

# **A Community Battles Drug Addiction**

**A Case Study of Bordumsa Anchal Samiti, Arunachal Pradesh**



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**Cover photo: An addict being treated at the de-addiction camp**

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## The Land and its People

### District Changlang

#### Location

Changlang district is one of the two southeastern most districts of Arunachal Pradesh having international border with Myanmar. The other district is Tirap. Changlang is located between Latitudes 26°40'N and 27°40'N and Longitudes 95°11'E and 97°11'E. It shares boundaries with Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Myanmar in the East, Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh in the south and Tinsukia district of Assam, in the west. It has an area of 4662 square kilometres. According to legend the name "Changlang" has its origin in the word "Changlangkan" which refers to a hill where a certain kind of poisonous herb was discovered which is used for poisoning fish in the river. Changlang became a district in its own right on 14 November 1987. Earlier it was part of the Tirap District.

#### Topography

Topographically Changlang is a hilly district with hills ranging from 200 to 4500 metres. However some parts of the district such as Miao, Diyun, Bordumsa and Kharsang circles and also some parts of Changlang, Jairampur, Vijoynangar, Nampong and Namtok circles may be described as plains. The district is crisscrossed by several rivers. The major rivers are Noa-Dihing, Namchik and Tirap. Other rivers are Namphuk, Dapha, Namphai, Tissu, Tarit, Tara, Tikeng and Tiging. Most of the rivers originate in the hills and come down to meet the Burhi-Dihing river. The rivers can become turbulent during the monsoons and cause damage to agricultural fields in the area but at the same time increases the fertility of the soil.



Map of Arunachal Pradesh

 Changlang district

## People

Like most of Arunachal Pradesh, Changlang is sparsely populated and mostly rural. Density of population is 32 per square kilometer. There are 362 villages, 3 statutory towns and 15 administrative circles. As per the Census of 2011 the total population of Changlang is 147951 out of which 77,289 are males and 70,662 are females. The decadal growth rate of the district has been 17.96%. Literacy rate is 61.90%.

Changlang is the home of primarily three tribes – Tangsas, Singphos and Tutsas. The Tangsa tribe in turn has several sub-tribes, namely, Muklom, Havi, Longchang, Mossang, Jugli, Kimsingh, Ronrang, Mungrey, Longphi, Longri, Ponthai, Sangwal, Tkhak, Yungkuk, Sakieng and Thamphang. They occupy the southern hills of the district along Indo-Myanmar border and Namchik basin. The Singphos occupy the foothills of the northern part of the district under Miao, Bordumsa and Diyun circles. The Tutsas live in the west part of the district under Changlang and Khimiyong circles. Other important tribes who have migrated to the district are

Noctes, Lisus and Deoris and also refugees like Chakmas and Hajongs. Apart from the tribal, significant number of non-tribal from different parts of India live in the district either as businessmen or as employees. The Bengalis form the most important non-tribal community in the district.

### **Economy**

The economy of the district primarily consists of agriculture and other allied activities. About 75% of the workforce is engaged in such activities. Due to the lack of flat plains the people living in the hills usually practice *Jhoom* or shifting cultivation. Productivity of such forms of agriculture is poor and therefore this does not satisfy more than three to four months of food requirement. The population therefore depends on food from forest areas. The people living in plains are relatively better off as they get plenty of rainfall and have good quality soil to cultivate throughout the year. The most important crops of the district are Arum, Tapioca, Sweet Potato and local spices and vegetables such as chilly, ginger, garlic, potato, pumpkin, gourd, brinjal etc. Tea is also grown, sometimes in small plots by individual owners. Tobacco, betel vine, oilseeds, spices etc are also grown. Opium is cultivated in Manmao and Khimiyong areas although it is illegal.

Changlang has lot of potential for industry, especially timber and tea, but industrial development has been hampered by poor infrastructure. There are some medium scale and small-scale industries.

## **Bordumsa Anchal Samiti**

### **Location**

Bordumsa Anchal Samiti (AS) is one of the two Anchal Samitis (AS) that comprise Bordumsa Sub-division of Changlang district. The other is Diyun. The domain of Bordumsa Anchal Samiti is coterminous with that of Bordumsa CD block while that of the Diyun with Diyun CD block.

Bordumsa CD block lies on the extreme north-western corner of Changlang district. On the north it is bounded by the Mahadevpur Tehsil of Lohit district and Diyun CD block of Changlang district, on the east by Miao block and Kharsang Tehsil, and on the south and west by the Margherita subdivision Tinsukia district of Assam.

Bordumsa is about 150 meters (492.12 feet) above the sea level. It is one of the places where the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh meet the plains of Assam. Topographically it is an area of somewhat undulated plains and has almost similar vegetation of Tinsukia district of Assam.

Bordumsa is also a location of international importance. It houses the Singpho Heritage Centre where each year in the month of February the members of Singpho community from different parts of Asia, including Burma and China assemble to celebrate their annual cultural festival called 'Singpho Manau Dance Festival.' Another point of tourist attraction of Bordumsa is the beautiful Buddhist monastery at Goju village, about 2 Km from Bordumsa town.

### **Communication**

Bordumsa is a small rural town. The town is the HQs of Bordumsa CD block and Bordumsa Sub-division. It is well communicated with the outer world by a well maintained road network, rail and air transport. The nearest long distance railway station of Bordumsa is Tinsukia in Assam (69 km) while the nearest passenger railway station is Digboi in Assam (35 km). Busses for Bordumsa are available both from Digboi town and Tinsukia Railway Station. Bordumsa is 146 km away from its nearest airport Mohanbari in Dibrugarh (Assam). There is also a weekly chopper service available at Miao to fly to Itanagar, the state capital. This is meant mainly for the officials of GoAP. The helipad is 32 km away from Bordumsa. Bordumsa lies about 100 km away from its district HQ Changlang via Digboi and about 400 km away from state capital at Itanagar via Dibrugarh. On this surface route to state HQ one has to cross the Brahmaputra on ferry and it takes about 10 hours to reach Itanagar from Bordumsa in a hired vehicle on this route. All villages under the Bordumsa CD block are connected to each other by a network of black topped roads and all season but un-metalled rural link roads (RLR).

