

SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC CONDITION FROM MIGRATION AND ITS EFFECTS IN PA- AUK AND KAWT KHA MEL VILLAGE TRACTS, MAWLAMYINE TOWNSHIP

Htay Htay Naing¹, Moe Ommar Lwin², Mya Moe Wai³, Thandar Thaw⁴ and Moe Moe⁵

Abstract

Migration plays a vital role in poverty alleviation and rate of unemployment. According to questionnaire survey the migrants of the study area left their native because of low job opportunity and low salary or wage which cannot fully support the livelihood of the family members and education cost of their offspring. The main intention of leaving for neighbouring countries is to earn more income. This paper focuses on the migration flow, trend and movement which affect the socioeconomic life of the migrant workers' families. The research questions are: (1) "What are the socioeconomic conditions of the migrant workers?" and (2) "What extent the respective families depend on the remittance sent by the migrants?". Main aim of this paper is to examine the effects on economic progress of migrants' families. The objectives are: to identify the socioeconomic conditions of the migrant workers, to know the main reason of migration, and to assess the extent of dependency on the remittance sent by migrants. Primary data are acquired by providing questionnaire and discussion with the family members of 120 migrant workers. The data are analyzed by frequency and percentage methods as well as with SWOT Analysis to reveal opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of earning income at the neighbouring states as migrant workers.

Keywords: migration, unemployment, remittance, rural area, SWOT Analysis

Introduction

Migration is a decision that impacts the welfare of the household, the home community, and in the end the whole economy in various ways (Azam and Gubert 2006). Migration and remittances have both direct and indirect effects on the welfare of the population in the migrant sending countries. While migration has economic, social, and cultural implications for the sending and host societies, remittances the migrants send home are perhaps the most tangible and least controversial link between migration and development (Ratha 2007). Mawlamyine is the capital city of Mon State and it is fairly developed because of its advantageous location and high accessibility with roads, railroads and airfield. In the study area, there are only a few households that depend on farmwork. Likewise, the numbers of workers engaged in weaving industry are also small. At least one member of each family or household is working in the neighbouring or other country and the majority of the households rely on the remittance sent back home by the migrant workers. Such existing infrastructural facilities as residential buildings, electricity and potable water sources, public rural health centre, clinics, basic education high school, University of Technology reveal that the study area is economically fairly developed. In order to have comprehensive understanding of the economic background of the area, this research work is conducted.

Research questions

What are the socioeconomic conditions of the migrant workers?

What extent the respective families depend on the remittance sent by the migrants?

¹ Dr, Lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Yangon

² Dr, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, West Yangon University

³ Lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Yangon

⁴ Dr, Lecturer, Department of Geography, Taungoo University

⁵ Lecturer, Department of Geography, Taungoo University

❖ Aim

- ▶ The main aim of this study is to examine the economic progress of migrants' families.

❖ Objectives

- ▶ to identify the socioeconomic conditions of the migrant workers
- ▶ to know the main reason of migration
- ▶ to assess the extent of dependency on the remittance sent by the migrants

Data and Methodology

The analysis is based on a survey of 120 migrants during the period from 25-12-2019 to 6-1-2020. Primary data which include gender, age, education, former and present job, income, marital status are acquired through questionnaire survey. The facts and information related to the migrant workers are responded by the family members of the respective migrant workers. Secondary data are obtained from Township General Administrative Department. The data obtained are assessed by sample statistical methods including frequency and percentage. In order to be able to present the good points and weaknesses of earning income as migrant workers, SWOT Analysis is used.

Study Area

Mawlamyine Township is located between north latitudes 16° 22' and 16° 30' and between east longitudes 97° 35' and 97° 42', covering an area of (230.04) square kilometres (88.82 square miles). It is (27.36) kilometres (17 miles) long from north to south and (11.27) kilometres (7 miles) wide from east to west. It is bordered with Hpa-an Township (Kayin State) on the north, Kyaikmayaw Township on the east, Mudon Township on the south and Chaungzon Township on the west. The study area is located (14.48) kilometres (9 miles) to the south of Mawlamyine urban area and close to Pa-Auk monastery, a well-known meditation centre. It also has University of Technology and it is fairly developed economically.

