

โอกาสทางการศึกษาของเด็กย้ายถิ่นในประเทศไทย
: ศึกษากรณีเด็กพม่าในจังหวัดสมุทรสาคร



นาย เซยา ทู

สถาบันวิทยบริการ

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาการพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ

คณะรัฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2549

ISBN: 974-14-3439-1

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

**MIGRANT CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THAILAND:
A CASE STUDY OF MYANMAR CHILDREN IN SAMUT SAKHON
PROVINCE**

Mr. Zeya Thu

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in International Development Studies
Faculty of Political Science
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2006
ISBN: 974-14-3439-1
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

เซยา ทู: โอกาสทางการศึกษาของเด็กย้ายถิ่นในประเทศไทย: ศึกษากรณีเด็กพม่าในจังหวัด
สมุทรสาคร (MIGRANT CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THAILAND: A CASE
STUDY OF MYANMAR CHILDREN IN SAMUT SAKHON PROVINCE) อ.ที่ปรึกษา: รศ.สุรัชชัย
หวั่นแก้ว. 79 หน้า. ISBN 974-14-3439-1

เด็กกว่า 63,000 คนจากประเทศเมียนมาร์ที่อายุต่ำกว่า 12 ถูกนำตัวไปขึ้นทะเบียนเป็นผู้อพยพเข้า
ประเทศไทยในเดือนกรกฎาคม 2547 ซึ่งตัวเลขดังกล่าวอาจจะสูงกว่านี้หากนับรวมไปถึงเด็กซึ่งไม่ได้ขึ้น
ทะเบียน เด็กจำนวนมากยังขาดแคลนสิ่งของที่จำเป็นเพื่อนำไปใช้ในการพัฒนาชีวิต ซึ่งถือเป็นเรื่องหนึ่ง
ที่สำคัญที่สุดสำหรับความต้องการของเด็กผู้อพยพจากประเทศเมียนมาร์ซึ่งอาศัยอยู่ในพื้นที่การศึกษา

จุดมุ่งหมายของการศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้เพื่อที่จะประเมินสถานการณ์การศึกษาของเด็กอพยพจากประเทศ
เมียนมาร์ในประเทศไทยและบ่งชี้ถึงอุปสรรคด้านการศึกษาของพวกเขา

การวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นการศึกษาด้านคุณภาพในจังหวัดสมุทรสาครซึ่งได้สัมภาษณ์แบบเจาะลึกและ
ทบทวนเกี่ยวกับเอกสารโครงสร้าง ข้อมูลหลักได้มาจากการสัมภาษณ์แบบตัวต่อตัวกับเด็กผู้อพยพชาว
เมียนมาร์, ผู้ปกครอง, หลักสูตรจากโรงเรียน, หน่วยงานราชการทางการศึกษา และ เจ้าหน้าที่ขององค์กร
พัฒนาเอกชน ที่ช่วยเหลือเด็กผู้อพยพในงานการศึกษา

การวิจัยดังกล่าวปรากฏว่าการศึกษาของเด็กผู้อพยพในจังหวัดสมุทรสาครมีสามประเภท คือ

1. การศึกษาในประเทศเมียนมาร์
2. การศึกษาในระบบของไทย
3. การศึกษานอกระบบโรงเรียนหรือโรงเรียนสำหรับเด็กอพยพซึ่งก่อตั้งโดย NGOs หรือ
องค์กรทางชุมชนต่าง ๆ สามารถประเมินได้ว่า 10% ของเด็กผู้อพยพจะไปศึกษาที่ประเทศ
เมียนมาร์ 9 – 18% เข้าโรงเรียนในประเทศไทย ในขณะที่ 5 – 8% เข้าโรงเรียนแบบนอก
ระบบสำหรับเด็กอพยพ

การศึกษานี้ได้บ่งชี้ถึงอุปสรรคของการศึกษาของเด็กอพยพว่ามาจากการมีหลายระดับและปัญหาที่
แตกต่างกัน นักวิจัยได้รวมปัญหาด้านที่พักอาศัย/ชุมชน, ปัญหาด้านโรงเรียน และ นโยบายและระบบของ
โรงเรียน ให้เป็นอุปสรรคที่พบด้วย

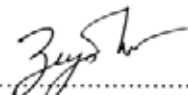
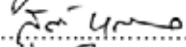
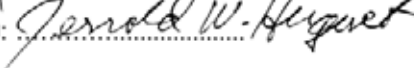
การศึกษานี้สรุปได้ว่าสถานการณ์ของเด็กผู้อพยพจากประเทศเมียนมาร์ด้านการศึกษาที่ต่ำกว่า
มาตรฐานทั่วไป ข้อมูลสามารถแนะนำได้ว่า มติคณะรัฐมนตรี 2548 ที่มุ่งจัดการศึกษาสำหรับเด็กทุกคนใน
ประเทศไทยจะต้องจัดการให้ได้ประสิทธิผลและสนับสนุนโรงเรียนสำหรับเด็กอพยพให้เต็มที่ ขณะเดียวกัน
ควรสนับสนุนให้องค์กรพัฒนาเอกชนมีส่วนร่วมให้การดำเนินการต่าง ๆ จากทั้งสองฝ่าย

สาขาวิชา การพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ
ปีการศึกษา 2549

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต:

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา:

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม:

4881308524: MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
 KEY WORD: EDUCATION/ MYANMAR/ MIGRANT CHILDREN/
 THAILAND/ SAMUT SAKHON

ZEYA THU: MIGRANT CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN
 THAILAND: A CASE STUDY OF MYANMAR CHILDREN IN SAMUT
 SAKHON PROVINCE: ASSOC. PROF. SURICHA WUN'GAEO., 79
 PP.ISBN 974-14-3439-1.

63, 000 children from Myanmar who were under age 12, registered as migrants in July 2004 in Thailand though the number can be higher taking into account unregistered children. Most of the children are deprived of their needs, which are essential for their development in life. One of the most important needs for Myanmar migrant children lies in the area of education.

The objective of the study was to assess the situation of Myanmar migrant children vis-à-vis education in Thailand and to identify the barriers to their education.

The research was a qualitative case-study of Samut Sakhon Province that employed in-depth interviews and a structured document review. The main data were drawn from face-to-face interviews with Myanmar migrant children, their parents, principals from the schools, government officials in the education sector, and NGO staff members who help migrant children in the field of education.

The study found out there are three types of education available for children of migrants in Samut Sakhon: 1) Schools in Myanmar, 2) Formal Thai schools, 3) Informal schools or migrant schools set up by NGOs or community organizations. It is estimated that 10 percent of migrant children go to Myanmar for study. 9 to 18 percent enter Thai schools while 5 to 8 percent join informal migrant schools.

The study identified barriers to migrant children's education that are multi-layered and multi-faceted. They include household/community-level, school-level, and policy-and-system-level barriers.

The research concluded that the situation of Myanmar migrant children regarding education is poor by general standard. It recommended that the implementation of 2005 Cabinet Resolution which provided education for all children in Thailand be carried out effectively and migrant schools be strengthened while NGOs can play a key role in both of these processes.

Field of Study International Development Studies Student's signature.....

Academic year 2006..... Advisor's signature.....

Co Advisor's signature.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis will always remind me how I owe a big debt of gratitude towards the following persons.

First of all, I would like to say ‘thank you’ to Dr. Heike and friends from Heinrich Boell Foundation for providing a scholarship to study in this program and helping me in various ways.

Next, I want to thank my advisor Ajarn Surichai Wun’gao for his constant support, guidance and encouragement.

My deep gratitude goes to chairman of my thesis committee, Dr. Mya Than, whose support and guidance during my stay in Thailand helps me in a multiplicity of ways. I want to express special thanks for my co-advisor Dr. Jerrold Huguet for always giving me insightful comments and advices when I needed.

Let me also say ‘thank you’ to all the people in the MAIDS program who have helped me in many ways.

A heart-felt thank goes to my friends Thaung Htut Aung and Khun Poon for their friendship and support. I also want to thank Ma Maw Maw Zaw for her support.

I must acknowledge the help of my participants for sharing their time and experiences with me, and the help of NGO staffs while I collected the data in Samut Sakhon. I must thank Raks Thai foundation for helping me in collecting data in many ways. I also thank Labor Rights Protection Network (LPN) for providing valuable information.

Thanks to the Research Project on Human Security in the Global Cities Network for field support, major part of research expenses.

Last, and surely not least, a million thanks go to my mother for her sacrifices in raising me. How eternally indebted am I to her!

To those who I did not specifically name, I thank you all for helping me accomplish this study.

CONTENTS

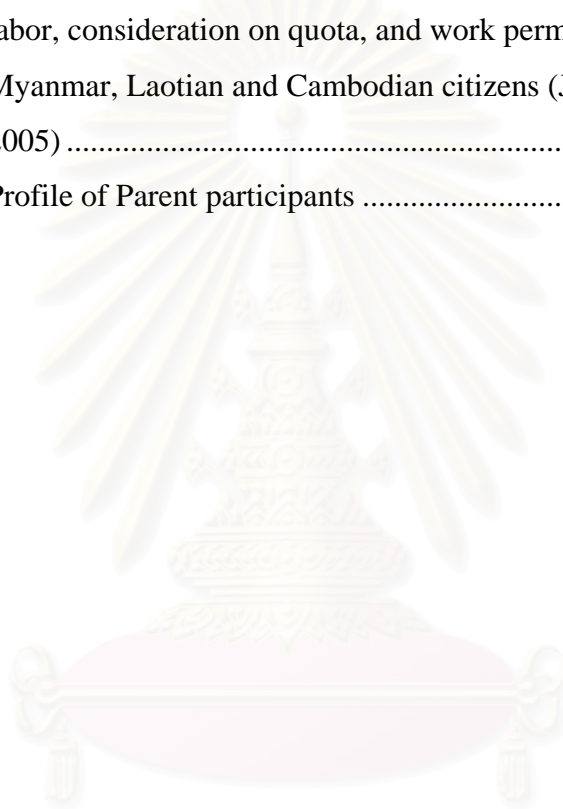
ABSTRACT IN THAI.....	iv
ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. International Migration and Thailand.....	1
1.2. Working and Living Conditions of Migrant Workers	4
1.3. Arrests and Deportation.....	6
1.4. Migration Policies of Thai Government and Problems	6
1.4.1. A Brief Comparison of Policies of Thailand and Several South East Asia Countries.....	6
1.4.2. Government Bodies.....	7
1.4.3 Regulations.....	8
1.4.4. Human Security.....	11
CHAPTER II. PROBLEM STATEMENT/ BACKGROUND	14
2.1 Migrant Children from Myanmar	14
2.2 Education and Myanmar Children.....	15
2.3 2005 Cabinet Resolution.....	16
2.4 Hypothesis	17
2.5. Research Questions.....	17
2.6 Objectives	18
2.7 Conceptual Framework.....	18
2.8 Significance of the Study.....	20
2.9 Ethical Considerations	20
2.10 Scope and Limitation of the Study	20
2.11 Literature Review	21
2.11.1 Migrant Workers from Myanmar.....	21

2.11.2	Migrant Children in Thailand.....	23
CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		26
3.1	Research Design	26
3.2	Point of entry	27
3.3	Research Site	27
3.4	Participants	28
3.4.1	Parents	28
3.4.2	Children.....	28
3.4.3	Principals.....	29
3.4.4	Officers from the Education Office.....	29
3.4.5	Key Informants	29
3.5	Methods	30
CHAPTER IV. PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH SITE		31
CHAPTER V. FINDINGS.....		40
5.1	Types of Education.....	40
5.1.1	Schools in Myanmar	41
5.1.2	Migrant Schools	42
5.1.3	Thai Formal Schools	42
5.2	Factors Influencing Migrant Children’s Education	42
5.2.1	Household/ Community-Level Factors.....	43
5.2.1.1	Attitudes of Migrant Parents toward Education.....	43
5.2.1.2	Uncertainty of Life in the Host Country	44
5.2.1.3	Seeing a Future in Myanmar.....	45
5.2.1.4	Lack of Information about Thai Education.....	46
5.2.1.5	Attitudes toward Thai Education and Curriculum	48
5.2.1.6	Duration of Stay in Thailand.....	48
5.2.1.7	School Expenses.....	49
5.2.1.8	Gender	50
5.2.1.9	Child Labor	50
5.2.1.10	Thai Language Proficiency.....	52
5.2.1.11	Intention to Stay a Long time in Thailand.....	53

5.2.1.12 Education Level of Parents	54
5.2.1.13 Moving Frequently from One Place to Another	55
5.2.1.14 NGOs	56
5.2.1.15 Lack of Documents	56
5.2.2 School-Level Factors	58
5.2.2.1 Distance from School	58
5.2.2.2 Attitudes of Administrators at Schools	59
5.2.2.3 Funding and Budget	60
5.2.2.4 Thai Parents' Attitudes toward Migrant Children	61
5.2.2.5 Discrimination at Schools	62
5.2.3 Policy and System Level Factors	63
5.2.3.1 Lack of Implementation of 2005 Resolution on Education	63
5.2.3.2 Lack of Communication System between Thai schools and Parents	64
5.2.3.3 Fear of Arrest or Harassment	64
5.3 Case Studies of Parents	65
5.3.1 Case Study 1: Daw Hla	65
5.3.2 Case Study 2: Daw Wa	66
5.3.3 Case Study 3: Ko Zin	67
5.3.4 Case Study 4: Ma Kyay	67
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	69
6.1. Situation of Myanmar Children vis-à-vis Education	69
6.1.1. Myanmar Children's Academic Performance	70
6.2 Barriers to Children's Education	70
6.3. Implementation and Enforcement of the 2005 Resolution	71
6.4. Strengthening Migrant Schools	72
6.5. Future Research	73
REFERENCES	74
BIOGRAPHY	79

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
Table 1	Number of work permits issued, by type of business and nationality of worker, 1 July-15 December 2004	4
Table 2	Samut Sakhon Province Report on requirement for migrant labor, consideration on quota, and work permit issuance of Myanmar, Laotian and Cambodian citizens (June 1- August 30, 2005)	34
Table 3	Profile of Parent participants	36



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. International Migration and Thailand

In the 1970s, the rise in oil revenues enjoyed by Arab states owing to oil crisis gave rise to a labor market boom in the Middle East attracting substantial numbers of Asian workers. From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, over a million workers migrated to the Persian Gulf (Appleyard, 1992 cited in Chantavanich, Germershausen and Beesey. (Eds), 2000). Thousands of Thais, Indonesians and the Filipinos were among those Asians who rushed to go to the oil producing countries in West Asia. However, with the collapse of the oil prices in the 1980s and the Gulf War in 1990, flows of migration declined significantly. Almost at the same time, a new pattern of migration emerged in Asia, this time, in East Asia, where newly industrialized countries have enjoyed unprecedented high growth rates and have become magnets for foreign labor from their poor neighbors.

This new migration phenomenon also saw formerly labor-sending countries like South Korea and Thailand changed their status by turning into both labor importer and labor exporter. In the 1980s, a million Asian migrants were working in East and South East Asia (Abella, 1995, p125 cited in Asis, August 2005). The number of Asian migrants working in these two regions rose to more than 3 million in the 1990s (Asis, 2005 August). By the year 2000, this number reached 6.1 million including an estimated 2.4 million unauthorized migrant workers (Battistella, 2002, p406 cited in Piper, 2004).

