members within the alliance, and the community and people outside the movement, such as donors and the media. According to the Kaladan Movement, English and Burmese are mainly used for interaction within the alliance, with developers and the international community, and for publication and releasing statements. Within the individual organizations and for the interaction with local people, the preference is to use their respective ethnic languages, rather than Burmese, the national lingua franca.

As the Movement comprises educated and experienced leaders, they also possess IT and mass media skills which are highly advantageous. Two of the member organizations, CHRO and ARN, were formed by political exiles. They had the opportunity to pursue their further studies in a second country, such as India and Thailand, or a third country where some resettled, like Canada, USA and Australia. Leaders of ZIF have an Indian educational background. Since the beginning of the alliance, the Kaladan Movement created a web page in order to voice their opinions, standpoints and reports on the Project. The web page[11] collects all information and activities related to the Project and the Movement. According to the Movement, they do not get any help from others; they run the website by themselves. Besides the collective Kaladan Movement website, each individual organization also has their own website[12] and social media page, such as Facebook. The web and social media pages aim to raise the local people's voice along with the Movement's members' voice, so they will be heard by the developers. This strategy is fruitful to not only connect with the local people, but also with the developers and other civil society organizations. As the Movement member organizations are based in different locations, their most used communication channels are email and Skype. Letters are sent through email, and meetings are mostly organized via Skype.

Not only are all the organization leaders highly educated, some leaders also have international experience, which helps them to lobby and do advocacy work. While they have their own mass media channel for advocacy and awareness raising, they also use mainstream and local media for interviews and press conferences in order to spread their concerns to a larger audience. This method is effective to find new partners and support groups, and develop better ideas and strategies to deal with high level officials from the Indian and Burmese government, as well as the contractors. Consequently, these means give the activists opportunities to partner with local people, and community-based and non-government organizations, who provide them with technical and financial support.

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11. The Kaladan Movement's website is www.kaladanmovement.com
12. CHRO's website is https://www.chro.ca and ZIF's website is http://zoindigenous.blogspot.com. ARN's website has been inactive due to hosting problems.

Organizational resources

Organizational resources consist of international and national social organizations that are specifically created for the social movement, or outside organizations that the social movement can approach for material help and technical support.

The Kaladan Movement has many partner organizations at the international, national and local level. Some organizations give financial support, while other organizations give technical support and cooperate in their activities. For instance, the Kaladan Movement and the individual organizations receive funding from several international funding agencies, which will be detailed in the following section. The Kaladan Movement uses some of the local community members, and journalists from partner media organizations to collect data from the field. In 2015, the CHRO worked with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to raise awareness on forced labor in the country.

The alliance of the Kaladan Movement was specifically formed by the local activists to bring their voices together, mitigate conflicts of interests, and overcome the challenges they face regarding to the Kaladan Project. All member organizations agreed that working together has been a beneficial move for the Kaladan social movement. They gain advantage from sharing material resources, because the size of the organizations and their capacities are different. For instance, CHRO has a lot more funding and human resources, compared to the other organizations. As they come from diverse backgrounds with different experiences, they can also help each other in developing new ideas and tactics to confront the government and developers, and find solutions to the structural barriers. Ting Oh said,

> Our network eases the communication with all the stakeholders, media and donors. New and stronger ideas are developed faster. This could have not been possible by working as an individual organization, to know all the issues everywhere.

In a similar way Lian Bawi Thang explained,

> It was not possible to reach out to the Indian side. We gain advantage because ZIF is with us from India, especially when it comes to access to information. At the same time, the participation of ARN is very effective to reach out to the Arakan people. It also solves our language barriers when communicating with the local residents.

One of the challenges the activists face in the Movement is access to information as they are seeking transparency. The 2008 Framework Agreement between Burma and India was initially unpublished, and all the documents related to the implementation were not made public. According to the activists, it was not possible to get information and documents about the Project in Burma. Most of the important documents related to the Project were handled by the Indian government and contractors, whereas the Burmese laws do not facilitate access to information for such documents. As an Indian based local NGO, ZIF could push the authorities to release some documents relating to the Project, because India enacted the Rights to Information (RTI) Act in 2005, which guarantees access to information in state institutions for citizens. Despite some limitations, the participation of ZIF has been a gateway for getting information from India. Making use of the diverse political situations is a unique tactic of the Kaladan Movement, alongside the strengthening of their voices and activities. The leader of ZIF, Lalremruata, said,

> RTI is a progressive law. We tried our best and got information to some extent. But there are still many limitations—like defense and security issues—because of hierarchy. As this is the central project, we tried to get information with the help of other organizations, like The Other Media, based in New Delhi.

The alliance also helps the Movement's members to mitigate conflicts of interest. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Arakan people have different perceptions about the Project than other ethnic groups, due to their economic and infrastructural differences. This has led to opposing preferences for the goals of the movement. Ting Oh, for instance, explained that ARN's initial aim in 2009 was to halt the Project because they could not see any benefits from the Project for the Arakan people. At that time, ARN was a resistant movement. Meanwhile, CHRO and ZIF wanted the Project to proceed on the condition that the developers take full social responsibility during the implementation. As the alliance emerged, ARN compromised their stand and joined the non-resistant movement. Hence, all the movement members agreed with the model of the non-resistant movement.