To enter Bordumsa, a person who is not a bona fide resident of Arunachal Pradesh has to show Inner Line Permit (ILP) at the Bordumsa Gate. This is because Changlang district is an insurgency- prone area.

### **People of Bordumsa**

Bordumsa is a predominantly tribal habitat. In fact the name Bordumsa came from two words: 'Bor' and 'Dumsa'. While the former means 'Big', the later is the title of one of the clans of the Singpho tribe; the autochthones of Bordumsa. Members of Singpho community form the majority of the total population of the Anchal Samiti. The tribes and other communities that inhabit Bordumsa CD block include (i) Singpho, (ii) Khampti, (iii) Tangsa, (iv) Nocte, (v) Sonowal Kachari, (vi) Deoris, (vii) Ahom, (viii) Adibasi, (ix) Chakma and (x) Hajong.

The Singpho, Khampti, Tangsa and Nocte are the aboriginals of Arunachal Pradesh and are considered as Scheduled Tribes (ST) of the state. Originated from Mongolia, the Singphos are called the Kachin in Burma and the Jingpho in China. They speak the Singpho dialect of the Jingpho language. The Khamptis are a sub-group of the Shan tribe of Burma. The Tangsa and the Nocte are the two sub-group of the Naga tribe and are found both in India and Burma. The Sonowal Kachari, Deoris and Adibaasi who are treated as ST communities in their native state of Assam and Orissa respectively, have come here as migrants long back and have become permanent residents of Arunachal Pradesh. But here in Arunachal Pradesh they are not counted among the ST communities of the state. These communities along with the Ahoms who are also of Assamese origin are called 'migrant settlers' and are treated as 'others'. The members the Chakma and the Hajong have come from Bangladesh across the international border and are staying here as refugees and have no resident status.

There are 39 census villages and 43 census enumeration blocks in Bordumsa CD block. Of the 39 census villages 3 (Bijoypur-I, Bijoypur-II & Bijoypur-III) are outside the domain of PRI as these are hundred per cent refugee villages. These refugee settlements account for about 18.24% of the total population of the CD block in Census 2011.

**Table 1: Population of Bordumsa, 2001 and 2011**

Census Year	Total Persons	Total Males	Total females	Sex Ratio
2001	25369	13231	12138	917
2011	28880	14857	14023	944
Rate of growth	+13.84%	+12.29%	+15.53%	+27

Source: Member Secretary of Bordumsa AS and Bordumsa SDO Office

Table 1 shows that the decadal (2001-2011) growth of population of Bordumsa is only 13.84% which is much lower than that of the district of Changlang (17.96%) as a whole. This low rate of growth of population is possibly due to the low rate of fertility among the Singphos, the most populous community of the area, caused by the long tradition of opium addiction among them. However one positive aspect of Census 2011 findings is that the gap in the sex ratio has improved by 27 points. As per Census 2001, about 64.02% of the total population of the Bordumsa CD block was from the Scheduled Tribes of the state while the remaining 35.98% belonged to 'other' communities.

According to the local people whom the ISS study team met during field work, relation between various tribes as well as between tribes and non-tribal population is cordial. Being primarily a tribal society, the position of women is better than many other areas of India and according to the local people "girls attend school more than boys" and have greater sense of responsibility. All STs and 'other' communities of the CD block follow patriarchy but property is transferred to both male and female heirs.

### **Economy**

The livelihood of the local population revolves mostly around plantation and agriculture: tea plantation and cultivation of crops. The topography of the Anchal Samiti is in the main undulated plains, with a climate that is suitable for both paddy and tea plantation. In fact one of the reasons of Bordumsa being an important location in the district of Changlang is its tea plantations. Though no exact figures on the total area of tea plantation in the block is available, according to Wikipedia there are "more than hundreds of hectares of land under tea plantation" at Bordumsa. Tea plantation is the mainstay of the economy of the Anchal Samiti. Almost all Singpho households of the Anchal Samiti are small tea planters. The sizes of these domestic tea plantations vary from 10 acres to 1 acre or even less. These planters do not



process tea. They only grow it. For plucking of tea leaves and subsequent processing etc they lease out their tea plantations to large tea gardeners or to their agents. There are a few commercial tea estates at Bordumsa. One of these tea estates is owned by a local resident of Bordumsa and the rest belong to the Marwari entrepreneurs. A domestic tea plantation of 1 acre, after 3-4 year of sowing fetches about Rs 15,000/year as lease fee.

No data on cropping pattern for Bordumsa CD block was available. However according to the findings of Cropped Area Survey Programme (2004-2005) under Agriculture, Economics and Statistics ([arunachalpradesh.nic.in/rural/html/wimp/dpr/DPR\\_Changlang.pdf](http://arunachalpradesh.nic.in/rural/html/wimp/dpr/DPR_Changlang.pdf)) the main field crops of Bordumsa and Diyun CD blocks taken as a whole included:

- (i) Cereals [paddy, maize & wheat],
- (ii) Pulses [gram, Rajma, local pulses],
- (iii) Oil seed [mustard, sesame, soya],
- (iv) Vegetables
- (v) Spices [ginger, chilies, turmeric] and
- (vi) Others [potato, sweet potato, sugarcane].