Mawlamyine Township is resided mostly by Bamars (57.5%), followed by Mon (20.32%). In 2019, it had a total household of 45,065 with a population of 229,520. The majority, 266,075 or 86 percent, lived in the urban area and 36,555 or 14 percent inhabited in the rural area and with a total household of 7,675. The number of population in the study area in 2019 was 8,428 which represented 23 percent of the rural population of Mawlamyine Township. The inhabitants are mostly Mons. The number of workforce in Mawlamyine Township was 169,455 of which 126,592 or 75 percent were engaged in certain jobs. The number of people with no employment was 42,863 or 25 percent of the total workforce. There were 102,928 dependents and the dependency ratio was $102,928/126,592 \times 100 = 81$ (Source: GAD, Mawlamyine Township, 2019).

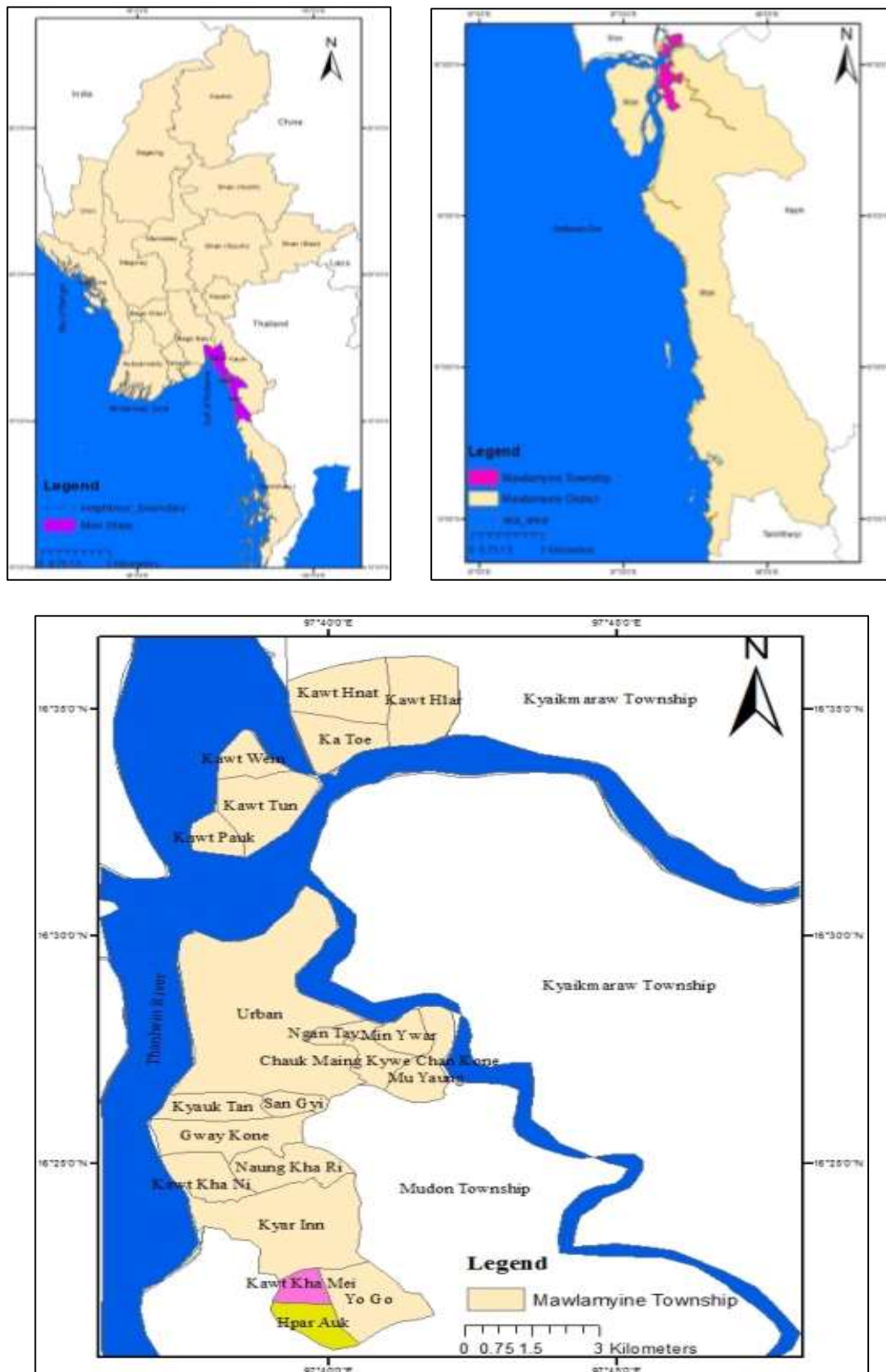


Figure 1 Location of study area in Mawlamyine Township

Findings

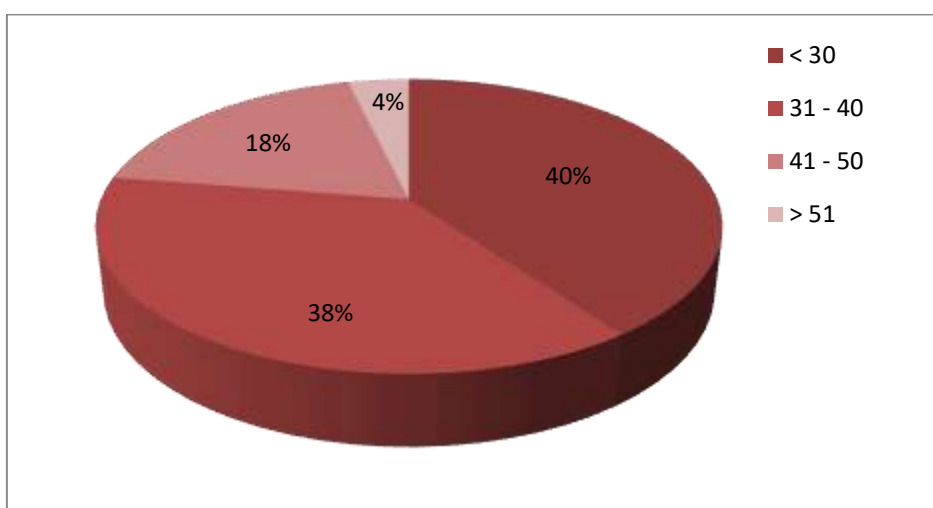
Socio-economic Characteristics of the Migrants

Gender

Of the 120 migrants workers under study 68 (57 percent) are males and the remaining 52 (43 percent) females. Therefore, there is less difference between two males and females among the migrant workers.

Age (years)

Among the 120 migrant workers, 48 (40 percent) are aged under 30 years, 45 (38 percent) between 31 and 40 years, 22 (18 percent) between 41 and 50 years and 5 (4 percent) 51 and above years. Generally young adults who can work manually are the most common among the migrant workers.



Source: Table 1

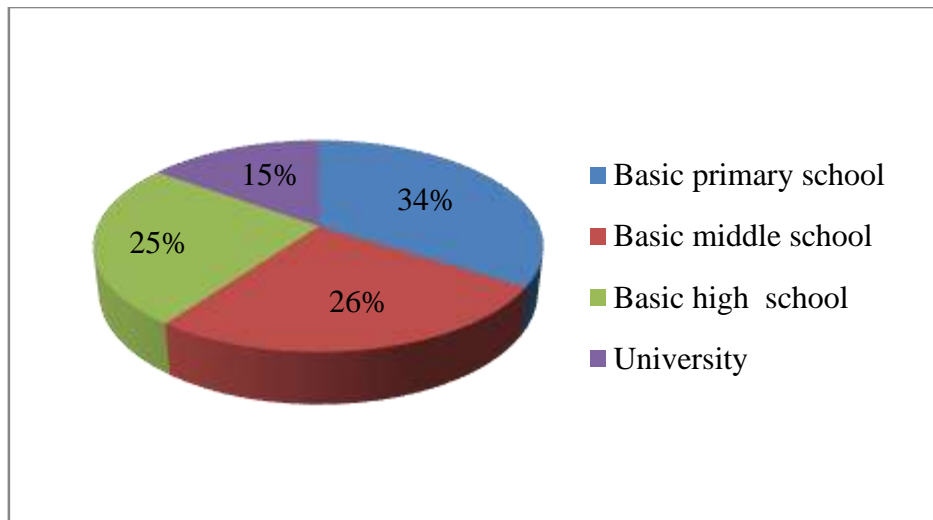
Figure 2 Age of the migrant workers in the study area

