

WHY MYANMAR MIGRANT WORKERS FLEE TO THAILAND?



NYAN TUN SHEIN

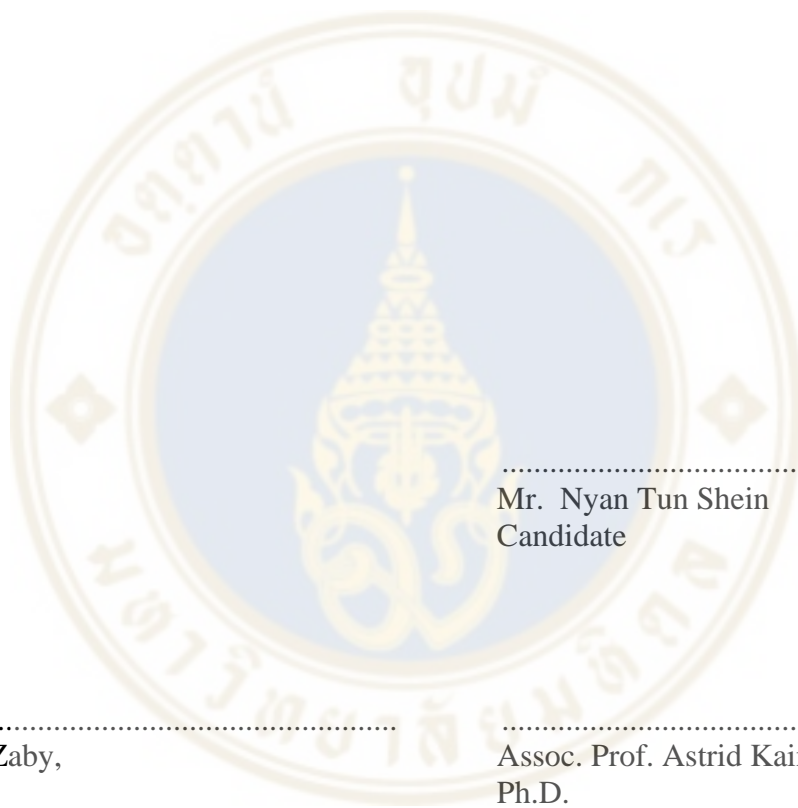
**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
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M.M. (HEALTHCARE AND WELLNESS MANAGEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

This research explicit the lives of Myanmar Migrant Workers, in the other words, the conditions of poor people because of the delayed development in their own country due to political mismanagement by the government that grabbed the power without the agreement of people.

The main reasons for moving into Thailand of each migrant worker will display in this research together with their lifestyles, harshness, working conditions, income, and family status before moving into Thailand. Effects of the 1st February Coup upon their lives as well as hopes to return home are also included.

The situations of basic workforce level can be learned in this research. Therefore, higher management levels will be encouraged to rule their employees with sympathy and empathy. In addition, managers can learn how to support basic workers; key productive factors, to level up their lives.

KEY WORDS: Migration / Myanmar Migrant Workers / Military Dictatorship /
Burmese Way to Socialism / 1st February Coup

51 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Myanmar, a wonderful golden land, is the largest mainland country in Southeast Asia. It is surrounded by India and Bangladesh in the West, and China, Laos, and Thailand in the East, respectively. Among them, the border area with Thailand is the longest; 2,416 kilometers in length throughout the ethnic regions such as Shan State, Kayah State, Kayah State, and Tanintharyi Region (Burma - The World Factbook, 2021). Gross Domestic Product is 76.186 billion in 2020 (GDP per capita (current US \$) - Myanmar, 2020). The majority of the economy is dependent on agriculture. It can create up to 37.8% of GDP (Myanmar at a glance, 2021). The total population is 54,743,882 in June 2021 (Myanmar Population (LIVE), 2021). As a developing country, all the people in Myanmar cannot get high-quality living standards comparing with neighboring countries as well as all over the world. About 24.8% of the population is destitute (Sargsyan, 2019). The count of deprived people is 6.7 times higher in rural areas (Sargsyan, 2019).

Myanmar is not a country that completely lacks the opportunity to grow. It has abundant natural resources as well as the long sea exit of the Bay of Bangel, Gulf of Martaban, and the Andaman Sea. In addition, it possesses plenty of prosperous lands in which rice and a variety of vegetables are easily cultivated. In 1950, immediately after independence, the capital city Yangon, former name Rangoon, was regarded as one of the commercial hubs of Southeast Asia. Even the World Bank estimated that Burma would become the highest economic zone in the region. Nevertheless, in 1987, Myanmar was announced as “The Least Developed Nation” by the United Nations (Least Developed Country Category: Myanmar Profile, 1987).

All the catastrophic events in Myanmar are triggered by the grab of power by the military dictatorship in March 1962 (Devi, 2014). It can be regarded as the turning point of the monarchy era. The condition of the country changed into the dark side with the seized of power by General Ne Win after ousting the Civilian Government Leader,

U Nu from his position (Devi, 2014). General Ne Win and his colleague juntas controlled the country with the council, named the Revolutionary Council. General Ne Win implemented **“The Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP)”** under **“The One-Party System”** which is controlled by the Military (Devi, 2014). In 1972, General Ne Win and his military officers gave up their uniforms and moved into BSPP according to their prepared plan. Therefore, the country was under a civilian government but with the same military leaders (Devi, 2014). In 1974, U Ne Win became President of the country, and the lives of Myanmar people were a completely helpless and hopeless situation.

Against sanctions of the United States and European countries, General Ne Win held the “Burmese Way to Socialism” policy and isolated the country from the world (Devi, 2014). Consequently, the amount of foreign investment fell from 40% of GDP in 1960 to 26% of GDP in 1970 (Steinberg, D. I., Aung-Thwin, Michael Arthur and Aung., Maung Htin, 2021). The most brutal action is the nationalization of most of the publicly owned lands, businesses, banking sectors, and factories. Moreover, the 1985 Demonetization also led to the economic crisis and the uprising of the whole country in 1988. After that, for the reason to control the country’s peace and tranquility, the military juntas led by General Saw Mg seized the power again in September 1988 and ruled the country with “The State Law and Order Restoration Council” (Steinberg, D. I., Aung-Thwin, Michael Arthur and Aung., Maung Htin, 2021).

In 1990, the first multi-party election was held. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy Party attained victory. Although NLD was the winning party, they did not get any chance to rule the country (Steinberg, D. I., Aung-Thwin, Michael Arthur and Aung., Maung Htin, 2021). The military continued grabbing power and detained the Public Leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for almost 15 years. At that time, the fortune of the Myanmar people was like a candle in the storm. Starting from the Central Administration Sector, all the sectors such as the Economic sector, the Healthcare sector, the Education sector were gradually broken down like the Domino Effect in prolonging Military Era.

All these factors pulled down Myanmar people to harsh daily lives. Poverty was overwhelming throughout the country, especially in rural areas. All facilities in the country were left behind the world. The majority of children gave up their education and worked to fulfill their daily meals. The number of beggars was also increased

everywhere. Every worker and even professional staff had to struggle with relatively low salaries comparing with regional countries. For instance, the daily transportation expense was about two-thirds of the salary for basic workers. At the same time, a few groups of people were become millionaires and kept enjoying their lives with high-ended luxurious utensils.

Then, most of the youths started trying to seek opportunities to escape from the poor, inconvenient, and difficult lives. People dreamed about going abroad and gaining higher income. They aim to support financially to their families. Myanmar becomes the major migration source among the Greater Mekong Sub-region. About 4.25 million people left Myanmar and stay in foreign countries (Maung, 2020). Thus, the nearest economic booming country with the longest border area, Thailand, became one of the destinations of migrant workers from Myanmar.

With the economy booming and growth of industries around 1970, Thailand became one of the most economically developed zones among the Asian countries. The number of local Thai workers was not enough to fill the required workers for rapidly increasing factories, and other economic zones such as fishing and agriculture (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphal, 2012). This is the causative factor for the diffusion of migrant workers from neighboring countries, mostly from Myanmar; about 4 million including unskilled, semi-skilled, and professional workers (Mekong Migration Network, 2021). The majority of unskilled and semi-skilled workers have to do dirty, dangerous, and difficult works named 3Ds works (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphal, 2012).

Even though Myanmar migrant workers get a bit higher daily income, their lives are still tough. Some of them crossed the border illegally by themselves and cheated traffickers. As the result, they have been arrested when they are detected as illegal migrant workers. In the early years, the government of Thailand did not approve any policy concerning migrant workers. From the year 2001, the Thailand government attempted to legitimate migrant workers by negotiation with neighboring countries. Now, over 80% of registered migrant workers are from Myanmar (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphal, 2012).

Almost all of Myanmar is willing to come back to their home country with the recent economic development due to Public Civilian Government. But their hope

was broken down by the 1st February 2021 Coup. Myanmar has been turmoil in condition since the beginning of the coup. The economy and banking systems are nearly collapsed. Now, every Myanmar citizen desire to restore Democracy with the Elected Government according to November 2020 Election Result.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Migration

Migration is the changing of the individual's residence that he or she lives in for a long period. International migration means moving individuals from one country to another for various reasons (Poulain, 2008). United Nations defined the Long-term Migrant as "A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for at least a year (12 months) so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence (United Nations, 1998)". Migration can be triggered by civil wars, starvation, political instability, scanty employment opportunities, low level of living standards (Boyle, Paul and Halfacree, Keith and Robinson, Vaughan, 2014).

2.2 Labor Migration

International Organization for Migration (IOM) defined Labor Migration as "The movement of persons from one state to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2008)". In other words, it is the movement of laborers to the country which is not their motherland to work. Whatever employed or unemployed in their current country, all the migrant people of working-age or older belong to the term "Migrant Workers" (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2017).

2.3 Global Migration Condition

In 2017, throughout the world, there are 258 million total international migrants for various reasons. Among them, 234 million migrants are in the working age of above 15, and 164 million are migrant workers (ILO, 2017). According to previous

results of ILO in 2013, the count of total international migrants was 232 million. Working-age migrants contributed up to 207 million. Total migrant workers are 150 million (ILO, 2015). Therefore, an increase in the migrant population can be detected; 11% for total international migrants, 13% for working-age migrants, and 9% for migrant workers (ILO, 2017). Figure 2.1

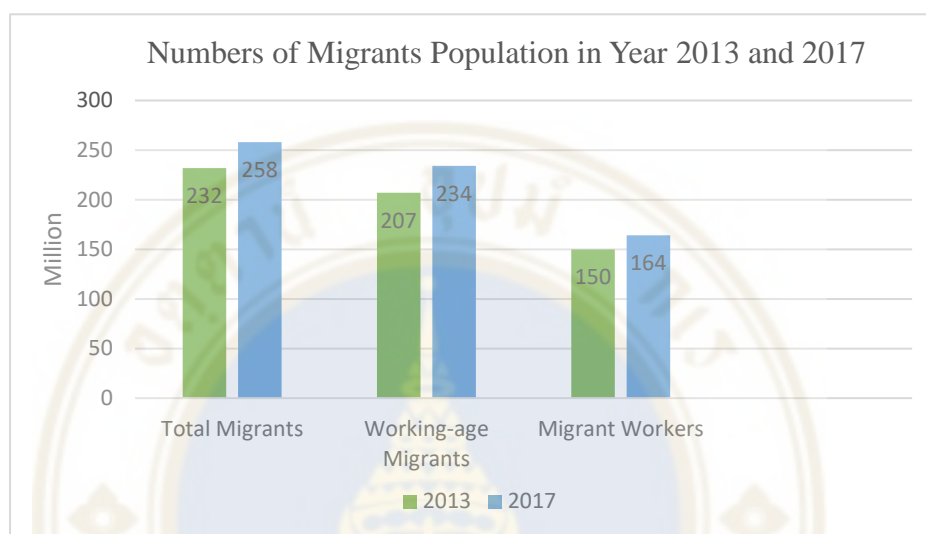


Figure 2.1 Numbers of Migrants population in Year 2013 and 2017 (ILO, 2017)

The distribution of migrant workers among the countries according to income level is 3.4% in low-income countries, 10.1% in medium low-income countries, 18.6% in medium upper-income countries, 67.9% in high upper-income countries (ILO,2017) Figure 2.2. As for geographical distribution, 23% are in the North American Region, 23.9% are in the North, South, and West of European Region, and 13.9% are in the Arab Region. Another 5% are in other regions including East Europe, Sub- Saharan Africa, Asia, and Australia. Less than 1% of migrant workers exist in North Africa (ILO,2017) Figure 2.3.