Agricultural lands of the Anchal Samiti are primarily mono-cropped. Cropping intensity in 2004-2005 was only 102.8. Yield rate being poor, the agriculture in the Anchal Samiti is in the main a subsistence one. About 73% of the total population of the Anchal Samiti, according to an estimate of State Directorate of Economics & Statistics, GoAP, in 1999, was under BPL category. But there is no landless household in Bordumsa. "In Changlang District, Bordumsa CD Block in particular the problem of fragmentation of land holdings is not an issue on account of the peculiar pattern of land-ownership, tenure and land use prevalent. The ownership of land and the individual rights are governed by customary laws of the community. Due to the unique ownership and management system, there is little or no alienation of the people from their land and resources and therefore, even farmers, despite their poor economic condition can be considered resource-rich ([arunachalpradesh.nic.in/rural/html/wimp/dpr/DPR\\_Changlang.pdf](http://arunachalpradesh.nic.in/rural/html/wimp/dpr/DPR_Changlang.pdf)).

Most of these poor people who come from the Adibaasi communities (the aboriginal tribal communities of the Chhotonagpur plateau are generally referred to as Adibaasis outside), work as labourers in commercial tea gardens and other rich farmers' farms for major part of the year

to meet their household economic needs. Here both men and women work in agricultural lands and tea plantations.

### **Health Care**

There is a government run community health centre, Bordumsa Community Health Centre (CHC) at Bordumsa town. This CHC is actually a rural hospital. In addition there are 4 Health Sub-centers at the village level. One such Health Sub-center covers more than 5 GPs. These sub-centers are manned by the paramedical personnel called Auxiliary Nurse cum Midwives (ANMs). At the grassroots level there are 38 ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers who cover all the 39 villages of the Block. The block also has 44 ICDS centres. The workers of the ICDS centers also work as facilitators of National Rural Health Mission (universal immunization, ANC, NC, PNC, JSY, JSSY etc.) and IPP-I activities along with the ASHA workers. The Chairperson and Member Secretary of Bordumsa Anchal Samiti claim that most of the deliveries within the Anchal Samiti area are institutional.

### **Education**

The CD block of Bordumsa has about 38 schools:

- (a) Government Schools = 29 (Primary-16, Middle- 10, Secondary- 2 & HS- 1)
- (b) Private Schools= 8 (Below secondary- 2, Secondary- 6).

All the schools are coeducational schools. Most of the private schools are missionary schools. Medium of instruction in most of these institutions is English and in some both English and Hindi are used as medium of instructions. Total enrolment of these schools is 6645 (Boys-3532 and Girls- 3113). Yet the block fared very poorly in literacy front. The Census 2001 recorded only 34.31% of the total population as literate. One possible reason of this poor literacy rate is believed to be boys' lack of interest in getting educated. The girls are more inclined towards education. Yet only about 65% of the total girls of school going age-group, according to the Anchal Samiti, are enrolled in schools.

For pre-school education of children, there are 44 ICDS centres.

## **Panchayat in Arunachal Pradesh: A brief historical overview**

The village communities of Arunachal Pradesh, the land of tribes, were governed by the tribal village councils, headed by the *Gaonbura*, the village headmen since time immemorial. These village councils were given recognition under the North East Frontier Administration of Justice Regulation, 1945. In 1964 a four member committee was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. Daying Ering to study the system, under which the authority was being exercised by different indigenous tribal institutions and to make its recommendations for a new Panchayati Raj system. The Committee recommended the establishment of a 3-tier Panchayati Raj system consisting of Gram Panchayats, Anchal Samitis and Zilla Parishads. This led to the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) Panchayat Raj Regulation Act in 1967. Arunachal Pradesh during this period was known as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The new Panchayati Raj was formally inaugurated on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1968. Elections were held seven times between 1968 and 1992 through the secret ballot except the Gram Panchayat elections which were held according to traditional custom. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the Constitution of India ushered in a new era of Panchayati Raj in the state. The earlier Panchayat Raj Act was dissolved on 14 September 1997. The new Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act came into effect from November 2001. The first election according to the new system, supervised by the State Election Commission was held in 2003.

There are two important features of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat system that makes it somewhat different from rest of the country. Firstly, Arunachal Pradesh being primarily a tribal society without any Scheduled Caste population, the special reservation for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes does not apply in this state. Secondly, there is a post of “Gaonbura”

which was part of the old village council but has been continued till today.<sup>1</sup> The Gaonbura is a person, usually male but can be female also, who administers justice at the local level according to traditional customary laws. They receive honorarium from the state government.

The nomenclature and number of Panchayats in Arunachal Pradesh are:

**Table 2: Structure of PRI of Arunachal Pradesh**

Level of Panchayat	Name	Numbers
District Panchayat	Zilla Parishad	15
Intermediate Panchayat	Anchal Samiti	150
Village Panchayat	Gram Panchayat	1744
<b>Total</b>		<b>1909</b>

## Profile of Panchayati Raj in Bordumsa

### Structure

Bordumsa Anchal Samiti has 22 Gram Panchayats under its jurisdiction. The following table shows the strength of PRI in Bordumsa.

<b>Table 3: Members of Bordumsa Anchal Samiti and the Gram Panchayats within it</b>							
Sl. No.	Name of GP	Elected Members		Sl. No.	Name of GP	Elected Members	
		GP	AS			GP	AS
1	Bordumsa GP	5	1	12	Rajanagar-I GP	5	1
2	Mohong Mura GP	6	1	13	Rajanagar-III GP	3	1
3	Galenga GP	3	1	14	Kherempani GP	3	1
4	Kumung Pothar GP	4	1	15	Wagun Ponthai GP	3	1
5	Gidding GP	9	1	16	Simu GP	3	1
6	Dirak Pothar GP	4	1	17	Wagun-I GP	4	1
7	Lalung GP	4	1	18	Wagun-III GP	3	1
8	Borket GP	3	1	19	Kherembisa GP	4	1
9	Wakhetna GP	4	1	20	Uchabam GP	3	1
10	Magantong GP	4	1	21	Goju GP	6	1
11	Dapkhu GP	3	1	22	Kherem Kachari GP	9	1
<b>Total</b>						<b>95</b>	<b>22</b>

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis see Sanjay Dubey, *Dynamics of Tribal Local Polity and Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh*, Premiere Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991.