Thailand was one of the first post-war labor-sending countries in Asia starting in the 1970s. In 1992, Thailand exported 81,718 workers ensuring third place among labor exporters behind only the Philippines and Indonesia which held first and second, respectively (Chantavanich et al.(Eds), 2000). Beginning in the early 1990s, Thailand emerged as one of the new tiger economies as it has enjoyed high growth rates thanks to export-oriented economic policies adopted during the 1980s. The more prosperous

Thailand becomes, the less willing are Thai people to work in jobs they regard as 'dirty, difficult and dangerous'. As a result, Thailand increasingly faced a shortage of labor to work in labor-intensive industries. That situation attracted labor from neighboring countries that are less-developed than Thailand. In this way, Thailand's international migration became a complete picture as it shifted from being a labor supplying country into the role of receiving country- the largest migrant groups at present coming from Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Thus, while Thailand is still a labor sending country with the number of Thai workers deployed overseas equaling 148,000 in 2004(Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b, p25), it receives the migrant labor from neighboring countries.

Among migrant workers in Thailand, it is estimated that those from Myanmar which shares the longest border with Thailand are the largest group with an estimated population of 2 million making up 80% of migrants (Panam, Caouette, Mar Kyaw Zaw & Punpuing, 2004, Amnesty International [AI], 2005). While some Myanmar immigrants are refugees fleeing armed conflict between the Myanmar military and armed resistance groups in areas near Thai-Myanmar border, the majority are economic migrants who crossed the border in the hope of making money in their host country.

Migrants from Myanmar can be found in different parts of Thailand ranging from Chiang Mai in the North to Phuket in the South, reflecting the long border between Myanmar and Thailand. Though many of them work in border provinces such as Kanchanaburi, the provinces which house the largest populations of people from Myanmar are Bangkok and Samut Sakhon in the Central Region. The legal minimum wage differs from province to province. For example, in Mae Sot, Tak Province, the minimum wage is 133 baht while in Bangkok, it is 165 baht (ARCM, 2004). Generally, the wage is higher in central provinces than in border provinces. However, it does not necessarily mean that migrants follow better wages. They probably go where labor demand is growing.

While there are ten types of businesses allowed officially for migrant workers, Myanmar migrant workers are concentrated in five sectors, namely, agriculture,

marine fisheries, construction, textile and garment factories, and domestic work (Asian Research Centre for Migration [ARCM], 2004).

From the statistics of 2004, Myanmar migrant workers acquired approximately 75% of the total work permits issued for migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, obtaining 610,106 permits out of 814,247 (See Table 1.).



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Table 1 Number of work permits issued, by type of business and nationality of worker, 1 July-15 December 2004

Type of business	Total	Cambodia	Laos People's Democratic Republic	Myanmar
Total	814,247	104,789	99,352	610,106
Fishing boats	58,686	22,874	2,634	33,178
Fishery processing	68,602	4,666	1,013	62,923
Agriculture	179,404	18,816	16,795	143,793
Rice mill	6,923	186	266	6,471
Brick factory	5,280	280	395	4,605
Ice factory	4,514	387	485	3,642
Transport	3,002	1,770	124	1,108
Construction	114,459	24,463	8,442	81,554
Mining	1,489	93	38	1,358
Private household	128,514	8,746	31,449	88,319
Others	243,374	22,508	37,711	183,155

(Adapted from Table 13, Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b, p31.)

1.2. Working and Living Conditions of Migrant Workers

In the workplace, Myanmar migrant workers face exploitations and abuses, which come in many forms. Exploitation includes very long working hours without overtime payment and against their will; payment far less than Thai minimum wage per day; and lack of safe working conditions (Sam, June 16, 2005). Migrant workers may not be aware of their basic labor rights. Even though they know labor rights and realize exploitation of employers, they are not able to assert their rights due to their vulnerability of being migrants (AI, 2005).

Some employers cheat migrant workers by delaying their salaries. Such cases are not unusual, and become a norm for undocumented migrant workers. When workers ask for their overdue wages, employers simply refuse, and most of the time, workers can do nothing (Panam et al, 2004). They have to quit the job and find another.

One of the reasons why migrants face exploitations and abuses is due to their inability to make complaints collectively. Migrant workers in Thailand cannot organize and join labor unions due to the lack of recognition of their right to freedom of association though technically they are permitted to join Thai unions. Those attempting to organize into informal labor unions face threats and punishments (AI, 2005). They are dismissed, arrested and deported back to Myanmar, regardless of their legal status. Employers usually resort to collaboration with immigration officers and local police by giving bribes (Arnold & Hewison, 2005). They also hire criminal gangs to deal with those migrants who attempt to organize (AI, 2005). In this way, employers leave no stones unturned to violate workers' rights.

Many migrant workers live in accommodations provided by the employer. They may be barracks in the factory compound, huts for those working in market gardens, or a small space in the house for women working as domestic workers. Some rent rooms outside their workplace. They tend to share one room with 10 or more people including couples to save on the rent. Inside or outside their workplace, the accommodations mostly have poor sanitary conditions.

Apart from the poor working and living conditions, migrant workers have limited access to social services such as health care and education. "In terms of health care and information, the majority of the migrant population, regardless of legal status, has very limited access to basic health and reproductive health services due to fear of arrest, language and cultural barriers, high costs, health provider bias, lack of transportation, or the feeling that seeking health care at a hospital or clinic is a waste of time due to long waiting hours and poor treatment (Nopachai, 2004, p11)".

1.3. Arrests and Deportation

Migrant workers are subjected to arrests, detention and deportation all the time. Police may raid the factories, farms and restaurants they work in, and arrest them if they do not have documents. Even though they are documented, they may only have the copies of their documents as their employers keep the originals making them still more vulnerable to arrests (Mekong Migration Network [MMN] & Asian Migrant Centre [AMC], 2005). Police officers threaten to arrest and deport migrant workers back to the border in order to extract bribes despite the fact that they are documented (AI, 2005). It is not unusual that when police are desperate for money, they just wait outside the factories where migrant workers work, and extract a bribe from workers¹. To avoid police, most migrant workers usually have to stay at their homes and workplace- they rarely go outside.

1.4. Migration Policies of Thai Government and Problems

1.4.1. A Brief Comparison of Policies of Thailand and Several South East Asia Countries

“Despite some variations, labor migration policies in the receiving countries in Asia can be broadly summarized as follows: limiting labor migration, limiting the duration of migration, and limiting integration (Piper, 2004, p75).” “There is a tacit approval of irregular migration in much of the region with reluctance to regularize them (for instance by way of amnesties) with the exception of Thailand’s policies vis-à-vis Burmese migrants (Piper, 2004, p75).”

In the South East Asia region, Singapore and Brunei are receiving countries while Thailand and Malaysia send and receive workers. Singapore had a migration framework before large numbers of foreign workers arrived in the country (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific [UNESCAP], 2001). Malaysia and Thailand formulated policies on labor migration when large numbers of migrant workers were already present in their labor markets (UNESCAP, 2001).

¹ Personal communication with a 27-year-old migrant male from Myanmar working in Bangkok

Singapore and Brunei introduced stiffer penalties to curb immigration violations, understandable from the point of view of small states with small populations. Thailand and Malaysia, both sending and receiving countries, carry out deportations and crackdowns. While Malaysia has gone more in the direction of punitive measures against unauthorized migrants, Thailand has sought to improve the registration process (Asis, 2005). With some 70 percent of migrant workers coming from Indonesia, Malaysia has tried to diversify the source countries of its migrant workforce while Thailand has not tried to do so despite 80% of its migrant workers stemming from Myanmar (Asis, 2005).

In terms of human rights protection, human rights commissions at national level exist only in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea in the South East and East Asia (Piper, 2004).

1.4.2. Government Bodies²

Five major Thai government bodies are concerned with migration (Stern, 1998). They include 1) Ministry of the Interior; 2) Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 3) Ministry of Labor³; 4) National Security Council and 5) The Army.

Among them, the most important body regarding migration is the Ministry of Interior which manages all of Thailand's official points of entry/exit for all modes of transport; which issues visas, detains and/or deports migrants who violate Thailand's laws, and handles requests for permanent residency; which supervises camps for displaced persons in Thailand.

The Ministry of Labor plays a key role by issuing work permits to foreign employees in Thailand and by registering illegal labor migrants from Myanmar, Laos

² Information in this section is largely drawn from Stern. 1998: *Thailand's migration situation and its relations with APEC members and other countries in Southeast Asia*.

³ In Stern. 1998, it was the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, later split into two separate ministries: the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

and Cambodia. Being a potent organization in the Thai government, the National Security Council exercises a strong influence on Thailand's immigration policy, based on the perceived relationship between Thailand's national security and potential problems associated with migration.

The army is also an important body regarding immigration policy: it has a generally strong influence in Thai politics. It is especially powerful along the long stretches of border with neighboring countries, particularly with Myanmar and Cambodia. The way the Army exercises its influence is not clear but policymakers cannot ignore the views held by its leaders.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for dealing with foreign countries when faced with problems related to migration that arise from immigration into Thailand and emigration from Thailand to foreign countries while other governing bodies discussed above address issues of migration domestically.

1.4.3 Regulations

As a large portion of migrant workers are illegal or undocumented migrants, they are invisible and their numbers cannot be known. Thailand fears the management of that population will not be within reach, and it will lead to serious social and economic problems. Along these lines, the Thai government has tried to regulate and control migration in a series of measures carried out since the 1990s.

“Thailand is not a party to the key international conventions concerning international migration and its domestic policy is not comprehensive; as a result, its migration policies and programmes are marked by omissions and ambiguities (Huguet & Punping, 2005b, p.7)”. In 1992, for the first time, Thailand attempted to address the massive, migrant labor flow into Thailand. This attempt, however, failed due to then extremely high bail it imposed on employers who were to register their workers (Caouette, T., Archavanitkul, K. & Pyne, H., 2000 cited in Panam et al, 2004). In 1996, a new registration policy requiring a much lower registration fee compelled larger numbers of migrant to register as workers without proof of registration faced deportation (Panam et al, 2004).

In 1997, the Thai government found itself with an immense task to reemploy the masses of newly unemployed Thai nationals following the Asian financial crisis. After the deportation of hundreds of thousands of migrant workers back home, which was intended to pave the way for Thais, Thai industries faced a serious shortage of labor. That is because jobless Thais were not willing to enter jobs deemed 3-Ds when Thailand desperately needed a boost from the smooth running of its cash-earning industries. This led the Royal Thai Government (RTG) to reevaluate migration policy. Consequently, two cabinet decisions in 1998 expanded the scope of the migrant worker system to cover 54 provinces and 47 job types (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b). While it was estimated that there were approximately 231,000 jobs to be filled; only 99,974 migrants had registered by December of 1999 (Panam et al, 2004).

This labor void compelled the RTG to consider a more comprehensive and effective registration of undocumented workers in 2001. In 2001, the Thai government expanded its registration policy on migrant workers by permitting foreign workers in all industries and jobs (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b). Previous policies on illegal workers to Thailand dating back to 1996 had set quotas on the number of migrant workers through allocations to each province (MMN & AMC, 2005). During this registration period, 568,249 migrants received work permits of which 451,255 were from Myanmar (Panam et al, 2004).

Between 2001 and 2003, registration systems were updated annually.

MMN and AMC (2005) reported, “Between 2001-2003, the total number of registered workers dropped dramatically. This fall does not indicate that there were fewer migrant workers; rather, fewer migrant workers decided to register due to systemic problems with the registration system (p.104).”

Common problems for migrants with registration were lack of information and inability to travel and register when employers refused to cooperate. According to the MMC and AMC (2005), following problems contributed to the fall in the number of migrants re-registering. First, registration was linked to the employer. Thus, any migrant who faced unsatisfactory job conditions was either forced to endure the

situation or risk losing his job and legal status in Thailand. In this way, employers have an upper hand. Second, many migrants could not afford to pay the 3800 baht registration fee. Migrants who borrowed money from employers to pay the registration fee found themselves in debt and vulnerable to exploitation. Third, to pay the police bribes for protection was cheaper than the registration fee.

Moreover, workers only had a photocopy of registration cards since employers kept the original ones. Without original cards, migrants were still subject to arrest and deportation, as they could not prove their legal status.

To address some of the above problems, the 2004 registration took place in two phases (MMN & AMC, 2005). The first phase included registration of migrants for temporary ID cards and registration of employers who declared their needs for potential migrant workers. It was followed by registration of migrant workers and employers for work permits. Registration was free in the first phase and permitted migrants to stay for one year. Second phase included medical check-ups and enrollment in a health insurance scheme with a fee assessed for each. Employers and employees then registered for work permit. In July 2004, nearly 1.3 million migrants registered for temporary ID cards, about 817,000 had medical examinations and 814,000 had obtained work permits (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b).

The 2004 migration system was an improvement over the previous systems. But it also had its share of limitations. “To complete the entire process required a minimum of five visits by the employer and/or the employee to government offices or a hospital (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b, p.48)”. That policy allowed workers to change employers if they are exploited or abused by employers. However, those who wanted to change employers found out that they had to go through the registration process again, paying another fee of Baht 3,800 (MMN & AMC, 2005).

In May 2005, a Cabinet Resolution on a new policy on migrant workers was passed, which made further attempts to allow migrant workers to move for work (MMN & AMC, 2005). According to it, migrants can now work in another province after repaying the registration fee.

1.4.4. Human Security

The traditional notions of security are most often in the state/military context- nation states defending their borders to protect citizens from foreign military threats. These ideas have not been able to explain challenges resulting from rapid and tremendous changes on many fronts- economic, social, political, environmental, and human (Chen, Fukuda-Par & Seidensticker. (Eds), 2003). As a result, the concept of 'human security' has come into existence to broaden the scope of security beyond state security.

“Human security complements 'state security' in four respects:

- Its concern is the individual and the community rather than the state.
- Menaces to people's security include threats and conditions that have not always been classified as threats to security.
- The range of actors is expanded beyond the state alone.
- Achieving human security includes not just protecting people but also empowering people to fend for themselves (Commission on Human Security, 2003, p6)”.

According to the UNDP 1994 Human Development Report, which first publicized the concept of *human security*, *human security* focuses on 'freedom from fear' and freedom from want'. The report defined human security as “*safety* from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression; *protection* from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life- whether in jobs, in homes, or in communities (p.23).” That definition is based on seven dimensions of human security: personal, environmental, economic, political, community, health, and food security.

Migration is a human security issue. There are four themes to describe major issues relevant to the labor migration (Wun'gao, 2003, p126).

1. Globalization is the issues market integration; uneven trajectories in economic growth; differences in quality of labor among countries, and the use of migration as a development tool.

2. Security is becoming of greater concern among countries and includes issues of illegal migration; crime and trafficking; border control and cross-border cooperation; and minorities and the stateless.
3. Integration involves question about how to deal with migrants. Of particular importance is how and what services should be provided to migrants. International movement of women also needs to discuss.
4. Problems of health and migration are also becoming of more concern to policy makers.

Migrants have to confront with life insecurities which occur to both the migrants and their families, especially women and children (Wun'gao, 2003, p91).

Migrant workers from Myanmar become a 'human security' issue in Thailand in many ways. First one is associated with human security. One widely accepted perception about migrant workers is that they carry communicable diseases that had been rare or eradicated in Thailand (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005b). Although that may be just a perception, the undocumented migrants' situation regarding their health is very poor as they have limited access to public health system in Thailand. Since their numbers cannot be known, it becomes more frightening as they have the potential of triggering an epidemic. Along these lines, migrants pose serious *health insecurity* if their conditions are not improved while it is a *health security* issue for migrants themselves, too. So, it is necessary to improve 'human security' of migrants to maintain 'human security' of Thai people.