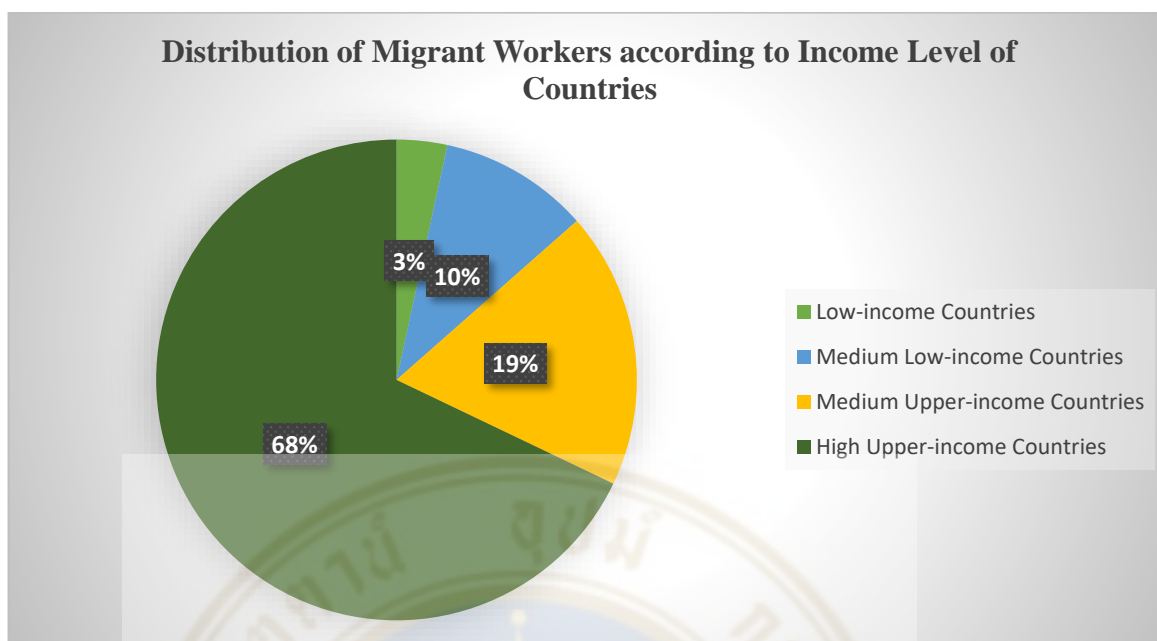


Figure 2.2 Distribution of Migrant Workers According to Income Level of Host Countries (ILO,2017)

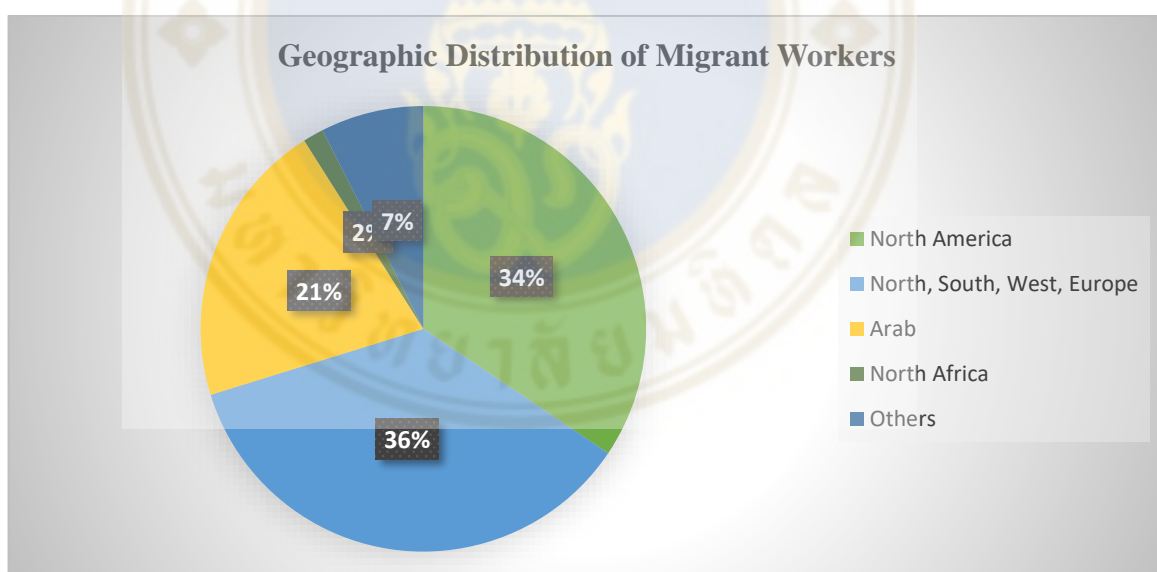


Figure 2.3 Geographic Distribution of Migrant Workers (ILO,2017)

2.4 Factors Influencing Migration

International Migrant Stocks of Mid-Year 2020 in Asia was 85.6 million while the total number all over the world was 281million (IOM,2020). People migrate for various reasons such as to find better living conditions, to achieve better education, and to get a better health care system. In 1966, Lee introduced the “push and pull” theory. This theory explained that the cause of international migration is due to a combination of two main factors; factors that push the individuals from the original region (push factors), and factors that attract the individuals toward the destination region (pull factors). Political instabilities, civil wars, lack of job opportunities, economic collapse, and own family problems may contribute as the push factors. Pull factors might include economic booming, plenty of job vacancies, labor shortage, favorable geographic conditions, and grantee to get better living standards. Push and Pull factors may vary according to individuals’ such as social status, gender, ethnicity, age, and physical ability (Lee, 1966).

Three elements drive the individuals to move from one place to another. They are-

1. macro-element (completely not related to individual),
2. meso-element (more related to the individual but cannot control totally),
3. micro-element (personal characteristics and attitudes) (Castelli, 2018).

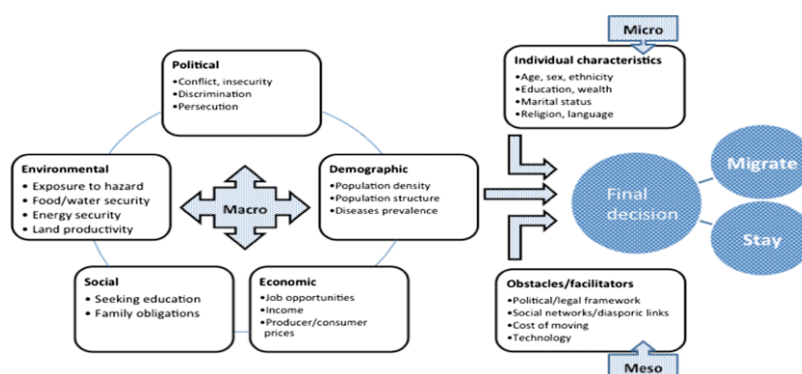


Figure 2.4 Complex Drivers of migration: macro-, meso-, and micro-factors,

Source: Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change (2011) Final Project Report the Government Office for Science, London, modified (Castelli, 2018)

2.5 Reasons for Migration around the World

In the world, there are various causes for the migration of people from one place to another. Some are related to surrounding environments and governments while some migrate because of their own individual factors.

2.5.1 Delay Development

Lack of development in a certain country can lead to the migration of its citizens to seek better lifestyles. Therefore, inadequate health care service, a low education system, and poverty become major contributing factors of migration (Castelli, 2018).

2.5.2 Population Growth

The increasing population also drives people to migrate. The fertility rate in high-income countries is 1.565 while that of low-income countries is 4.573 (The World Bank, 2019). The major population of high fertility rate has occurred mostly in Asia and Africa where lack of health education in childbirth as well as poor contraceptive methods (Castelli, 2018). According to United Nations, in 2015, the population of Africa increased up to one billion from 493 million in 1990. It is expected to become 2.2 billion in 2050, and four billion in 2100 (World Population Prospects: Key Findings

and Advance a Tables, 2017 Revision, 2017). Therefore, an increase in the total population leads to an increase in jobless populations within the country. Then, it drives people to migrate to find job opportunities.

2.5.3 Climate Change

Climate change is also one of the causes of migration. For instance, the case of Lake Chad, which currently has only One-twentieth of its original wide, is an obvious event to prove the moving of people because of difficulties in food, water, and cultivated lands (IOM, World Migration Report, 2018). IOM estimated that the number of climate migrants will reach up to 200 million in 2050 (Frank Laczko and Christine Aghazarm (eds), 2009).

2.5.4 Civil Wars and Dictatorships

Because of dictatorships, many places in the world faces conflicts and political instabilities. For instance - Syria and Afghanistan are the most famous events. Others are Eritrea, Somalia as well as some components of West Africa such as Mali, Gambia, some Central and Southern America areas (IOM, World Migration Report, 2018).

2.5.5 Land Grabbing

Grabbing the huge amount of land from the poor people by the government or private companies to do some businesses should consider as the causes of migration of people in those areas. It has commonly occurred in rural areas of low-income countries. Consequently, moving to other places by community living in those places is happened due to physical and mental impairment (Castelli, 2018).

2.5.6 Religious Conflicts

Conflicts between religious groups are also driving factors of migration. In 1947, many people moved from the border areas between India and Bangladesh because of clashes between Muslims, Hindu, and Sikhs. Jews also migrated to Israel due to religious conflicts (Castelli, 2018).

2.5.7 Education

It can be regarded that most of the migrants are lack education or inadequate education because of poverty in their original countries (Castelli, 2018). But in some cases, migrants are more educated than their counterparts of host countries (Goldin I, Cameron G, Balarajan M, 2011). Educated people migrate to search for better lives and better futures. As a result, the original countries suffer “Brain Drain” of valuable human resources (Castelli, 2018).

2.6 Origins of Myanmar Migrant Workers

According to the study of IOM and ARCM in 2013, 35.7% of Myanmar migrant workers stayed in urban areas before moving to Thailand while another 64.3% are from rural areas. Among them, the majority is Burma ethnicity (43.5%) followed by Shan (18.3%), Mon (15.1%), Karen (12.5%), and others (10.6%) Figure 2.5. As for the region, 76.4% of migrant workers are from the regions and states that exist along the Myanmar-Thailand Border area such as Shan State, Kayah State, Mon State, Karen State, and Tanintharyi Region. People who were lacking jobs before moving into Thailand is 21%. About 38.8% were employed with salaries in specific fields such as services, agriculture, and education. The rest 40.2% were self-employed in their works (International Organization for Migration and Asian Research Center for Migration, 2013). Figure 2.6

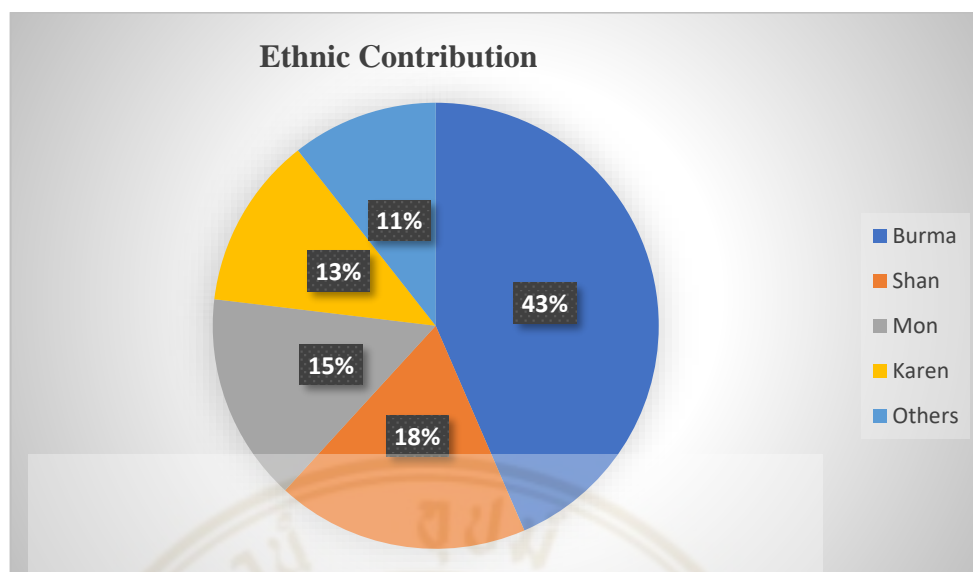


Figure 2.5 Ethnicity Contribution among Myanmar Migrant Workers
(International Organization for Migration and Asian Research Center for Migration, 2013)

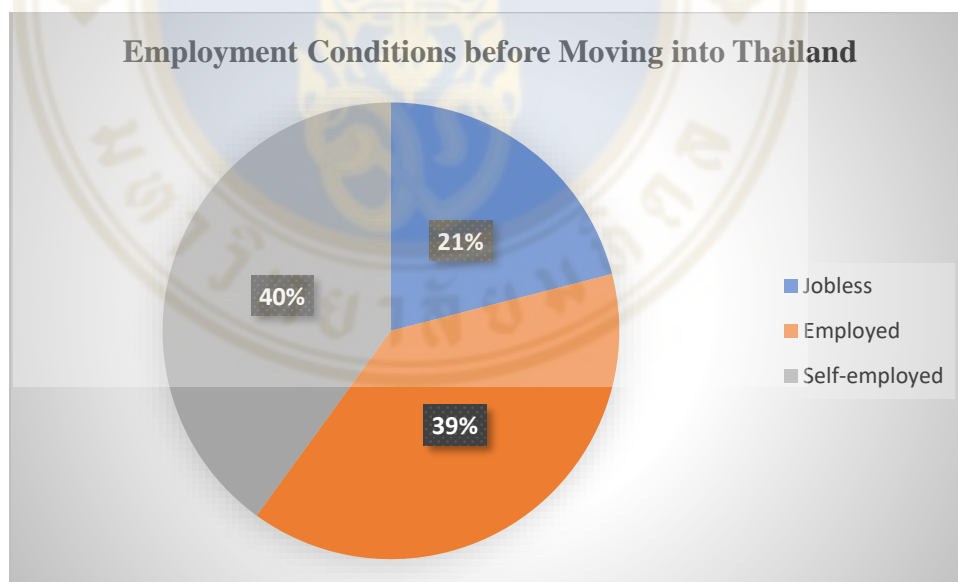


Figure 2.6 Employment Condition of Myanmar Migrant Workers before Moving to Thailand (IOM and ARCM, 2013)

2.7 Reasons of Myanmar Migrant Workers Moving to Thailand

Among various factors, decreasing working-age population in Thailand is one of the factors that drive Myanmar workers to move to Thailand. In Thailand, the working-age population is decreased from 18% in 1985 to 2% in 2015, while 30% of the population is under 15 years old in Myanmar. Another factor is the decreasing unemployment rate and labor shortage in Thailand, while Myanmar has been suffered poverty and lack of job opportunities due to sanctions against the military dictatorship. The minimum wage is also three times higher in Thailand. Moreover, as being educated people, Thailand workers started to avoid danger, dirty and difficult works. Therefore, migrant workers got the chance to fill this gap (Hatsukano, 2019).

The study of IOM and ARCM in 2013 stated that about 74.9% of workers moved to Thailand because of relatively higher salaries and better job opportunities. It can be regarded as the main reason for migration to Thailand. The next 13.4% is due to persuading by their family members and friends or due to personal experiences of favorable situations than native country. Another 4.6% is to find better living conditions (International Organization for Migration and Asian Research Center for Migration, 2013).

2.8 Patterns of Migration

The official agents who provide services legally to seek job opportunities for Myanmar workers are extremely rare. However, there are many routes to enter Thailand throughout the border areas. Most Myanmar migrants cross the Moei river from Myawady and reach Mae Sot. Another point to reach Thailand is from Kawthaung, Tanitharyi Region to Ranong. The next one is crossing the Three Pagodas Pass to Sankhalaburi Figure 2.7. Some migrant workers come legally with work permits but some are not (Mon, 2010).

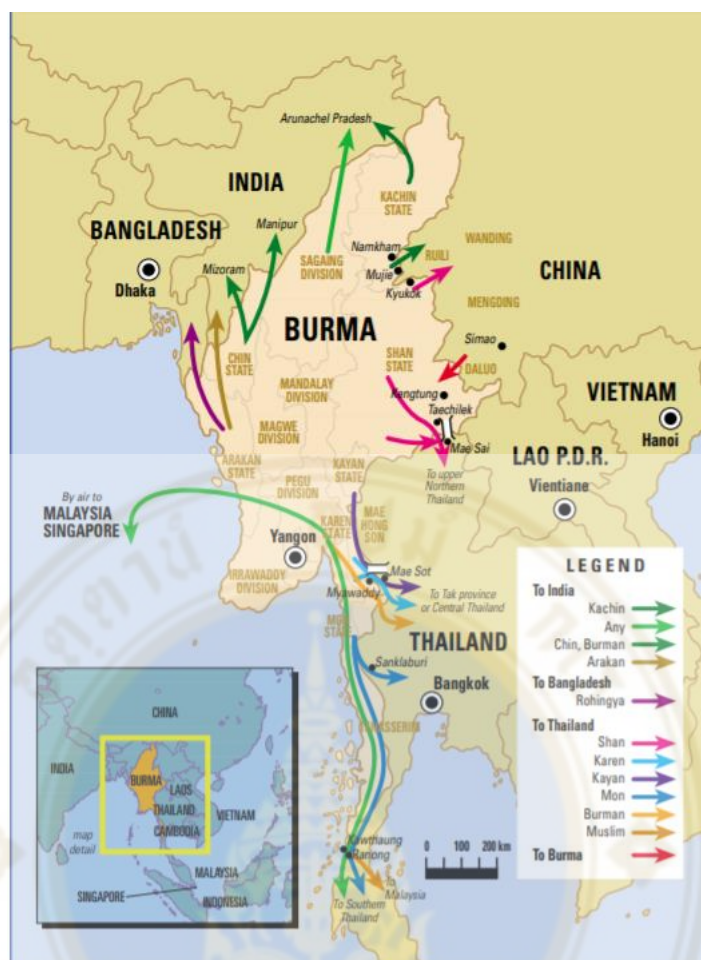


Figure 2.7 Map Showing Routes of Migration from Myanmar to Thailand
(Mekong Migration Network and Asian Migrant Centre, 2005)

In 2002 and 2003, Thailand started migration policies related to surrounding countries after signing at MoU (Memorandum of Understanding). However, because of several processes and expensive registration fees, people used unofficial routes to migrate as usual (Hatsukano, 2019). Therefore, most migrant workers are ‘irregular’, and they are poorly treated by their employers and brokers. Brokers take benefits from migrant workers with the incentive of finding jobs in major cities where salaries are desirable. In some cases, migrant workers are cheated by brokers. They can be victims of forced labor, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation (Htay, 2016). In 1998, the brokers gained 2000-3000 THB as the service fee to move from provinces at the Myanmar border region to the provinces at the border with other countries. If migrants

want to move to the central regions like Bangkok illegally, they needed to pay brokerage fees of 5000-6000THB (M M T Aung, K Archavanitkul and H H Pyne, 1997). This fee became 10,000-15,000 THB in 2008 (Mon, 2010). Many workers are being arrested and even death due to illegal migration as well as its consequences (Mon, 2010).

2.9 Distribution

According to the Ministry of Labor Thailand, the total number of registered workers in 2020 was 2,482,256. Nevertheless, Mekong Migration Network estimated that in 2020, the amount of total Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand including both legal and illegal was about 4 million. Apart from the Northeast region, Myanmar migrant workers are distributed throughout Thailand including Bangkok, Northern and Southern regions, and Border regions (Hatsukano, 2019). The most crowded provinces are Bangkok, Samutsakorn, Tak, Samutprakan, Ranong, Pathum Thani, Surat Thani, Songkhla, Phuket, and Chon Buri (Chantavanich, Supang and Vungsiriphisal, Premjai, 2012). Most Myanmar workers are working in the construction field followed by agriculture, Agric-processing, and food-related sectors. The rest work at meat processing, recycling, metal sales, garment business, plastic business, electronics, restaurants (Department of Employment, Ministry of Labor, Thailand, 2016).

2.10 Employment Conditions and Wages

Because of floating laws of labor in Thailand, the lives of migrant workers are harsh. Even though the government provides the Thai Labor Protection Act in 1998 including standard working hours, sick leaves, maternity leaves, and protection of women from dangerous works, Myanmar workers still need to do over working hours without relevant payment. Their regulations are determined by individual employers. For instance, official working hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm in Seafood processing and garment factories. However, the actual working hours of migrant workers are up to midnight and sometimes even until 2-3 am. Moreover, they do not get sick leaves while they are ill in some conditions (Mon, 2010).

The minimum wage of migrant workers in Thailand is 300THB per day. There are differences in wages according to distributed places, gender, and possession of work permits. Some are paid lower than the minimum wage and some get higher than that. 65% of migrant workers without temporary work permits receive lower than half of the minimum wage. More female workers are not paid according to the official minimum wage. Most of the migrant workers in non-border areas such as Bangkok, Samut Sakhon, and Surat Thani get minimum wages while their counterparts in the border regions do not receive full minimum wage. For instance, in Tak province, 91.5% of workers are paid lower than minimum wage (International Organization for Migration and Asian Research Center for Migration, 2013). Not only unofficial low salaries, sometimes they delay paying wages. In some conditions, workers do not receive any payment (Mon, 2010).

2.11 Obstacles

Most of the Myanmar workers cannot get full protection and exact labor right because of their illegal status. Whenever they are broken labor rights, they are too scared to complain about it (Mon, 2010). Although the government provided National Labor Laws for migrant workers, they are not practiced (Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008, 2009). Lack of sanitation, crowded situations, and poorly prepared materials cause the migrants working at construction sites, factories, and agricultural fields to acquire health problems. To illustrate, occupational incidents, sleep disorders, mental health problems, and exhaustion (Mon, 2010). Moreover, they also faced severe problems like drug abuse and HIV/AIDS (Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008, 2009).

Women are more suffered harsh conditions than men because of their nature of gender. Women who go abroad and work without proper protection are used to be victims of sexual abuse by their employers, human traffickers as well as local authorities. In 2003, according to UNICEF (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund), about 10,000 Burmese girls are being trafficked as sex workers into Thailand every year. Sexual harassments and sexual abuses in the workplace are quite common. As a result, female workers also face the problems of unwanted pregnancy. Performing proper antiseptic abortion procedures in hospitals is expensive in Thailand. Therefore,

poor low-income girls usually choose back street procedures to solve these problems. Consequently, they suffer complications of septic abortion such as bleeding, collapse, shock, and even death (Htay, 2016).

2.12 Economic Contribution on Thailand

Myanmar migrant workers can contribute to enormous economic growth in Thailand (Mon, 2010). Migrant workers can serve as the backbone for Thailand's Economy. They cover most of the basic requirements of export industries. Moreover, Myanmar migrant workers play a crucial role in the labor force by filling the works that are not willing by Thai workers (IOM, Op-ed: Migrants - A Catalyst for Thailand 4.0, 2017). About three percent of the labor force in Thailand is occupied by registered migrant workers. In the fishing industry, migrant workers account for 25% of employees in total. Average 2.3% of national income per year or about 760 million THB per year is contributed by migrant workers (Mon, 2010).

2.13 Hope for Return

With the political reforms and economic growths in Myanmar after 2011, specific amounts of irregular migrant workers hope to return to Myanmar. They are waiting for a better economy, job opportunities, and better payment in Myanmar. Democracy, political stability, economic development, and peace can bring them back to Myanmar. Returned people from foreign countries can transfer knowledge and techniques to their homeland. It can also boost the development of the nation (Htay, 2016). Many workers accumulate assets in Thailand to build their own business when they go back to Myanmar. But some are happy with current conditions in Thailand. 21.1% of migrant workers do not willing to go back. Even 10.8% never think about going back. Nevertheless, 54.9% of workers want to go back within 1-2 years (Chantavanich, Supang and Vungsiriphisal, Premjai, 2012).

Myanmar has been in turmoil in condition since 1st February 2021. Against the military dictatorship, the United States and European countries made sanctions again. Their primary aim is to halt juntas. People throughout the country try to restore

democracy with their utmost effort. The country's condition is now unpredictable. Furthermore, the days to return home of Myanmar migrant workers are still far and far.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Questions

What are the factors driving the migration of people from Myanmar to Thailand? What is the story behind them before moving to Thailand? What are their difficulties of struggling in Thailand? What are their hopes for the future?

3.2 Research Objective

The main objective is to validate the influences of political and economic instabilities on the lives of citizens by exploring factors initiating migration. In addition, it is also aimed to demonstrate how difficult in certain groups of people to struggle with their lives while others are flowing their live streams conveniently. By conducting this research, it can be expressed those poor lives of Myanmar Migrant Workers in Thailand. Furthermore, it can demonstrate their daily lives, employment conditions, and future dreams. This research can highlight the changing of living standards by moving to a country with abundant job opportunities. Lastly, this research can compare the economic conditions of the original country with the host country and can draw the solution of how important the labor force is for the development of the economy as well as how human resource drainage impacts the original country.

3.3 Research Design

This research will establish various reasons why Myanmar migrant workers flee to Thailand. It will dig the emotions, opinions, and attitudes of migrant workers to reflect their lifestyles. Specific expressions and detailed words will be put to draw the whole picture of their life processes. Research that needs to prove how consequences become due to certain causes is more suitable with the qualitative approach than the

quantitative approach that shows simply linked relationships between issues (Maxwell, Causal Explanation, Qualitative Research, and Scientific Inquiry in Education, 2004). Moreover, to show the entire process that leads to certain outcomes, the Qualitative Method is the best way to use (Maxwell, Causal Explanation, Qualitative Research, and Scientific Inquiry in Education, 2004). The qualitative method by interviewing a relatively small group of individuals is easier to understand certain situations, actions, and meaning (Maxwell, Designing a Qualitative Study, 2008). Therefore, the research was approached with “Qualitative Method” by using “Semi-structured Interview” to 15 Myanmar Migrant Workers to explore the in-depth nature of their lives including before and after moving to Thailand, working situations, personal feelings, expectations, and desires.

3.4 Research Population

Targeted groups of the population that participated in this research are Burmese migrant workers with the age of 24 years to 53 years who are working around Bangkok including three sellers, four waiters, three construction workers, four housemaids, and one Air-con servicer.

3.5 Interview Process

Semi-structured interviews for this research were started by taking appointments and consents with interviewees via Messenger, Line, and phone calls in advance. Additional interviewees were collected by the Snowball Approach from current interviewees. Because of COVID 19 pandemic condition, only one person was conducted via face-to-face. The rest are interviewed with the phone call, Messenger video calls, and Line video calls.

One by one interviewing process took about 30 minutes for each person. The time of interviews was negotiated according to availability and out-of-working hours of interviewees. Before taking every interview, they were initiated talking about the matters that are not related to the interview to build a good relationship so that they are willing to explore their life stories exactly. Then, explained the purpose of the

research and why they are asked to interview. The next step is carefully explanation of all the voice records are kept confidential, and it will not do any screen captures or video records. Interviews were started with general questions about their age, working address, daily or monthly income, and living conditions. After that, asked open-ended questions of “Why they left Myanmar?”, and their conditions before moving to Thailand based on their answers. Interviews were conducted with the same style both online and face-to-face. Throughout the interviews, notes taking, and voice recordings were done by the allowance of interviewees.

3.6 Research Instrument

General background questions and open-ended questions concerning the reasons why they are moving to Thailand were used as the research instrument to understand their living status related to before and after moving to Thailand. Moreover, they were encouraged to express their personal feelings in convenient and secure ways.

3.6.1 General Background Questions

1. What is your age?
2. Where are you working now? Is there any previous working place? If ‘YES’, where and how was the condition in there?
3. How many hours do you have to work per day? How many holidays do you get per month?
4. How many persons in your family?
5. How much is your daily or monthly income?
6. How long have you been in Thailand?
7. How do you want to describe your daily life?

3.6.2 Questions Related to why they moved to Thailand

1. Were you employed or unemployed before moving to Thailand?
If 'YES', what kind of work and how much daily or monthly income? Could the income fulfill your needs?
2. What is your educational background?
3. What kind of house did you possess while you were staying in Myanmar?
4. Did your place include armed conflict areas?
5. When did you leave Myanmar?
6. What is your main reason for leaving Myanmar?
7. What is your dream of working in Thailand?
8. Do you think political instabilities can impact your life?
9. Can you give financial support to your family now?
10. Do your expectation and reality match in Thailand?
11. What are your difficulties with working in Thailand?
12. What are your hopes for your future?
13. What condition of Myanmar do you hope to attract to go back?
14. How do you feel and what is your opinion of the current crisis in Myanmar?
15. Do you think the 1st February Coup in Myanmar can affect your dreams?

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Analysis of Demographic Data

This research was conducted with 15 Myanmar Migrant Workers that include seven males and eight females who are working as waiters, construction workers, housemaids, sellers, and air-con servicers around Bangkok Metropolitan Area. The detailed demographic results are shown in the Table 4.1.

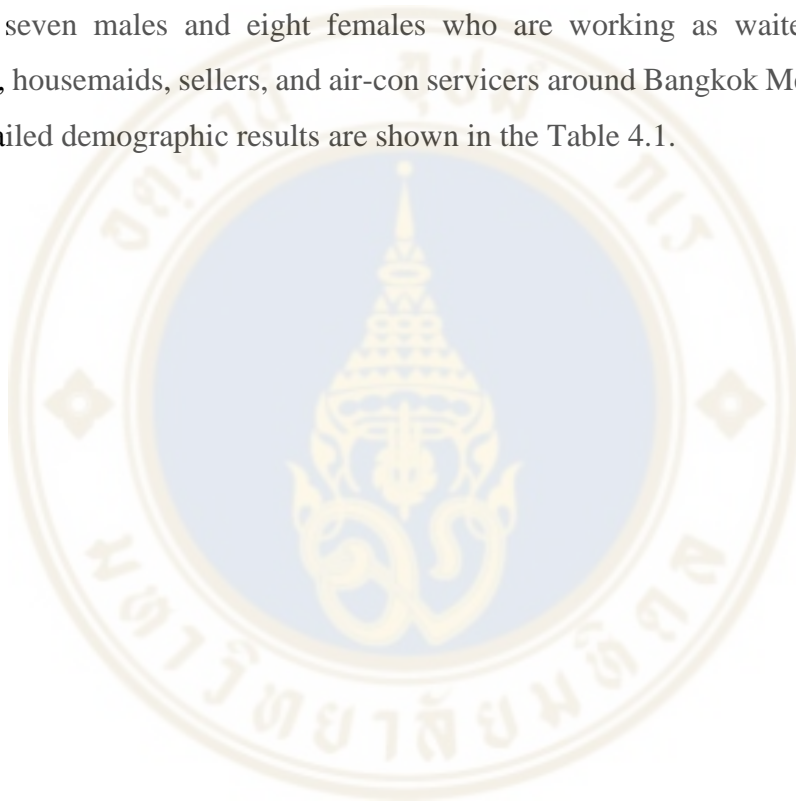


Table 4.1 Demographic Data of Participants

Observed Data	Options	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Age	20-30 years	7	47%
	31-40 years	6	40%
	41-50 years	1	7%
	51-60 years	1	7%
Gender	Male	7	47%
	Female	8	53%
Education Status	Middle school	11	73%
	High school	2	13%
	Pass Matriculation Exam	1	7%
	2 nd -year Distinct Education	1	7%
Current Jobs	Waiter	4	27%
	Construction Worker	3	20%
	Housemaid	4	27%
	Air-con Service	1	7%
	Seller	3	20%
Income per Month	8,000 – 15,000 THB	10	67%
	16,000 – 20,000 THB	3	20%
	Above 20,000 THB	2	13%
Working Hours per Day	8-10 hours	10	67%
	11-13 hours	3	20%
	14-16 hours	2	13%
Holidays per Month	2 days	1	7%
	4 days	9	60%
	5 days	1	7%
	8 days	1	7%
	No specific holidays	3	20%
Length of Staying in Thailand	1-5 years	2	13%
	5-10 years	4	27%
	11-15 years	5	33%
	16-20 years	4	27%
Employment Conditions before moving into Thailand	Employed	8	53%
	Unemployed	5	33%
	Self- employed	2	13%
Housing Status	Bamboo House	6	40%
	Wooden House	7	47%
	Small Brick House	2	13%
Family Members	Under 5 persons	3	20%
	5 – 10 persons	12	80%

According to the interviews, the demographic data of migrant workers such as age, gender, education status, current jobs, income, working conditions, employment

status before moving into Thailand, housing status, and family members were recorded. The followings are analysis of these demographic data with illustrations.

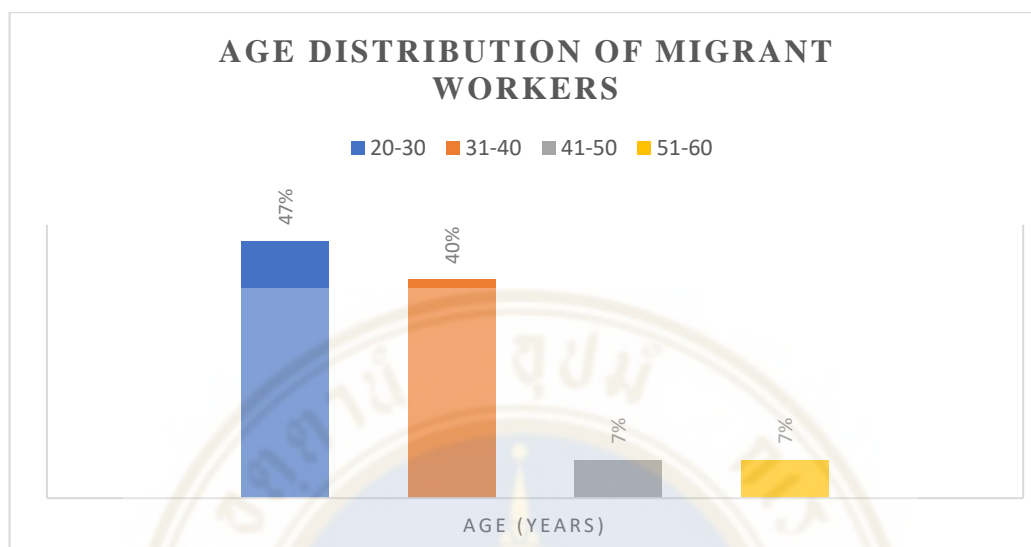


Figure 4.1 Age Distribution of Migrant Workers

The youngest age is 24 years while the oldest one is 53 years. The majority of them are ranged between 20-30 years of age and occupied 47% of the total research population. There is only one person (7%) for both ranges of 41-50 years and 51-60 years. According to these findings, it can be regarded as there is no under-aged employment and over-aged employment in this research population. Figure 4.1

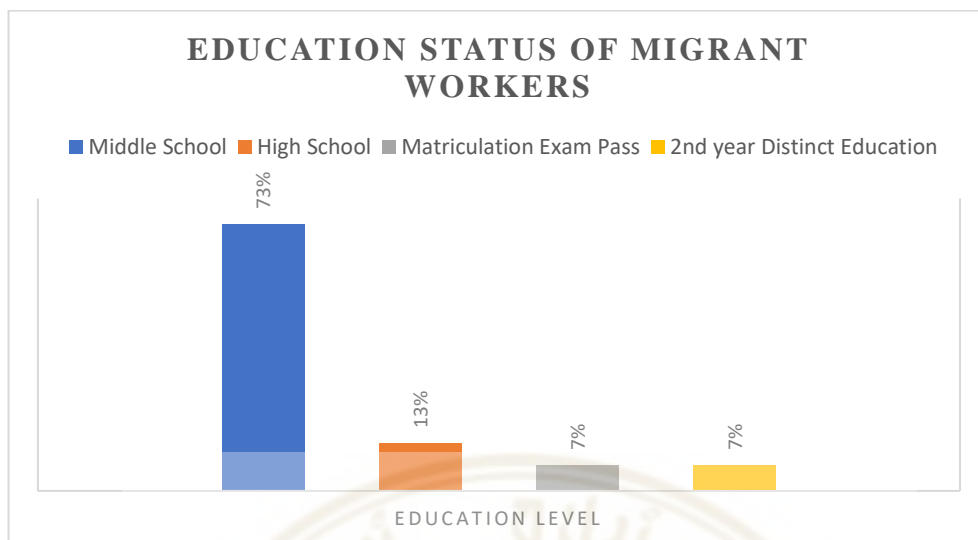


Figure 4.2 Education Status of Migrant Workers

Regarding the education status of migrant workers, none of them finish persuading their education. Most are middle-school level which is 73% of the total. A low level of education status also drives people to migrate. There are only 13% who could study until high school level. Other seven percent passed the matriculation exam. The rest seven percent could join universities; however, they were not graduated. According to interviews, all the migrant workers cannot continue their education because of their poverty. Figure 4.2

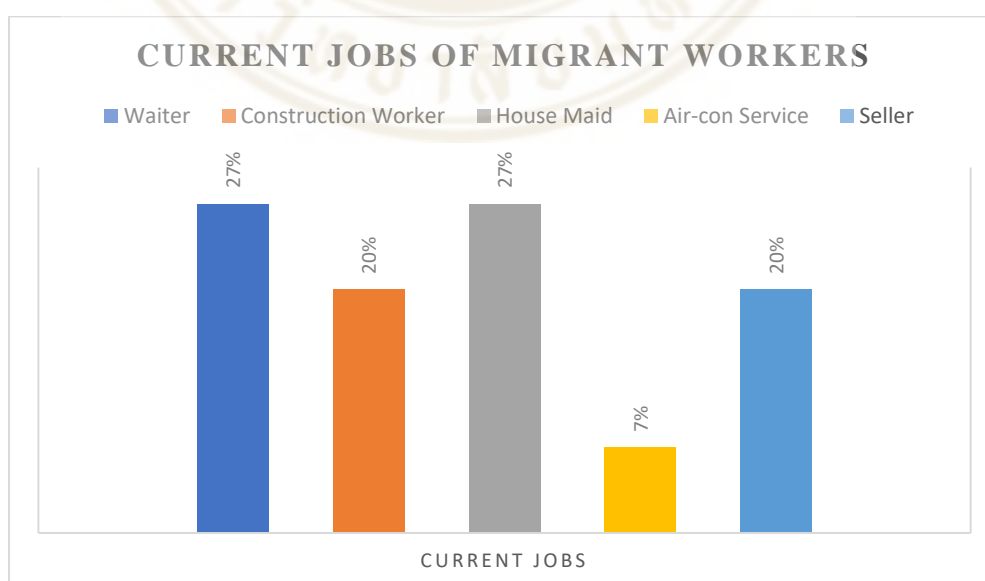


Figure 4.3 Current Jobs of Myanmar Migrant Workers

Among the types of works, the waiter and the housemaid are the most common works for migrant workers of this research population. These two types of jobs are accountable 27% for each category. There is only one person (7%) who is working as an air-con serviceman. Another two categories; construction workers and sellers are 20%, respectively. In this research, there are no factory workers because of the COVID-19 crisis at the time of the research. Figure 4.3

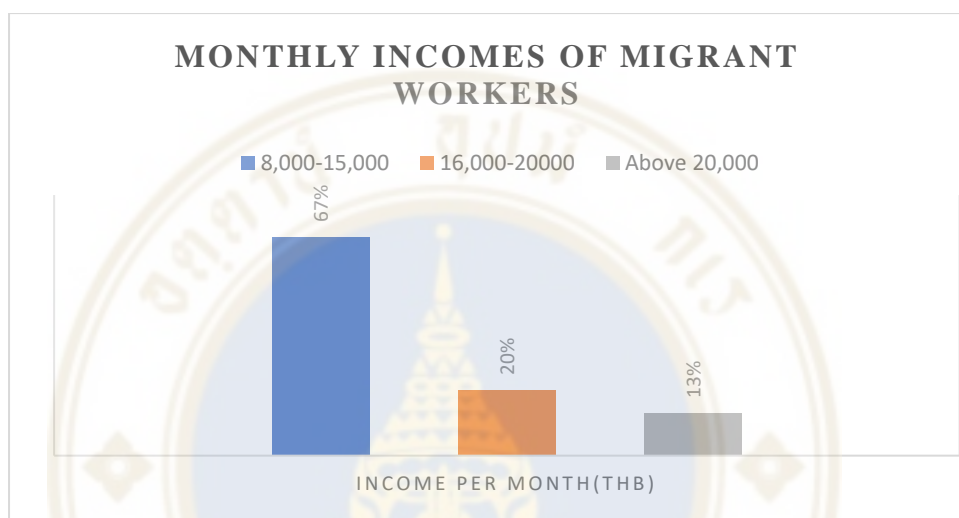


Figure 4.4 Monthly Incomes of Migrant Workers

Among the migrant workers, 67% get a monthly income between 8000-15,000 THB. Therefore, no one gets lower than the official minimum daily payment. It is aligned with the study of Myat Mon in which it was described as the minimum wages per day is 300THB (Mon, 2010). The remaining 20% get 16,000-20,000 THB per month. The last 13% get above 20,000 THB as their monthly income. According to these findings, payments are fair enough for Myanmar Migrant Workers in Bangkok province. Figure 4.4

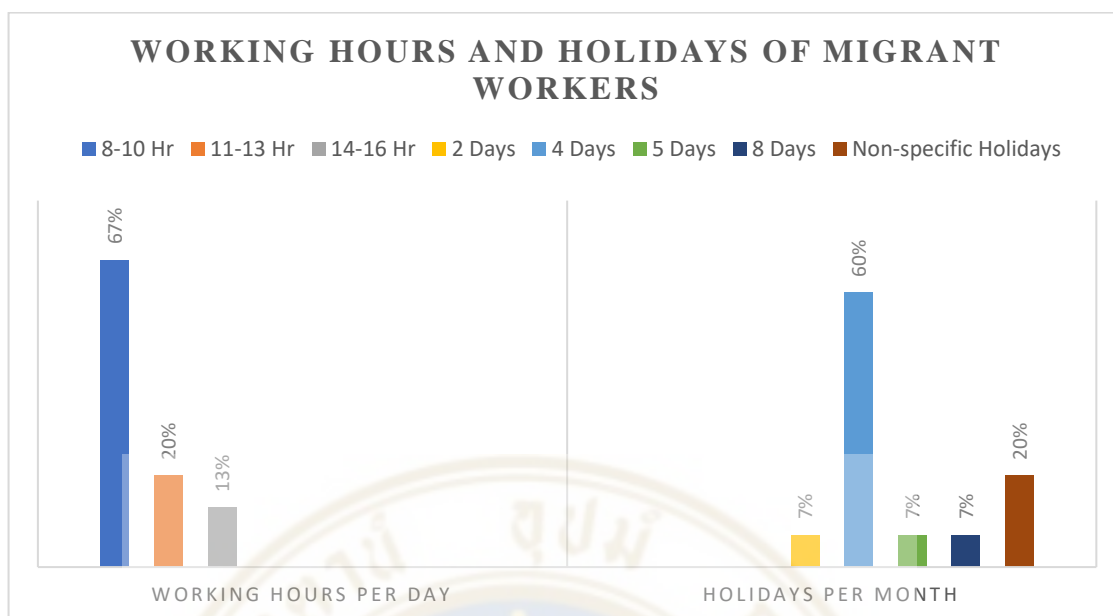


Figure 4.5 Working Hours and Holidays Status of Migrant Workers

Most migrant workers (67%) are working 8-10 hours per day. It can be regarded as most of the migrant workers in Bangkok province need to work according to National Labor Laws. Another 20% of them have to work up to 13 hours. Only 13% need to work 14-16 hours per day. Sixty percent of them get holidays of 4 days per month. Some people: 20% do not have specific holidays which means they are paid daily, and they can rest whenever they want without any payment. The rest get holidays of 2 days, 5 days, and 8 days, respectively. They all are accountable 7% for each. By these findings, the majority of them get enough holidays except the one who gets only 2 days per month. Figure 4.5

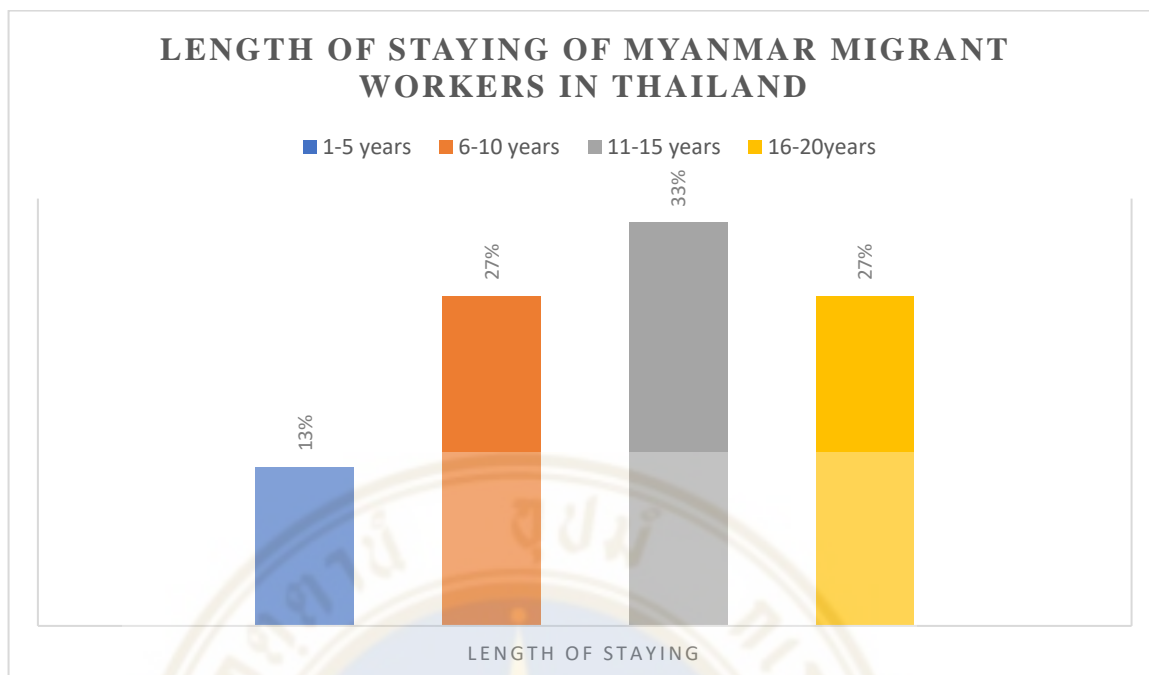


Figure 4.6 Length of Staying of Migrant Workers

It was observed as 33% of the research population are living in Thailand for 11-15 years. Another two groups of 6-10 years and 16-20 years are 27% for each. Only 13% is living in Thailand for 1-5 years. Because of prolonged living experience, most of them are quite stable in their current situation. By this result, it can be assumed that those migrant workers can stay for a long time because they are quite comfortable with their current jobs. If not, they will no longer stay in Thailand. Figure 4.6

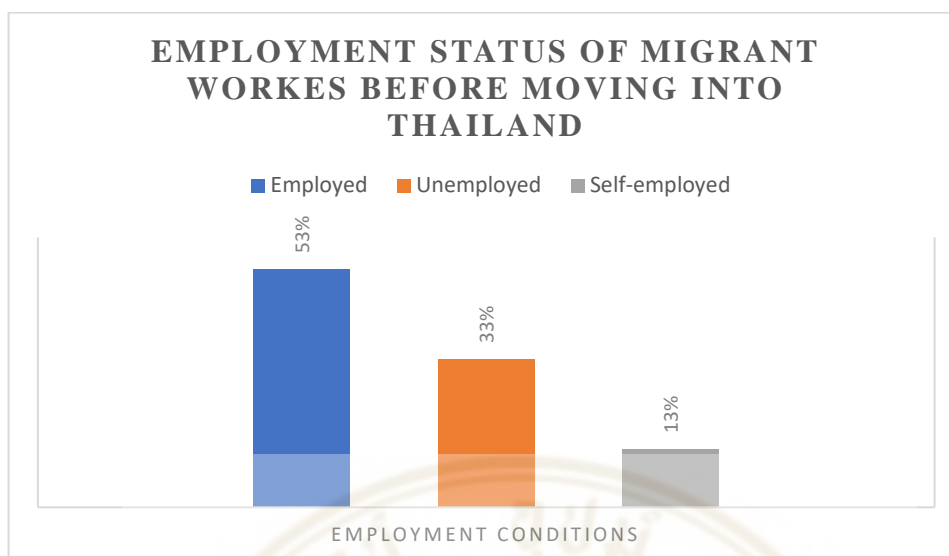


Figure 4.7 Employment Status of Migrant Workers before Moving into Thailand

As for the employment status, 53% of migrant workers are already employed before moving into Thailand. Another 33% did not have any jobs before moving into Thailand. The rest 13% were working in their own workplaces. These findings are quite different from the research of IOM and ARCM conducted during 2013. In which it was described as 39% are employed, 40% are self-employed, and 21% are jobless (International Organization for Migration and Asian Research Center for Migration, 2013). It might be due to differences in the research population and the time as well as quantity of participants. Even though most of them were employed in Myanmar, they all did not get enough income to cover their daily needs. Figure 4.7

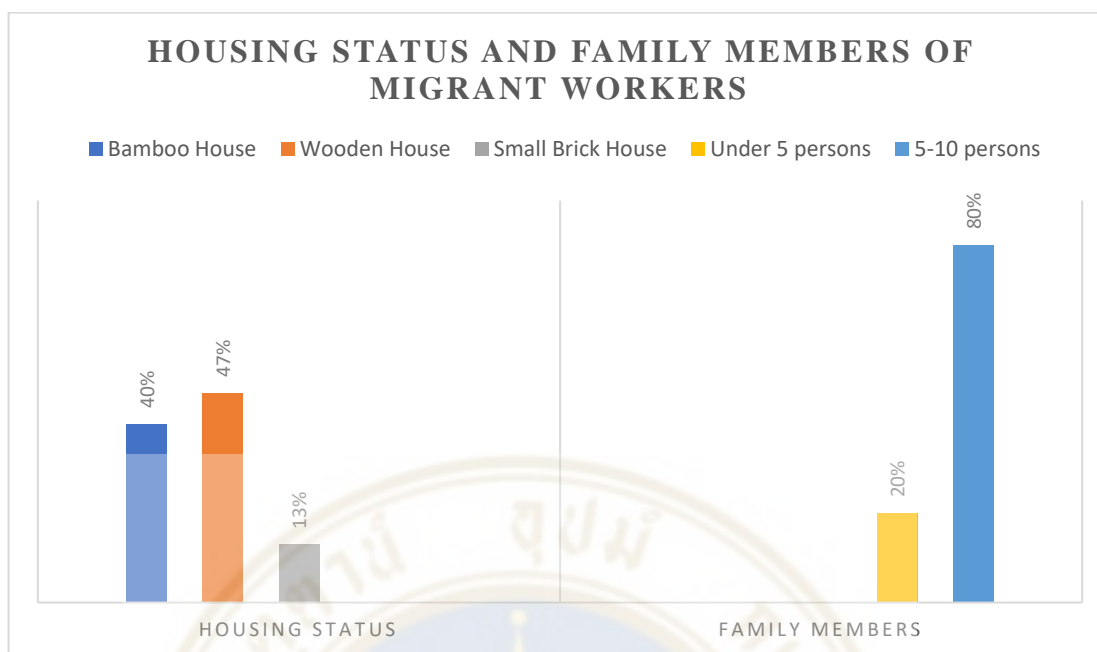


Figure 4.8 Housing Status and Family Members of Migrant Workers

The majority of migrant workers do not have well-protective houses in their hometowns. Almost half (47%) of them can live in wooden houses. Another 40% can live in bamboo houses. Only 13% possessed small brick houses. It can indicate the poverty of migrant workers. It is also a factor that drives them to migrate to find better living standards.

The most significant common feature of migrant workers is multiple family members. The migrant workers who have 5-10 family members in this research population are 80%. The increased number of family members leads to poverty and hardness in solving the daily family needs. Only 20% have family members of less than five persons. Figure 4.8

4.2 Analysis of In-depth Interviews Findings

The followings are findings and analysis of all interviews with 15 migrant workers. They were asked questions according to the research instrument. Among them, the most common answer quotes were collected and collaborated with discussions. The numbers (1), (2), (3), ..., (15) represent the number of candidates who said each respective quote. (Table 4.2)

Table 4.2 List of Candidates

Candidate Number	Method of Interview	Age (Years)	Gender	Education	Current Job	Income (THB)
1	Face to face	27	Male	Grade-8	Waiter	9,500/month
2	Phone Call	53	Male	Grade-8	Construction worker	750/day
3	Messenger Video Call	26	Female	Grade-8	House maid	14,500/month
4	Messenger Video Call	28	Male	Grade-7	Air-con Service	750/day
5	Line Video Call	28	Female	Grade-11	Seller	15,000/month
6	Messenger Video Call	36	Female	Grade-8	House maid	13,000/month
7	Messenger Video Call	44	Female	2 nd -year distinct education	House maid	12000/month
8	Messenger Video Call	24	Male	Pass Matriculation exam	Waiter	10,000/month
9	Line Video Call	32	Male	Grade-6	Construction worker	600/day
10	Messenger Video Call	38	Female	Grade-8	Seller	13,000/month
11	Messenger Video Call	35	Male	Grade-6	Waiter	331/day
12	Messenger Video Call	27	Male	Grade-8	Waiter	17,000/month
13	Messenger Video Call	39	Female	Grade-6	Construction worker	300/day
14	Messenger Video Call	32	Female	Grade-10	Seller	16,000/month
15	Line Video Call	29	Female	Grade-6	House maid	13,000/month

4.2.1 Description of Daily Life

Migrant workers were asked, “How would you like to describe your daily life?” to explicit their daily conditions. Some answered that their lives are still quite hard. Not only are they struggling with their living cost but also, they are collecting money to provide for their families. Working makes them exhaust in sometimes. **“Tired because of over workload in some days (9)”**. **“The work is too tired in some time (10)”**. However, they continued they are tolerable for this fatigue.

“It is difficult because it is not my home, and I am trying to be the best for everything as much as I can (1)”. Candidate (1) is a waiter from a restaurant, and their shop is not operating currently because of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangkok. He continued that during normal situations, there was tip money given by guests. They could collect extra money from this. Nevertheless, it is impossible for him at present. Some restaurants provide half of the salary even they are closed. **“It is quite hard because of COVID-19. Our restaurant is closed now, and we get only half of our salary (8).”**

COVID-19 pandemic makes a lot of trouble for everyone in the world. Myanmar migrant workers are also one of the population groups who are suffered many obstacles due to the spreading of this disease. Some are even lacking jobs because their workplaces are closed without any payment. **“Because of COVID-19, the restaurant that I am working in is closed and I faced many difficulties due to lacking a job. Now I have nothing to do (11).”**

However, most of them have already adapted to their specific environment. They have been trying to smooth everything with them. As a result, almost all are quite stable. **“I am living in a place provided by my work. My life is quite normal right now and everything is fine (2)”**. The prolonged living status also provides to learn everything in their surroundings. Therefore, they could adjust according to their experience. **“Because of prolonged living in Thailand, my life is quite stable. I can choose the works what I want within my capacity (3)”** said Candidate-3 who has been living in Thailand for about 11 years.

Some are working under kind employers. Their lives are relatively comfortable compared to those who are working under unsympathetic employers. **“My life is quite stable now because my boss is kind to me (6)”**. **“My boss is quite good,**

and I think my life is just like normal (15)”. “My boss is kind enough, so I am ok right now. Sometimes, I feel tired but not always (5)”. “I did not face too many difficulties because when I was working as a housemaid, my boss was kind to me. I felt like my home. Not too busy and I got holidays to go outside. I got the chance to participate in festivals such as Songkran (14)”.

Some are satisfied with their lives because they are doing what they want. **“Right now, I am satisfied with my job as well as my life because I am doing what I love which is electronic work, and income is quite enough (4).”**

These findings indicate that the lives of migrant workers are quite hard, yet they are struggling every day to get adaptation. There is a relief factor that is the mindset of employers. There are many employers with various attitudes. Some treat warmly to their employees. This is a fact that was not included in the previous studies. In this world, good and bad are always together. Some employers are kind to their inferiors. Nevertheless, some consider only their benefits. The workers who are working under kind heart employers are blessed than others. Moreover, at the time of the research, almost all migrant workers get the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, their lives are quite hard comparing with normal situations.

4.2.2 Difficulties of Working in Thailand

It is interesting that their problems and obstacles of working in Thailand. Some expressed the language barrier as one of the difficulties. **“The language barrier is the main problem. It took some time to get understanding each other with my boss (6)”.** Myanmar language and Thai language are quite different. They mentioned that it is too difficult to try to speak another language immediately after arriving in Thailand. However, they tried as much as they could. In this situation, all of them can speak fluently in Thai.

Apart from the language barrier, finding jobs is also another difficulty for them. They must approach with many outside payments to get a job. There are many brokers in the Myanmar migrant worker’s market. Even once they achieved to get a job, the perceived balance between wages and workload is unsatisfactory. **“I faced language problems and difficulties in finding jobs when I arrived in Thailand. Some job employers do not pay appropriate salary after employing (1)”.** **“Finding jobs and**

the language barrier are my main problems at the start of reaching in Thailand (8)". "To find the job and I had the experience of staying several months without any job. And we were not given enough salary at first (11)".

It was detected that making official documents is also one of their tough problems. **"It is really hard for me to get a passport and a work permit (12)". "Work permit and passport making is also a difficult issue (7)".** Migrant workers themselves have the feeling of inferiority and insecurity because of living in a country that is not their homeland. Illiteracy and being unofficial status of their living push them to get fears to conduct with official departments like the Embassy of Myanmar. Because multiple steps are required to get an official document, they are afraid to go through this procedure in general.

The majority of the research population did not mention the over workload inappropriate with human capacity except the Candidate-13 who is working as a construction worker currently. She faced unwanted over workload while working at a restaurant at the start of arriving in Thailand. **"When I was working at the restaurant, I had to wake up at 5 am, then work. This shop is too busy. So, I did not get the chance to eat my daily meals on time. I ate my first meal at 1 or 2 pm as the breakfast and my lunchtime is 4 pm daily. My duty off time is midnight. After that, I could prepare for my dinner. I ate my dinner at 1 am, and then woke up at 5 am again (13)".** She worked for 2 years at that restaurant with 2,000 THB per month. She expressed it was the harshest time in her life.

Interestingly, whether they have already aware of these difficulties or not before coming into Thailand. According to findings, most are aware of some problems. For instance, they may be cheated by brokers, dangers of human trafficking, working without proper payments, and sexual harassment in workplaces. **"Difficulties are already expected (1)". "I've already known about all the difficulties of working in Thailand (12)".** Some got the tolerance because the troubles that they faced in Myanmar are worse. **"I faced many difficulties in Myanmar, therefore I already expected obstacles before moving to Thailand (4)".** But some did not have awareness of such obstacles. Even they expected better conditions than reality. **"I thought that it would be nice. But it is quite hard to struggle here (8)." "I didn't expect the troubles (13)".**

Comparing with previous studies, in this research population, no one faced horrible situations such as sexual abuse, health problems, unofficial low payment, heavy workload irrelevant with human capacity. The language barrier is a difficulty that was not mentioned in previous research. Difficulties in finding jobs and making official documents can also be considered as new findings.

The language barrier is one of the biggest troubles that they needed to try to overcome. Despite many job opportunities in Thailand, migrant workers are still struggling to find jobs for long-term work. Inappropriate working hours and imbalance over workloads are almost extinction nowadays by this research population. Most of them are already noticed that hurdles. Curiously, why they came into Thailand even they had already known about these obstacles.

4.2.3 The Main Reason for Moving into Thailand

Every interviewee did not want to leave their homeland. They decided to come to Thailand as their last grass to grab for the terrible troubles in their families. Some are responsible persons for their siblings. They are also only one hope for their parents. **“I am the eldest daughter in my family. I wanted to proceed with my education. I wanted to pass the matriculation examination, and I wanted to join a university. But we had a lot of debts because of building a new house. So, the main reason for coming to Thailand is to pay the debts as soon as possible. I did not want to come here. But this is my responsibility (14)”.**

They faced severe financial problems because of many debts. **“....to support financially to my family because at that time we were depending on the support of kinsfolk (5).”** **“I came here to solve the financial difficulties of my family and to pay the debts (1)”.** **“The main reason to come here is to solve the financial problems of my family (2)”.** Some are necessary to provide the cost for medical treatments of their family. In other words, they came to Thailand to save the lives of their parents. **“Our family faced difficulties because of my mother’s illness. We did not have enough money to treat my mother. That is why I came to Thailand (6)”.** As for Candidate-7, although she was fighting everything in Thailand, her mother had passed away before she got the stable condition as well as collected enough money to provide financially. **“The main reason is to provide financial aid for my mom who**

was seriously ill at that time. But 2 years later, before I could not give financial support, my mom had passed away (7)”.

With the financial difficulties, scanty of job opportunities also drive Myanmar people to migrate because they did not have any entrance of money. **“I came here because of the scanty of jobs in Myanmar. I wanted to get a good job that can make me be the one who can support enough financial income for my family (13)”.** They are not coming to Thailand because of their self-desires of wealth. They all want only to support their families. **“I came here to solve the financial problems of my family (2)”.** **“My main aim of coming here is to provide a better life for my family (4)”.**

They do not hope to be wealthy. However, they only hope to solve the problems of families, to treat the illness of their parents, and to pay the debts to pledgers. **“To provide my mother and my family is the priority. I have nothing special dream (1).”** **“I only hope to support my parents as my dream (9).”** **“... I just enough if I can support my family (15).”**

Currently, they all can support their families financially as they wish. Candidate-2, a construction worker said, **“I can provide financial support to both of my children until they finish their bachelor's degrees (2)”.** **“I can support my mother. My mother is enough only with my support (14)”.** Nevertheless, Candidate-11 cannot provide money to his family as usual because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to these findings, it is obvious that the key factor that drives Myanmar to migrate is poverty. People resort to migrating to another unfamiliar place because of their harsh difficulties added by lack of job opportunities due to delayed economic development stem from political mismanagement. These factors are consistent with the study of Castelli (2018). The major driving macro-element of Myanmar migrant workers are lack of job opportunities and not enough income. Political instabilities stand as the meso-element. Multiple family members can be considered as the micro-element for migration (Castelli, 2018). The study of IOM and ARCM in 2013 expressed as about 74.9% of migrant workers came to Thailand because of higher income and plenty of job opportunities (International Organization for Migration and Asian Research Center for Migration, 2013). All migrant workers in this

research population also moved to Thailand to seek better salaries and job prospects to solve their families' financial problems.

4.2.4 Migrant Workers and Education

Those children from deprived families capitalized on their lives by working in a foreign country. Moreover, they gave up all the opportunities for their coming lives, especially education. Children in Myanmar carry their bags and leave their warm-hearted nests to solve their destitution while children in other developed countries competitively seek education to be better future.

According to the demographic findings, none of the migrant workers are graduated. Most were stopped their schooling at middle-school age, the period of a child that can learn everything from the environment or start to detect the various problems of their families. It can be regarded as the harshest time in their lives to choose between education and family. **“When I was young, the economic condition of my family was quite hard. Therefore, I left school and I tried for my daily life by myself. ... I sold ice-bars in the streets when I left school (11)”. “...I wanted to proceed with my education. I wanted to pass the matriculation examination and I wanted to join a university... (14)”.**

“At that time, I was studying at school. But my parents could not effort to support every child in our family. I felt inferior and sad. Then, I decided to quit school by considering the future of my younger brothers. It was not easy to stop my education, but I thought that my younger brothers to be not like me (12)” said 27 years old waiter who stopped his education at Grade-8 for his family. They sacrificed to be an effort for siblings and parents. In their lives, starvation is more horrible than illiteracy. They could not stand looking down on their parents by others. **“.... We had to borrow money from others. We got money only they felt pity for us. My mother encouraged me to proceed with my studies. I did not want to go to school at that time because I could feel with my mother. My mother was subdued by others because we did not have money. Therefore, I came to Bangkok to get more money as much as I can (13)”.**

In Myanmar, the cost of education is cheap. Every child just needs to go to school only. The policy allows everyone to go to school, however, fate does not allow

it to be. Some children are going around the streets to sell ice bars. They are not sure to go to school the next morning. The government usually announces, “Education for Everyone”. In reality, there are more important matters than education for some lives. Every answer in this research indicates that they stopped studying not because they are unfathomable but because they had no other choice.

All these consequences are based on political instabilities and insufficient economic development. Myanmar has been living under military control for many years. The country is disorganized in every sector. With the release of Public Leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in 2010, the hope of Myanmar people is growing again to move to the developed country. But everyone’s desire is destroyed by the 1st February 2021 Coup.

4.2.5 Effects of the Coup on Migrant Workers

Migrant workers hope to go back to Myanmar when the economy is developed. They feel upset and disappointed after hearing about the coup. **“I feel incredibly angry about the coup because our country was quite able to control COVID 19. But the military destroyed it (1). “I condemn seriously. I cannot accept it. It should not happen at all (5)”.** They believe that the country will not develop under the military regime. **“.... If the coup can make the country develop, do it. But, as far as I know, there are no developed countries under military regimes except China and Russia (4)”.** **“I feel sad. I do not want my country to be like that. I want my country to develop like other countries (6).”** **“Everyone likes freedom. The coup should not happen, and it is due to selfish of a person. They learn from former juntas like Ne Win to make the coup. If those people who take advantage of the country are still present, our country will not develop (11)”.**

Everyone does not want to go back to the past. They do not want to allow the next generation to be like them. **“I wish to win our mother, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. I do not want a military dictatorship. We have been living for a long period under military control. The country was not developed. I do not want to be the next generation like us. I wish my next generation to get freedom and be able to do whatever they want with their own decision (3)”.**

Some are sad every day because of the killing and shooting of innocent unarmed protestors. They want to stop this situation as soon as possible. **“I feel sad, and I am worried about my mother. I also worry about the whole country. I see the sad news every day and I cannot do anything to help. I think everyone does not want this condition. (11)”**. **“.... I also sad for those people who were killed at protests.... (13)”**.

The coup effects not only their feelings but also their conditions in Thailand. They are not easy to do the official process like the Civilian Government Era. **“During the era of NLD Government, Myanmar Embassy office was very functioning, and we could get so much help. But, after the coup, the Myanmar Embassy Office has not been functioning as previously and they do not provide help as usual (1). “We can proud during the period of the civilian government. At that time, everything was smooth. But right now, I feel like going back to previous years before the NLD government. The processes in the Embassy office are delay now and we are facing many difficulties (5)”**. It points out the country starts to be disorganized in the foreign relationship function. It can be regarded that the conditions under the government that value the citizens and the government that does not interest the citizens are completely different.

The World Migration Report by IOM in 2018 expressed civil wars and dictatorships are also driving factors for migration (IOM, World Migration Report, 2018). The coup of 1962 is the main cause of decreasing economic development of Myanmar. It is also the major driving factor to migrate Myanmar workers. It has happened again currently. The coup makes them split far away from the road to come to their homes.

4.2.6 Home Coming Dreams of Myanmar Migrant Workers

Despite the good environment, the ease of living standard, and the attractive income, Thailand will never become the home of migrant workers with warm family life which is the one that everybody in the world wants to have. Some have the hope to own a small business in Myanmar. They plan to collect money as much as they can. After that, they will go back to Myanmar and live with their family. **“My future dream**

is to go back to our country and to do a business (14)”. “I hope to stay with my mother. She is now getting old, so she may need an assistant to live with her (11)”.

The military destroyed all their hopes. In this condition, all of them do not want to go back again. They do not live in the situation that they faced previously when they were young. **“I feel broken of all my dreams (14). “At first, we have the plan to go back in the next 2 years. But the military destroys our plan (2)”. “I will never go back as long as the military regime continues. I do not feel I am safe under military control (5).” “I would like to own a business in Myanmar (10)”. “My dream is to collect money and to do own business in Myanmar (14)”. “I wish to build the house and to do own business in Myanmar (5)”.**

The study of Chantavnich, Supang, and Vungsiriphisal, Premjai in 2012 indicated that 54.9% of Myanmar migrant workers want to come back after getting off a better economy, job opportunities, and better salaries (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal, 2012). Everyone wants to come back to Myanmar in this research population. The percentage difference might be due to the difference in the number of participants. Moreover, 2012 is the period of the USDP government which is the civilian government completely controlled by the military. Therefore, the population in 2012 could not see the changes and development during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s era (2015-2020).

Some of them dream about owning shelters to live with their family. **“At that time, our house was not too good and not protect enough from various seasons. So, I wanted to build a new house for my mother (13)”. “....to provide my mom finically and to rebuild our house in Myanmar (5)”. “I would like to own a house (7)”. “My dream is to collect money and to build a house (6)”.** If they were born in a country that can protect its citizens, they did not need to worry about such a small issue.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Regarding the question of “Why Myanmar Migrant Workers Flee to Thailand?”, the fundamental solution is “Poverty”. Myanmar is a country that was suppressed its economic development by the prolonged military regime started in 1962. The economy of Myanmar was disorganized and dissociated due to mismanagement by the military government. General Ne Win cut the links of Myanmar with the world by his awful policy; **“The Burmese Way to Socialism”**. Myanmar citizens suffered these effects for long period. Productivity of the country was quite delayed than other developed countries. Not only uneducated poor people but also educated people left Myanmar because of irrelevant salary payments and complicated working environments with a lot of bias. The country suffered the double negative effect of delayed economic development, and loss of human power.

This research can explicit what are the impacts of the government that took the power without recognition of people. Deprivation and abundance of people are mainly dependent on the government that takes full responsibility for the country. Myanmar Workers in Thailand migrated because they could not stand the hard conditions in each family. Delayed economic development and scanty job opportunities also push them to go away from their country.

According to the push and pull theory of Lee, poverty, lack of job opportunities, political instabilities of Myanmar play the role as push factors. Economic development, plenty of job vacancies, and higher wages in Thailand can be considered as pull factors (Lee, 1966).

At the time of the research, Myanmar has been chaotic in condition due to the military dictatorship and the COVID-19 crisis. The economy is nearly collapsed, and a lot of foreign investments come back to their origins. Most migrant workers have the willingness to go back to Myanmar after the economic reform that was started

visualizing during the NLD government era. However, in the current situation, the specific answer cannot be stated for the future of every Myanmar citizen including migrant workers.

5.2 Recommendation

Recently, on 15th June, to promote Fair and Ethical Recruitment in the Greater Mekong Subregion including Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Labor jointly held a virtual Regional Conference with Recruitment Agencies. This conference mainly discussed the ongoing employment eco-system in each country. Moreover, implementing more policies and measures of ethical recruitment standards was also debated (IOM, Ministry of Labour Jointly Host a Regional Conference on Promoting Fair and Ethical Recruitment Across Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand, 2021). The government of Thailand attempts to protect the rights of migrant workers. But it would be better if the authorities dig until to the basic level to detect actual conditions and check whether migrant workers receive enough labor rights according to established laws or not.

Despite the existence of agencies, they cannot overwhelm the whole migrant worker market. The brokers and illegal third parties are still present. If the government can ban illegal brokers, the job finding process of migrant workers could be efficient. Therefore, government-approved licensed employment agencies should be created as a new business model so that migrant workers can apply for safe and reliable works. Illegitimate agencies and unofficial payments will disappear gradually.

The licensed agencies will provide one-stop service throughout the whole process of job searching including making required documents such as the passport, the work permit, and the working visa. The agencies will prohibit giving service to those people who crossed the border without approval by authorities. By doing this, illegal migration will also be reduced. The agencies should keep in connection with their provided workers and check periodically whether the workplace is relevant with implemented labor rights. If the factories or companies do not follow labor laws, the agencies can put in blacklists so that labor rights can be protected. The government can

help by performing monthly or annual audits to agencies concerning ethics, labor laws, and bribes.

The managers of organizations need to filter strictly illegal migrants before hiring. If an illegal migrant is detected in the company, should be informed to authorities rather than taking advantage of this. Enough payment according to working hours should be checked as well. To communicate directly between workers and senior management levels, the appropriate channels should be opened. For instance- complaint box, request letter, occasional assembly. The organization is also responsible to monitor the agencies whether workers are asked for additional payments or not. Most migrant workers are poor. They need to support financially to their families. Moreover, the companies should provide opportunities to save money so that they can collect and send it again to their family. For instance, monthly reducing of a small amount of the salary, and paying back the accumulated amount at the end of the year.

During the COVID-19 crisis, all the businesses are in emergency conditions. Some companies are closed. Some let their employees quit the job. Some maintain their workforces without payment. Some can pay half of the salary. Migrant workers are also facing the impacts of COVID-19. The effects on housemaids and construction workers are relatively lighter than waiters and factory workers. The companies are struggling with sophisticated financial problems. If they can solve and handle the situation, all employees including migrant workers can also achieve the benefits.

To solve these financial problems, they should utilize effective management plans. All departments in the company should cooperate to implement extensive plans. Analyzing the impacts of pandemics, and the capacity of the company should be accomplished first. Fixed costs should be reduced as much as possible. The inventory should be managed to be in an appropriate condition. Payable for suppliers and banks should be negotiated for delayed payment. Receivables should be collected rashly. Investment plans should be suspended for a certain period. The last, new revenue streams must be created.

As for the site of Myanmar, it is no other solution than to stop the coup because all the events in this research are happened based on the 1962 Coup and Dictatorship. It happened again in 2021. Myanmar needs intervention and help from International Organizations like United Nations. In this condition, the country is only in

turbulence. The State Administration Council, the name given by the military themselves, is not recognized as a government by most of the countries around the world. Praying to be the best is the only way for all Myanmar people and migrant workers.

5.3 Research Limitations

Due to COVID-19 Pandemic, it was not possible to reach crowded Myanmar Migrant workers areas near Bangkok such as Don Mueng, Mahachai, Samusakorn. There are a lot of infected people in these places, and the government decided to be isolated. Therefore, the research was conducted with migrant workers who lived around central Bangkok.

Almost all participants were not able to meet face to face because the cases of COVID-19 in Bangkok is enormously increased at the time of research. Interviewing online is quite tough especially for this research containing a lot of emotional issues. Communication is not effective as the face-to-face interview. For instance, while the candidate is reaching the climax to talking about his or her traumatic events, the researcher got trouble showing sympathy via eye contact. Eye contact can influence our perceptions of others (Bohannon, Leanne S and Herbert, Andrew M and Pelz, Jeff B and Rantanen, Esa M, 2013) . In today's technology, cameras in most devices are attached at the uppermost part of each device. Although participants in the interview are looking at each other on the screen where eyes are seemed to appear, both sides can see that their partner is always looking in the downward direction (Bohannon, Leanne S and Herbert, Andrew M and Pelz, Jeff B and Rantanen, Esa M, 2013). The researcher needs to connect emotionally to all participants by showing sympathy, empathy, and kindness. In addition, honesty and truthfulness are needed to show as well before getting their true painful life stories. Therefore, the online interview may reduce the quality of the research rather than the face-to-face interview.

Myanmar is confronting a double crisis; the coup and COVID-19 during the time of data collection for the research. According to the Ministry of Health and Sport, Myanmar, on 15th July 17, 2021, 4188 new cases, 212,545 in total and total deaths rose to 4346. Moreover, Myanmar people are suffering from a shortage of oxygen supplies.

It leads to the cause of many deaths. Protests and violence by the military have also happened simultaneously. Most migrant workers have their family members in Myanmar. Thus, they are worried about them. Consequently, most are in stressful conditions. It makes lower interest in the interview. Therefore, it was relatively difficult to collect people comparing with normal conditions.

This research would be better if the crises were not happened. For future research, it should be done in normal conditions with an extensive survey and face-to-face in-depth interviews.



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