In last term (2008-13), out of a total of 95 elected GP members, 61 (64.21%) came from ST communities and the rest 34 (35.79%) from 'others' communities and 37 (38.95%) of the total elected GP members were women. While almost 50% (30 out of 61) of the tribal GP members were women, only 20.59% (7 out of 34) of the GP members coming from 'others' communities were women.

Of the total 22 AS members during the last term 77.27% (17) were from ST communities and the rest 22.73% from 'others' communities. Ratio of male-female among the AS members was exactly 1:1. 8 of the total 11 women AS members were from ST communities and 3 from 'others' communities. 18 of the total elected AS members fought election on INC (Indian National Congress) tickets while remaining 4 as independents. Each GP has a Chairman or Chairperson. Same applies to the Anchal Samiti too.

### **Infrastructure & Personnel**

With the allocation from the Finance Commission, 4 out of 22 GPS under Bordumsa CD Block have their own buildings. Those without own offices function from their Chairmen's/Chairpersons' residences. But as there was no devolution of power and functionaries to PRI in Arunachal Pradesh none of the GPs of the CD Block have personnel to assist the elected local self governments at the grassroots level. Almost same is true for the Bordumsa Anchal Samiti too. A room is allotted to the Chairperson of AS but there is no administrative personnel specially earmarked for AS. All the GPs and the SA are under the Member Secretary who is actually the Extra Assistant Commissioner Cum BDO of Bordumsa. All the personnel manning the office of the Extra Assistant Commissioner Cum BDO are at the disposal of the Member Secretary but not of the Chairperson of AS. The office of the Extra Assistant Commissioner cum BDO is well equipped with almost all modern office facilities including internet connection.



**Bordumsa Anchal Samiti Members, BDO and Staff**

### **Functions of PRI Members**

GPs prepare the annual plans for MGNREGA and other centrally sponsored programmes like Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) etc. for their respective jurisdictions and send those to the Member Secretary of Anchal Samiti for review and inclusion into the annual plan of the AS at the beginning of the financial year. Anchal Samitis in Arunachal Pradesh have right to scrutinise and modify the annual plans prepared by the GPs under their jurisdiction. At the time of execution of any of the sanctioned schemes of annual plan roles of the Chairman/Chairperson and other elected members of AS and GPs revolve round the following:

- Helping the Member Secretary in selection of beneficiaries and
- Overall supervision and monitoring of the work.

Beside these, the elected PRI members also have power to recommend/endorse one's application to Circle Officer for residency certificates etc. Without this recommendation one's

prayer will not be considered at all. However, in ST villages of the block the PRI members have to share these powers (helping the Member Secretary in selection of beneficiaries, overall supervision & monitoring of the work and recommending applications of the residents for certificates) with the *Gaonburas*.

To finalize and adopt the annual plan of the AS (by incorporating the GP plans with that of the AS's own, after modifications, if any,) the Member Secretary calls a general meeting of all elected PRI members (GP, AS, ZP) from the AS areas at the block office. The AS level annual action plan thus adopted is sent to the district level. The Member Secretary again calls such an AS meeting when funds come for any of the projects/schemes (MGNREA, 12<sup>th</sup> FC, IAY, IWMP etc). In such meetings the Member Secretary and the PRI members jointly decide the method of implementation etc. As per the PRI Act, Member Secretary must call one such meeting every quarter, i.e., 4 meetings a year. In all 6 such meetings were held at the Bordumsa Anchal Samiti in 2012-13.

### **Source of Funds**

Almost all the development works done under the umbrella of PRI at Bordumsa block are centrally sponsored poverty alleviation programmes and schemes, viz., MGNREGA, IAY, SGSY, and IWMP etc.

In addition Bordumsa Anchal Samiti also prepares some plans for which fund comes from the revenue the AS generates on its own. Bordumsa is one of the few Anchal Samitis in the state of Arunachal Pradesh which are endowed with a set of revenue generating assets. These revenue generating assets include (i) two ferry *Ghats* (Wagun-Jagun & Bijoypur-Udaipur) on the river Buri-Dihing, (ii) weekly Monday market at Bordumsa town, (iii) shops, (iv) Residential accommodations and (v) guest houses. While the ferry *Ghats* and weekly Monday market are auctioned annually; the shops, residential houses and guest houses are leased out on fixed rent.

As per custom of the local ST communities only the members of local ST communities can take part in auction of ferry *Ghats* and weekly Monday market. However there is no official bar on the lessee to sub-lease the ferry *Ghats* or the weekly market to members of non-ST communities including even the outsiders. The Wagun-Jagun ferry *Ghat* is a typical example of such a sub-leasing. For the last few years the official leaseholder of this ferry *Ghat* who comes from one or the other ST communities of the CD block has been sub-leasing the lease to one person who is a native of Jagun locality in Margherita tehsil of Tinsukia district of Assam. This person (now in mid 30s) happens to be is an ex-member of armed ULFA outfit. He had surrendered to the administration under a general rehabilitation package of the north-eastern states and was unofficially awarded the sublease of the Wagun-Jagun ferry *Ghat*. This year (2013-14) he has paid the official lessee an amount of Rs. 5, 80, 000.00 as fee. A pair of fairly large mechanized boat is joined together and used for ferrying people and vehicles from one bank of the river to the other. This vessel belongs to the Bordumsa Anchal Samiti. The cost of any major repair of the vessel to the amount of Rs. 5000.00 or above is borne by the AS while those below Rs. 5000.00 are the liability of the lessee (sub-lessee). The Sub-lessee's net annual earnings from this ferry *Ghat* ranges from Rs. 80, 000.00 to Rs. 1, 00,000.00.