Since there are groups of individuals who perceive other groups as their enemies or at least as their competitors and it is important to develop a common security between different security communities, i.e., human security (Wun'gao (Ed), 2004, p17). This concept should be employed in the issue of migrants in Thailand as migrants are often seen as danger to several security aspects of Thais.

When it comes to migrant workers, they are often seen as a burden to *national security* of Thailand, though their positive side is rarely stressed (Asian Research Center for Migration [ARCM], Institute for Population and Social Research [IPSR] &

Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation [TDRI], 2004). In reality, migrant workers play a key role in ensuring the *economic security* of Thailand. They dominate the labor force in Thailand's most important foreign exchange-earning industries such as fisheries, garment factories, rubber plantations, food processing and agriculture (Vicary (Ed), 2005). In fact, these industries increasingly have to depend on migrant workers as more Thais refuse to enter the jobs deemed 'dirty, dangerous, and difficult' (ARCM et al, 2004). The absence of migrants would mean a serious blow to Thailand's economy. Thus, economic aspect of human security of Thailand is enhanced by the presence of migrant workers.

Migrant workers threatening employment security of Thais is a widespread concern (ARCM et al, 2004). There is a widely held view among Thais that migrants are taking jobs away from Thais. However, when the Thai government deported masses of migrant workers back to their land following the 1997 financial crisis to pave way for newly-jobless Thais, a majority of labor-intensive, export-industries faced a serious shortage of labor as Thais were reluctant to enter those deemed demeaning jobs (Panam et al, 2004). It was even argued that the absence of migrants could in fact increase unemployment among Thais (ARCM et al, 2004). Job security of Thais is strengthened by migrant workers.

From the above, it can be said that 'human security' of Thais and that of migrant workers are complementary. If one's human security is lowered, another's will be affected. Thus, human security of different people living together, here, Thais and migrant workers, can be best achieved when human security of all groups is ensured and enhanced.

Education plays a fundamental role in developing human security (Fouinat, 2004). Sen (2002) described several distinct reasons why basic education can influence human security. Illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurities themselves. Basic education can help people to get jobs and gainful employment. Thus, In order to improve migrants' human security, it is essential to enhance their education situation.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEM STATEMENT/ BACKGROUND

2.1 Migrant Children from Myanmar

A total of 93,000 persons under age 15⁴, among them were 63, 000 children from Myanmar who were under age 12, registered as migrants with the Ministry of Interior in July 2004 when migrants were allowed to register (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005a). Considering the fact that some children may not register, the population of migrant children in Thailand can be well over 100,000. A study estimated that there were 100, 000 children of Myanmar migrants in Thailand with an estimated 16,500 in Ranong Province alone (Asian Migrant Centre & Mekong Migration Network, 2002).

Migrant children can be divided into those who are migrants themselves crossing the border in search of work; children of migrants who accompany their parents during the migration journey; and those who were born to migrant parents while in Thailand. Problems and hardships of migrant children follow the patterns of those of adult migrants closely, but at a higher degree and with a different style due to their special vulnerability as children.

Whatever their status, legal or illegal, most of the children are deprived of their needs, which are essential for their development in life. They include cultural needs, community-created needs, needs created through the interaction with Thais, health needs and education needs (Amaraphibal & Worasaen, 2000). One of the most important needs for migrant children lies in the area of education. Though, in principle, registered migrants have a right to social services such as health and education, education seems unthinkable for most of the migrants and their family members from Myanmar.

⁴ According to Thai laws, the minimum age for work is 15.

2.2 Education and Myanmar Children

A majority of children have limited access to government schools and informal schools (Amarapibal & Beesey, et al., 2003, cited in Bryant, 2005). Some local schools accept them, but do not issue school-leaving certificates for them even after successful completion of their education as non-Thai citizens cannot obtain a school leaving certificate (Amaraphibal & Worasaen, 2000). Although there are some informal learning centers, they can only provide a limited education and training to migrants, for many reasons. Even these few schools frequently receive orders from local authorities to close down since these migrant schools are seen as a threat to the national security of Thailand.

In March 2006, five migrant schools in Phop Phra district, Tak Province, had to close on orders from local Thai authorities (Silp, March 21, 2006). The local authorities said that these schools could pose a risk to national security of Thailand since they did not know what curriculums were being taught.

Some scholars pointed out the probable implications of migrant children lacking access to education. The fact that the tens of thousands of children of migrants are not attending school is the beginning of the danger of an undocumented and uneducated underclass of foreign migrants growing in Thailand (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005a). The social costs of the non-provision of education also seemed acknowledged by the government noting the problems of limiting access to education by children living in Thailand:

“[T]he government is also concerned for the wellbeing of the Burmese and any of their children born in Thailand. Certain social problems could arise from the limited access that stateless children have to education and health care. This raises the question of the education these children should be allowed to access. , (the Director of the Ministry of Labor cited in Vicary (Ed). 2005, p.29),”

Probably being aware of the depth of the problem, the Royal Thai Government took measures to address that. In July 2004, education for children was officially

guaranteed for all children in Thailand, though in reality there has been little facilitation of this for the children of migrants (MMN & AMC, 2005; Kraft, 2004).

2.3 2005 Cabinet Resolution

In July 2005, a cabinet resolution on the education of undocumented and non-Thai persons was passed, providing for the education of all children from kindergarten through high school (MMN & AMC, 2005, pp.124-125).

Key points of this resolution are:

- 1) “To expand the opportunity for undocumented and non-Thai persons to enter into the education system, including groups who had previously been excluded from some levels of education. ... no longer be restrictions on levels of education or on travel to educational institutes... will now accept register and give certificates to all undocumented and non-Thai persons at all levels.
- 2) To allocate a budget per student for the educational institute which is giving education to the undocumented and non-Thai person, from kindergarten to high school. The amount per student will be the same as per Thai student. ...6.5 million baht will be needed...1,269 undocumented and non-Thai students... for the promotion of Private Education.
- 3) The Ministry of Interior will provide the 13 digit personal identity... to identify the status of undocumented and non-Thai persons. ...will grant permission and facilitate children and youth restricted by law to live in certain areas, to be able to travel to the education facility... without having to ask for permission each time
- 4) The Ministry of Education will organize the appropriate education for children and youth who are ‘persons displaced from armed conflict’...”

However, it is very likely that the number of migrant children enrolled in formal schools will be less than the Resolution permits or expects. There may be numerous reasons within and beyond the family. Parents of children may not be able to pay for expenses of attending school. Local schools may not accept migrant children because they may repel Thai students. Or that may simply be due to more

structural factors such as budget constraints for provision of education for migrant children.

As discussed above, providing education for Myanmar migrant children is complex. Factors can range from familial to structural. In order to provide education to migrant children effectively, it is essential to understand their situation and the obstacles on their way to education. That condition demands comprehensive research on migrant children's situation vis-à-vis education. Unfortunately, research even on migrant children in general is very limited, let alone on migrant children's education in particular. This highlights a large gap in knowledge about migrant children's education.

This study will bridge the knowledge gap in this crucial area in migration studies in Thailand. The research will seek to understand the present situation of migrant children regarding education. Why do Myanmar children join or not join the Thai education system although they are finally allowed to do so? What are the barriers that prevent them from education? This research will address these puzzles.

2.4 Hypothesis

Migrant children's access to education in Thailand is very limited because of:

- 1) Household-level barriers which include lack of information, language, child labor, school expenses, perceptions and attitudes
- 2) School-level barriers which include distance from school and insufficient facilities
- 3) Barriers at policy and system level towards migrant children's education

2.5. Research Questions

- 1) What is the situation of Myanmar migrant children regarding education?
- 2) What are the barriers to Myanmar migrant children's access to education in Thailand?

2.6 Objectives

- 1) To assess the situation of Myanmar migrant children vis-à-vis education in Thailand.
- 2) To identify the barriers to the children's education.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A study on child migrants in Thailand suggested several barriers that may contribute to children's lack of access to education in Thailand (Huguet & Punpuing, 2005a). Schools may not accept migrant students partially due to language difficulties. Migrant families may not be able to afford the expenses of education such as for the purchase of uniforms and supplies.

Language was not a significant factor for migrant children's low attendance in Thai schools, according to *Amaraphibal & Worasaen* (2000). They studied Myanmar migrant children in Ranong Province and found out that the failure of parents and guardians to see the importance of education, the expenses, and the difficulty of adaptation to a Thai institution explained the low participation of Myanmar migrant children in Thai schools.

Family background and structure, cost-benefit thinking of parents, division of household labor, and parental perceptions are widely believed to have significant impacts on children's educational participation. *Buchmann* (2000) argued that parent's expectations for future financial help from children and perceptions of labor-market discrimination against women were significant determinants of children's enrollment while patriarchal norms and child labor had no effect.

United Nations Children Fund [UNICEF]'s *Barriers to Girls' Education, Strategies and Interventions* divided barriers to girls' education into three levels: 1) household/community level; 2) school level; 3) policy and system level (UNICEF, n.d). *Household/community-level* barriers include direct and indirect costs to schooling, attitudes and practices, health-related issues. School fees, clothing, shoes, books are examples of *direct* costs while opportunity costs such as child labor and

work constitute *indirect costs*. *School-level* barriers include issues such as distance from school and poor quality environment at school. *Barriers at policy and system level* include inadequate legal framework in areas such as compulsory education and child labor; lack of enforcement of existing laws relating to e.g. school fees, child labor; insufficient national budgetary allocations to primary and secondary education; isolation of education from existing national frameworks; and lack of political will. *Gender* dimension was also included as a factor-affecting enrollment of girls in schools.

Discrimination can play a key role in determining migrant children's access to local schools in regions where they reside, whether they are internal or international migrants. *Human Rights in China* (2002) studied main barriers to realizing internal migrant children's right to education in urban schools. *Status* barriers, *economic* barriers and *discrimination* are identified as the major barriers, though all three contain discrimination in different forms. The government focuses more on finding ways to get migrant children out of the cities than on providing them with an education. Migrant children from rural areas are represented in official statements as a burden for urban education departments where resources are already stretched too thin. *Economic* barriers are also common. State-funded schools charge a range of 'miscellaneous fees' to all students to cover expenses though schooling is supposed to be free of charge. Poor migrant workers are not in a position to pay these high charges. Given migrants' marginal status and the unlimited discretion of schools to deny their children places, getting information on the proper fee standards or challenging overcharging would be particularly difficult for them.

Discrimination is also a major factor affecting migrant children's participation in the urban education system in China. Urban teachers and administrators do not want to accept migrant children, arguing that accepting such children will lower the overall quality of education in the cities. Local authorities also prefer to spend their education funding on improving the 'weak schools' instead of 'accepting large numbers of migrant children' as they assume these children will bring down the overall quality of education. Migrant children face *discrimination* in school. Local students bullied them, and even teachers often look down on them. Discrimination

from teachers and local students compels migrant parents to enroll their children in the schools attended only by other migrant children.

Lack of *information* about the Thai education system and the 2005 Resolution on education may contribute to migrant children's limited access to schools. Parents migrating from one place to another in search of better jobs may also be a factor in their children's education participation⁵.

2.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will contribute to the understanding of the current situation of migrant children from Myanmar vis-à-vis education. Recommendations made in this study will be useful in improving the lives of those disadvantaged children in Thailand.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

In conducting in-depth interviews, I secured voluntary informed consent explaining participants that it was for academic purposes only.

2.10 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Participants were selected myself and/or with the help of the organizations that help migrant workers in Samut Sakhon Province. So, availability of participants and knowledge of the employees in those organizations were key factors in selecting participants, although an effort was made to include a variety of people of age, ethnicity and legal status.

According to the definition in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is a person under 18 years of age, "unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier". However, in Thailand, the Act Instituting the Juvenile and Family Courts and the Juvenile and Family Procedures of 1991 defines the word

⁵ Personal communication with a scholar of migration in Thailand.

‘child’ as a person over 7 years old but below 14 (Nyo, 2001). In this study, the age of children participants was set between 5 and 14 to include kindergarten students.

Interviews with Thai officials, principals and the majority of children were carried out with the help of an interpreter. That might limit the interpretation of the data to some degree.

The findings of the study may only apply to the time frame in which the research was carried out as the conditions such as government policies may change with time.

2.11 Literature Review

2.11.1 Migrant Workers from Myanmar

“International migration...into Thailand is driven by the large disparities between the country and some of its neighbors in levels of economic and social development, and in political climate (Huguet&Punpuing, 2005a).” In this way, the migration process in Thailand crosses borders, and it becomes international. To regulate international migrant workers from neighboring countries on their soil starting from 1992, the government of Thailand initiated a series of measures. Some 1,280,000 workers from neighboring countries registered and 814, 000 applied for work permits beginning in July 2004. The majority of those with work permits are from Myanmar comprising about 600, 000.

Huguet and Punpuing (2005a) discuss all aspects of policy issues on international migration in Thailand, including Thai migrant workers working in other countries, social and economic impact of migrant workers in Thailand, enforcement issues and human rights. They do not give a detailed account of migrant children in Thailand, though they mention their education. Realizing that gap, Huguet and Punpuing (2005a) recommend that more research should be done on the situation of migrant children in Thailand, including school enrollment.

There is an overall lack of basic labor rights for migrant workers from Myanmar including the rights to organize and to bargain collectively (AI, 2005).

Myanmar migrant workers suffer from lower-than-minimum wages, more-than-12 hour working days, physical and verbal abuse, harassment from the police and employers, and poor living and working conditions. AI (2005) highlights the various violations of rights against Myanmar migrant workers. However, the study does not discuss the right to education of migrants.

Although low-skilled migrant laborers as a whole are subject to human rights violations and hardships, whether documented or undocumented, women are more vulnerable than men. One hundred thousand females from Myanmar are employed as domestic workers in Thailand, and work in extreme conditions and environments (Panam et al, 2004). Their hardships and problems are different from other migrant workers because they are isolated according to the nature of their work. Though this study offers comprehensive knowledge about domestic workers, one of the least known areas in migration study in Thailand, it has limited information about an overview of the whole scenario of migrant workers in Thailand.

Very few literatures that address the legal situation and Thai policy are available. 'Burmese migrant workers in Thailand: policy and protection' bridges that gap by discussing Thai policy and the legal situation of migrants in great detail (Paisanpanichkul, 2001). In the study, the ambiguities and contradictions as well as details of the various policy initiatives are covered, including the various fines and punishments for illegal migrant workers and their employers. The article also discusses the legal protections available to migrant workers under law.

"The positive side is rarely highlighted- migrants are an integral part of economic growth and other potentially positive economic influences, as well as undertaking 3D jobs that Thais are reluctant to take up (ARCM et al, 2004, pp60)". The Thai economy depends on migrants, and that dependence is likely to persist in the medium or long term. Despite that dependence, the situation of migrant workers receiving equal treatment and minimum wages is rare. Migrants should be treated as Thai workers under Thai labor laws, such as in employment conditions. Access of migrants to social services and information should be increased. ARCM et al (2004) provides an overview of labor market conditions and prospects in Thailand as well as

in-depth information on the extent and condition of employment of migrant workers in five industries of Thailand that employ the great majority of migrants- agriculture, construction, garment and textiles, marine fisheries (including fishing and seafood processing), and domestic work.