Human resources

Human resources in a social movement is the manpower of the movement, the individual skills of the members, the leadership style, and the people involved. As the Kaladan Movement comprises different civil society groups, the human resources or manpower possessed by each organization varies. This can be seen as one of the weaknesses of the movement, as the unequal human resources and size of the organizations could create a hierarchy among member organizations, which could threaten the survival of the alliance. The Kaladan Movement is a non-binding and non-institutionalized alliance group, without proper rules and regulations. The leadership is based on mutual understanding, rooted in their similar interests and goals. This situation could be one of the reasons why the alliance is not as active as before.

ZIF has the least formal human resources, and operates with only five office staff members. According to the director, ZIF is an indigenous organization for all Zo people. There is no limitation on membership or work scope. Although small in number, the individual capacity of each staff member is high as they have lived in developed countries before. ARN has more human resources and partner organizations compared to ZIF, with five to ten office employees. However, for security reasons, ARN members keep a low profile in the border town where they are located. Their leadership style is similar to ZIF, and they also have free and open membership. CHRO is equipped with the most human resources among the three organizations. Founded in 1991, CHRO have many educated and experienced employees. The head office is located in Yangon, and the sub-offices are located in Kalay, Hakha, Thantlang Falam, Tedim and Matupi Township. Their leadership style is well structured with different levels of administration and a management board. The departments are divided based on their focus and the projects they manage. At the time of writing, CHRO has more than 40 employees. Generally, the employees at CHRO are paid competitive wages based on current wages within NGOs in Burma. Being a human rights organization, almost all the members possess human rights knowledge and education, which enhances their work in the human rights field and social movement.

Material resources

Material resources include monetary resources, property, office space, equipment and supplies. Besides this, the current availability of the internet is a huge advantage for contemporary social movements. The vast majority of the people, even in underdeveloped countries, now have access to the internet which enormously eases communication and the spreading of information. This is also indirectly related with the political and economic conditions of a country. Before 2010, the general public had limited access to mobile phones and internet, which had huge impacts on the activists' ability to reach the general public in order to spread awareness and lobby.

As mentioned earlier, the Kaladan Movement's major communication channels are email and Skype; the material needs for this, such as computers and phones, are readily available among the activists. As all three organizations are now based in urban areas, with varying levels of political freedom though, they have proper office equipment facilities and access to basic infrastructure. Nevertheless, in some circumstances, the use of mass media is not always successful to reach people in rural areas, for example in Paletwa Township where communication and transport facilities are still underdeveloped.

Also, monetary resources are important to operate the movement. Normally these are acquired from outside sources, such as international donors and local community. The Kaladan Movement is funded by the Burma Relief Center (BRC). The funds are granted solely to support the social movement and have a specified time span. Apart from this, there are several partner organizations of the Kaladan Movement, and each individual organization has their own means of raising funds. Until recently, the ARN was funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF). Now they are funded by NGOs and local community-based organizations, based on the projects they handle. ZIF raises funds in a similar way from the local community. CHRO gets financial support from international organizations, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Society Foundation, United Nations Voluntary Fund, The Netherlands Center for Indigenous Peoples, Asia Indigenous People Pact and from several community-based organizations (CHRO, n.d.). Table 6.2 shows how the Kaladan Movement mobilizes and utilizes available resources to reach positive outcomes.

Table 6.2 Resource Mobilization of the Kaladan Movement
Source: Author (adapted from McCarthy & Edwards, 2004)

Resources	Mobilization
Moral Resources	Recognition from the Indian and Burmese government Hosting book launch Recognition from the international community Public meetings and conferences
Cultural Resources	Language skills – English, Burmese, Lai, Arakanese, Mizo IT skills – Internet browsing, Email, Skype for meetings and work Other skills – Communication, networking, advocacy, lobby
Organizational Resources	Partnering with international, national and local organizations Creating an Alliance – Kaladan Movement Benefits from the Alliance – developing group ideas, make use of India's RTI
Human Resources	Manpower Individual ability Unequal manpower for collective strength (Unequal manpower among organizations is utilized as opportunity to form strengthening alliances)
Material Resources	Funding from international donors Funding from local contributors Physical technology such as computers, mobile phones Urban infrastructure

Identifying the outcomes of the movement

In the study of social movements, success or failure is difficult to measure for both resistant and non-resistant movements, because the outcomes are sometimes indefinite. For instance, resistant movements like the Myitsone dam (Hkawn Ja Aung, 2014), Kaeng Sueng Ten dam (Kirchherr, 2018), and Kaa Lone Htar village movement (Middleton & Zaw Aung, 2016), aimed to halt the project. Scholars studying these movements indicated the success of these movements when they successfully could suspend the respective project. Nevertheless, the question can be asked what will happen if these projects are resumed, because suspension does not mean halting or abolishing the project. In the case of non-resistant movements, it is even more difficult to measure the outcomes because this form of movement has complex goals compared to resistant ones. Demands are made by the activists based on the potential consequences of the social events or issues they are concerned about.

In the case of the Kaladan social movement, the activists rather aim to shape the nature of the implementation. While they identify the negative impacts of the Project, they also recognize the potential benefits for the local people. Hence, indicators of success are assessed in terms of changes developers make during the implementation in direct or indirect response to the movement. The outcomes of the movement are analyzed through the number and type of changes the movement has succeeded to obtain during the implementation process, and to what extent the activists can convince the developers to take up responsibility. The following sections will examine the actions taken to get favorable changes, while also incurring unfavorable changes.