Marital Status

Migrant workers include both single and married. The married couples earn more income. Some couples have offsprings and they leave them with their grandmother and grandfather to look after the kids. Of the 120 migrants, 43 (36 percent) are single and 77 (64 percent) married. This shows that married migrants are greater in number than the single ones.

Education Status

As regards to the education level of the migrants, 41 (34 percent) are of basic primary level, 31 (26 percent) basic middle level, 30 (25 percent) basic high school level and 18 (15 percent) university level. Generally basic primary level and basic middle level are more common.

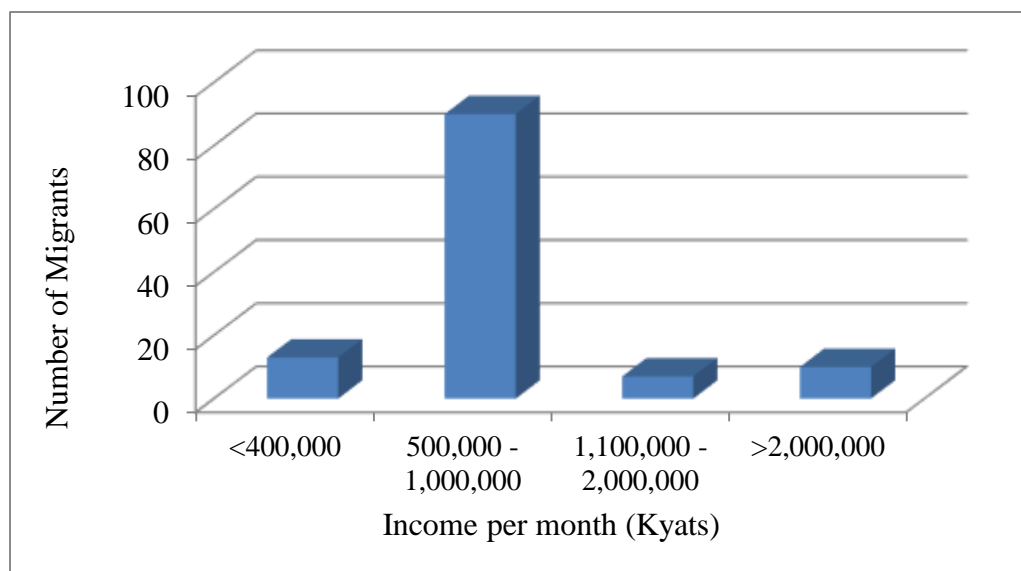


Source: Table 1

Figure 3 Education levels of the migrant workers in the study area

Income

According to questionnaire survey, 90 (75 percent) earn a monthly income of between kyats 5 and kyats 10 lakhs, while 13 (11 percent) receive kyats 4 lakhs each. There are 7 (6 percent) migrant workers who earn between kyats 11 and kyats 20 lakhs per month and 10 (8 percent) over 20 lakhs. Although their education level is low, they can earn a considerable high income in other countries, much higher than the salary earned by the gazette officer in the homeland. This is the main reason of leaving the country and work as migrant workers in other countries.



Source: Table 1

Figure 4 Income per month (Kyats) of the migrant workers in the destination area

Table 1 Distribution of migrant workers according to socio-economic characteristics (n= 120)