Real incomes for workers from Myanmar have remained relatively constant in the last 20 years, in contrast to that of Thai workers (Vicary, 2004). Income varies on the basis of the region of employment: workers in the central region receive higher income than those in the border provinces though their income is still low compared with Thai workers. Income also varies by type of employment. Among Myanmar workers, those from States and Divisions bordering Thailand form the majority.

Migrant workers have limited access to social services such as health and education. There is a significant lack of knowledge about HIV among factory workers, and a large sub-population of Myanmar migrants within Thailand lacked the most basic information about HIV/AIDS (Mullany et al, 2003). The level of knowledge among Myanmar migrant workers along the Thai/Myanmar border concerning risk factors and prevention or transmission of HIV was quite low. Although the data of Mullany et al (2003) were collected among factory workers in Tak province and may not represent the whole Myanmar migrant population, the study serves as an initial estimate of the degree to which migrant workers have been excluded from social services in Thailand.

2.11.2 Migrant Children in Thailand

Most of the migrant children are in a vulnerable position due to inadequate social services and various legal restrictions (Huguet&Punpuing, 2005b). About 80,000 migrant children do not have access to education. “The situation of children of migrants in Thailand has not received the attention it warrants from government policy makers, government and other programme planners, international organizations and social researchers (Huguet&Punpuing 2005b, p123).” More research is needed on the situation of migrant children, including school enrollment.

“Providing services to children of illegal migrants can be politically and economically difficult, because of the possibility that it will attract new migrants or encourage existing migrants to settle permanently” (Bryant, 2005). As most research on migrants in Thailand has focused on a few highly disadvantaged groups such as sex workers, very little is known about the remaining migrants. Thus, evidence on problems experienced by migrant children in Thailand is largely inadequate, making it difficult to formulate interventions.

Migrant children and young persons face exploitative and violent environments, health risks and violation of a wide range of basic rights as they migrate across borders. “Thus, moving across borders was found to increase their vulnerability, as they often lack documentation, have limited or no language and literacy skills, reside and work in isolated areas with few or no services and are largely dependent on their employer for their safety and survival” (Caouette, n.d, p19). This study focuses on the general situation of migrant children in border areas of Thailand, China and Myanmar. It does not discuss extensively about education of migrant children although it includes a section on education. Moreover, it does not provide information about children of migrant workers in central provinces of Thailand.

Among migrant children in Thailand, there are three groups of children in especially difficult circumstances: child labor, children in prostitution, and street children (Vungsiriphisal et al, n.d). They are of many nationalities such as Cambodian, Burmese, Chinese, Lao, Bangladeshi, and Indian. These children are subject to human rights violations including labor rights, abuses and mental health problems, and at high risk of contracting diseases. Few enjoy the opportunity to receive higher than a primary school education while most of them did not have any formal education at all. Even the children who were born in families that have been living in Thailand for a long time had little opportunity to receive education due to their status as illegal migrants. The study does not cover the other groups of migrant children, such as children who neither join the workforce nor enter a school despite their much larger numbers.

From the existing literature, it is found out that there is a large knowledge gap about migrant children's situation, especially in the education sector, in Thailand.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

My research was qualitative and employed in-depth interviews and a structured document review.

The main data were drawn from face-to-face interviews with migrant children, their parents, principals from the schools, government officials in the education sector, and NGO staff members who help migrant children in the field of education. In the case of parent participants who send their children to formal schools, and children participants in Thai schools, the principals selected the majority of participants. Other participants were selected by the researcher himself, and with the help of the staff members of NGOs working with the migrant population in Samut Sakhon Province. However, an effort was made to include a variety of participants, in terms of age, ethnicity, legal status and so on.

Interview questions were semi-structured to provide a degree of flexibility to explore unexpected issues coming up during interviews, while maintaining consistency.

The data collection period was between the third week of June and fourth week of July 2006. As the data gathered from interviews with migrant parents, and some children were in Burmese, they have to be translated into English. This was done simultaneously with data collection.

Data collection and analysis were done simultaneously and alternately. Analysis began with data collection. After each visit to the research site, data were transcribed and analyzed.

3.2 Point of entry

First, I decided to start with key informants so that I can build on them. I approached two NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) working with migrant workers in Samut Sakhon. One of them pledged to help me collect data regarding migrant schools run by it. In other words, I can have access to migrant children who study at its schools, and their parents, and NGO staff members as key informants.

Thus, the challenge for me was to locate other participants including principals, children who study at formal schools and their parents on my own. First, I went to the schools at the heart of Samut Sakhon. These three schools happened not to have migrant schools, but anyway I received information about formal schools that did not have migrant children.

Next, I went to the Education Office in Samut Sakhon Province and interviewed officers there. The strategy was to acquire a list of schools that accepted migrant children altogether with addresses, and phone numbers, apart from interviews with them. After that, I chose the schools depending on their size, status and location. Then, my interpreter called these schools, explained about my research and me, and made appointments with principals. Once arrived at the schools, I interviewed principals, teachers, and children from Myanmar. For parents, I waited until they came to the school to take their children back to home, and interviewed them. A school volunteered to recruit parents ready for interviews when I came. There I had a chance to interview five parents without having to wait until the school was over.

3.3 Research Site

Interviews were carried out in various parts of Samut Sakhon. Several interviews were in Krok Krak Nai and Talad Kun Communities in Mahachai while others were in schools in different places. The selection of schools was based on the number of migrant children they have, school level and location.

3.4 Participants

3.4.1 Parents

Four groups of migrant parents were interviewed:

- 1) Those who send their children to Myanmar to study or will do so,
- 2) Those who send their children to informal migrant schools
- 3) Those who send their children to Thai formal schools, and
- 4) Those who send their children to no education institution.

Group 1: number of participants, 5

Group 1 participants were selected with the help of an NGO worker who is a migrant himself.

Group 2: number of participants, 2

I interviewed Group 2 parents when they took their children to a migrant school as I waited there.

Group 3: number of participants, 8

Two parents from Group 3 were chosen with the help of a Thai teacher teaching at a migrant school. The principals selected the rest of Group 3.

Group 4: number of participants, 3

All three participants were selected with the help of a migrant worker who has been living in a migrant community in Samut Sakhon for 13 years, and knows the community inside out.

3.4.2 Children

Two groups of children were interviewed:

- 1) Those who go to Thai formal schools and
- 2) Those who go to informal migrant schools

Group 1 was studied so that Myanmar children's situation in Thai formal schools is understood. The aim is to find out their academic and social situation in the classroom: the interaction with Thai classmates, academic performance, language difficulties and probable discrimination against them. It is also intended to countercheck the information gathered during the interviews with parents. A total of 17 were interviewed. All but two were interviewed at their schools with the approval of the principal. The principals selected all the children except two. Two were interviewed at their houses at night, with the help of a Thai migrant schoolteacher.

Four children from Group 2 were interviewed. They were interviewed to grasp the situation in migrant schools, children's background and needs. These children were selected with the help of a migrant teacher from a Raks Thai migrant school.

3.4.3 Principals

I visited 8 schools including both primary and secondary schools, and conducted interviews with principals. All the schools are public schools except one that is private. Out of 8 schools, three are located in the heart of Province. I just went there without informing principals in advance. In fact, I just entered the schools closest to the van station whose vans shuttle between Bangkok and Samut Sakhon, the busiest part of the province. All three happened not to have Myanmar migrant children.

The other four schools were selected with the primary/secondary criteria, size of the school, and the number of migrant children in the school.

3.4.4 Officers from the Education Office

Two officials from the Samut Sakhon education office including the director were interviewed.

3.4.5 Key Informants

Five NGO workers from NGOs active in providing education to migrants in Samut Sakhon were interviewed. They acted as key informants. They included both

Thais and Myanmar. All of them live in Samut Sakhon and have extensive knowledge about migrant workers. One key informant from Myanmar has lived in Samut Sakhon for more than twenty years.

3.5 Methods

The major data were collected by means of face-to-face interviews with participants.

Documents prepared by government organizations and, NGOs, and other related research documents were used to grasp the situation of migrant workers and children in Thailand in general and Samut Sakhon Province in particular.

Field observation was performed to gather information about participants' lives and community.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER IV

PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH SITE

Samut Sakhon Province is located at about 36 kilometers southwest of Bangkok, in Central Thailand on the Gulf of Thailand at the mouth of Tha Chin River. It occupies a total area of 872 square kilometers and is administratively divided into 3 districts: Muang, Krathum Baen, and Ban Phaeo.

Samut Sakhon has a large supply of fish due to the presence of major ports receiving numerous deep-sea fishing boats. Although Samut Sakhon is a small province, it is one of the wealthiest provinces in Thailand thanks to its big moneymaking seafood industry. It boasts one of the biggest seafood processing industrial areas in Thailand. Samut Sakhon also has the biggest fish and shrimp markets in the country where tons of seafood cold storage along with farm products from the Eastern, Southern and Central Regions are unloaded and traded every day. Fishing, seafood industries, salt production, gardening, and rice farming are major economic activities. Samut Sakhon is also the biggest producer of brine salt.

As Samut Sakhon becomes richer⁶ and its labor demand higher, it attracts workers from other regions of the country. A majority of them are from the North East region.

At the same time, Thailand enjoyed high economic growth. As a result, Thai workers increasingly shunned the jobs they regarded as 3Ds- dirty, dangerous, and demeaning. Fishery-related work was among them. Industries started to feel the shortage of labor. This situation paved the way for the inflow of foreign migrant workers from Thailand's neighboring countries, namely, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. As foreign migrant workers are yet willing to work under harsh conditions with

⁶ Samut Sakhon enjoyed the 2nd highest gross provincial product per capita (2004) with 415,983 baht at current market prices while country average is 102,447 and Bangkok stood at 6th with 284,447. Source: Pocket Thailand in Figures 9th Edition 2006 (Alpha Research Co.Ltd) Nanthonburi Thailand.

low pay, they replaced internal migrant workers from the North East Region. Among international migrant workers, those from Myanmar are the majority in Samut Sakhon.

Samut Sakhon is the second only to Bangkok in the number of work permits issued to migrant workers in 2004⁷. A total of 74, 225 migrants are registered with the majority from Myanmar, 67,799, though the actual population may be higher taking into account the population of unregistered migrant workers. This high population of migrants is probably due to Samut Sakhon's high wage: the minimum daily wage in 2006 is 184 baht being the same as Bangkok. Other provinces where migrants from Myanmar are concentrated, such as Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Tak, Ranong and Mae Hong Song have minimum wages of 142, 155, 143, 155, and 141 baht respectively. However, a majority of migrants may get lower-than-minimum wages.

There were 103,426 migrants registered in Samut Sakhon according to 2004 Ministry of Interior registration data. Of those, 2,800 were children under 15 years of age. From the statistics of August 2005, employers have requested a quota for hiring 137, 080 migrant workers⁸. Among them, 125, 330 were Burmese. So, even neglecting the undocumented population of Myanmar migrant workers, the registered migrant population is still high when compared with the local population of 442,914 in 2002.

Main groups from Myanmar in Samut Sakhon are Karen, Bama, Mon, and people from Dawei. They come from many different places in Myanmar. Their place of origin varies from Sittwe in Rakhine State in the far west of Myanmar to Dawei in the southernmost part. Among migrants from Myanmar, Mons constitute the majority. The province also holds Mons of Thai origin.

⁷ Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labor, the number of work permits issued, by region and province, and by nationality of workers between 1 JULY and 15 DECEMBER 2004. From Huguet and Punpuing (2005). p 44, Table 14.

⁸ Data from Labor Office of Samut Sakhon Province.

Workers from Myanmar are concentrated in Mahachai where they work in seafood processing or fishery-related work. Work in seafood factories includes cleaning, peeling and sorting shrimp, hauling fish and shrimp, and transporting ice for seafood packaging. Some also work as vendors or domestic workers or in construction or in market gardens.

Most migrant workers in fishery-related industries live in crowded rooms with poor sanitary conditions. Some live in rooms provided by their factories. However, most migrants share a room with 10 or more people to save on the rent. Couples are among them, and a cloth may be hung from the ceiling for privacy. Workers in market gardens live in huts at their workplace.

They live in migrant communities across Mahachai. In some communities, Burmese restaurants, VCD and book rental houses, and karaoke houses where migrants can sing Burmese songs are in place to meet the demands of the population there. As one migrant said, ‘Everything from Myanmar is available in Mahachai.’ It is usual to see migrants in their traditional dress walking on the streets, and hear them chattering in Burmese or Mon. Sarongs are hung from the windows and balconies of rooms. Inside the rooms, posters of Burmese actors or actresses are on the walls. In fact, as local Thais say, these communities look like “Burmese villages”.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Table 2. Samut Sakhon Province Report on requirement for migrant labor, consideration on quota, and work permit issuance of Myanmar, Laotian and Cambodian citizens (June 1- August 30, 2005)

	Requirement of migrant labor								Consideration on the number of work permits(Quota)								Work permit issuance							
	Employer	Total	Myanmar		Laos		Cambodia		Employer	Total	Myanmar		Laos		Cambodia		Em- ployer	Total	Myanmar		Laos		Cambodia	
			M	F	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F		
Total	6031	184960	86772	83953	6013	5775	1586	861	5985	179229	76259	84452	8256	7086	1842	1334	5884	73896	34771	34684	1935	1836	452	218
1. Fishery	375	7868	7369	256	73	75	95	0	375	7393	6840	390	59	13	91	0	310	1890	1703	62	75	12	37	1
Fishery (sea)	314	7520	7153	174	49	49	95	0	315	7116	6657	322	43	3	91	0	253	1741	1602	20	62	1	37	1
Inland Fishery	62	348	216	82	24	26	0	0	62	277	183	68	16	10	0	0	57	149	83	42	13	11	0	0
2. Fish-processing	785	102434	42532	57069	1366	1405	25	37	780	100690	32549	61792	3426	2499	17	407	1041	45033	18066	26581	120	192	42	32
3. Agriculture and Livestock	584	2529	1394	1002	76	32	11	14	563	3009	1626	1231	81	47	13	11	518	1415	751	608	28	26	1	1
3.1 Agriculture	565	2419	1325	967	73	29	11	14	545	2863	1524	1194	79	42	13	11	505	1391	733	603	27	26	1	1

3.2 Livestock	19	110	69	35	3	3	0	0	18	146	102	37	2	5	0	0	13	24	18	5	1	0	0	0
4. Rice mill	6	212	95	72	28	17	0	0	6	284	160	79	28	17	0	0	8	127	72	31	16	8	0	0
5. Brick Factory	27	175	98	69	8	0	0	0	27	409	259	90	20	20	10	10	20	115	84	31	0	0	0	0
6. Ice Factory	33	849	750	95	3	1	0	0	33	955	843	108	3	1	0	0	48	464	416	40	5	1	2	0
7. Discharge of goods by water	11	571	461	103	0	2	5	0	11	620	531	78	2	1	8	0	12	274	162	16	52	1	43	0
8. Construction	344	10992	6462	2991	413	302	616	208	341	10817	6413	2752	381	223	773	275	368	3720	2331	1051	87	45	154	52
9. Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10. Personal	1181	2048	478	1041	94	395	17	23	1170	1912	274	1026	52	521	7	32	975	1180	189	575	23	363	5	25
11. Others	2685	57282	27133	21255	3952	3546	817	579	2679	53140	26764	16906	4204	3744	923	599	2584	19678	10997	5689	1529	1188	168	107