Favorable outcomes

Chapter 5 discussed how the Framework Agreement between Burmese and Indian governments did not include procedures for an Environmental Impact Assessment in Burma, because the government did not have any mandatory legal procedures for such activities. The activists claimed that failing to conduct an EIA/SIA was a violation to Burma's commitment for responsible investment in the country. In response to the activists' demand, the Burmese government promised to conduct an EIA in Burma in 2012 (Cherry Thein, 2012). In 2016 the EIA was finally conducted by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, and the report was published in April 2017. The media and activists claim that this assessment is the result of the Kaladan social movement. Regardless how it was conducted, and how much satisfaction the activists got from the result of the assessment, it is one of the positive outcomes of the social movement as they were able to push the developers to carry out such activities.

Another big change in the implementation was the shortening of the river route in phase II of the Project. As per the initial plan, the inland waterway would go all the way up to Kaletwa, which is about 50 kilometers from Paletwa (Refer Figure 1.2). Later, the route was shortened to stop in Paletwa. According to the local activists, the river between Kaletwa and Paletwa is quite shallow compared to downstream of Paletwa. Hence, heavier river dredging would have been needed, which would have caused more social and environmental impacts, and the destruction of cultural heritage. According to the local people, the rocks and stones along the Kaladan river, especially those between Kaletwa and Paletwa, have a valuable historical background:

> We want to minimize the environmental and social impacts. That's why we push them to shorten the river road up to Paletwa. We can say this is one of our achievements.

Another big achievement was the compensation for the affected local people. The 2008 Framework Agreement did not include any procedure to give compensations to the affected people. Activists claim that, initially, none of the impacted local people in Arakan and Chin State were compensated for losing their land and livelihood. Meanwhile, India did provide compensation to the affected villagers for the road construction in Mizoram. When the Kaladan social movement realized it was unlikely that the local people in Burma would get any compensation for losing their housing land and farming, they lobbied the government to meet the requirement to carry out the Project responsibly. Their lobbying had a positive result, because the Burmese government took some action to compensate the villagers impacted by the road construction. At the time of writing, two-thirds of the villagers have been compensated, divided into three parts. However, there still remain some controversies between the developers and the local impacted people, such as the terms of payment and the amount of compensation.

Building awareness about the Project's nature, orientation and intention, and the potential impacts is also one of the major activities of the Kaladan Movement. In the initial stage of implementation, the activists were concerned that the local people were not aware of the goal of the Project and who implemented it. This lack of knowledge made the local people vulnerable, as there were heightened risks that the developers would undermine their interests. Apart from this, knowledge of basic human rights is of crucial importance for the local people to speak up against the developers. It has helped them defend their rights, especially in the case of land confiscation and the threatening of their livelihoods.

Another favorable outcome are the benefits from allying with and creating understanding among inter-ethnic organizations. Merging into a bigger organization facilitates the mobilization of resources, therefore, raising the potential for success. Their ability of networking and organizing is the key to sustain their solidarity and strengthen the individual organizations. Furthermore, there is better understanding among the members' organizations, and there is a "unity in diversity". In some cases, the developers are hesitant to admit that the changes made during the implementation process were the consequences of the Kaladan social movement. However, activists insist that the social movement has had obvious impacts on the implementation. CHRO Deputy Director said:

> The government or the developers may not claim these changes are the outcome of our Movement. But one obvious thing is that we can push the developers to be aware of what they should know, and how they should implement it. Otherwise, they would implement it in whatever way they want, and the situation might have been very different.

Unfavorable outcomes

Despite some achievements, the movement actors have also encountered several challenges and limitations that have hindered the success of the Kaladan social movement. For instance, the Kaladan Movement has difficulties to sustain its strong solidarity which has almost led to the end of the alliance. As a consequence, the member organizations are now working individually. The unequal organizational size and financial conditions are the weaknesses of the Movement. CHRO can expand their activities in many fields, including the monitoring of the Project implementation, and the setting-up of more offices in different townships in Chin State. Meanwhile, the growth rate of both ARN and ZIF remains slow. As a result, the alliance does not function as efficiently as it did before 2017.

Besides this, GDI has ceased their activities related to the Project for some years now. The GDI leader, Salai Isaac Khen, told me about their current stand on the Project:

> There is no need to negotiate for us anymore, because the Project is on the right track. They have already shortened the dredging

> plan and started road construction. When the construction of the road started, the impacted people were given a proper compensation for their loss. When I became a Minister, I myself carried out the compensation process. So, it is very satisfactory.

This statement indicates that GDI assumes that the Kaladan social movement has been successful because they have achieved what they demanded for, so there is no need to continue. Their achievements are visible through the changes that have been made to the Project implementation. However, it can be asked if the Project implementation is really on the right track? Is it really satisfactory for the local people? For the other member organizations, the implementation is not fully satisfactory because of the lack of responsibility in the EIA procedures, and the lack of public consultation.

The stand of GDI, on the other hand, can be questioned because Salai Isaac Khen, whom I interviewed on behalf of GDI and who was the Executive Director until 2015, was appointed by the NLD government as the Chin State Municipal Minister in 2016. He resigned from his ministerial post in 2018, and returned to GDI as a political analyst. The question can be asked if GDI's standpoint on the Kaladan social movement has changed because its leader has become a part of the government? Without asking this question directly to him, Salai Isaac Khen told me that he has never contradicted himself about his personal stand on the Kaladan Project, even after becoming part of the government. However, contrary to his statement, this study has revealed in the previous chapter that the compensation given for land confiscation to the local people has created problems and was not considered as fully satisfactory.