The shops are rented out to members of local ST communities and residential accommodations and guest houses are also rented out to government employees of ST origin of Arunachal Pradesh.

These assets generated annual revenue of Rs. 5.56 lakhs, Rs. 8.75 lakhs and Rs. 7.08 lakhs in the financial years 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively. Such Own Source Revenue is being spent on such works as (i) boring drinking water tube wells at various villages, (ii) constructing public toilets and (ii) maintenance, renovation and extension of the own revenue generating assets.



### III

#### Development interventions by PRIs in Bordumsa AS area

##### MGNREGA

Last year (2012-13) the Bordumsa CD block executed 242 MGNREGA schemes in its 22 constituent GPs. The following table derived from the annual statement on physical and financial achievement under MGNREGA during the year 2012-13 depicts the scenario in a nutshell.

Sl. No.	Name of scheme	No. of schemes	GPs involved	Total no. of households	Total person-days generated	Average person-days per household
1	Micro Irrigation Channel (MIC)	3	Borket, Mohong Mura, Kumung Pother	352	16424	47
2	Rural Link Road (RLR) : inter & intra village	14	Bordumsa, Dapkhu, Khrem Kachari, Galenja, Dirok Pathar, Rajnagar-I, Simu, Wagun-I&II, Uchabam, Wagun Ponthai, Khermpani, Gidding, Lalung, Mogantong	1442	60758	42
3	Fish Pond	3	Goju	135	7155	53
4	Drainage canal	3	Wakhetna, Rajnagar-III, Kherembisa,	230	9930	43
5	Land Development at ICDS centre	1	Wagun-III	41	1435	35
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>95702</b>	<b>44</b>

The Member Secretary received an amount of Rs 9933062.58 on account of MGNREGA for the year 2012-13. Of this total receipt Rs. 9932408.00 was spent towards wage (5933524) and non-wage (3955683) payment.

**MGNREGA Fish Ponds:** The fish ponds dug under MGNREGA at Bordumsa CD Block are unique in nature and demand special mention. All assets created under MGNREGA at Bordumsa belong

to the community in general and will benefit them. All these assets, except the fish ponds, need only periodic repair and maintenance. But fish ponds, in addition to periodic repair and maintenance – generate regular income. Till date the CD block has about 9 such fish ponds which are dug on the common land of the village communities where they are dug. After the completion of a scheme of digging of fish pond under MGNREGA, it is handed over to the community of the village through the concerned GP. However the filling of the newly dug pond with water and releasing of the initial stock of fish seedlings into it are responsibilities of the scheme. Thereafter the onus of nurturing of the fish pond lies with the village community itself. The income-expenditure account of the fish pond is also maintained by the village community. The income generated from such a fish pond is treated as an emergency community fund. The poorer among the village community may access this fund to meet their emergency medical, educational and other social (marriage etc.) needs. According to Mr. Tamo Riba, the Member Secretary of Bordumsa AS, about 70-80 poorer families of the block are benefitting from the MGNREGA fish ponds. Mr. Arjun Mura, a former Anchal Samiti member of Bordumsa from the Mohung Mura GP, added that his village (Mohung Mura) got a MGNREGA fish pond in 2009-10 which now generates about Rs 15,000-20,000 as net income annually.

#### **IWMP-I**

Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) is joint programme of the departments of Rural Development and Land Resource Development of Government of India. In Arunachal Pradesh it is aimed at reducing the spread and practice of Jhoom cultivation. In 2012-13 the BDO of Bordumsa received Rs. 949040.00 under IWMP-I for execution of 7 sanctioned projects. The following table showing the achievement of these projects has been constructed from the utilization certificate of BDO, Bordumsa.



**A fish pond excavated through MGNREGS**

<b>Table 5 Physical and Financial Achievement under IWMP-I during 2012-13 in Bordumsa CD Block</b>						
Sl. No.	Name of the project	No. of projects	GPs involved	Amount Sanctioned (Rs.)	Expen-diture (Rs.)	Person-days generated
1	EPA: Repair & Maintenance of Log Bridge	1	Kumung Pathar	400000.00	399981.00	3226
2	Water Harvesting Structure (Tube well for drinking water)	2	Kherempani & Kumung Pathar	433440.00	433312.00	3494
3	Livelihood Activities: Handloom Production unit	2	Kherempani & Kumung Pathar	57800.00	57800.00	X
4	PS & ME: Piggery farming for SHG	2	Kherempani & Kumung Pathar	57800.00	57800.00	X
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>949040.00</b>	<b>948893.00</b>	<b>6720</b>

## IV

### Award winning intervention by Bordumsa Anchal Samiti

#### The Problem

On 31 May 2007, a journalist named Atonu Choudhuri noted in an article in The Telegraph that “Arunachal Pradesh’s drug problem is getting worse. What was once an addiction to homegrown opium has now made way for new narcotics like heroin and brown sugar. “He also noted that while opium has been cultivated in this area for quite some time now, the problem has now become more dangerous as youths are turning towards new-age narcotics for “fun.”<sup>2</sup>

Our field visit in June, 2013, to write the case-study of a de-addiction campaign in Bordumsa, also confirmed what was reported by Choudhuri. The addiction problem in the districts of Changlang, Upper Siang, Tirap and Lohit having international border with Myanmar has a complex history. Opium (locally known as *kani*) cultivation and consumption is part of the traditional life of these areas. Opium is also used as medicine – for those with sleeping problems or joint pain or cough and cold, a small dose of opium is considered to be good for health. A section of the adult members of the tribal communities of Singpho, Tangsa, Khampti etc. of both the sexes is consuming opium for more than three centuries - more by men than by women and by older people more than younger ones.