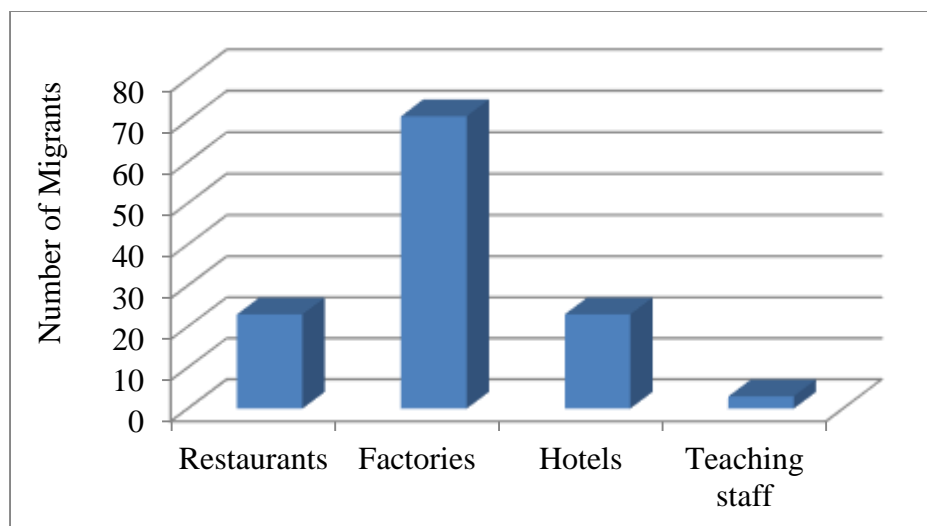
Socio-economics characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	68	57
Female	52	43
Total	120	100
Age (Years)		
< 30	48	40
31 - 40	45	38
41 - 50	22	18
> 51	5	4
Total	120	100
Marital Status		
Single	43	36
Married	77	64
Total	120	100
Education Status		
Basic primary school	41	34
Basic middle school	31	26
Basic high school	30	25
University	18	15
Total	120	100
Current Job Type		
Restaurants	23	19
Factories	71	59
Hotels	23	19
Teaching staff	3	3
Total	120	100
Former Job Type		
Student	9	8
Jobless	72	60
Trading activity	13	11
Traditional weaving activity	21	17
Transporting activity	5	4
Total	120	100
Income		
<400,000	13	11
500,000 - 1,000,000	90	75
1,100,000 - 2,000,000	7	6

Socio-economics characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
>2,000,000	10	8
Total	120	100
Types of house		
Brick house	66	55
Semi-brick house	39	33
Wooden house	15	12
Total	120	100
Migrant's Destination		
Thailand	95	79.17
Malaysia	10	8.33
Korea	10	8.33
Japan	5	4.17
Total	120	100
Reasons of migration		
Job opportunities in destination	120	100
Migration Time		
2000-2004	9	7
2005-2009	13	11
2010-2014	36	30
2015-2019	62	52
Total	120	100
Farm ownership (Acre)		
No Farmland	102	85
Own farmland	18	15
Total	120	100
Dependency Percentage		
Dependency Percentage	Number of Households	
No Dependent	4	
Below 50%	20	
Above 50%	96	
Total	120	

Source: Field observation (25/12/2019 – 6/1/2020)

Current Job Types

Among the migrant workers under study, 71 (59 percent) are engaged at factories, 23 (19 percent) each at restaurants and hotels and only 3 (3 percent) in service activity as teaching staff.