M= Male, F= Female

Source: Labor Office of Samut Sakhon Province

Table 3. Profile of Parent participants

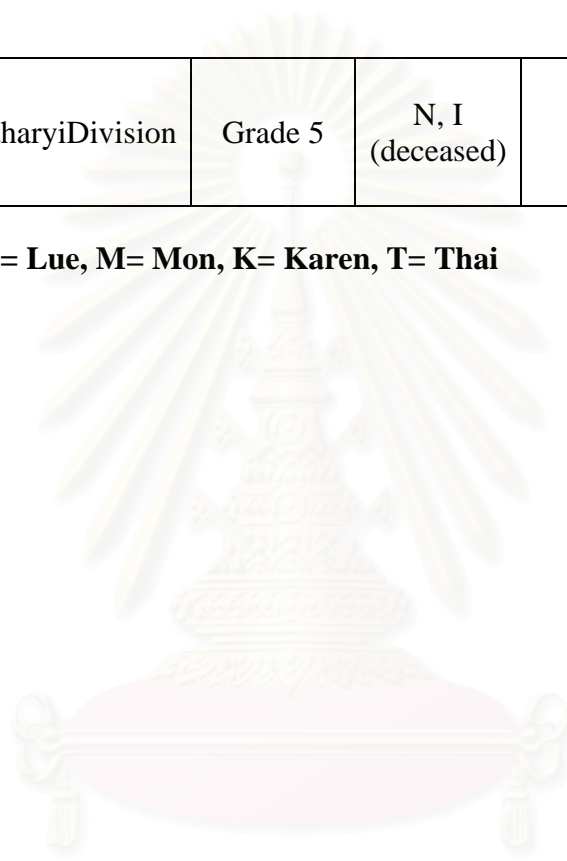
No	Age	Ethnicity	Sex	Work	Place of Origin ⁹	Education	Spouse Education	Language	Household Income per month (baht)	Family Size	Duration of Stay in Thailand	Duration of Stay in Samut Sakhon
1	29	Bama	Male	NGO Staff	Mon State	First Year University	Grade 6	B+T	12,000	3	10year	6year
2	30	Karen	Male	Market Garden	Karen State	Monastic school, literate	Grade 5	B+K+T	10,000	4	10	5
3	32	Bama	Male	Shrimp-peeling+ TV Cassette repair	Mon State	Grade 11	Grade 8	B+M (little) +T	11,000	3	10	7
4	36	Karen	Male	Shrimp-sorting	Karen State	N, I	N, I	B+K	9,000	4	6	6
5	32	Bama	Male	Shrimp-selling	Yangon Division	Grade 11	N, I	B+M+T	10,000	3	17	12
6	30	Bama	Female	Sea-food Factory	Mon State	Grade 11	Grade 2	B+T (little)	11,000	4	5	5

⁹ Myanmar is composed of 7 Divisions and 7 States. Divisions are Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Sagaing, Magwe, Ayeyarwaddy and Tanintharyi. States are Kachin, Kayar, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan.

7	41	Chinese+Mon	Male	Shrimp-peeling	Tanintharyi Division	Grade 2	No, illiterate	B+T	9,000	4	10	10
8	25	Lue	Female	Market Garden	Shan State	N, I	Grade 8	B+L+T	7,500	4	7	7
9	45	Mon	Female	Fish-sorting	Mon State	N, I	N, I	B(little)+M+T	7,500	4	8	8
10	32	Mon	Female	Shrimp-peeling	Mon State	N, I	N, I	B(little)+M+T	8,000	4	10	10
11	49	Karen	Female	Sea-food Factory	Mon State	N, I	N, I	B (little) +K+T (little)	12,000	4	5	1
12	32	Karen	Female	Sea-food Factory	Mon State	N, I	N, I	B (little)+K+T(little)	9,000	4	5	1
13	50	Karen	Female	Sea-food Factory	Mon State	N, I	Monastic education	B(little)+K+T(little)	20,000	6	5	1
14	36	Mon	Female	Shrimp-peeling	Mon State	Grade 4	Grade 6	B+M+T	13,000	5	6	6
15	26	Mon	Female	Factory	Tanintharyi Division	N, I	N, I	B (little) +M+T	12,000	3	6	1
16	48	Mon	Female	Open a grocer	Mon State	N, I	Grade 8	B+M+T	15,000	3	10	10
17	45	Mon	Female	Shrimp-peeling	Mon State	N, I	N, I (deceased)	B+M+T	5,500	2	6	6

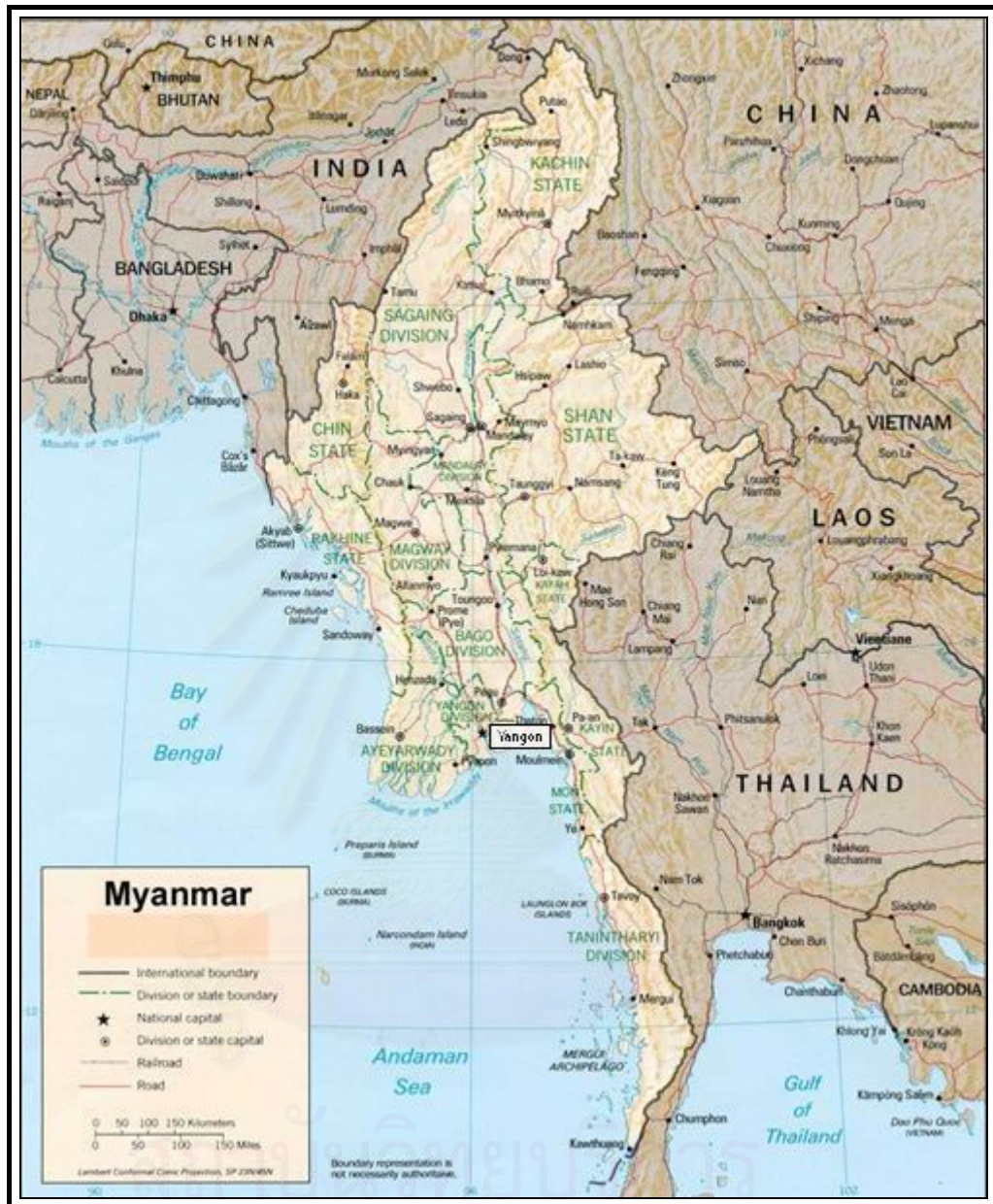
18	50	Mon-Bama	Female	Open a betel-chew shop	Tanintharyi Division	Grade 5	N, I (deceased)	B+M+T	4,500	6 ¹⁰	9	9
----	----	----------	--------	------------------------	----------------------	---------	-----------------	-------	-------	-----------------	---	---

Note: N= No education, I= Illiterate, B= Burmese, L= Lue, M= Mon, K= Karen, T= Thai



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

¹⁰ Now, she has her daughter as only family member with her in Thailand. She has sent all the rest of her children, boys, to her relatives in Myanmar as she no longer affords to raise them.



Map of Myanmar with seven States and seven Divisions

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

5.1 Types of Education

There are three types of education available for children of migrants in Samut Sakhon: 1) Schools in Myanmar, 2) Formal Thai schools, 3) Informal schools or migrant schools set up by NGOs or community organizations.

It is estimated that 10 percent of migrant children go to Myanmar for study. 9 to 18 percent enter Thai schools while 5 to 8 percent join informal migrant schools. The other does not have any education access.

The number of Myanmar migrant children in formal schools in Samut Sakhon is around 900¹¹ according to Raks Thai organization, an NGO working with migrant issues including education. In informal schools, approximately 400 children are studying. All of them are in primary school. Thus, around 1,300 children are having some form of education. According to the estimates of Labor Protection Network (LPN), another NGO, in 2005, there are between 5,000 and 7,000 migrant children in Samut Sakhon. Raks Thai organization estimated that there were around 5,000 Myanmar migrant children in Samut Sakhon. Putting the estimate at conservative 5,000, the proportion of children getting access to education in Samut Sakhon is roughly estimated to be around 26 percent: 18 for Thai schools and 8 for migrant schools. If 7,000 is taken as children population, the figure will be 18, 13 and 5 respectively. If the number of migrant children at Thai schools is taken according to 2005 figure, i.e., 562, that of getting access to education will be lower. For the figure of 5,000, it will be 19 percent, i.e., 11 for Thai schools and 8 for migrant schools. For 7,000 one, the figures will be 14, 9 and 5 respectively. So, it can be said that the proportion of migrant children from Myanmar having access to education will range from 14 to 26 percent of total children population.

¹¹ It said that figure was from a survey recently made by Education Office in Samut Sakhon. I acquired 2005 statistics from Education Office which stated 562 undocumented and non-Thai children were studying in formal Thai schools in Samut Sakhon.

5.1.1 Schools in Myanmar

A number of migrant parents send their children to Myanmar to study in a school there. Some parents send their children to Myanmar only when they reach the age to join the school, while some do so even before children are old enough to attend schools. Some have given birth to children in Myanmar and left them with their relatives.

Such parents have close relatives in Myanmar such as their parents or siblings to look after their children. They remit enough money to their relatives on a regular basis to cover all the costs of children.

Some children were born during their parents' stay in Thailand others were born in Myanmar and followed their parents into Thailand. Far-sighted parents manage to acquire Myanmar birth certificates for their children when they were born in Thailand. So by the time they send the children to Myanmar to study, children find no difficulty in entering schools there. Some parents have not acquired Myanmar birth certificates, but this does not prevent their children from studying at schools in Myanmar. They said that their villages were in remote areas, so people including teachers knew each other and accepted children without birth certificates. In fact, they said even some adults do not have National Identification Cards.

This option demands three necessities. First, parents must have close relatives, who can bring up their children like them while they themselves are away. Secondly, parents have to stay apart from their young children for a long time, as it is difficult to go back and forth between Samut Sakhon and the place where their children live in Myanmar. Thirdly, parents have to remit a considerable amount of money periodically in order to cover both general and school costs of their children. Mostly, parents send their children to their parents, thus killing two birds with one stone: supporting their parents and their children at the same time. In Myanmar society, supporting parents is a good deed and much valued. Sons and daughters who take care of their parents are regarded as good sons and daughters, and highly respected by the community.

5.1.2 Migrant Schools

For parents, another choice of education for their children is informal migrant schools, which are organized by NGOs and community based organizations active in the area. They are not allowed the status of Schools: they are Learning Centers.

Today, there are six schools of this type in Samut Sakhon. Raks Thai organizes four, Labor Protection Network one, and the one is a Mon school offered by the Mon community.

Basically, they teach Thai, Burmese, and mathematics. Some schools teach Mon, as most of the children attending the school are Mon, reflecting the fact that Mons constitute the majority of migrant workers from Myanmar in Samut Sakhon. Mon school does not provide Burmese language training. One school adds Culture in its curriculum. Some schools use textbooks and teaching aids such as maps of Myanmar imported from Myanmar.

5.1.3 Thai Formal Schools

A number of students from Myanmar are attending formal schools in Thailand. However, the number is very small compared with the estimates of migrant children in Samut Sakhon.

Statistics from the Education Office in Samut Sakhon in 2005 showed that there were 46 schools that accepted 562 migrant children and children without Thai nationality. 133 Bama, 6 Mon, 57 Karen are among them.

5.2 Factors Influencing Migrant Children's Education

Some of these factors were already in my mind before entering the field by conducting literature review. The rest emerged during and after collecting data.

5.2.1 Household/ Community-Level Factors

5.2.1.1 Attitudes of Migrant Parents toward Education

Attitudes of parents toward education are an important factor for children's education. Findings confirm that Myanmar migrant workers are no exception. All migrant parents who send their children to education institutions, whether they are in Myanmar or Thailand, have positive attitudes toward education. Three parents have high hopes for their children regarding education. Although their ethnicity, education level, duration of stay in Thailand, and income vary, they have the same attitude: education is essential for their children. Some of them are very poor, but they manage to put their children in school.

“We cannot leave behind a fortune as inheritance for our children. When they get education as inheritance, they can stand on their own feet.”(A 32-year-old migrant father who will send his son to Myanmar for study)

“I want my children to be highly educated. I do not want them to work as others' subordinates in a foreign country.”(A 30-year-old migrant father who sends his son to Myanmar for study)

“Since I do not have education, I am someone's worker. If they become educated and big, it will be very nice.” (A 35-year-old migrant mother whose son is at Grade 6 at a Thai primary school).

It is worth quoting a key informant, an NGO worker, at length, who compared the different attitudes of parents toward education:

“Some parents told their children: We became the servants of others because we did not have a chance to study. If we are literate and educated, we can apply our skills in our country... It looks like some parents are teaching their children that the priority is to earn money. When there are vacancies for part-time jobs for prawn-peeling, parents take their children to work. As children earn money, they start to think

like that: “oh, if we work, we can get money.” This idea enters children’s mind. In this way, indirectly, parents do not encourage education, but moneymaking. When children are interested in this kind of work, children know that they can get money if they work like that. And parents do not discourage them from working.”(A key informant, NGO staff, who has lived in Samut Sakhon for more than twenty years)

5.2.1.2 Uncertainty of Life in the Host Country

Parents’ perception of their future in Thailand determines migrant children’s access to schools both in Myanmar and Thailand. Some migrant parents expressed doubts about their life in Thailand. They perceive that their future is uncertain in a foreign land. For them, living in Thailand is only temporary. They point out that the policies of Thai government are not consistent. It is of no use sending their children to Thai schools. Instead they send their children to schools in Myanmar. Other migrant parents who do not send their children to Myanmar schools also expressed doubts about their life in Thailand.