It was quite intriguing to explore as to why and when there was a shift from traditional opium addiction to more dangerous forms of narcotics addiction. Mr.Thinnong Umbu and Mr. Ongla Umbon, youths who are associated with the Singpho Youth Organisation (SYO) as the General Secretary and President respectively, provided the clues:

- Around 1995-96, the youth of this region, particularly of the elite families started to go to Shillong in Meghalaya and other far-off places for higher study. They caught the addiction of brown sugar and heroin in these places where consumption of such narcotic substances were considered “cool”. The addiction for brown sugar, heroin and

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<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070531/asp/northeast/story\\_7852373.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070531/asp/northeast/story_7852373.asp) Checked on 17.7.13

strong cough syrup was brought to the locality by the youth of the elite families. This gradually became a trend setter among the local youth of poorer families also.

- What started as a lifestyle addiction soon became integrated with problems of local economy. In 1996, the Supreme Court banned timber logging in the region. While this had a good impact on the environment, it was bad for livelihood opportunities of the youth. A thriving timber logging business came to a halt and this resulted in unemployment. With the shrinking of employment opportunities many among the youth fell into depression and this in turn helped to push the youth towards addiction.
- Such demand side factors were helped by certain supply side factors. The region, the south-eastern Arunachal Pradesh, being on the border land of India and Myanmar consists of what is known as the “mini golden triangle” – supply of narcotics was abundant and unchecked. Many of the youths facing unemployment also became peddlers.
- Abundance of supply and rising demand was helped by poor governance and loophole in existing laws. Those who were interviewed in the field, including the BDO of Bordumsa, were unanimous that the role of the police in combating drug peddlers left a lot to be desired. It is said that the police were soft on the peddlers and there were accusations also that the police have actively connived with the drug peddlers. This of course cannot be proved but it is certainly true that a lot of grievances were expressed against the police.

The youths belonging to Singpho Youth Society also said that there are loopholes in the existing legal system. For example, according to the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS Act, 1985), police raid has to be accompanied by a Magistrate or a Gazetted Officer. Since this is not always available, raids cannot be properly conducted or the culprits are released by the Sessions court. Also according to the Section 17 of the Act, the definition of “peddler” and “consumer” sometimes creates problems. To be considered a peddler, the person has to have at least 10 gm of narcotics with him/her. However this is often difficult to prove and therefore the arrested person gets away as a “consumer”. The youths of Singpho

Youth Organisation also said that a “peddler” if convicted should get a conviction of 6 months which is non-bailable. However it is often seen that a culprit is released after a month or so.

Addiction, explained Sri Singdu Nong Singpho, current Zilla Parishad member and former President of Singpho Development Society, is the root cause of backwardness in the region. Although not rich, the people of the area mostly had some land and were not desperately poor. It was possible to make a living out of the land as the land is quite fertile and can grow different types of crops including cash crops such as tea. Also there is protection of tribal laws and various kinds of governmental incentives for the tribal. But addiction has resulted in a gradual decline in the fortunes of the families – money has been wasted away and some have even sold off their land illegally to non-tribals. Family environment has been ruined in many cases and children and women in the family have suffered. Also in some cases women have acquired the addiction from men and have become equally narcotics dependent.

Another reason why the spread of narcotic addiction could not be controlled was that the society does not have any religious institution that can control the youth. The local people are followers of their own tribal religion and also followers of Buddhism but the region lacks a strong religious institution that can discipline the local youth. Had there been a strong religious institution it would have been perhaps possible to instill a fear of excommunication from the community and thereby prevent young men from becoming addicted.

However there are a few villages that are not being affected by this menace of drug addiction. These are either Adibasi villages or tribal villages (who profess Christianity as religious faith). As for example, the Adibasi village of Mohung Mura and the tribal village of Borkhet do not have a single case of drug addiction. While the Adibasis of Mohung Mura are quite content with their traditional drinks of *Hadia*, the priest of the church, the Gaon Bura, the PRI members and the SHG members of Borkhet keep a close and constant watch on members of their village community, particularly the youth so that no one dared to take drug in any form.

## **Intervention**

The local civil society as well as international organisations like ILO started their intervention on the addiction problem from about 2003. ILO started to fund NGOs in the region who had registration and permission to get foreign funds. However many of the local NGOs and CBOs did not have any formal registration and therefore could not access ILO funds. This did not deter the local NGOs and CBOs in the Bordumsa area. The Singpho Student Union unanimously decided in 2004 to start a campaign against de-addiction which was known as “Operation Clean Society”. In spite of not having any funds from external sources they decided to carry out an awareness campaign. Similarly the Mahila Mandal of the region, another unregistered organisation of women formed in 1976 by former MP Omem Meyong Deori, joined the campaign at the village level. This campaign went on till about 2010 and was to some extent successful in raising awareness. However given the lack of funds and the purely voluntary nature of the work its success was limited.

In 2010 a local Civil Society Organisation named Singpho Development Society (SDS) and the Anchal Samiti Panchayat decided to carry out a major intervention and raise funds for the programme. It was realized from the first phase of campaigning that simply by raising village level awareness it would not be possible to control the menace. Village level campaigning was not fruitful in case of those who have already become addicted and their number was quite substantial. Many of the addicts wanted medicine to quit the addiction. Such medicine was not locally available and had to be brought from Mumbai. SDS and Anchal Samiti Panchayat took up the issue with the Health Department and brought some medicine which were distributed free of cost to the addicts.

Such medical support to villagers who have become addicted initially had a positive result. However it was found that when a person was able to give up the addiction he soon came under peer pressure to return to addiction. Thus it was realized that trying to de-addict one or two individuals in a village where there are many addicts is not going to solve the problem.



