ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL MIGRATION PATTERNS OF THITTOKAN VILLAGE TRACT, CHAUK TOWNSHIP, MAGWAY REGION (MYANMAR)

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Abstract

This study intends primarily to investigate the socio-economic activities and migration patterns of Thittokan Village Tract, Chauk Township, Magway Region (Myanmar). Furthermore, migrant incomes will be studied. The objectives of the study are (1) to study the social-economic activities of rural residents, (2) to investigate the rural migration that can influence income of rural families, and (3) to examine internal and external migration patterns of rural families, and (4) to suggest ways of reducing rural migration in the study area. Relevant data will be elicited from both the primary and secondary information, which will be analyzed by using sampling methods and qualitative assessment. The results of the findings show that internal migration is higher than external migration in the study area.Moreover, the villagers believe that both internal and external migration contribute to the reduction of poverty in various ways, with some newly emerging studies revealing that migration helps poor families to cope with risk and to smooth incomes.

Keywords: Internal Migration, External Migration, Migration Patterns

Introduction

Globalization and migration are rapidly transforming traditional spheres of human activity. The work of rural families is no longer confined to farming activities, and rural people are increasingly being diversified through internal migration (rural-to-urban) and external migration (international or other countries). This study intends primarily to investigate the relationship between rural socio-economic activities and migration in Thittokan Village Tract, Chauk Township in Magway Region.

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Study Area

Thittokan Village Tract is a Village Tract in Chauk Township of Magway District, Magway Region, Myanmar. Thittokan Village Tract is subdivided into 4 Villages including Thittokan Village, Suutat Village, Sankan Village and Sanni Village. It lies between latitude 20.77364' and longitude 94.96774' Figure (1).

The research is conducted from the perspective of migrant remittance earnings rural families of Thittokan Village Tract in the case of Chauk Township, Magway Region.

Research Question

"To which extent and through which migration patterns, channel and conditions does rural migration affect the income of rural families?"

Research Hypothesis

- Rural migration positively affects farm and total income of rural families through remittances
- Rural migration is a rational decision to maximize total family income of migrant sending rural households

The specific objectives of the research are;

- to study the socio-economic activities in rural residents,
- to investigate the rural migration that can influence income of rural families,
- to examine internal and external migration patterns of rural families,
- to suggest that the ways of reducing rural migration in the study area

Methodology and Sources of Data

This study analyzed physical conditions, human factors and economic conditions within the village. Physical conditions and human factors are investigated by using secondary data. Major sources of secondary data collection are from the Settlement and Land Records Department, Immigration and Man Power Department, Township Peace and Development Council. The migration data and socio-economic conditions of the villagers are emphasized by using primary data, which are gathered by using questionnaires, open interviews and field observations.

For data analysis, quantitative analysis and qualitative assessment are used to express the local people socio-economic conditions in Thittokan Village Tract. After that, Geographic Information System is applied for drawing maps and analyzing land use and distribution of economic activities. The discussion on sampling methods also includes the different producers that were used for section of households and research sites.



Figure 1. Location of Study Area **Source:** Department of Geography, University of Mandalay

Population Background and Source of Labour

Human Factors

Human factors are very important in the geographical study of a region. Generally, the population distribution and density depend on relief, transportation facilities and water supply for agriculture. Magway Region is an administrative region in central Myanmar. It is the second largest of Myanmar's seven regions, with an area of 44,820 square kilometers. Magway Region is made up of the districts of Magway, Minbu, Thatyet, Pakokku and Gangaw comprising 25 townships and 1,696 ward and village tracts. Chauk Township is one of the Townships in Magway District and it has 5 Village Circles which are Salay, Pakannge, Gwaypin, Kwinlat and Gwaycho Village Circle. Thittokan Village Tract lie Gwaycho Village Circle.

Thittokan Village Tract is a Village Tract in Chauk Township of Magway District, Magway Region in Myanmar. It is subdivided into 4 villages including Thittokan Village, Suutat Village, Sankan Village, and Sanni Village. Thittokan Village has the highest population in Thittokan Village Tract. According to 2016 population data Thittokan Village Tract was 3,573 persons with 1,624 males and 1,949 females and the total population was 3,451 persons with 1,539 males and 1,912 females in 2015.