“We do not come to Thailand legally. It is difficult to acquire a chance to live here.” (A 29-year-old migrant father who has lived in Thailand for ten years)

“But I say, to what extent, they will give us, migrant workers opportunities? One day, our children’s education will be... ah, how can I say? And this is not our country. One day, racist prejudices will break out. Even if our children attend school, they may face discriminatory treatment.” (A 32-year-old migrant father who will send his son to Myanmar for study: Response to my explanation about the 2005 Resolution that Myanmar children are eligible to study in Thai schools)

5.2.1.3 Seeing a Future in Myanmar

This factor and the previous one are interrelated. The majority of parents interviewed see their future in Myanmar. They perceive that their future is uncertain in the host country. They want to save money in a short time and go back to Myanmar. Several of them send their children to Myanmar to study in Myanmar schools. In this way, their children will grow up in Myanmar and, when they go back, their children do not need to adapt to Myanmar society again.

“We will not live here for all our life. We will go back to our country soon. I do not want the education of my children to be one part here and one part there.”(A 32-year-old migrant father who will send his son to Myanmar for study)

“Even if we have a chance to live here for all our life, I want my child to study the Myanmar language only. I want her to become an educated person in Myanmar; in a Myanmar school. That is why I send her to Myanmar.” (A 29-year-old migrant father who has sent his daughter to Myanmar for study)

Another reason why parents send their children back to Myanmar is that they perceive Thailand as not a suitable place for their children to grow up. Some particularly said that their neighborhood was not a proper place for children as they live in crowded rooms with 7 or 8 people in a small room, and dirty quarters.

“In Thailand, children start to do bad things as soon as they reach the age of 13 or 14.” (A 29-year-old Bama father who sends his daughter to Myanmar for study)

“Most of the children near our house are not morally acceptable.”(A 30-year-old Bama father who will send his son to Myanmar for study)

“The surrounding here is not the same as in Myanmar. When children wake up, they hear name-callings first thing in the morning. They see people drinking together first. They watch children playing in the

street. Nothing good here for them to admire and imitate! That is why even parents cannot teach children to behave well and get interested in education. However, bad children in this surrounding become good and obedient ones once they arrive back in Myanmar. So, the problem is environment.” (A 35-year-old Mon-Karen father who sends his two children to Myanmar for study)

Another group of parents who sees their future in Myanmar sends their children to neither Thai schools nor schools in Myanmar. They do not put their children in Thai schools because they will return to Myanmar. And they may think or argue that knowledge of Thai language and education will not be useful in Myanmar. On the other hand, they will not send their children back to Myanmar for study. So, the children end up with no education at all.

“Parents do not want to send their children to Thai schools because they will go back to Myanmar. They do not want their children to learn Thai, which will not be useful in Myanmar. They want their children to work with them.” (A key informant of Myanmar origin who has lived in Samut Sakhon for more than 20 years)

5.2.1.4 Lack of Information about Thai Education

Migrant parents from Myanmar lack crucial knowledge about Thai education and schools. They do not know whether their children are eligible or not. They do not know what documents they need. They have never heard of the 2005 Resolution on Education. This lack of information is an important factor in determining migrant children’s access to education.

All of the parent respondents that send their children to Thai schools have very poor or no knowledge about Thai education and Thai schools. This makes them send their children to schools later than they would if they had acquired the information earlier.

Only one parent, out of eight, asked teachers directly about the possibility of the school’s acceptance of her children. She did so only after she got the information

from her co-worker that her child was eligible for Thai school. One parent lives in the school neighborhood, and is friendly with some employees from the school. However, that did not make her ask teachers directly about the eligibility of her son.

Key informants confirmed that migrants are reluctant to approach schools. That is why staff members from NGOs accompany parents when they want to put their children in Thai schools. Migrant parents may be intimidated by the idea of talking to a person in authority in a foreign country because they are afraid of some people in authority such as police. Another cause of their reluctance to approach Thai schools may be their lack of confidence with their Thai language ability.

Many parents acquire information from their employers. Some have got it from their Thai neighbors. Some learn about Thai schools from their fellow migrant workers.

It is important to note that in a group of three parents who are friends, once one acquired the information about eligibility of her child to enter Thai school, and then sent him to Thai school, others did the same after getting the information from her. So, information played a key role in this case. Even though they wanted to enroll their children in an educational institution, they were not able to do so due to the lack of information. As soon as they received the information, they could and did immediately.

“(I sent my child to school) because she sent her son to school.” (A 32-year-old Karen mother referring to her friend, fellow Karen, who received the information about the eligibility of Myanmar children at a Thai school: Response to the question of how she knew that her son was eligible for Thai school)

“This big-sister knew” (Another Karen mother referring to the same person in the above example: Response to the question of how she knew that her son was eligible for Thai school)

Both the Education Office and principals acknowledged the *lack of information flowing* between Thai schools and migrant parents.

5.2.1.5 Attitudes toward Thai Education and Curriculum

Some parents do not want to enroll their children in Thai schools because of their attitudes toward Thai education and curriculum.

First, they do not like the teaching style of Thai schools. They perceive that Thai teachers are too flexible with discipline matters. They want their children to obey, respect and fear their teachers. Some parents expect schools to teach their children manners, such as how to address to elders and how to behave in the presence of teachers and parents. They think Thai schools will not provide their children with what they expect regarding manners and culture.

Some parents do not want to put their children in Thai schools since they know and hear that Thai textbooks contain materials that teach children to hate Myanmar. They fear their children will have misconceptions about their own people and their native land. Their suspicions arise even more as they witness the scenes in Thai movies that incite hatred towards Myanmar.

“I do not want my children to be poisoned.”(A 30-year-old Karen father who will send his son to Myanmar)

5.2.1.6 Duration of Stay in Thailand

Duration of stay in Thailand determines migrants’ willingness to send their children to Thai schools. As migrants stay longer in their host country, they become familiar with ways of life and practices there, and get attached to the life there. Children may learn to speak Thai. Children may tend to think themselves as Thai. These facts together will encourage migrant parents to send their children to Thai schools. All parents interviewed who sent their children to Thai schools have lived in Thailand for at least five years. A majority of them have lived in Thailand consecutively while others go back and forth between Thailand and Myanmar.

It is also found that many migrants with long periods of stay in Thailand never send their children to Thai schools. All five parents who send their children to Myanmar for study have lived in Thailand for at least 10 years.

5.2.1.7 School Expenses

School expenses are a major factor in migrant children's limited access to education in Thailand. They impose a huge burden on most migrant families who have low income. They may include school entrance fees or donations, uniforms, books, food, stationery, and transportation costs. School expenses are also school level factors since education is free according to the 2005 Resolution.

School expenses will matter particularly for single-parent families, and families that depend on a parent's income. Families usually face this situation when women cannot work while they are pregnant, have recently given birth or looking after a new-born baby. At that time, school expenses will become a more significant burden on families with low income.

A majority of parent respondents who send their children to Thai schools said that school expenses were a massive burden on the family.

One parent who sends his two children to a migrant school said that he wanted his children to join Thai formal schools, but he is not in a position to do so. Thus, he sends them to migrant school instead. Here, it is worth quoting him directly: "I want to send them to a Thai school. But, it will cost three thousand per child (per year). Children have to change clothes again and again, and also shoes. It costs a lot: school fees, fees for meals and snacks. I cannot afford it. Thus, I put them here (migrant school) instead." (A 41-year-old migrant father who has lived in Thailand for ten years)

As some parents are not able to pay school expenses, they have to look for schools that do not charge entrance fees or entrance donations. Until they find one, their children have to wait. "Entrance is free in this school. So I put my son here. The

school at Loi Ko Thong (place name) charges 3, 800 baht as you enter. How can I afford it?" (A 49-year-old migrant mother who has lived in Thailand for five years)

Key informants stressed that expenses are a major obstacle to migrant children's education.

5.2.1.8 Gender

Evidence of gender discrimination against girls is not found. Parents treat children equally regarding education.

From the interviews with parents who send their children to an education institution, all have favorable opinions on girls' education. Among 562 migrant children or children without nationality attending Thai schools in Samut Sakhorn according to 2005 figures, 273 are girls, compared with 289 boys.

5.2.1.9 Child Labor

The study found that child labor and lack of education access are mutually reinforcing.

Lack of education access starts child labor in this way. Some parents take their children to their workplace, where they peel prawns, since children do not go to school and there is no one to look after them at home. Then, gradually, children learn to peel prawns. They get money from that activity. They begin to get addicted to it. Parents do not discourage them either. Finally, they become full-fledged child labor.

"Some parents do not send their children to schools. They said that they loved their children. They cannot stay away from their beloved. In fact, they do not love their children: they ruin their lives. When children grow up, they peel prawns together with their parents, and become slaves like them."(A 29-year-old migrant father who sends his daughter to Myanmar for study)

On the other hand, child labor is an obstacle to children's education. Poverty is the major reason. Children have to work to support their family. Their earnings contribute substantially to family survival.

“We are only two. I sell betel-chews as nobody hires me to work at factories, as I am fat and old. But, my shop is in very bad shape with very meager income. Again, my daughter has to go to hospital frequently costing a lot of money. So, I have to send my daughter to factories to peel prawns. She gets 100 baht per day. We live on my income and hers” (a 50-year-old mother who sends her daughter, her only family member, to no educational institution. Her husband died in a storm during his fishing trip working aboard a fishing boat in the sea)

Key informants pointed out that ‘child labor’ was a major barrier to migrant children's education in Thailand. Even in migrant schools, children's participation is hampered by child labor. “Some of the children about 13 or 14 will go to work when their families urgently needed a certain amount of money, most of the time, less than 2,000 baht. They do not come to school during that time. Only when the problem is solved, they join our school again.”(A key informant discussing migrant students in their school)

Child Labor in Adolescent Age?

Children already studying in formal schools tend to drop out from school after spending several years there. Half of the children respondents studying in Thai schools said that they wanted to stop studying when they finish primary school. They said that they wanted to help their parents in their work. They are fully aware that they are poor. They will work and earn income to help their family.

From key informant interviews and interviews with parent participants, it was learned that 12 to 14-year-olds are a significant workforce in the prawn peeling industry.

“Children of my son’s age (her son is 14) get up at 2 or 3 in the early morning and go peel prawns at the factory. They have never been to school.”(A 35-year-old migrant mother who sends her two sons to a Thai school)

A key informant said that children were better than adults in prawn peeling. Several migrant workers confirmed that. In the same amount of time, they tend to peel a much greater quantity of prawns than adults do. In this industry, income depends on the quantity of prawns peeled. This age group coincides with the age when children finish primary school. This is not just the case for children in the prawn-peeling industry. Children whose parents work at farms said that they wanted to drop out after Grade 6, primary school. At this age, the direct cost of school expenses seems to combine with indirect cost or opportunity cost of child labor. This kind of cost-benefit thinking may enter into parents’ and children’s minds. It is probable that parents, although poor, first make efforts to send their children to school to become literate. When children reach Grade 6 in primary school, parents are no longer in a position to fund their education.

There is no indication that student respondents are tired of studies. They love their school and their school-life. Smart students are among them, who also express their wish to leave school and help their parents at work after Grade Six. The children in question are fully aware that they are poor and they have obligations to help the household.

5.2.1.10 Thai Language Proficiency

Knowledge of the language of the host country is a major problem for migrant children from Myanmar. Principals asserted that they would accept migrant children only if they could speak Thai.

Children who have just arrived from Myanmar to join their parents cannot speak Thai or have poor knowledge of Thai, and they have problems joining Thai schools. Even if schools accept them, language problems may frequently interfere with their achievement in school.

Two student respondents at a migrant school came from Myanmar 6 months ago. They said they did not speak Thai. Both have attended school in Myanmar. One of them, a girl, studied in Grade One, Primary School, until her family left for Thailand. When asked whether she wanted to study at a Thai school, she said, 'No'. I asked why to probe further. She said,

“I don't like that. I cannot read out the lessons. My grandma wants to (send me to Thai school). I hate that.”

Two Karen students attending Thai schools have poor command of Thai. They did not understand the questions I asked through the interpreter though the questions were simple. They do not speak Burmese either. They only speak Karen. Another student had to act as an interpreter. Though they are 12 and 13 years old respectively, they had to start at Grade One, probably because they cannot speak Thai. They joined the school almost three weeks ago.

An officer from the Education Center in Samut Sakhon said, 'Myanmar children cannot speak Thai.' He went on to say, “There is one reason why migrant parents do not send their children to Thai schools. They think children will not understand what teachers teach.”

Children who were born and raised in Thailand are familiar with and can speak Thai. In fact, Thai language is close to being their mother tongue. They all can speak Thai well. They said that they had no problem understanding what teachers taught. All but three of the student participants were interviewed with the help of an interpreter since they cannot speak Burmese, or at least they were not confident enough. They are confident with the Thai language. Principals from their schools also confirmed that Myanmar children in their school had no difficulty with Thai language.

5.2.1.11 Intention to Stay a Long time in Thailand

Several migrant parents send their children to Thai formal schools since they intend to stay a long time in Thailand. Some of them may even want Thai citizenship.

They want their children to learn the Thai language, especially writing and reading skills. They believe that knowledge of Thai language would enable their children to lead a good life in Thailand. They think that their children will enjoy upward mobility if they get Thai education.

“If my son finishes Mor Song (Secondary school, Grade 2), he can get the clerk position, I mean, in our factory” (a 36-year-old Mon mother who sends her two sons to a Thai school. She said that she wanted to stay in Thailand as long as she could.)

5.2.1.12 Education Level of Parents

Education level of parents is an interesting and tricky factor in this study.

Contrary to popular belief, it is found out parents without any education at all want their children to have education. All of my participants who send their children to Thai schools have no or very poor education themselves. Only one out of eight studied at 4th Grade, primary school in Myanmar. The rest had no education and were illiterate in any language. Again, education of their husbands is poor¹². Among their husbands, one studied in monastic school and is literate in Burmese. Another husband passed Grade 8, the equivalent of Thai lower Secondary School, Grade 3.

However, their poor education did not bar them from providing their children's education. Instead, that very fact made them send their children to Thai schools.

“I want him to be literate, educated. I have no education at all. I did not have a chance to go to school.” (Response to the question on the reason for sending children to school, a 50-year-old Karen mother of five children).

“I send my daughter to school because I am not literate. Mother is not literate, so daughter must be literate. I feel small because I am

¹² All of my parent participants who send their children to Thai schools happened to be women.

illiterate. I do not want her to feel small like me. (Response to the question on the reason for sending children to school, a 26-year-old Mon mother of one child).”

Parents have ambitions for their children’s future that include leaving the migrant stream and obtaining a good education.

5.2.1.13 Moving Frequently from One Place to Another

In many cases, migrant children change schools and communities frequently, sometimes once every year. Moving frequently from one place to another hampers students’ education access in several ways.

They may suffer from repetition of grades. In their previous school, they may have studied at Grade 3. But it cannot be guaranteed that they can study at Grade 4 in their new school. The new school may even put them at Grade 1 and they have to start over again.

Some of them cannot obtain official school-leaving certificates from their previous school, and it will be difficult for them to enter new schools. Some schools may simply decline to accept migrant children though they have been schooled in other schools. It depends on the principal of the school that they try to join. Thus, their education will be cut off at a premature stage. The disadvantages of moving frequently can discourage students and parents from continuing education in schools, especially when they are combined with the effects of child labor.