In Meeletwa, the nearest village to Paletwa and about 300 meters from the transshipment station, there are 11 households that will be displaced and have already been compensated. The village is situated on a very narrow hill between the Kaladan river and the new road (see Figure 5.1). In the north, a small stream tributary forms the border between Meeletwa and Arakan village. The 11 displaced households say there is no place to relocate because the village is too small, and is surrounded by rivers and a road. According to them, opposite their village, on the other side of the road, there is a government forest reserve where no one is allowed to settle. One displaced villager said,

> They promised us that they would give us new land to rebuild our houses, but they have not given anything until now. If they do not give us land, where can we stay? It's a big problem for us. There is no place to rebuild our house in our village.

In August 2018, there has already been a preliminary clearance for the road construction. The villagers were told to move before the road construction would resume after the monsoon. However, the villagers have no idea where to move. According to the village head, they collectively submitted an application for a new relocation site, but they have not received any response from the General Administration of the Burmese government.

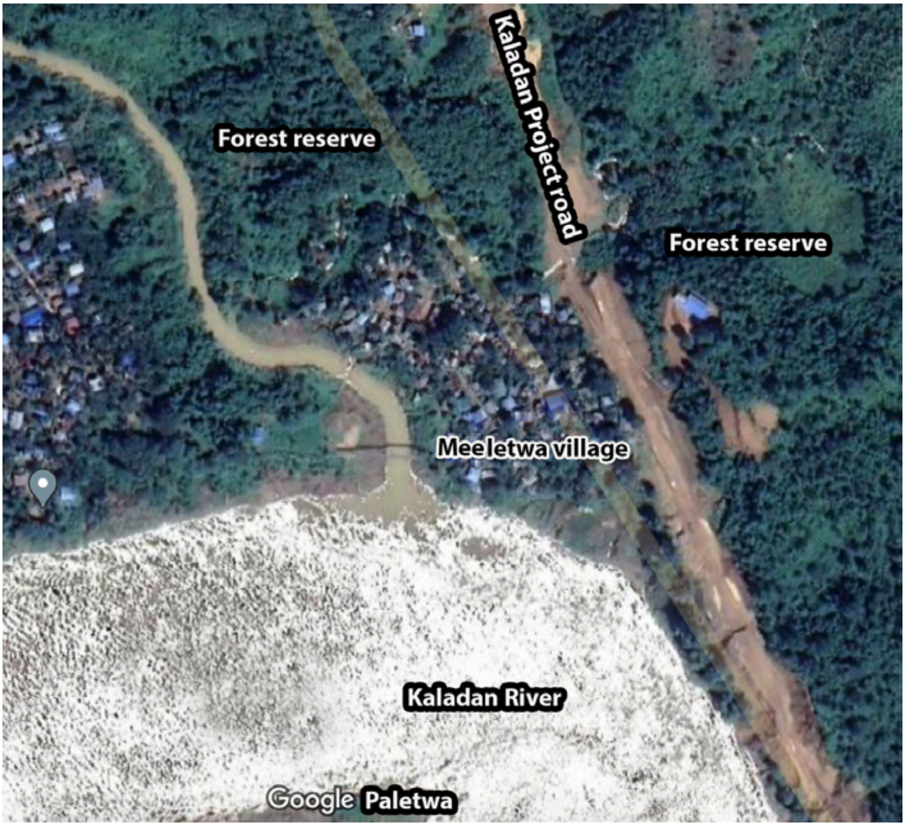

Figure 6.1 Meeletwa Village *Source: Google (n.d.)*

Even though the EIA/SIA was one of the favorable outcomes of the Kaladan Movement, the activists are not fully satisfied because of the methods used during the assessment. The Indian government hired the Yangon based organization My Asia for the assessment. However, activists have raised questions about the independence and background of My Asia. They point out that the firm leaders are said to have a Burmese military background, and faced several complaints from other projects they handled in other regions. The result of the assessment is also highly criticized due to the lack of acknowledgement of environmental challenges related to cultural and national heritage, and the lack of public participation. The advocacy coordinator of CHRO, M. Howard, said,

> I think there is only one title in the EIA report on social problems and social issues, and there is one sentence saying that there are no social issues, which contradicts what we have previously documented with ARN and ZIF. They say they have interviewed local CSOs and NGOs, but I don't think so. In fact, we haven't been contacted, and neither have ARN nor ZIF.

Mr. Howard also insisted that "not enough" assessments have been done as My Asia only conducted the assessment on the Kaladan river. No impact assessments have been conducted yet at the road construction sites, which have caused several land confiscations.

7

CONCLUSION

Introduction

As this study has combined the research of policy reviews and social movements, it covers both the policy behind and civil society's response to the Kaladan Project. More specifically, the policy and strategic endeavors behind the Project have been examined, and how activists deal with the issues related to the protection of the local people's interests. This concluding chapter will delve into a theoretical analysis of the findings, and their contribution to social science studies. To end, the policy implementations and recommendations for future studies will be outlined.

Theoretical discussion of the findings

Regional integration

Regional integration is typically established between two or more states with institutionalized agreements and can be established both economically and politically (Heinonen, 2006). Economic integration involves relaxing or decreasing tariff barriers in order to ease the flow of goods between two countries, which brings mutual benefits. Political integration is when two states form a framework agreement that allows the movement of people under certain rules and regulations (Heinonen, 2006). Some scholars differentiate "formal" integration from "informal" integration. Wallace (1990) noted that formal integration takes place through establishing proper institutions resulting from the agreements, including policies and legislations. On the other hand, informal integration is a non-binding integration without the interference of the authorities (Wallace, 1990). This type of integration can happen around the borderlands between two states. The movement of people in such an area mostly happens through non-legalized or undocumented cross-border activities.