Population Distribution

Thittokan Village Tract is located far from the Kyaukpataung-Chauk main road. Thittokan Village Tract has 755 households and total population of 3,573 in 2016. In the study area, physiographic conditions influence the distribution of population. The large number of population is concentrated in the central village area. Other areas are sparsely populated. Most of people are Bamars. Some are other ethnic groups, also Indians and Chinese. The majority of people are Buddhists. Some are Christians. According to the data available, the total population of the study area was 3,573 persons in 2016, 2,518 or 70 percent were above 18 years of age and the remaining 1,055or 30 percent below 18 years Figure (2).



Figure 2. Population Distribution of Thittokan Village Tract **Source:** Based on Table 7

Table 2. Population Condition of Thittokan Village Tract, Magway Region(2016)

No	Village	House hold	Above 18 Year Population		Below 18 Year Population			Total Population			
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Thittokan	270	369	517	886	211	238	449	580	755	1,335
2	Suutat	245	360	398	758	163	148	311	523	546	1,069
3	Sankan	175	249	303	552	103	129	232	352	432	784
4	Sanni	65	134	188	322	35	28	63	169	216	385
	Total	755	1,112	1,406	2,518	512	543	1,055	1,624	1,949	3,573

Source: Land Records Department in Chauk Township

Ethnic Groups and Types of Occupation

Chauk Township is situated in Central Myanmar, and the majority of the population is Bamar. According to 2015-2016 census, 98.96 percent of the total population is Bamar, about 1 percent of the population was other ethnic groups, 0.02percent the total population was Kayin, 0.01percent the total population was Shan, and 0.02percent, 0.01percent, and 0.003percent of the total population were Kachin, Rakhine and Mon respectively. The mixed population, mostly Bamars and foreigners, amounted to 0.97 percent in 2015-2016 Table (2).

Races Group	Total Population	Percent	Ethnic Groups	Total Population	Percent
Bamars	208488	98.96	Rakhine	30	0.01
Chin	35	0.02	Mon	7	0.003
Kayin	52	0.02	Kayah	3	0.001
Shan	23	0.01	China	148	0.07
Kachin	9	0.02	India	1,886	0.90

Table 3. Population of Chauk Township by Ethnic Groups in 2015-2016

Source: Immigration and Man Power Department of Chauk Township

As the majority of the population is Bamar, Buddhists made up the greatest number with 98.96 percent of the total population. The Chins also strongly believe in Buddhism. There are different religious buildings such as Pagodas, Monasteries, Chinese Temples, Christian Churches, and Hindu Temples within the township. Most of these Pagodas, Monasteries, Temples and Churches are found in the urban area of Chauk Township. Thittokan Village Tract has 3,573 persons of the total population in 2016 Table (3). They were mainly engaged in agriculture, livestock breeding, manufacturing, and professionals such as doctors, teachers and nurses. Total workforce was made up of 1,624 males and 1,949 females. The second and third most important economic activity of the township was out migration, manufacturing and government staff. The numbers of male workers were much greater than that of female workers in the out migration and manufacturing sector. In Thittokan Village Tract, workers engaged in

agriculture are the highest population. Therefore, agricultural development of Thittokan Village Tract is very important for the economic growth of the area, because about 70 percent of workers are employed in the agricultural sector.

Assessment of Internal or External Migration Patterns of Thittokan Village Tract

Basic Concepts of Migration

Migration has become an integral part of the current rural economy. Both internal (rural to urban with the state) and external migration (international migration) can have major rural development and poverty implications for individuals and their families' economies. Rural poor people migrate internally, but also externally. Short-term contract external migration has greater potential to reduce poverty than internal migration, because of the size of remittances received per household.

Their migration leads to an increase in both employment opportunities and income. Although the internal or external migrants are often essential for the economic activities in receiving areas, their living spaces are not typically allocated in national economic development or urban planning, especially in cases of rural-urban migration.

Internal Migration is moving to a new home within a state, country, or continent. And also internal migration refers to people within a country moving to another location within its borders, also known as external migration, refers to the act of migration across borders from one country to another. Usually, the motivations for internal and external migration differ.

Movement of internal migration includes rural to rural, rural to urban flows. The migration duration can be both short and long term. A particular section of internal migrants circulate repetitively between origin and destination areas based on their respective seasonal conditions and labour demands. These groups are referred to as seasonal and circular internal labour migrants. The most contemporary research is on rural to urban internal migration. From the perspective of poverty reduction, seasonal and circular migration may provide important insights, as these types of migration appear to be more prevalent among the poor. External Migration is moving to a new home in a different state, country or continent.

(* http://family.jrank.org/pages/1169/Migration-Types-Migration.html)

External migration is mostly taken up by medium to high land holding households to improve their livelihood situations but rarely by landless or near landless households. The major reasons for external migration are the high income, better job opportunity and to improve their experience. As compared to internal migration, international migration has higher costs and risks as well as returns.

Migration Channels in Thittokan Village Tract

In the study area, labour migration channels are diverse. In all the four surveyed villages, internal migration to Mandalay Region especially in Pyin Oo Lwin, Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Shan State and also external migration to Thailand, China, Singapore, Japan and Malaysia is an important livelihood strategy undertaken by rural household members. Though there is lack of data and studies on internal migration in the study area, various surveys shows that there is a lot of internal mobility for income generation.

Depending on the nature of work and the distance between the work and the origin village, all three types of internal migration – seasonal, yearround temporary and permanent - were observed. The major reason for internal migration is employment. Lack of year-round and sufficient employment in the origin location is the major cause for people to migrate. In general, there seems to be a reduction in seasonal labour migration, with the traditional seasonal migrants preferring to make more temporary and permanent migration to other locations with the entire family. Internal seasonal labour migration is prevalent when the origin and other locations are not very distant. In certain regions, migration is highly complex, both sending and receiving migrants at the same time.

Migration Patterns in Thittokan Village Tract

Permanent, temporary, seasonal and shuttle internal migration patterns are observed in the study area. These types of migration aim at securing often precarious livelihood strategy. There is no universally accepted definition for the various patterns or types of migration. The various patterns of migration, as observed, are defined as follows: **Permanent Migration** – Migration is considered to be permanent when migrants or households have left their origin place for good and settled in the destination place indefinitely (with or without registering with the authorities). These migrant or households do not intend to return to their original place of residence.

Temporary Migration – Migration is considered to be temporary, when an individual or household (fully or partly) settles in the destination location throughout the year, but still has the intention to return to the original place of residence.

Seasonal Migration – Migration is considered to be seasonal, when it takes place only in a certain time of the year or when the migrant returns to his/her place of origin at least once a year.

Shuttle Migration – Migration is defined as shuttle migration when the migrant's place of residence and place of work is different but there is no actual change of residence. Thus, the migrant commutes from place of residence to the place of work on daily basis.

According to 2016, total population data of Thittokan Village Tract has 3,573 persons and the total population is 3,451 persons in 2015. Representatives of key informants and officials in each sample village were selected to gather general information about the research area. According to survey data results are as follows;

Internal migration is more a survival strategy, external migration, when successful, has a clear wealth accumulation objective. The most important factor for progressing from internal migration to external is the existence of social networks to support the migration process. According to the study conducted by surveying in 2015, 6.22 percent of villagers migrate to other countries (external migration) and 2.85 percent of villagers migrants in within country (internal migration) are migrants from the Thittokan Village Table (4), Figure (3, 4). And also, in 2016 surveying data, 6.97 percent of villagers migrate to other countries (international or external migration) and 3.30 percent of villagers migrants within country (internal migration) are migrants from the Thittokan Village Table (5), Figure (5, 6). However, there

is a recent tendency among young migrants from the Thittokan Village going for cross-border or external migration to Thailand, China, and Malaysia.

Name	2014			2015			2016		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Thittokan	32	31	63	47	36	83	51	42	93
Suutat	59	46	105	76	51	127	82	60	142
Sankan	27	21	48	29	26	55	27	21	48
Sanni	19	12	31	20	12	32	19	8	27
Grand Total	137	110	247	172	125	297	179	131	310

Table 4. InternalMigration of Thittokan Village Tract, Magway Region,
Myanmar (2014-2016)

Source: Survey Results in 2014-2016

Gender in Migration in Thittokan Village Tract

In Thittokan Village Tract, migration is not gender neutral. Internal migration, both men and women migrate, while external migration is mostly male dominated. Most internal seasonal male migrants are either single or married the distance to the origin village is not very huge, so that they can regularly visit back to their home. Similarly, most female seasonal migrants are single and migrate to nearby areas as dependent of the spouse or family members. Therefore, the sector of work has a clear gender division with women being higher demanded in tea plantations, flower plantations and other agriculture work, services, and various factories.



Figure 3. Internal Migration (Gender) of Thittokan Village Tract (2014-2016) **Source:** Based on Table 8



Figure 4. Internal Migration (Total) of Thittokan Village Tract (2014-2016) Source: Based on Table 8

	2014			2015			2016		
Name	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Thittokan	32	1	33	37	1	38	43	1	44
Suutat	21	0	21	24	0	24	36	1	37
Sankan	19	0	19	23	0	23	26	0	26
Sanni	6	0	6	9	0	9	12	0	12
Grand Total	78	1	79	93	1	94	117	2	119

Table 5. External Migration of Thittokan Village Tract, Magway Region,Myanmar (2014-2016)

Source: Survey Results in 2014-2016



Figure 5. External Migration (Gender) of Thittokan Village Tract (2014-2016) **Source:** Based on Table 9



Figure 6. External Migration (Total) of Thittokan Village Tract (2014-2016) **Source:** Based on Table 9

Reasons for Migration in Thittokan Village Tract

The reasons for migration (internal and external) are complex and vary from area to area. Migration may be mainly pushed by major economic, demographic and social status. As they mainly depend on agricultural activity, almost all of family members work at this work as household labour. However, in recent years, because of unpredictability of agricultural activity due to climate change, especially youth from households go outside to find other income opportunities which lead to decreased work force in agriculture. Moreover, the area is suitable for Ya cultivation, and the growing seasons is lengthy. But yield potential decrease when it is dry (few amount of rainfall) in growing season. The most common reason for migration is high income generation, year-round employment opportunity, better paying employment and improve skills. Thittokan Village Tract constitutes the largest proportion about 95 percent of migrants to Malaysia. In Thittokan Village Tract, most migrants reported that lack of sufficient employment in the local community is the major reason for migration (internal and external). Also, mass migration movements are expected as a result of climate change, while agricultural production, including access to food. Episodes of low rainfall and drought are likely to become more frequent and severe, thus triggering further migration of those already living under difficult conditions. However, the reasons for migration also vary according to gender, age, skills and socio-economic situations. Based on such reasons and conditions, patterns of migration (internal and external) also vary. Such migrants are mostly temporary or seasonal migrants, depending on opportunities and family situations. For such households, migration is a livelihood and survival strategy with little wealth accumulation.

In internal migration, depending on the labour needs on the family farm, these migrants also usually visit their native village during the major agriculture season. The migrants' households and migrants are interdependent for mutual support during extreme events, such as crop failure in the native village and migrants failing in the migration process. The case takes place in a village with about 755households in Thittokan Village Tract, where some villagers are landless or near-landless. The livelihood of the entire village is dependent on the Ya crops. The income was not even sufficient to pay the costs of inputs. Thus, villagers were forced to sell their house to pay the debt incurred in Ya crops loss and, together with their family, they left the village for good. Among the remaining households, most youths have migrated to Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay cities to work in restaurants or flower or coffee/tea shops to supplement their household incomes.

Findings and Conclusions

Findings

The preferred destination areas for internal labour migrants from the Thittokan Village Tract are: (1) Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay for work in industrial zones, tea shops, restaurants, constructions, workshops, services and seasonal plantations (flowers & fruits); (2) Shan State and Tanintharyi Region to work in tea, sugarcane, rubber plantations, and mines; (3) North Kachin for work in gold and jade mines. Internal migration can be seasonal,

temporary and permanent. Work in cities and mines are temporary or permanent in nature. While work in the agriculture sector and plantation sector is seasonal in nature. The type of migration depends on the existing social network, experiences and the socio-economic status of the households.

Most young males with slightly higher education (up to 8-15 years of schooling) find jobs in restaurants, workshops and as sales personnel in shops. The salary for such jobs ranges between 35,000-150,000Kyat per month with free food and accommodation.

The jobs in restaurants, also earn service tips and the work has certain career growth potential. Youth with lower level of education (up to grade 4) find work in the construction sector. Construction workers earn between 3,500-10,000 Kyat per day depending on the experience level with free food and accommodation. However, this sector reports high rates of work related accidents for which workers do not have any insurance cover. The traditional seasonal migration routes such as to flower plantations in Pyin Oo Lwin, tea plantations in Shan State and rubber plantation in Mon State are losing attraction, with mines and construction work getting more attraction. Also, there is increase in temporary and permanent migration with entire families. Seasonal migration is high in the case of Thittokan Village Tract, inter-region migration in the Village is more temporary in nature. Work is seasonal in nature from January to April. Workers return home during off-season to work in their farms. Most internal migrants are males of 8-40 years of age.

For instance, our migrant worker is a young man of 12 years with an up to grade 5 education level. He had little interest in study and was struggling with his exams. As many young men in his village had been, he wanted to drop studying and start working. He was eager to explore city life away from the village. Thus, though there was no economic reason, he decided to migrate to Yangon, Mandalay city to work in an auto spare parts shop. This job earned him 35,000 Kyat to 150,000 Kyat per month with free food and accommodation. They visited their village during the main planting and harvesting season to help their family within farming.

All of young males find jobs in restaurants, tea shops and as sales personnel in shops. The salary for such jobs ranges between 35,000-150,000Kyats per month with free food and accommodation. Jobs in restaurants are preferred as, apart from salary, they also earn service tips and the work has certain career growth potential. Youth with lower level of education (up to grade 4) find work in the construction sector. Construction workers earn between 3500-10,000 Kyat per day depending on their experience level with free food and accommodation. However, this sector reports high rates of work related accidents for which workers do not have any insurance cover Table (6).

As in another instance, migrant worker is a young woman and she is 22 years old and comes from Thittokan Village Tract. She has been working in a restaurant in Nay Pyi Taw since last 4 years as a waiter. She got the job through a friend. She completed grade 9 of schooling but failed in grade 10, and so decided to find job instead of repeating the exam. From her village, very few people migrate, and now she wishes to return back as well. However, she does not want to return back empty handed. Rather she wishes to be self-employed as well as to create jobs for others. She wishes to use the skills (technical, financial and other life skills) that she has learnt to open up her own restaurant in neighbouring village. About 2 years ago, the government has established a factory which employs a lot of work force both from outside the village as well as from cities. She has been saving a part of her salary to fulfil her dream. Apart from working as a waitress, she has been learning financial book keeping, cost calculations, kitchen handling etc. about the restaurant business and is now confident to succeed in her business.

Sector	Daily Wages	Month Pays	Food	Accommodations
Agriculture	3,000-5,000	90,000-150,000	Free	Mixed
Construction	3,500-10,000	105,000-300,000	Free	Free
Plantations	-	35,000-150,000	Mixed/ Free	Mixed
Sales person	-	50,000-200,000	Free	Free
Restaurant	-	100,000-200,000	Mixed/ Free	Mixed
Tea Shop	-	35,000-150,000	Mixed	Mixed

 Table 6. Wages in various sectors of employment in the Thittokan Village

 Tract (Internal)

Source: Survey Results in 2014-2016

 Table 7. Wages in various sectors of employment in the Thittokan Village

 Tract (External Migration)

Sector	Daily Wages	Month Pays	Food	Accommodations
Agriculture/	-	350,000-450,000	Mixed	Free
Plantation				
Construction	-	350,000-500,000	Mixed/ Free	Free
Decoration	-	350,000-500,000	Mixed	Free
Sales person	-	200,000-450,000	Mixed	Free
Restaurant	-	350,000-450,000	Mixed/ Free	Free
Factories	-	350,000-450,000	Mixed/ Free	Free

Source: Survey Results in 2014-2016

There is also an increase in external migration to Thailand, Singapore, China, Malaysia, though it is still much lower compared to the Southeast. Most of villagers from the Thittokan Village Tract are reported to migrate to Malaysia to work in factories, constructions, decoration and as service workers Table (7). As this migration trend is already established, social networks are used to migrate and find jobs in destination locations. This external migrant is a 32 year old man from Thittokan Village Tract in Chauk Township. In April 2009, he and his wife started working in the plantation in Malaysia. Earlier she used to work in plantation which is far from the village. The decision to move to the plantation was due to its closer proximity to the village. Working in plantation, the couple could save 500,000 to 1000,000 Kyat per month. This money was used for consumption, education of children and a small portion invested in cattle and agriculture land. In 2010, he purchased a farm land for 2,500,000 Kyat and a cow for 250,000 kyat. In 2013, he made one more investment on cattle; purchasing 2 cattle for 3.5 lakhs each. After one year, he sold them for 6 lakhs each. He wants to invest in purchasing more cattle and farm land, because one day, wishes to have his own small livestock enterprise in the village Table (7).

Conclusions

Migration patterns in the study area are mainly diverse: internal migration, and external migration. Internal migration is higher than external migration in the study area. Within internal migration, again diverse patterns are observed – seasonal, shuttle, temporary and permanent migration. Internal migration within the study area is very high in summer. Reasons for migration from Thittokan Village Tract include relative poverty, lack of jobs, inability to earn enough money to survive. Thus, external migration is more a wealth accumulation strategy, whereas internal migration is more a survival strategy. Migrants are mostly employed in flower and vegetable plantations, factories, construction, restaurants, tea shops, services, and etc.Thittokan Village Tract is situated at Chauk Township, Magway District in Magway Region. There are 755 households and the population is 3,573. Special attention is paid to the development of agriculture, which is not only the backbone of economy but also the main occupation of the villagers. The study of case area based on natural environment factors, social factors and economic factors.

The aim of this paper is to review existing literature, and find evidence on linkages between internal and external migrations and poverty. It draws attention to many types of migration including internal migration, short-term external contract labour, cross-border mobility and regional migration and the different impacts that they having at the household level and beyond. The findings show the impact of migration on individual migrants; left behind family members; community; local economies; and national economies of origin. Villagers believed that both internal and external migration, contributes to the reduction of poverty in various ways, with some newly emerging studies revealing that migration helps poor families to cope with risk and to smooth incomes. Moreover, migration is an important livelihood strategy undertaken by poor rural populations to increase their income and employment security and options. The major reason for migration is the lack of year-round and sufficient income opportunities in the source locations and the demand for the labour in destination locations. However, there is a gradual trend in internal migration to progress from seasonal to year round temporary migration and permanent migration, and eventually to external migration. The transition from seasonal to temporary and permanent is particularly seen in the

case of landless or near landless farmers and in case of smallholder farmers to external migration. Not only internal but also external migration is seasonal in nature at times. During surveys, most migrants expressed their wish to return to their native village provided there were sufficient work and income opportunities. Thus, it is also important to explore employment and income generation in native villages. Internal migration is mostly used as a survival strategy rather than external migration.

In the study area, more than wage difference, the lack of availability of off-farm work and seasonality of agriculture sector is the major cause of migration. Among the various sectors in which migrants are found working is construction sector that provides higher wages for poor rural villagers. The earning capacity is much higher for international migration compared to internal migration, when migration is successful. While a successful external migration can lead to accumulation of land, small business, a successful internal migration is still limited to bridging gaps in consumption demands of the household members.

Remittance earnings from internal migration is relatively small and mostly used to smoothen family consumption with little saving. On the other hand, remittance earnings external migration is higher savings and enough to undertake a small enterprise.

Future Prospects

- 1. Rural residents migrate as they do not have good opportunities near their home. Good schools, jobs, business opportunities, technology, etc. if made available can curb migration.
- 2. Better job prospects within rural areas will surely reduce the rate of migration.
- 3. Rural area needs to be developed to accommodate the migrant population with sufficient income opportunities for rural residents.
- 4. Agricultural materials will support rural farming system.

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