**A patient being treated in the de-addiction camp**

The Anchal Samiti Panchayat and Singpho Development Society therefore decided to raise funds for a de-addiction camp. The Anchal Samiti Panchayat donated Rs 200,000 (Rs Two Lakhs) for the purpose of the camp. SDS and Anchal Samiti then went on a collection drive. The local MLA was convinced to donate Rs 2,00,000 from MLALAD funds. Small funds as well as contribution in kind such as cooked food were promised by the village communities. Funds were also raised from local business men such as the tea plantation owners. In all Rs 11, 00,000 (Rupees Eleven Lakhs) was collected from different sources including the own contribution of the Anchal Samiti Panchayat. Apart from fund raising the Anchal Samiti Panchayat and SDS also managed to convince the local population to provide voluntary labour. The local youth contributed a substantial amount of time.



The strategy that was developed was to hold a three-month de-addiction camp for all addicts in more than thirty villages under Bordumsa Anchal Panchayat. Intensive awareness campaign was conducted in the villages to convince families of the addicts to send them to the de-addiction camp. The premises of the Singpho Development Society were used to set up the de-addiction camp. In all 464 addicted persons, including women, were treated in the camp for three months. This included medicinal facilities, psychological counseling and provision of nutritional food. The involvement of the Anchal Samiti and the GPs also helped to raise awareness among the local administration who also participated enthusiastically in the programme. All administrative support was provided by the BDO who is also the Member Secretary of the Anchal Samiti. The Health Department provided qualified doctors and nurses to treat the addicts. Some of the medicines that were used were Adnok (tablet), Methylcobalamine (Tablet and Injection), Omeprazole (Capsule), Lomofen (tablet) and intravenous fluids. A total of 3 doctors, 25 youth volunteers and 25 Nurses worked tirelessly in the camp. Of the nurses 5 were trained nurses from Community Health Centre Bordumsa and 15 were local women who were trained to nurse the patients.

#### **The De-Addiction Camp and the Dapkhu GP**

Dapkhu, a single village GP, has 57 households. The people of the village are all tribal (mainly Singpho) and agriculturists and tea planters. Barring 4-5 households, all have land. Some have more land compare to others. A significant section of the villagers, both old and young, are addicted to *Kani*. According to Ms. Singdu Roi Singpho, the Chairperson of Dapkhu GP, the village had contributed to the de-addiction campaign in the following way:

- Providing rice and vegetables to the camp free of cost ;
- Participating in mobilization and motivation campaign;
- Almost all villagers contributed something or the other to the camp and
- Sending about 12 addicts to the camp.

awareness campaign was launched in the Anchal Samiti area. Here also the Anchal Samiti played a leading role in motivating the youth to take part in the campaign. The youth of Singpho Student Union came out in a big way to contribute voluntarily to the cause. They went

from door to door in the villages to convince the people of the villages on the evils of addiction. A large number of opium smoking pipes were also burnt or destroyed to make a symbolic gesture on the menace of addiction.

The Anchal Samiti also motivated the police to catch several peddlers and an important local mafia boss, Jogendra Nath alias Jaggu, was arrested.

Along with carrying out a campaign and a de-addiction camp, the Bordumsa Anchal Samiti has also urged Government of Arunachal Pradesh to set up a permanent de-addiction centre at Bordumsa with latest medical facilities. This proposal is under consideration at present.

### **The Story of former *Kani* addict who lodged a successful battle all by himself to quit the habit**

Mr. Tawtong Samon, a young man of 38, is a member of the Singpho community, the dominant tribal community of Bordumsa CD block. He is a married person and a proud father of 3 daughters. He is the youngest son of a very well to do peasant family. Early youth of Tawtong was as normal as any other young man of his community. He was studying in a local high school. The normal track of his growing up stage had changed all of a sudden when he was 18 and a student of class X. He got involved in a brawl with a member of the Chakma refugees living in the area. It ended in



bloodshed. The member of the refugee community was seriously injured and Tawtong thought that his enemy would die. This had frightened him so much that he fled from Bordumsa and eventually landed in Myanmar. There he lived among the member of his community, the

Singphos. He lived there for about a year and also went to China to meet the Singphos there. During this entire underground period he made no contact with his family. His father had lodged a missing diary with the local police. After one and a half year he wrote a letter to his father that he was in Myanmar and had also visited China. His relieved father went to the police with the letter. Consequently, when Tawtong returned home he got arrested on the charge of espionage against his own country. He was interrogated and tortured by the army for about 6 months. However once interrogating army officer was convinced with the version of the story and he gave a certificate in the format of 'to whom it may concern' on his release. Tawtong always carries this certificate with him. He never went back to school. He was spending his time loitering around meaninglessly. His elder brother and elder sister are doctor and school teacher respectively but he was a "nobody", a black sheep. This had made him frustrated. And on one of his idle and meaningless loitering days one Aharsan, a peddler of opium, which the Singphos call *Kani* in their vocabulary, befriended Tawtong. To begin with the peddler supplied the daily doses of Kani free of cost. After a few days, when Tawtong developed a liking for it the peddler started charging money. It was INR 100.00 a day (INR 50.00 per dose). Tawtong needed 2 doses a day. He used to take it in form of smoking in a pipe made of bamboo. After a period he got so conditioned with the substance that without it he "did not feel normal and energetic and got violent". His father came to know about the addiction of his and had decided to get him married at the age of 23 with the thought that the added family responsibility might compel him to quit the habit. His father also gave him his quota of family farm land (tea plantation) to fend for himself. It was about 6.6 acres. But contrary to his father's expectation, this new found financial independence had given a boost to his addiction. "Lots of money were spent." Money came from his tea farm. Tea leaves are plucked once a week for 10 months a year. Weekly turnover for Tawtong's tea farm was INR 20, 000.00. The annual turnover was INR 80, 000.00X10 = INR 8, 00,000.00. Net profit per week was INR 10, 000.00. So to spend INR 100.00 a day was no problem to him. He took opium continuously for about 14 years. During this period in the moments of his violent feats he even had beaten his wife and children many a time. On one such violent day in 2011 after beating his wife suddenly a thought struck his mind