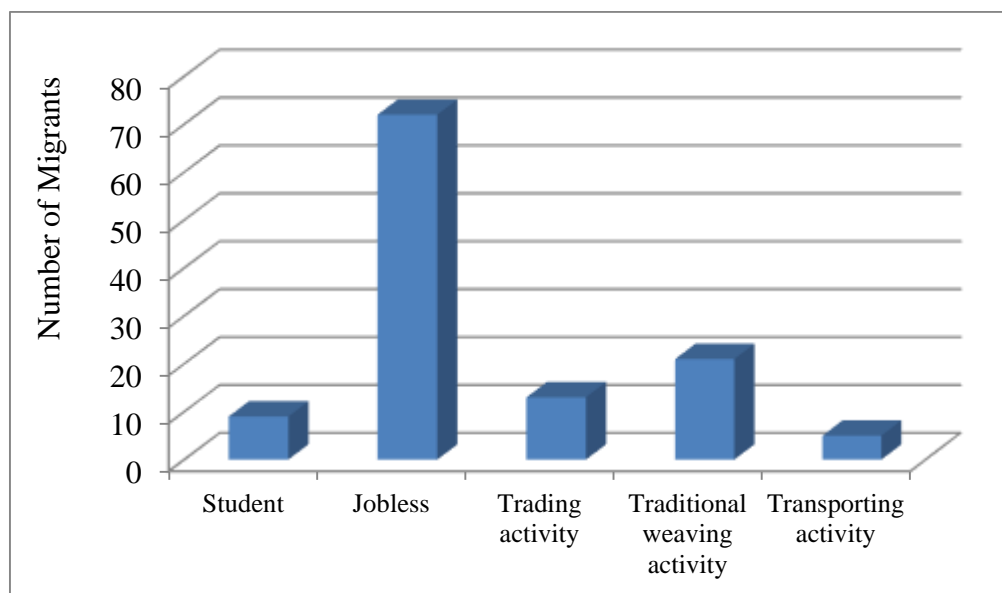


Source: Table 1

Figure 5 Current job types of the migrant workers in the destination area

Former Job Types

Before they left their homeland, 72 (60 percent) were jobless, depending on family income. Among the remainders, 21 (17 percent) were engaged in traditional weaving activity, 13 (11 percent) in trading activity, 9 (8 percent) in pursuing education and 5 (4 percent) in transporting activity.



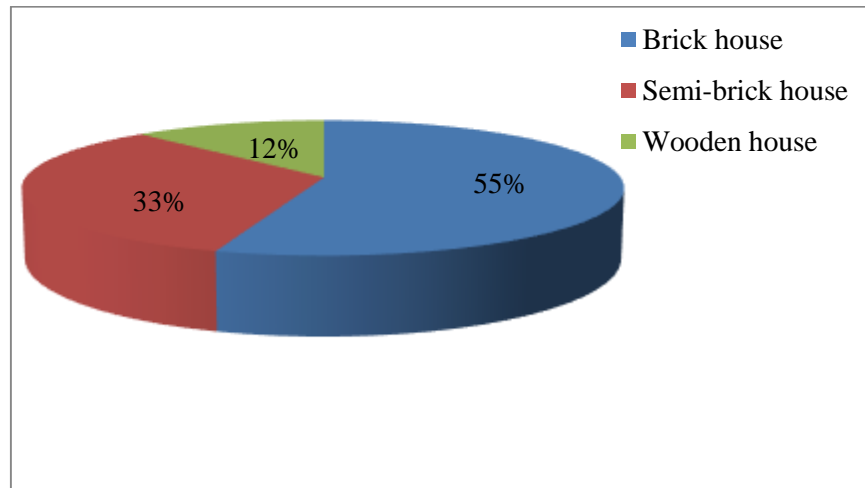
Source: Table 1

Figure 6 Former job types of the migrant workers in the study area

Types of House

Type of house is one of important indicators of the socioeconomic status of the house concerned. According to field surveys, there are 66 (55 percent) brick houses, 39 (33 percent) semi-brick houses and 15 (12 percent) wooden houses. Even the wooden houses are large with two

stories; this situation indicates that the socioeconomic status of the families of the migrant workers is moderately high.