Compared to other cases of regional integration, India's version of regional integration is quite general. For instance, China's regional integration, as a part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is mostly related to energy security (Jing Zhang, 2019; Xunpeng & Lixia, 2019). To be specific, China's major investments in Burma are in the energy sector, for example, the Myitsone dam project in Kachin State, and the Kyaukphyu Deep Seaport project in Arakan State. The temporarily suspended Myitsone project was expected to produce 6000 MW of electricity, of which 90% was to go to China (Tao, cited in Hkawn Ja Aung, 2014). While the Kyaukphyu Deep Seaport aims to facilitate oil and gas imported from the Middle East and other regions to China, the project package also includes extracting gas in Arakan State. Hence, China's recent integration with Burma goes together with the aim to secure energy supplies.

India's attempt to pursue regional integration with Burma and Southeast Asia, on the other hand, can be widely understood from a mixture of economic, political, and national security objectives. More specifically, the implementation of the Kaladan Project can be considered as a part of India's economic and national security goals, which are also interrelated. In terms of its economic goals, India expects to ease the distance between mainland India and its NER as the economy of the isolated NER heavily depends on goods supplied from mainland India, while India extracts several natural resources in the NER. In terms of its security, India expects to be more effective in addressing insurgencies in the NER through avoiding China's threats to the Chicken's Neck, and through a better transport linkage. Besides this, prioritizing Burma serves both economic and political purposes as India has been seeking an open economic model and needed new partners in Southeast Asia following the fading relations with the USSR in the early 1990s.

India also aims to counterbalance China's influence in the region. However, the attempt to integrate has stirred up the power competition between the two countries, which has existed since the Cold War era. While India took off for its integration with Burma and South-East Asia, China was embarking at the same time on an even bigger investment project in the region. China's hijack of India's gas purchase plan in Arakan State is an obvious example of India's integration being directly affected by China's influence on Burma.

India's approach to integrate with Burma is quite different from China's "dual track" approach, which is considered as the key to China's continuous influence over Burma, both politically and economically. India has little chance to adopt such an approach, mainly due to its ethnic armed conflicts which haves also spread onto Burmese territory. On the other hand, India's inability to adopt the "dual track" is an opportunity for Burma as the country seeks to balance the influence from the two superpowers while striving for political transition. As the competition keeps going and Indian officials are fully aware of China's level of influence in the region, the question of what strategies and tactics will be used by India to offset the influence of China is interesting to ask for further studies.

Theoretically, India's regional integration can be categorized under Niekerk's (2005) geographic scope and sustentative coverage approach. These two approaches refer to a kind of integration that emerges through state involvement in the integration plan in areas such as trade, labor and mobility, as well as macro policies (Niekerk, 2005). Bhattacharjee (2016) notes that India's AEP focuses on regional integration along with economic reforms through adopting the geographical proximity approach of regional and sub-regional cooperation in terms of free trade agreements. Since the development of the AEP, India has been seeking formal relations with its neighboring countries and the region through joining regional organizations.

India is an active member in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), which used to be known as BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Cooperation). This grouping aims to enhance non-binding cooperation among the member countries in many sectors. India has also joined the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation which comprises six countries through which the Ganga and Mekong rivers flow (Thongkholal, 2015). This organization aims to provide cooperation among member countries in four major sectors – education, transportation, culture and tourism. In 2003, India and ASEAN member countries agreed to develop the ASEAN-India Framework Agreement, with the formal agreement signed in 2009. These moves from India to integrate with countries in the region, are part of their AEP (Thongkholal, 2015).

Even though India's integration emerged from a one-sided interest, Burma has also gained opportunities from this integration. Burma was suffering from the isolation policy of the West and the domination of China, so creating a regional partnership was seen as a way to get relief of such burdens. For Burma, entry into ASEAN and integration with the biggest democratic country was an opportunity to achieve foreign and economic policy reforms. The integration has resulted in promoting diplomatic relationships and cooperation in many sectors between Burma and India.

Therefore, the one-sided attempt of regional integration has become an opportunity for another party.

In theory, regional integration ostensibly aims to bring economic development and prosperity to citizens. The Indian government claims that the new official border will look exactly like borders in other areas, giving local people the hope that the area will be utilized as an economic corridor, which will enhance the livelihoods of the people. Meanwhile, the Chin State government is looking forward to the Kaladan Project implementation. Pu Zo Bawi, speaker of the Chin State Parliament, said that when the project is implemented, Chin State will enjoy free movement of goods and trade, enabling the trade of different goods with India (Sang, 2017). Nevertheless, there has been little evidence of the benefits and opportunities brought by the Project to the local community. The Project implementation has not created job opportunities for the local community as it should, because the contractors brought several Indian workers for construction. Where local workers have been employed, the wage payments were not equal between the Indian and Burmese workers. Furthermore, the local community has suffered from social and environmental impacts, as stated in the previous chapters.

Meanwhile, some local people have no idea about the potential outcomes of the Project for them. During my visit to Meeletwa village, the villagers said they expect nothing else than a new transport link. They have no idea what this Project might bring. From the community leaders' points of view, there are positive and negative expectations. Economic and job opportunities, and infrastructure development are among the positive expectations; while migration, armed conflicts and social problems are their long-term concerns. Therefore, if the Project does not fulfil its promises and expectations, it would not be wrong to argue that India's regional integration is creating the opposite effect to the one intended.

Social movement, resource mobilization and political opportunity

Social movements are formed when people in society feel insecure due to external threats. Traditionally, many movements have originated from the aggrieved community, which gathers human resources among the movement participants in order to initiate the movement (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The Kaladan social movement emerged in defense of local people's rights, and to prevent negative impacts of the Project. The social movement members are divided according to their origins: some members have a close relationship with the people in the Project implementation area because it is their birth place; and some members originate from a different area, but belong to the same ethnic group. In other words, while the activists of the Kaladan social movement are not directly impacted by the Project implementation, they represent the impacted people because they belong to the same community and work with the affected people. Therefore, from this study it can be noted that a social movement sometimes originates from the shared value of empathy among the community members.

Social movement theorists note that having the right choice of goals, tactics and strategies are important in order to succeed (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The reasons for the Kaladan social movement to counteract the implementation of the Project are the lack of transparency, the marginalization of local people in the decision-making process, and the impacts on the local people. However, the activists also acknowledge the potential benefits of the Project as it aims to bring new integration in a remote region. This optimism, heightened by the expectation of economic benefits, has determined the choice to be a non-resistant movement. If the activists did not foresee any benefits for the local people, and if the negative impacts of the Project were thought to be as severe as other projects like China's Myitsone dam in Kachin State, the Kaladan social movement could have chosen to advocate for the halt of the Project. Hence, it can be noted that the choice whether to resist or not depends on the benefits, impacts and outcomes of the project in question.

The tactics and strategies of the movement reflect the activists' choices about the actions and location of the movement. McCarthy and Zald (1977) noted that tactical choices are based on the precondition of a relationship between activists and their opponents (such as the state), and the previous results and ideology of the movement. Kaladan social movement activists have used different tactics, based on available resources, to influence their opponents or developers. For the Kaladan Movement, forming an alliance was the best tactic to maximize the movement's strength. As the diverse ethnic groups that the organizations represent have different practices and beliefs, their opinions and expectations about the Kaladan Project are also different. Therefore, it is important to have a common voice for all ethnic groups that host the Project implementation. Hence, the alliance enables the Kaladan Movement to decide what the right strategic and tactical choices are. However, the instability of the alliance in later years has become one of the weaknesses of the Kaladan Movement. This study has found that financial problems are the main factor that has weakened the alliance. The case of the Kaladan Movement therefore indicates that the choices of a social movement depend on resources available to activists, as lack of resources can weaken the movement.

Resource mobilization is one of the key functions or processes that determines the success or failure of the movement (Phongpaichit, 2002). Activists mobilize resources that enhance the movement, not only from the inside, but also from the outside. McCarthy and Zald (1977) argued that even though only some movements might acquire external support, such external factors are usually central to the analytical tool that helps to review the outcome of the movement. Jenkins (1983) argues that resource mobilization is a process in which a group of people from a social movement "secure collective control over the resources needed for collective action" (p. 532). The activists' ability to mobilize outside resources and to utilize the resources available to the Kaladan social movement are the keys to achieve their goals. Hence, while a social movement needs relevant choices of tactics and strategies, adequate resource mobilization is essential in order for the movement to succeed.

As McCarthy and Zald (1977) noted, society facilitates social movements by providing infrastructure that activists can utilize to bargain with the opponents. Such infrastructure comprises facilities or resources like "communication, media, expenses, levels of affluences, degree of access to institutional centers, preexisting networks and occupational structure and growth" (p. 1221). The Kaladan Movement carried out fieldwork to survey local people's opinions and investigate the immediate impacts of the Project implementation. The result was aimed to create awareness among the developers and international community via social and printed media. The evidence has also been used to prove that the developers are required to take responsibility for the impacts on the local people living along the implementation area.

Also, political opportunity plays an important role because it determines the movement's available resources and choices. Scholars noted that different political situations provide different political opportunities which shape the social movements (Salem Press, 2011). In other words, political opportunity creates a chance for social movements to bring their agenda forward. The inter-relations between social movements, resource mobilization and political opportunity give a comprehensive understanding of social movements. The Burmese political transition and reforms have become an opportunity for the Kaladan social movement. Examples are the recent reforms leading to the emergence of civil society, and the freedom of movement and expression, which has provided the activists with more options about the form of the movement, its tactics and goals. However, this study argues that the Burmese political reforms do not fully facilitate social movements, as the Burmese government still denies the right to information, and journalists and activists are not yet enjoying full freedom of expression. Moreover, ANR's hesitancy to move their office to Burma is mainly due to the ongoing communal crisis and armed conflicts in Arakan State.

Theorists have also noted that the concept of political opportunity does not mean the political situation fully helps a social movement, because the political situation itself can be a hindrance (Meyer et al., 2002). The Kaladan social movement in the Burmese context enables the theoretical understanding that the political opportunity's paradoxical feature of being both a facilitator and constraint, can happen in a situation of political transition. While the political transition gave the movement opportunities, it is yet to provide full freedom. In other words, during a political transition only limited opportunities are provided. On the other hand, if there is no political transition, then this paradoxical feature of political opportunity will not be manifested. For instance, during the Burmese military regime, activists in Burma had no chance to exercise their rights, therefore, any political opportunity that would arise would not be a facilitator. If Burma would have gone through a successful political reform and built up strong institutions, then any political opportunity would be a facilitator, and not a constraint.