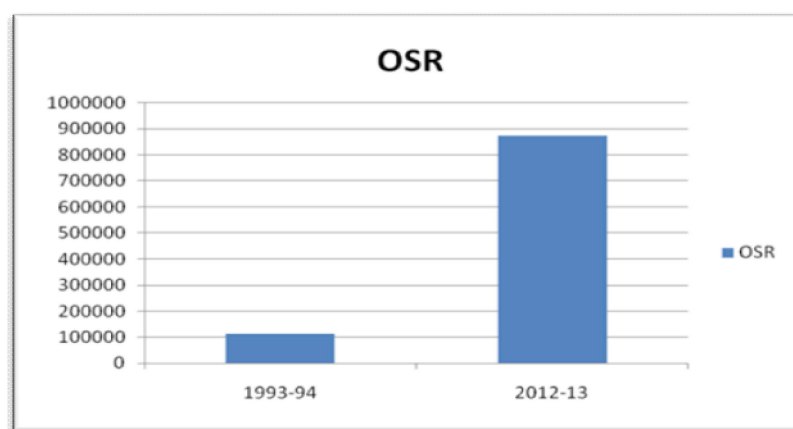
that beating ones wife and children befits only a fallen one. “*Mai ek gira hua insan hun!*’ (I am a fallen person). And he resolved to quit opium.

He did not take any de-addiction medicine or external help. He just stopped taking it. It was physically very painful. “I used to throw kicks while asleep. Extreme heat was generated in my body. To get rid of it I used to get myself sunk in pond water for hours together but finally the triumph was mine. I became a *Kani*-free man.”

The Singpho Development Society used the service of Tawtong as a volunteer and counselor in the de-addiction camp they organized in cooperation with Bordumsa Anchal Samiti in 20011-12.

### Other Noteworthy Interventions

Most Panchayat Raj Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh have very little Own Source Revenue. They are almost totally dependent on the State Government and the Central Government for their funds. Bordumsa Anchal Samiti is an exception to this general trend. In 1993-94 Bordumsa Anchal Samiti had an Own Source Revenue of Rs 1, 13, 000/- but in 2012-13 the Own Source Revenue went up to Rs 8,75, 325/-.



**Increase in Own Source Revenue of Bordumsa Anchal Samiti**

The income for the Anchal Samiti comes from various sources such as a rent from local markets, ferry ghats, shops and guest house which are all owned by the Bordumsa Anchal Samiti. The revenue that is

earned by the Anchal Samiti is in turn invested in other infrastructure projects so that the income of the Samiti further increases. In this way Bordumsa Anchal Samiti is slowly but surely moving towards a significant degree of self-sufficiency.



**A local market created by Bordumsa Anchal Samiti with own resources**

### **Replicability**

The de-addiction camp was a success. It managed to cure, for the time being at least, most of the addicts who came to the camp. It also raised awareness and showed what can be achieved if local community, local Civil Society Organisations and the Panchayati Raj institutions come together. The de-addiction campaign had a rub-off effect on other neighbouring districts as well as a result of which one can see a movement happening to set up more such de-addiction

camps and combat the menace of narcotics addiction. On 30 March 2013 *The Arunachal Pioneer* carried a report on de-addiction initiatives in Arunachal Pradesh<sup>3</sup>. The report quoted the Deputy Commissioner of Changlang District, Ms. Chanchal Yadav:

“We organised motivational film shows and distributed booklets and posters, but also got medical teams to talk about the health problems arising out of opium consumption,” she said. “It appears to have gone down well, especially with the educated youth segment, and we expect a trickle-down effect of it into the community at large. The authorities are offering alternative crops like cardamom, tea, ginger and kiwi.”

It is evident from the above quote that Changlang district officials (along with other neighbouring districts) have seriously taken up the issue of narcotics addiction and are taking steps to control, if not eliminate, the menace. The report also says that several other districts are trying to combat the menace. What Bordumsa Anchal Samiti had initiated has now been taken up on a large scale by the authorities in several districts, proving once again that a good work done somewhere will definitely generate a ripple effect.

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.thearunachalpioneer.in/state/2013/03/31/no-more-opium-arunachal-tribals/>. Checked on 17.07.13

## **Persons Interviewed**

1. Sri Singdu Nong Singpho, Member Changlang Zilla Parisad
2. Smt. Tongko Singpho, Chairperson, Bordumsa Anchal Samiti
3. Sri Tamo Riba, BDO & Member Secretary to Bordumsa Anchal Samiti
4. Smt. Singdu Roi Singpho, the Chairperson of Dapkhu GP
5. Sri Mayng Maio, President, Singpho Development Society
6. Smt. Pisilu Singpho, Anchal Samiti Member (ASM) from Wakhetna segment
7. Sri Arjun Mura, ASM, Mohong Mura segment
8. Sri Jura Mura, ASM (IND), Kherem Kachari
9. Sri Babulal Sonowal, GPM, Kherem Kachari GP
10. Sri Ongla Umbon, President, Singpho Youth Organisation
11. Sri Tingnong Umbu, General Secretary, Singpho Youth Organisation
12. Sri Raju Sarkar, EO (RE), Bordumsa BDO office
13. Sri Swapan Rakshit, BDO office staff
14. Sri Moousam Zongsam, BDO office staff
15. Sri Satyajit Talukdar, BDO office staff
16. Sri Rana Kumar Nath, BDO office staff
17. Smt. Maitho Mossang, Member, Borkhet SHG (under SGSY)
18. Sri Kisnu Borgohain, Jagun village in Margherita tehsil, Tinsukia, Assam; Sub-lessee  
Wagun-Jagun ferry ghat
19. Sri Tawtong Samon, Goju village, a former opium addict
20. Villagers of Dapkhu, Mohong Mura, Borkhet and Kumung Pathar villages