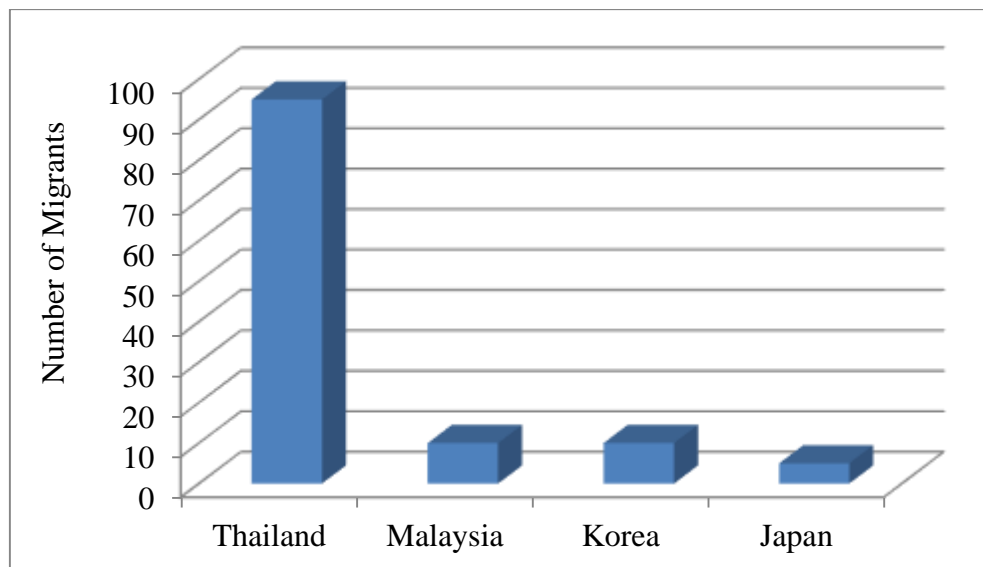


Source: Table 1

Figure7 Types of house of the migrant workers in the study area

Migrant's Destination

The great majority of migrants' destination is Thailand, one of the neighbouring states of Myanmar. Among the 120 migrant workers, 95 (79.17 percent) searched job in Thailand, 10 (8.33 percent) each in Malaysia and South Korea and 5 (4.17 percent) in Japan.



Source: Table 1

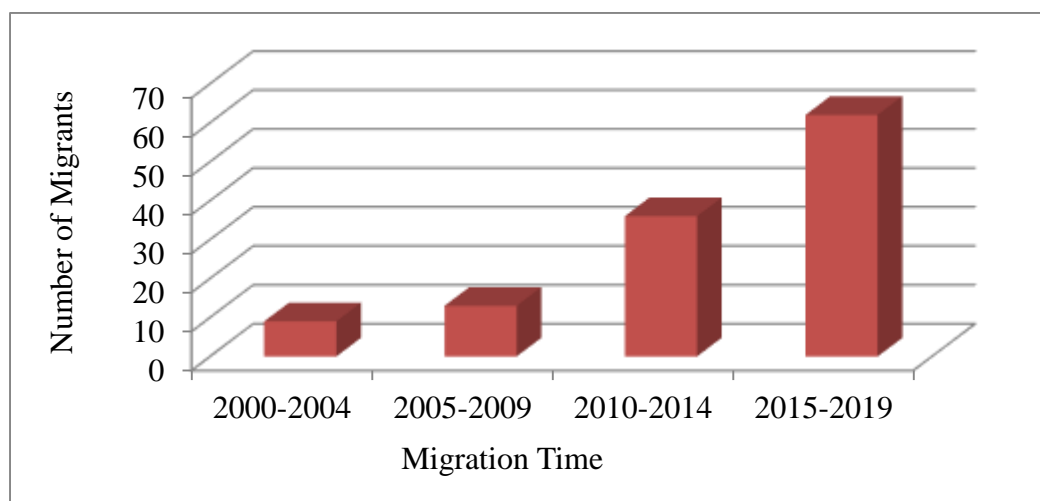
Figure 8 Destination or country of the migrant workers

Reasons of Migration

According to the responses to questionnaire survey, the main reasons of people leaving their native are due to low employment opportunity and low wage in the native land.

Migration Time

Based on the responses to questionnaire survey, the time spent in foreign countries as migrant workers is divided into 4 periods. In the 2000-2004 periods, there were only 9 (7 percent) migrant workers in the study area. The number of migrant workers was 13 (11 percent) in the 2005-2009 period, 36 (30 percent) in the 2010-2014 and 62 (52 percent) in the 2015-2019. This show that the number of people leaving the homeland to neighbouring and other countries for jobs that earns more income has been notably increasing. It was more than half of the total migrants in the last 5 years.