Another point made in this study was that even though the Kaladan social movement has limited human resources, the skills vested in the available human resources and their ability to mobilize outside resources, such as the use of social media, financial assistance from international organizations, community support and acknowledgement of the developers, are central to the positive outcomes of the movement. Hence, this study argues that amid many structural challenges caused by the ongoing unstable political condition in Burma, the Kaladan social movement has become a symbol for non-resistant movements in Burma and contemporary social movement studies. The Kaladan social movement has transformed the nature of the Kaladan Project implementation with the help of given and mobilized resources, and their capacity.

Policy implications and recommendations

As this study has revealed several positive and negative outcomes, this section will provide the overall research weakness, policy implications, recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

Redefining aid or investment

Chapter 4 has detailed the different perceptions of the local people about the Kaladan Project, and how the Indian government has made different presentations for different groups of people. This is why it is necessary to clearly define what aid or investment means in the context of the Kaladan

Project. The Indian government depicts the Project as aid or a financial grant given to the Burmese government, a claim that contradicts the perceptions of the activists and local people from both India and Burma. In this case, there may not be an absolute right or wrong answer because it is a government-to-government project with potential benefits for both countries. However, if the Project is solely seen as aid, then the question is why only India directly handles the Project implementation and hires only Indian companies for the major work? Therefore, future studies could focus on an in-depth study on the idea behind international aid, and theoretically redefine both investment and aid. As this is a transnational Project, it has specific characteristics, unlike other state-led development projects and investments in Burma.

Policy reforms

Even though the movement has achieved many outcomes under Burma's democratic transition, there are still requirements for policy reforms in order to make state-led development projects more responsible, as well as to guarantee the freedom of movement. This is because the existing legal provisions still do not enforce full responsibility of the developers. For instance, the Indian government hired My Asia Consulting Company to conduct the Environmental Impacts Assessment on the Kaladan river. There are complaints from civil society organizations, not only about the results and the process, but also about the company's background. Usually, an EIA aims to evaluate the potential negative impacts of the implementation, and the result should be used to decide whether to carry out the implementation or not. The company conducted an EIA in 2016, and published the result in April 2017. It was conducted without public participation and does not acknowledge any negative impacts, which contradicts the local people's experiences as well as the activists' claims. Therefore, the Kaladan Movement group does not acknowledge the EIA's result. Hence, the policy and legislations related to EIA procedures should be reinforced, so that it guarantees comprehensive responsibility.

At the macro level, policies related to local people's rights, civil society movements and freedom of expression still need to be improved. Rights' groups still do not get formal acknowledgement by the Burmese government for activities related to the marginalized groups and indigenous people's rights. Meanwhile, many state-led development projects and investments have caused intense concerns for the local people, as they are carried out without transparency and public participation. When the concerns for such projects and investments are raised by the people or activists, the actions taken are slow and sometimes there is negligence from the developers and the state. In the case of the Kaladan Project, a considerable amount of information related to policies and the implementation has still not been published. This has made the people confused about the nature of the Project implementation and its intentions, and also indicates the slow progress of the Burmese democratic transition. Therefore, the Burmese government should take a step forward in the reformation of legislation and enforcement policies to guarantee transparency in development projects and investments, freedom of movement, right to information, and the protection of marginalized and indigenous groups.

Taking responsibility for the impacts and follow-up actions

Having identified the immediate and long-term potential impacts, there still are certain actions that both the state and civil society should take. First of all, the compensation given to the affected villagers in Paletwa Township have generated many controversies among the villagers, and between the government and the villagers. The major complaints to the government are the terms of payment, whereas controversies among the villagers are about land ownership. Due to the armed conflicts, many villagers impacted by the Kaladan Project have left their homes. During my fieldwork in 2018, Meeletwa villagers were still in need of help to relocate, and in 2020 about 100 houses in the village have been burned down by unconfirmed groups[13] ("100 Houses Burned," 2020). Therefore, the government should take responsibility for those who are displaced, and conduct proper follow-up actions in order to solve the land confiscation problems, and make proper ground surveys before they give compensations to the villagers who still need to be compensated.

Second, one of the major concerns is migration. This concern is raised by all the ethnic groups that host the Project implementation because they believe that the arrival of irregular migrants in the new corridor could be a societal threat for the host community. It is important that the Indian and Burmese governments anticipate by cooperating at the macro to micro level to make a proper policy related to migration control and the upcoming corridor. Nevertheless, an unyielding policy could also contradict the idea of integration and open markets which could in turn hinder development. Therefore, it is vital for both governments to cooperate equally in order to control the possible migration influx and make neutral policies.

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[13] Burmese media reported that on May 27, 2020, 100 houses in Meeletwa village were burned down during severe fights between the Arakan Army and Burmese army. Both sides accused each other for the arson ("100 Houses Burned," 2020).

Third, the implementation area currently experiences intense conflicts between the Arakan Army and Burmese military, which has burdened the local community, especially in Southern Chin State. The conflicts have escalated following the implementation of the Project, and has become a threat to the people's lives and the implementation itself. Militarization has increased in the area to counter the insurgent army because the Burmese government has committed themselves to provide security for the Kaladan Project personnel as per the Framework Agreement. The conflict has resulted in people losing their lives and leaving their homes, access to healthcare and other social services being blocked, and schools being closed. Moreover, the conflict is unlikely to end in the near future. Therefore, this study strongly urges that all stakeholders in this conflict should take their responsibility, including the Indian and Burmese government and Arakan Army, for the impacts of the conflict, while seeking peaceful solutions to the conflict through non-violent means in order to not only safeguard the local people's lives, but also to peacefully continue the Project implementation.

Finally, this study has revealed that the Kaladan social movement has more or less had positive outcomes. However, the diligence of those carrying out the movement is questionable. Having lasted one decade, the Project implementation is likely to take at least two more years due to the severe armed conflicts. As mentioned earlier, there are land confiscation issues to be followed up, and the Project developer and implementers should be pushed to take accountability and responsibility. The policy-making related to the Project operation after the implementation is also important to watch and follow up as it will directly impact the local community. Therefore, the Kaladan social movement actors should continue to work on their commitment to push the developers for a responsible implementation.

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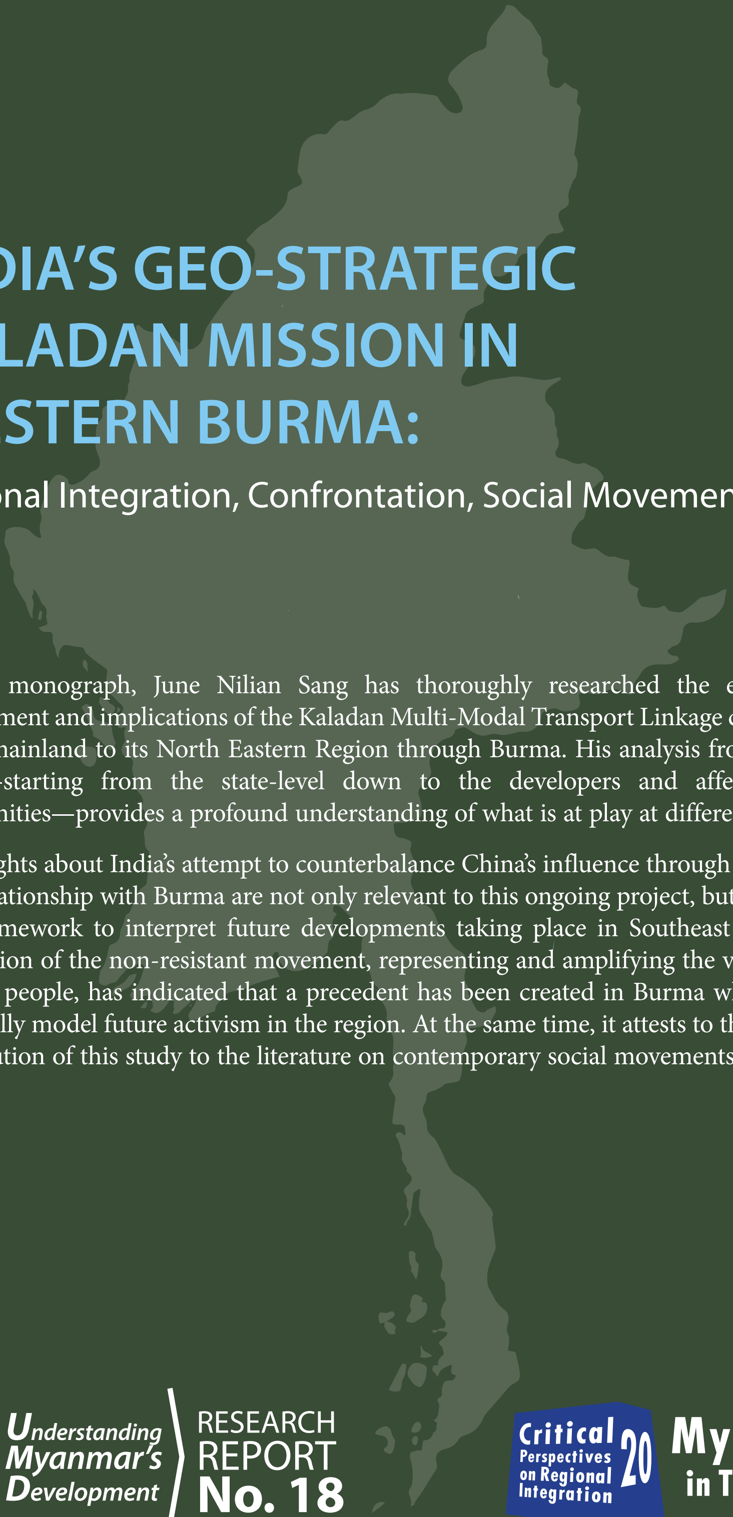

INDIA'S GEO-STRATEGIC KALADAN MISSION IN WESTERN BURMA:

Regional Integration, Confrontation, Social Movement

In this monograph, June Nilian Sang has thoroughly researched the emergence, development and implications of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Linkage connecting India's mainland to its North Eastern Region through Burma. His analysis from various angles—starting from the state-level down to the developers and affected local communities—provides a profound understanding of what is at play at different levels.

His insights about India's attempt to counterbalance China's influence through tightening their relationship with Burma are not only relevant to this ongoing project, but also serve as a framework to interpret future developments taking place in Southeast Asia. The exploration of the non-resistant movement, representing and amplifying the voice of the affected people, has indicated that a precedent has been created in Burma which could potentially model future activism in the region. At the same time, it attests to the valuable contribution of this study to the literature on contemporary social movements.

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Critical Perspectives on Regional Integration 20
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