Moving frequently is not a problem reserved only for formal school students. This is also the case with children attending migrant schools. ‘Formerly, some migrant workers lived in this neighborhood (near school). Now, their parents moved to a factory far from here. Thus, parents no longer have time to accompany them to school.’(A Myanmar key informant, NGO worker, who has lived in Thailand for twenty years)

5.2.1.14 NGOs

NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) are key players in Myanmar migrant children's education in Samut Sakhon Province. They assume different roles in this business. They are both service providers and facilitators. They offer education to migrant children by running informal schools. They provide information about Thai schools to migrant parents. They give advice to parents about education. If parents are reluctant to approach the officials from schools to enroll their children there, staff members of these NGOs accompany them and deal with teachers. Moreover, they encourage migrants to provide education to their children.

5.2.1.15 Lack of Documents

Lacking documents that schools ask for has a strong influence on Myanmar children's access to Thai schools. All the principal respondents stressed that they needed documents from the parents of prospective students to accept them in their schools.

However, lack of documents can also be categorized as a school level factor to education since 2005 Resolution mandated children without documents can join Thai schools.

According to the majority of principals responding, the household registration certificate, birth certificate and 13digit personal identity of children themselves and their parents are essential documents for migrant children to be accepted by formal schools. However, in some cases, children are accepted although they lack one of these documents.

If parents do not have necessary documents, children's education opportunities will be seriously affected depending on the school that they approach. Some schools will not accept them at all. Some schools will accept them, but they will not receive certificates or cannot take exams. Others will accept them, and put them in kindergarten forever. They cannot go upwards. In some schools, they can study until they finish sixth grade, but they cannot move on to secondary school. Some children

lack 13 digit IDs and only sit in the schools, but cannot answer exams or get certificates.

Three schools out of the five that accept Myanmar migrant children said that documents were a major problem regarding migrant children.

In the case of the household registration certificate, some employers offer to put the children of their employees in theirs, thus making them eligible to Thai schools. This can be possible only with workers who have a close relationship with their employers. Migrants who have to change employers often and who are frequently on the move may not enjoy that privilege.

Some employees do not want to be overly dependent on their employers for their children's education. They reasoned that they could not be sure how long that relationship would last. If the relationship turns sour, their children's education will be interrupted. So they do not accept the offer made by their employers.

According to these findings, a child who was born in Myanmar and accompanies its parents on their migration journey or later joins them in Thailand, will not be able to join a Thai school as she/he will not have a birth certificate. However, several participants who are studying in Thai schools were born in Myanmar and/or even have been schooled in Myanmar. The employers of their parents seemed to negotiate with the principals of the schools.

Though the 2005 Resolution said that children regardless of being documented or undocumented could enroll in Thai schools, it is not heeded or is yet to be implemented. However, in some schools, migrant children without documents have been accepted.

One parent said that when she first enrolled her child in the school six years ago, they did not ask anything from her. 'Now', she said, 'They are asking documents from parents who enroll their children in my son's school!'

Another problem of lacking documents is they have to stay away from the police all the time. So, parents will not send their children to school out of fear of children being arrested.

“The (Education) Center only takes care of students who have IDs” (An official at education center of Samut Sakhon).

5.2.2 School-Level Factors

5.2.2.1 Distance from School

Distance from school is a factor in children’s access to education. If young children live far from school, they cannot go to school themselves. Their parents have to accompany them. If both parents are working, they may not have time to do so.

If children live far away from the school, transportation costs can become considerable. Some parents hire motorbike taxis to take their children to school, but, some parents may not afford it. Some parents may be worried about their children’s safety when riding a motorbike.

“I am always worried about her safety even now. Although she is just 9 years old, she is developed like an adolescent. If she goes to school, I will always be worrying about her. Something might happen to her on her way home” (A 50-year-old mother who gave two reasons for not sending her only daughter and family member to school: one is concern for her safety)

NGOs confirmed that distance from school was an obstacle to migrant children’s education opportunities. Both Raks Thai and LPN have to arrange school ferries to help students living far from their schools to come to school everyday. Parents have to pay fees for this facility, and some parents may not be able to afford it.

On the other hand, children living near schools can go to school themselves even if they are young. Some of them ride bicycles while some go to school on foot.

5.2.2.2 Attitudes of Administrators at Schools

The attitudes of principals and teachers who hold administrative positions in schools play a significant role in migrant children's access to education. Even though children have all the necessary documents in accordance with the school's rules and procedures, and can afford to pay school fees, principals and teachers make the final decisions whether to accept them or not.

Among eight schools visited, two principals of the schools in the downtown sub-district of Samut Sakhon were interviewed. Their views are not favorable toward migrant children. They fear that the acceptance of migrant children will lower the reputation of their schools. Their attitudes are reflected in the fact that their schools do not have any migrant children.

One principal even said that his school was not for migrant children. He said that there were other schools that accepted migrant children. In short, both principals do not want to have migrant children from Myanmar in their school. Both of them quoted the criteria of their schools in accepting students. One of the criteria, perhaps the most important of all, is the final decision of the principals.

Principals and teachers of all five schools that accept Myanmar children have positive attitudes about Myanmar migrant children. Three schools said that documents were a major problem with Myanmar children. They will not get support funds for children without document, but, they still accept such children.

Thus, comparing the attitudes of principals and teachers of schools that accept Myanmar migrant children and of those schools, that do not, it can be seen that the attitude of decision-makers in the schools have a key role in migrant children's access to education.

From the discussion with key informants, it was found that the attitude of principals and teachers at Thai schools plays a key role in children's access to education. They will not accept migrant children even though they know about the 2005 Resolution.

“Principals and teachers do not want to accept migrant children in their schools because of their attitudes on migrants. They will give various reasons, which are lame excuses.” (A key informant of Myanmar origin who has lived in Samut Sakhon Province for more than 20 years)

5.2.2.3 Funding and Budget

Funds for students are a major factor in migrant children’s access to schools. Schools will not accept migrant children without documents since they cannot receive budget from the government for these children. The school has to bear that extra burden. In this way, inability to get a budget for migrant children becomes a barrier to their education.

From what principals said, since migrant children do not have the documents that are necessary to request funds for students, they are not eligible for funds provided by the government. Thus, funds for Thai children have to be shared among all students including migrant students.

However, according to the 2005 Resolution, migrant children are entitled to rights enjoyed by Thai students including funds provided by government.

In four of the five schools that have migrant children, the principals lamented that they cannot get budget for migrant children without documents from the government. They said that even though they accept migrant children now, they cannot accept more because of that budget problem. One teacher openly expressed her dislike towards sharing funds with Burmese children: ‘If migrant children had not been here, we could spend money on Thai children only.’

One principal gave the reason for his school not having migrant children from Myanmar: “Myanmar parents do not send their children to my school, so I cannot accept them.” However, he particularly stressed that getting budget for migrant children is very difficult. He repeated the phrase ‘no budget for migrant children’

three times during the interview. Understandably, there is not a single migrant student from Myanmar in his school.

The 2005 Resolution asserts that for migrant children, the education budget per student will be the same as Thai students regardless of their status. The study found that the budget per student for migrant children is non-existent. According to the Education Office of Samut Sakhon, it has received 3 million baht for migrant children's education in 2006. But, this money is spent on hiring new teachers for schools that have migrant children. This is not the budget per student mentioned in the Resolution.

An official from the Education Center of Samut Sakhon said that schools received a budget per student for migrant children if they accepted them. When informed of the principals' words on the budget, that migrant children are not entitled to this kind of budget, he said that they might misunderstand that budget.

Several key informants dismissed the 'budget' reason given by principals as 'lame excuse'.

5.2.2.4 Thai Parents' Attitudes toward Migrant Children

Thai parents can have an influence on schools' acceptance of migrant children. Principals will not accept migrant children if they feel that the latter may repel Thai children. They may have to heed some Thai parents' pressures on them not to accept migrant children because the latter do not want their children to study together with migrant students.

During an interview with a key informant (NGO worker), she said that Thai parents, who were powerful, could tell principals that they did not like their children studying with migrant children. She went on to say that this was the reason why principals do not want to accept migrant children. Her points are in accordance with the findings from the interviews with principals of big and famous schools in the province where influential people in Samut Sakhon are likely to send their children. These schools do not have migrant children. They do not want, or at least are reluctant

to accept, migrant children. On the other hand, in the schools that have a number of migrant children, Thai children come from poor families as well. The attitudes of poor parents towards migrant children studying together with their children may be different from those of big people or rich people. Or they may not be able to exercise influence on principals like powerful people.

Another key informant said that schools in the city of Samut Sakhon do not accept migrant children because principals had to comply with parents who did not want their children to be in the same school with migrant children. She told about her experience helping Myanmar migrant children enter formal schools. “The schools in the city area did not accept these children. They dared not risk Thai parents’ discontent. They did not want to repel Thai children. Finally, I approached a school outside the city which accepted them.”

5.2.2.5 Discrimination at Schools

A certain degree of discrimination against children from Myanmar exists. Ten out of 14 student respondents said Thai students insulted them by calling them ‘migrant workers’, ‘migrant students’ or ‘migrant children’, and ‘Burmese’. Two girls said that Thai students slapped them and called them ‘migrants’. Principals of these schools confirmed that some Thai children call children from Myanmar ‘migrant workers’. They said that they hit those Thai children for this behavior.

Several children said that they got back at their bullies by calling the names of their parents. However, a majority of them, including both boys and girls, said that most of the time they had to stay silent and be patient.

Five students said that when Thai students lost something in the class such as rulers or pencils, they were the first to be accused of stealing. Thai students accuse them so frequently that these students have learnt a strategy to deal with that. They attach their names on their rulers or pencils, and cover them with plastic. They open the cover and show their names to Thai students when they are accused. In this way, they said that they mocked Thai students who accused them.

5.2.3 Policy and System Level Factors

5.2.3.1 Lack of Implementation of 2005 Resolution on Education

Lack of implementation of the 2005 Resolution is one of the major reasons behind migrant children's limited access to education. In schools that I visited, effects of the Resolution cannot be traced. It has yet to start or has just started at the best. That is reflected in the number of migrant children in the schools. Though the number of Myanmar migrant children in schools increases, it is nothing compared with the estimates of Myanmar children in Samut Sakhon. Lack of enforcement of the Resolution is confirmed by interviewing different sources: principals, key informants, and parents.

The three main points of the Resolution were found not to be implemented yet:

'Educational institutes will now accept, register and give certificates to all undocumented and non-Thai persons at all levels.'

'The Ministry of Interior will provide the 13-digit personal identity number to undocumented and non-Thai persons to be able to identify the status of undocumented and non-Thai persons.'

'To allocate a budget per student for the educational institute which is giving education to the undocumented and non-Thai person, from kindergarten to high school. The amount per student will be the same as per Thai student.'

These points have previously been discussed under several sub-headings.

Although the Resolution was issued more than one year ago, principals of schools seemed to have no or poor knowledge about the Resolution. Only one teacher who answered interview questions on behalf of the principal quoted the 2005 Resolution before the researcher introduced it into conversation. A principal only started to read it when the researcher showed a copy of Resolution in Thai to him. He

took a considerable amount of time to read it. He said that he knew the Resolution but not in detail. But it seems that it was the first time that he knew the Resolution existed.

Several principals in the study dismissed the Resolution as an on-paper thing. They said that there were no clear instructions about it.

5.2.3.2 Lack of Communication System between Thai schools and Parents

There is no communication system between Thai schools and parents. Thus, parents do not know that they can enroll their children in Thai schools. Even if they know, they do not know the procedure to be followed to send their children to school.

Both the Education Office and NGOs pointed out the lack of such a communication system as a major policy level obstacle in providing education to migrant children from Myanmar.

“The major problem is that we do not have the connector between the Education Office, schools and migrant parents.... Providing information is the most important area where the Education Office cannot help migrant parents and children because we do not know the current situation of them.” (An official from the Education Office of Samut Sakhon)

Lack of a communication system results in parents’ lack of information about Thai education and schools. The latter has already been discussed in the section ‘Lack of information about Thai education and schools’ under ‘Household/Community Factors’.

5.2.3.3 Fear of Arrest or Harassment

Fear of arrest or harassment deters migrant children and parents from education. This factor would be more pronounced in the years when the number of migrant workers registered declines significantly. This decline may not mean that there is a decrease in the migrant labor force since migrants go back to their country.

More likely is that fewer migrants register. They may fear arrest or harassment since they are no longer legal. As a result, parents will not send their unregistered children to schools, and make them stay at home.

Fear of arrest or harassment can be thought of as a household/community level factor. But, I put it under policy and system level since it is more of a system factor than a household one. 2005 Resolution permits migrant children without documents enjoy education access, and Ministry of Interior was expected to facilitate that.

5.3 Case Studies of Parents¹³

5.3.1 Case Study 1: Daw Hla

Daw Hla, an ethnic Lue from Shan State in Myanmar, is a 25-year-old mother of two. She works at a garden along with her husband, an ethnic Bama, and lives there. She has been in Thailand for 7 years, almost the same as her elder daughter's age. Both she and her husband have work permits while her children have stay permits. Her family's total income is around 7,000 baht per month. Although she is poor: her shabby clothes, her words and her family income told that, she manages to send both of her children to the school. For each of children, school expenses are around 5,000 baht a year, comprising costs for uniforms, meals, pocket money, and miscellaneous. She said that it costs her family a lot. But when asked whether she thought about the cost when she and her husband decided to send the children to school, she said 'NO' immediately.

She herself had no education and is illiterate in any language. Her husband passed Grade 8 in Myanmar. She knew from her employer that her children are eligible to attend Thai school. Daw Hla did not think about her children's higher income-making possibility when she sent her children to the school. She just wants her children to be educated and literate. One of the benefits from education, according

¹³ All names are fictitious names.

to her, is that nobody can cheat her children if they are educated. To her, education in Myanmar and Thailand are not different. Education is good as far as it is education. She will send her children to school in Myanmar when they go back. Her family has a plan to go back to Myanmar, particularly Yangon¹⁴, former capital city of Myanmar. But they are not sure when. They will go back when they save a considerable amount of money.

5.3.2 Case Study 2: Daw Wa

Fifty-year-old Daw Wa, a Mon-Bama, a native of Mon State in Myanmar, sells betel-chews in Mahachai. She said that nobody hired her for work, as she was fat and old. Her husband died in a storm while working on a fishing boat in the sea. Daw Wa said that she had been in Thailand for at least 13 years and would live there till she died. She seemed depressed with her life, and did not want to contact her relatives, even her sons who she sent to her sisters in Myanmar. She lives with her nine-year old daughter, Ma Min, who is working as a shrimp-peeler in factories to make ends meet. Daw Wa said that Ma Min wanted to study, and she wanted to send her to a school. But, she could not afford it. Her small betel-chew shop is in bad shape, barely getting 100 baht per day. So, they depend on her daughter's 100 baht per day income that is still much lower than the minimum wage of 184 baht per day of Samut Sakhorn. Another reason for Daw Wa not sending her daughter to school is that she is concerned about the latter's safety on the way between school and their dwelling. She explained that her daughter is developed like a young teen though she was just nine years old. Ma Min has a lovely face and fair complexion. She is intelligent, charming and everybody likes her. Though she looks healthy, Ma Min has to go to hospital frequently: she has had heart disease since she was born. When asked if she wanted to go to school, she looked sad suddenly. She did not give an answer. Instead she looked at her mother's face seemingly asking for an approval. Ma Min had been to a migrant school close to her house when she was younger. She learnt some Burmese and Thai there, which she gradually forgets.