Source: Table 1

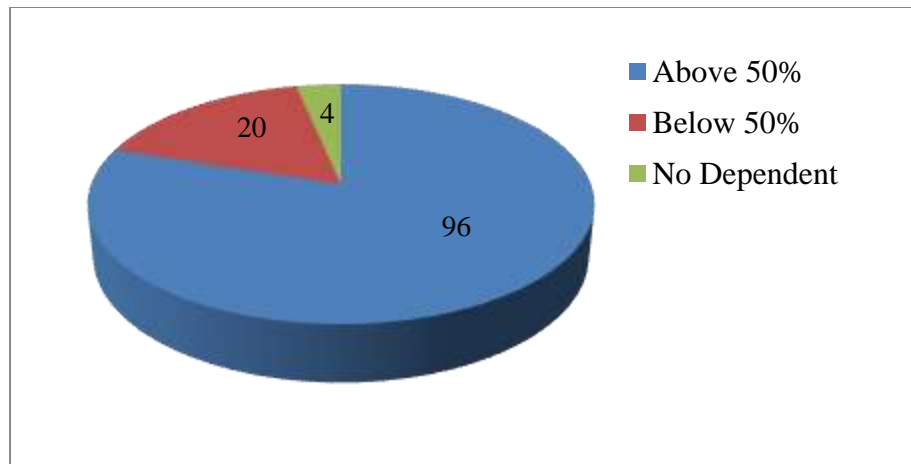
Figure 9 Migration time of the migrant's workers in the study area

Farm Ownership

Among the migrant workers' only 18 (15 percent) households have their own farmland and the remaining 102 (85 percent) are not get involved in the farmwork.

Dependency Percentage

According to questionnaire survey the majority of the members of the sample households depend on the remittance for their livelihood. There are only 4 households that do not depend on the remittance, but less than 50 percent of the 20 households members depend on it, while more than 50 percent of 96 households rely on the money sent back by the respective migrant workers. Therefore, the incomes gained by the migrant workers are very important for the livelihood of the household members and their socioeconomic status.



Source: Table 1

Figure 10 Dependency Percentage of the families on the remittance of the migrant workers in the study area

SWOT Analysis on the migration and its effects on the economics development of study area in Mawlamyine Township

<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - widening of knowledge related to politics, economics, social and culture - more exposure and relation with the foreigners - exchange of ideas and outlook among the youths of the native and foreign worker 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leaving the aged and the youth in the native - scarcity of labour for farmwork - decline in the traditional weaving industry - leaving some parts of the farmland uncultivated - the growth up of offsprings without the care of parents - living together only with grandmother and grandfather
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the increase of remittance, hence more foreign exchange for the country - the increase in the annual income of households - being able to go foreign countries easily, especially to Thailand - the progress of socioeconomic status - increase in the number of skilled labourers - being able to start business with the experiences gained from other countries (e.g. Htai cuisine shop, made-up and hair-beauty saloon) 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the decrease in the number of workforce - brain drain - replacement of Thai food - rapid spread of foreign culture (e.g clothing pattern, hair style, wearing of ear-ring by young males)

Source: Own idea based on field observation and interview (20/12/2019 – 30/12/2019)

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper analyzes migration and its effects on the economic condition in Pa-Auk and Kawt Kha Mel Village Tracts, Mawlamyine Township, Mon State. In the study area, all households have one or more migrant workers. The number of migrants at basic education level is higher than those at University Level as they moved before they finished their education. Most of the migrants are below the age of 51 years. Many young people are advantages in nature that they migrate to other countries. And a large variety of them work at the factory. According to the marital status, the number of married migrants is greater than singles. From the results of the interviews, there are 18 couples among 77 married migrants. Hence, almost the half of married people are found to be couples. Their previous job history is asked and most of the migrant workers were jobless before migrant, which is the main reason for their movement. Many female migrants workers had worked at traditional weaving and their salaries were low. Therefore, they moved to other countries for work. The income was raised after migration that they are able to reconstruct their houses and support their families. As a result, a lot of new and still constructing houses can be found in the study area. The migration to Thailand is more than migrants to Malaysia, South Korea and Japan. It is because of the Distance Bias in the geographical point of view. Moreover, there is no limitation of travel to Thailand most of the migrants are already familiar with the place, culture and language. There are 96 (80 percent) out of 120 households that over 50 percent of the members depend on the remittance of the migrant workers. The amount of remittance sent back has been fairly large, leading to the increase in the household income, high in socioeconomic status, becoming skillful workers through experience, and starting own business by some. Such advantageous conditions will support to create better job when they come back to their native. On the other hand, earning income in foreign countries as migrant workers has such negative impact as shortage of labour in the homeland, the effect of brain drain and the influence of foreign cultures among the local communities.

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