¹⁴ Now, the administrative capital of Myanmar is Nay Pyi Daw. On November 2005 government of Myanmar announced the decision to remove the capital from Yangon to Nay Pyi Daw.

5.3.3 Case Study 3: Ko Zin

Ko Zin, a 30-year-old NGO worker, comes from the capital of Mon State, Myanmar. He has spent ten years in Thailand. He studied at the University for a year before he left for Thailand. Being a Bama himself, he is married to a Mon woman. She runs a shop and sells groceries to migrant workers. Their household income is around 1,100 baht. They have a daughter who they sent to Myanmar just five months ago for study. Ko Zin's mother is taking care of his daughter. As they have managed to get a birth certificate for her since she was born in Thailand, she found no difficulty in entering a school. Ko Zin said that he would go back to Myanmar soon, probably within one or two years. He seemed to have saved money. He said that it was difficult for them to live forever in Thailand as they entered Thailand illegally. Even if they had a chance to stay there forever, he wants his daughter to learn the Burmese language only. He wants her to become an educated person in Myanmar. According to him, Thailand is not a good place for children to grow up. He said that children acquired bad habits as soon as they reached the age of thirteen or fourteen in Thailand. To him, the future is in Myanmar. He aims to start a small business in Myanmar. While in Thailand, he is not negligent: he learns what would be useful when he goes back to Myanmar.

5.3.4 Case Study 4: Ma Kyay

Thirty-year-old Ma Kyay works at a seafood-processing factory. She is an ethnic Bama and a native of Mudon, a town in Mon State. Her husband works on a fishing boat, and income is not steady: he only gets paid when the boat goes fishing. Their household income is around 10,000 baht. She failed at the high school final while her husband attended Grade 2 at primary school. She has two sons 9-year-old and 4-year-old, respectively. The elder son is studying at Grade 4, primary school in Myanmar while younger one goes to a migrant school. She gave birth to her elder son in Myanmar, and left him there since birth. She sends her younger son to migrant school to have some form of education that will be useful once back in Myanmar. She said that she could not teach him since she goes to work. She has plans to send this son also to Myanmar for study probably within one or two years. But, she said, if things were not right, he would stay in Thailand. She does not need to spend extra money for

sending her younger son to migrant school. She remits some money monthly to her mother in Myanmar who takes care of her elder son. In some months, if they are on a tight budget, they cannot do so. She wanted her children to be educated. She does not hope to get support from her children when they come of age. She wanted her sons to be educated since she had to drop out from school prematurely. When asked about her opinion on Thai formal schools, she said that her employer arranged to send her younger son to a Thai school. However, she declined that offer. She said that she wanted to know her child's situation at school. It would not be possible if her child is in a Thai school because she does not speak Thai fluently. She meant she could not communicate with teachers at a Thai school. So, since there is a migrant school (she said 'Burmese school'), she sent him there instead. There she can discuss her son with a Myanmar teacher.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Situation of Myanmar Children vis-à-vis Education

The situation of Myanmar migrant children regarding education is poor by any standard. Comparing the estimates of the total population of migrant children in Samut Sakhon province with those attending any educational institution, migrant children's access to education is very limited.

It is estimated that migrant children from Myanmar having access to education in Samut Sakhon will range from 14 to 26 percent of total children population.

Even the number at higher end is very low. And it should be emphasized that the quality of education available now in migrant schools cannot match that of formal schools in Thailand or Myanmar. If this fact is taken into account, the situation of migrant children is even worse.

Even among children studying in formal schools, some do not enjoy the full benefits of studying. Some children suffer from the repetition of grades as a result of moving from place to place frequently. As they do not receive certificates indicating their level of education, they face difficulty entering schools at their new place of residence. Some children are 4 or 5 years older than their classmates due to lack of education access during earlier years. Others may not understand the school lessons as they have poor command of Thai. Migrant children also have to endure a certain degree of discrimination at school. Very few children graduate from primary school as many drop out of school. Even if they graduate, they cannot get a school-leaving certificate indicating their level of education, which is essential for acceptance at secondary school.

Informal schools are still not in a position to provide proper education for children due to the government policies prohibiting them in the past. They do not have the facilities of a school. Teachers' skills are limited. They may not have

received proper training to teach children. Classrooms are crowded. Children's age ranges from 4 to 14. Children have varying levels of education. Some have been schooled in Myanmar and literate in Burmese, but they do not understand Thai.

6.1.1. Myanmar Children's Academic Performance

Myanmar children attending Thai schools are normal in their academic performance. Some of them are among the smartest in the class and get excellent grades. Some hold the last position in the class.

All principals from the schools with a number of migrant children confirmed that Myanmar children were normal in academic performance. Several said that children from Myanmar were smart and hardworking.

6.2 Barriers to Children's Education

Barriers to migrant children's education are multi-layered and multi-faceted. They include household/community-level, school-level, and policy-and-system-level barriers. They are identified as follows:

Household/ Community

- 1) Attitudes of migrant parents toward Education
- 2) Lack of information about Thai schools and education
- 3) Attitudes toward Thai education and curriculum
- 4) School expenses
- 5) Child labor
- 6) Poor Thai language proficiency
- 7) Moving frequently from one place to another
- 8) Lack of documents
- 9) Fear of arrest or harassment

School

- 1) Distance from school
- 2) Attitudes of administrators at school

- 3) Funding and Budget
- 4) Lack of documents
- 5) Thai parents' attitudes toward migrant children
- 6) Discrimination at schools

Policy and system

- 1) Lack of implementation of 2005 Resolution on Education
- 2) Lack of a system to distribute information among migrants
- 3) Fear of arrest or harassment

In accordance with my hypothesis, Myanmar migrant children's access to education in Thailand is very limited because of:

- 1) Household/Community-level barriers which include lack of information, language, child labor, school expenses, perceptions and attitudes
- 2) School-level barriers which include distance from school and insufficient facilities
- 3) Barriers at policy and system level towards migrant children education

6.3. Implementation and Enforcement of the 2005 Resolution

This study found that implementation of 2005 Resolution has just started or is yet to start. The Resolution should be implemented as soon as possible to improve the situation of migrant children regarding education according to its objectives. As the Resolution was designed to provide education to migrant children, implementing it will effectively address many of the problems of migrant children vis-à-vis education.

NGOs and Implementation

NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) are in a very good position to enhance the implementation of 2005 Resolution if their potential is fully tapped. NGOs can complement and are complementing the implementation process spearheaded by the government as they have certain advantages.

NGOs are key players in Myanmar migrant children's education in Samut Sakhon Province. They assume different roles in this business. They are both service

providers and facilitators. They offer education to migrant children by running informal schools. They act as communication agents between migrant society and schools or Thai education. They provide education information to migrant workers about migrant schools and formal Thai schools.

NGOs give advice to parents about education. If parents are reluctant to approach the officials from schools to enroll their children there, staff members of these NGOs accompany them and deal with teachers. If administrators at schools are reluctant to accept Myanmar children, they negotiate with them. Moreover, they encourage migrants to provide education to their children.

NGOs know the migrant population inside out. They work with migrants and help them in various ways. Migrants trust NGOs more than other organizations. NGOs can act as bridge between the governmental organizations and migrants.

In short, NGOs are already implementing the 2005 Resolution in their own way. However, their capacity is limited due to various constraints such as financial and legal ones. Thai government can help NGOs in various ways such as by giving permissions where necessary so that NGOs can work freely. International NGOs and donors can provide financial assistance. In this way, the implementation of the 2005 Resolution can be sped up.

6.4. Strengthening Migrant Schools

Migrant schools should be strengthened both in quality and quantity to provide better education to migrant Myanmar children. International organizations and Thai government can help migrant schools as described in the previous section.

NGOs are already running migrant schools in Samut Sakhon Province. However, the capacities of these schools are limited. They should be enhanced to provide primary and secondary education to their students. The number of schools should also be increased to accept more migrant children.

Even now, without facilities, these migrant schools have certain advantages. They are flexible. They can provide what Thai schools cannot such as Burmese

language. Parents see migrant schools as an opportunity for their children. Their children can learn Burmese there, while they themselves cannot teach it to their children. Entrance is encouraged, not restricted. Education is free. They do not need to spend much on school expenses. They are not reluctant to approach teachers there and discuss their children's social and academic condition. On the other hand, children can learn Thai language essential for their stay in Thailand. Even if they extend their stay in Thailand, their children would be at a better position than if they had not sent them to migrant schools.

Myanmar children who go to Thai schools should be offered a chance to learn Burmese language, Myanmar culture and history on weekends at migrant schools. In this way, migrant schools can be complementary to formal schools.

Summing up, migrant schools can play a key role in providing education to Myanmar children in Thailand.

6.5. Future Research

Studies on migrant children's education access should be done in other places such as Ranong and Chiang Mai where Myanmar migrants are concentrated. They can be qualitative, quantitative or both.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

REFERENCES

- Amaraphibal, A., & Worasaen, C. (2000). *Needs assessment for migrant children in Thailand: A case study of Burmese children in Ranong*. Bangkok, Thailand: Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
- Amnesty International. (2005, June). *Thailand: The plight of Burmese migrant workers*. (AI Index: ASA 39/001/2005). Retrieved April 15, 2006 from <http://www.burmalibrary.org>
- Arnold, D., & Hewison, K. (2005). Exploitation in Global Supply Chains: Burmese Workers in Mae Sot [Electronic version]. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 35(3), 319-340.
- Asian Migrant Centre & Mekong Migration Network. (2002). *Migration: Needs, issues and responses in the Greater Mekong Subregion*. Hong Kong: Asian Migrant Centre.
- Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM), Institute of Population and Social Research (IPSR) & Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI). (2004). *Thailand: Improving the management of foreign worker: Case studies on five industrial sectors*. Bangkok, Thailand: International Organization for Migration.
- Asis, M.M.B. (2005, August). *Recent trends in the international migration in the Asia-Pacific*. Paper presented at the Regional Seminar on the Social Implications of International Migration, Bangkok, Thailand. Retrieved May 5, 2006 from <http://www.unescap.org>
- Bryant, J. (2005). *Children of International Migrants in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines: A Review of Evidence and Policies*. Innocenti Working Paper No. 2005-05. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Buchmann, C. (2000). Family structure, parental perceptions, and child labor in Kenya: What factors determine who is enrolled in School? [Electronic

- version]. *Social Forces*, 78(4), 1349-1378. Retrieved May 10, 2006 from JSTOR database.
- Caouette, T. (n.d). *Small Dreams beyond reach: The lives of migrant children and youth along the borders of China, Myanmar and Thailand*. London: Save the Children (UK).
- Chantavanich, S., Germershausen, A., & Beesey, A. (Eds.). (2000). *Thai migrant workers in East and Southeast Asia*. Bangkok, Thailand: Asian Research Centre for Migration, Chulalongkorn University.
- Chen, L., Fukuda-Parr, S., & Seidensticker, E. (Eds.). (2003). *Human security in a global world*. Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, Harvard University.
- Commission on Human Security. (2003). *Human security now*. New York: Commission on Human Security.
- Fouinat, F. (2004). A comprehensive framework for human security. *Conflict, Security and Development* 4(3), December 2004. Retrieved August 25, 2006 from Taylor and Francis Online Journals database.
- Hara, N. (2000). *Social networks of migrant workers from Burma in Thailand: A case study of a migrant community in Samut Sakhon Province*. Master's Thesis, School of Social Development, the National Institute of Development Administration, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Huguet, J.W., & Punpuing, S. (2005). Child migrants and children of migrants in Thailand. *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, 20(3), 123-142.
- Huguet, J.W., & Punpuing, S. (2005). *International migration in Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand: International Organization for Migration.
- Human Rights in China (2002, May). *Shutting out the poorest: Discrimination against the most disadvantaged migrant children in city schools*. Retrieved May 31, 2006 from <http://hrichina.org>

- Mekong Migration Network and Asian Migrant Centre. (2005). *Resource Book: Migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion*. Hong Kong: Asian Migrant Centre.
- Mullany, L.C., Maung, C., & Beyrer, C. (2003). HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes, and practices among Burmese migrant factory workers in Tak Province, Thailand. *AIDS CARE*, 15(1), 63-70.
- Nopachai, V. (2004). *Reproductive health of Burmese migrant youth in Thailand: Findings, experiences, and lessons learned*. Bangkok, Thailand: Raks Thai Foundation.
- Nyo, N. (2001). Burmese children in Thailand: Legal aspects. In *Legal issues on Burma Journal*, 2001. 10 (December). 51-56. Retrieved May 15, 2006 from http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/Legal_Issues_on%20Burma_Journal_10.pdf
- Paisanpanichkul, D. (2001). Burmese migrant workers in Thailand: Policy and Protection. In *Legal issues on Burma Journal*, 2001, 10(December), 39-50. Retrieved May 15, 2006 from http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/Legal_Issues_on%20Burma_Journal_10.pdf
- Panam, A., Caouette, T., Kyaw Zaw, K.M., & Punpuing, S. (2004). *Migrant domestic workers from Burma to Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University.
- Piper, N. (2004). Rights of foreign workers and the policies of migration in South-East and East Asia. *International Migration*, 42 (5), 71-97.
- Sam, K. (June 16, 2005). Burmese migrants, Labor Groups fight for fair wages. *Irrawaddy News Magazine Online Edition*. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from <http://www.irrawaddy.org>
- Sen, A. (2002). *Basic Education and Human Security*. Paper for the workshop on “Basic Education and Human Security,” jointly organized by the Commission

on Human Security, UNICEF, the Pratichi (India) Trust, and Harvard University, in Kolkata, 2-4 January 2002.

Silp, S. (March 21, 2006). Thai authorities close migrant schools in Phop Phra. *Irrawaddy News Magazine Online Edition*. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from <http://www.irrawaddy.org>

Stern, A. (1998). *Thailand's migration situation and its relations with APEC members and other countries in Southeast Asia*. Bangkok, Thailand: Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM), Institute of Asian Studies.

United Nations Children Fund. (n.d). *Barriers to Girls' Education, Strategies and Interventions*. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from <http://www.unicef.org>

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific. (2001). *International Migration: An Emerging Opportunity for the Socio-economic Development of the ESCAP Region*. Retrieved 9 June, 2006 from <http://www.unescap.org>

Vicary, A. (Ed). (2003). *Migrant workers from Burma and Thailand: Policy review and Protection mechanisms*. Retrieved May 10, 2006 from http://www.econ.mq.edu.au/BurmaEconomicWatch/Chula_MW_Conference.pdf

Vicary, A. (2004). *Preliminary Survey Results about Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand: state/division of origin, year of entry, minimum wages and work permits*. Retrieved May 1, 2006 from <http://www.ibiblio.org>

Vungsiriphisal, P., Auasalong, S., & Chatavanich, S. (n.d). *Migrant Children in Difficult Circumstances in Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand: The Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.

Wun'gao, S. (Ed). (2003). *Challenges to human security in a borderless world*. Bangkok, Thailand: Center for Social Development Studies, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.

Wun'gaeo, S. (Ed). (2004). *Human security now: Strengthening policy networks in Southeast Asia*. Bangkok, Thailand: Center for Social Development Studies, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

BIOGRAPHY

Zeya Thu was born and raised in Myanmar. He graduated from Yangon Technological University in Myanmar with a bachelor degree in civil engineering. After university, he worked as a self-employed engineer. In 2004, he changed his course, and has become a journalist working in Myanmar since then.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย