

IN-MIGRATION OF SHWEKOKKO VILLAGE, MYAWADDY TOWNSHIP

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Abstract

The paper presents distinct immigration pattern of Shwekokko Village, Myawaddy Township. Although migration including in-migration and out -migration is common in most places, Shwekokko has only in-migration pattern. Shwekokko is located in fringe area of Myawaddy Township and it is close to Maesot as well as it is located on the bank of Thaungyin River. Job opportunities caused by nearness to Thailand, border area, large agriculture land, good accessibility, electricity and water supply are major factors attracting the people from nearby areas as well as from remote places. Population of the study area has been increasing and immigration is distinct phenomenon of the area. The main objectives of the study are to explore the migrant characteristic in Shwekokko Village, to present major factors attracting the people, to study existing good point and weak points of the area and to predict future prospect of Shwekokko Village. Primary data and secondary data will be used and geographic methods will be applied in the paper.

Keywords: immigration pattern, job opportunity, agriculture land, good accessibility, electricity and water supply

Introduction

Migration is considered an important global issue, as roughly one out of every 55 individuals in the world is a migrant today (IOM 2003). Kaya, 2015, said that migration is a human movement taking place towards or outwards a region. Bahuguna & Belwal, 2013 expressed that migration is the movement of people from one place in the world to another for taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence.

In-migration and out-migration are common in Myanmar. These are caused by pushed and pull factors. Push factors are those that force the individual to move voluntarily.

In Myanmar, three types of migration are generally found. Permanent migration is considered permanent when migrants have left their origin place for good and settled in the destination place. They do not intend to return to their original place of residence. Temporary migration is considered 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 is considered to be seasonal, when it takes place only in a certain time of the year or when the migrants return to their places of origin at least once a year (Nyi Nyi, 2013).

Push factors may include conflict, drought, famine, or extreme religious activity. Poor economic activity and lack of job opportunities are also strong push factors for migration. People often like to move to places with better cultural, political, climatic and general terrain in closer locations than locations further away.

Shwekokko or Shwekokkomyaing is one of the villages in Myawaddy Township that is located at Thailand-Myanmar border. Nearness to Thailand is locational advantage for the area.

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Job opportunities in the area attract the people not only foreigners but also Myanmar Nationals from other areas within Myanmar. Many economic activities are found in the area in which agriculture is one of the economic activities and paddy, pulses, corn, rubber and sesamum are cultivated. In crop cultivation, rubber plantation play important role and brick making, furniture making and sawmills are also found. Other economic activities are casual labour and most people work in Thailand as commuters.

Safety and accessibility favour the area to become a destination of migrants. Although it is located in the border area, safety is good and local people and migrants from other areas live peacefully in the area. Moreover, it takes only one hour to go to Maesot, Thailand. These factors affect in-migration of the Shwekokko Village.

Although Shwekokko is located in the remote border area, in-migration is prominent. Therefore, Shwekokko was selected as a study area to present in-migration from the geographical point of view.

Study area

Myawaddy Township lies between 16° 35' 10'' and 17° 05' 35'' N latitudes and between 96° 10' 30'' and 98° 55' 10'' E longitudes. Shwekokko is one of the village tracts of Myawaddy Township. It is located in border area between Thailand and Myanmar. Because of nearness to Thailand and many job opportunities, the area attracts migrants from the other areas of Myanmar as well as foreign countries.

Objectives:

The objectives of the paper are:

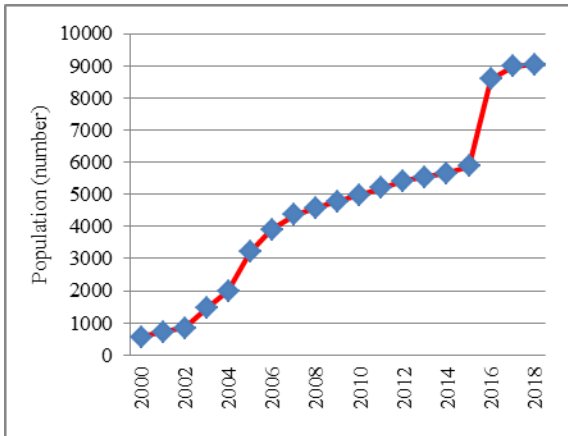
- to explore the migrant characteristic in Shwekokko Village
- to present major factors attracting immigrants in Shwekokko Village
- to study existing good point and weak points of the area and
- to predict future prospect of Shwekokko Village

Data and Methods

Primary data such as causes of migration, job opportunity, income, social contact were collected. Primary data were collected by field observation, informal talk, questionnaires and focus group discussion.

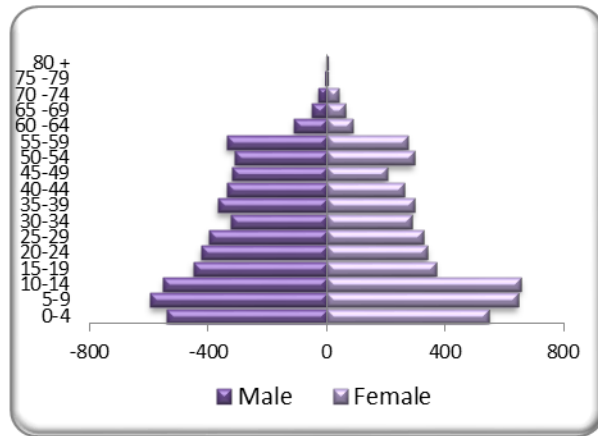
Firstly, field observation was done to understand existing physical and socio-economic conditions that support immigration of the study area. Then, informal talks were conducted with local authorities to explore the factor affecting migration. Next, questionnaires were distributed to the local people to do detail analysis for in-migration in the area. Finally, focus group discussion was done the advantage and disadvantage of the area to present livelihood of the immigrant lived in the area.

Secondary data such as climate, population, Regional Facts of Myawaddy were applied. Quantitative- qualitative mixed method was used.



Source: General Administrative Office in Shwekokko Village

Figure 3 Population Growth of Shwekokko Village



Source: General Administrative Office in Shwekokko Village

Figure 4 Population Pyramid of Shwekokko Village

Of the total population of 9837 in 2018, 1126 persons or 11.45 % of total population were migrants. This rapid increase of populations is due to job opportunities and nearness to Thailand.

Table 1 Native and Migrant Population of Shwekokko Village (2018)

Population	Male	Female	Total	% of total
Native Population	4448	4263	8711	88.55
Migrant Population	697	429	1126	11.45
Total Population	5145	4692	9837	100.00

Source: Administrative Office, Shwekokko Village.

Age Group

According to 2018 data, out of the total population, 3534 persons (35.9 %) were children and 396 persons (4 %) were aging population while 5907 persons (60 %) were adults or workable population. Most of the migrants who come to Shwekokko Village are between 15 and 45 years old. Migrant population therefore contributed to 19.1 % of workable population.

Ethnic Group

As the study area is located in Kayin State, nearly 73 percent of the population is Kayin and Myanmar ranks second in amount of population. Other ethnic groups are Mon, Pa-Oh, Rakhine and Shan. Although many ethnic groups are found in Shwekokko Village, there is no ethnical problem in the area. There are also many foreigners in which most are Chinese.

Table 2 Ethnic Group of Shwekokko Village

Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Kayin	6571	72.70
Myanmar	1641	18.15
Mon	450	4.98
Pa-Oh	27	0.30
Rakhine	22	0.24
Shan	328	3.63
Total	9039	100

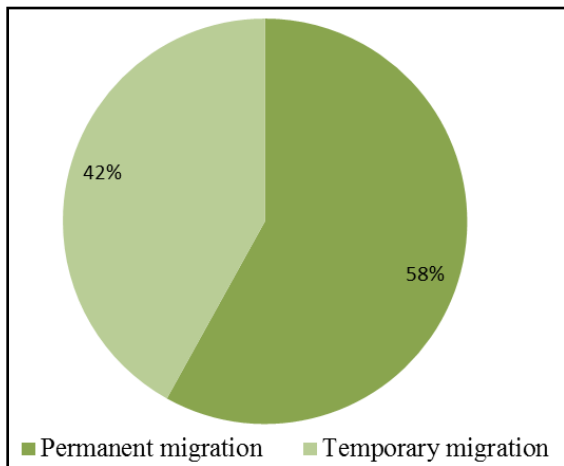
Source: General Administrative Office in Shwekokko Village

Findings and Result

Migration of Shwekokko Village

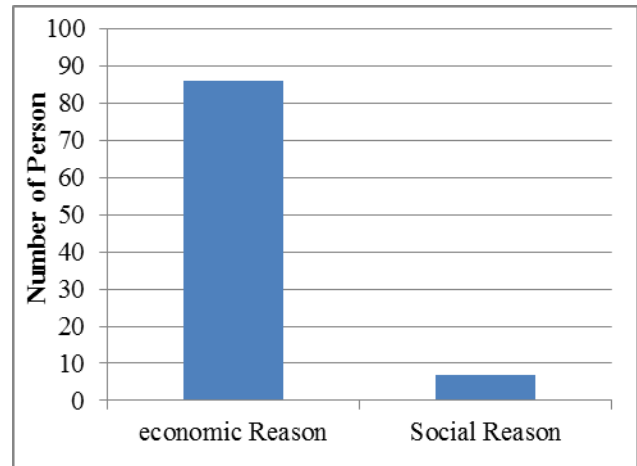
Types of Migration

According to semi-structured interviews, permanent migration and temporary migration are found although there are three types of migration: permanent migration, temporary migration and seasonal migration.



Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 5 Types of Migration



Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 6 Reasons of Migration

Reasons of Migration

Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by economic factors, but also by social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education and transportation factors (Krishnakumar & Indumathi, 2014). However, only economic and social reasons are found in the area. About 92 percent of the migrants come and settle in the study area because of job opportunity. Not only existing economic activities but also economic activities from Maesot that is nearly 30 miles away from Myawaddy attract migrants from other areas of Myanmar. Some migrants live in Myawaddy and work in Maesot as commuters. Eight percent of migrant moved to the study area due to social reason. Some migrants came and settled in the area because their relatives live in the area for more than 10 years. Although they move into the area by social reason, it is somehow related to economic reason.

Social Contact and Chain Migration

World Bank (2013) expressed that migrants primarily seek jobs through social networks in their villages rather than through paid brokers. These networks help migrants identify job opportunities and secure accommodation.

Massey (1990) also said that their social networks also control the rural urban migration. Social networks play an important role in decision making on migration.

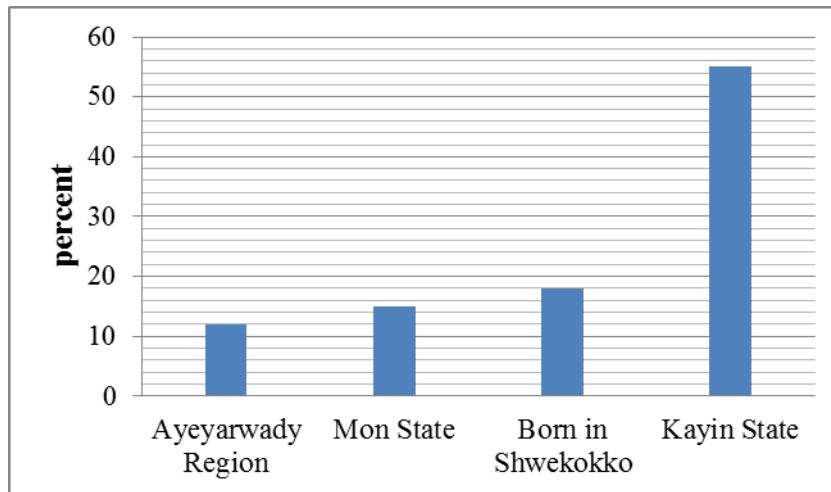
According to interview, new migrants moved to the Shwekokko Village because their relatives and friends living in the study area. Therefore, it is chain migration. The relatives and friends living in Shwekokko Village helped new migrants on settlement and to get jobs. As they moved into Shwekokko Village, they did not pay any fees.

Migrant Profiles

Place of origins

Bunea (2012) stated that migration is not a random process. It is a rational choice that implies two decisions: to migrate and where to migrate and the longer the distance, the lower the incentive to migrate due to higher migration costs.

Most migrants moved within Kayin State and from Kyarinnseikkyi, Myawaddy and Hpa-an townships to Shwekokko Village and nearness to Shwekokko Village is major advantage for those people. Twelve percent of the migrant come from Ayeyarwady Region and it is smallest in percentage due to remoteness.

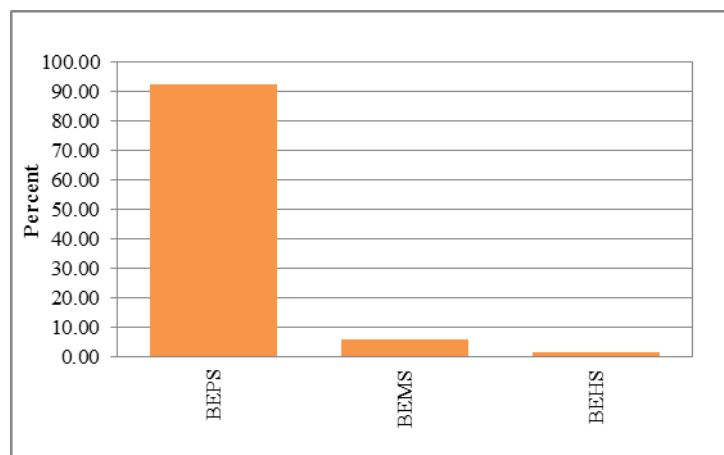


Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 7 Place of origins

Education level of the migrants

Of the migrant population, 92.36 % were basic education primary level and 5.95 were basic education secondary level while only 1.69 % was basic education high school level. Primary education level is largest in proportion in migrant group. Major economic activities in Shwekokko Village are suitable for low skilled workers. Therefore, most migrants are of low education level because migrants regardless to education can apply the existing jobs.

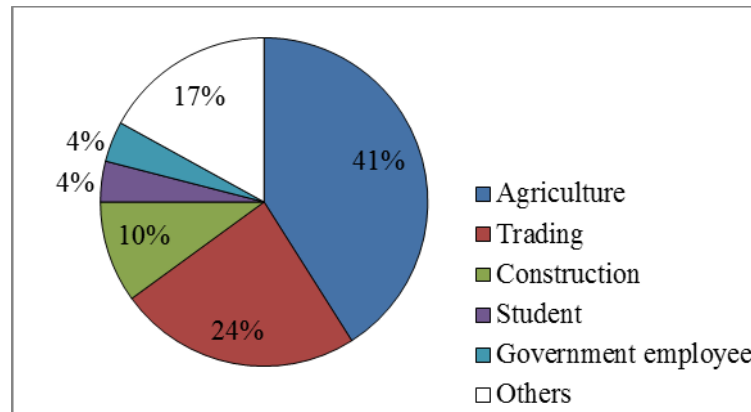


Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 8 Education level of the migrants

Types of Jobs

Most of the jobs are suitable for unskilled labour. Major economic activities are agriculture, trading, and construction. Some migrants work as casual labour worked in Shwekokko and some work in Maesot and they are commuters.



Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 9 Types of Jobs

Forty one percent of the migrants work in agriculture because rubber plantation is one of the major economic activities in the area. Twenty four percent of the migrants work in trading because of nearness to Maesot. Shwekokko is located near Maesot and it takes about an hour from Shwekokko to Maesot. As the growth of town is gaining momentum, construction work is one of the dominant economic activities as well as job opportunities for migrants. Ten percent of the migrants work in construction.

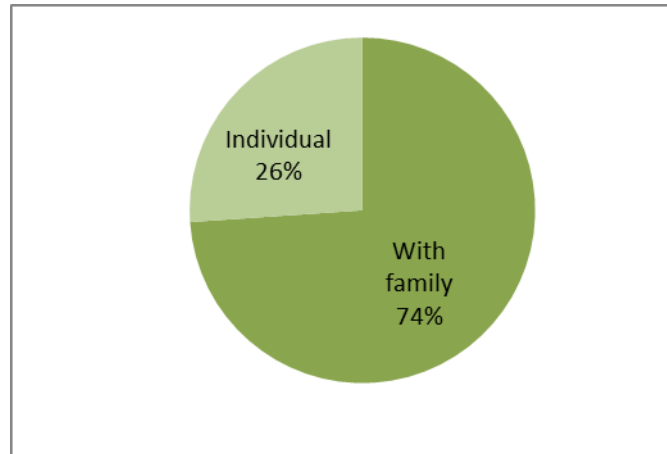
Incomes

Income is one of the factors encouraging migration in the area. Income differs from one person to another depending on skills and types of job of the migrants. The income of the migrants worked in agriculture, construction, construction worked in Shwekokko Village is lower than income of the migrants worked in Maesot as commuters.

According to questionnaires' survey, the labours worked in Myawaddy Township get less than 200,000 kyats per month and the people worked in Maesot gets more than 300,000 kyats per month.

Migrants

According to questionnaires' answers, 74 percent of the migrant come to the study area with their family because of job opportunity, education and facilities. Twenty six percent of the migrants individually come to the area because most are single.



Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 10 Types of Migrants

Pull Factors on Migration

Pull factors causing immigration in an area include higher employment, more wealth, better services, good climate, safer, less crime, political stability, more fertile land and lower risk from natural hazards (Jotsroll, 2008). In Shwekokko Village, locational advantage, job opportunities, safety and accessibility are major pull factors that attract migrants from other areas of Myanmar.

Locational Advantages

Shwekokko Village is located in Myawaddy Township in Kayin State and existing physical conditions such as climate are suitable for human settlement and economic activities. It is also located at the border area between Myanmar and Thailand. It is only 30 min drive away from Maesot of Thailand having many job opportunities for casual labours.

Job opportunity

Job opportunity plays a crucial role in helping migrants positively interact and engage with their new communities.

In the study area, job opportunities attract the migrants who lived in the area having less job opportunity. Major Job opportunities include agriculture, trading, construction material making, etc. that can be done by any adult male migrants.

Migration, safety, and development are inextricably linked. The link between migration and safety is not new.



Plate 1 Construction site of Shwekokko
(25.4.18)



Plate 2 Commercial area of Shwekokko
(25.4.18)

Accessibility

Shwekokko is one of the villages of Myawaddy Township and it is located in accessible area. It can easily contact to Hpa-an, Measot, Hlaingbwe, Kawkaraik, and Kyondoe, etc. The growth of accessibility is distinct.



Plate 3 Road of Shwekokko (Market Place)
(18.7.18)



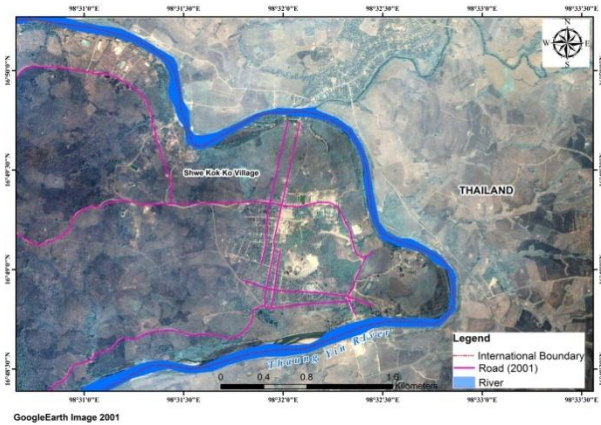
Plate 4 Road of Shwekokko (18.7.18)

Safety

Safety is one of the fundamental needs for those who move and settle in another place (Ravuvu, 2015). In Shwekokko Village, not only migrant but also native people said that safety is one of the factors that attract the migrant from other areas to the study area. Although Shwekokko Village is located in border area, local people are free from fear and there is no criminal case in the area.

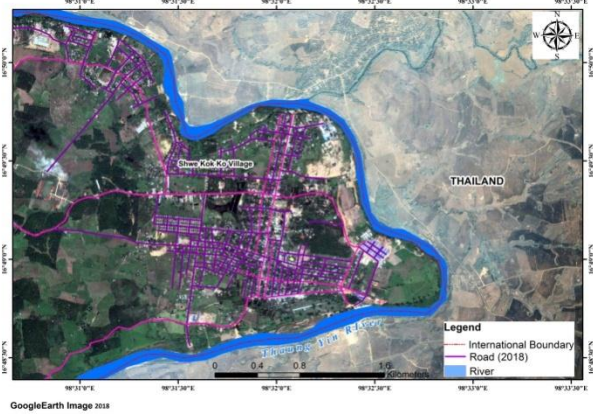
Sufficient infrastructure for socioeconomic development

This area is sufficient with socioeconomic infrastructure development to attract migrant from the other areas. For health, not only health department but also hospital serves the local people.



Source: Google Image

Figure 11 Road infrastructure of Shwekokko (2001)



Source: Google Image

Figure 12 Road infrastructure of Shwekokko (2018)

Myawaddy Township is one of the townships of Kayin State. Although migration includes emigration and immigration, immigration is distinctly found because of safety, accessibility and job opportunity. Permanent migration is mainly found because most migrants moved and settled down with their family in the area because of job opportunity.



Plate 5: Public Hospital of Shwekokko (25.4.18)



Plate 6: Rural Health Department of Shwekokko, (25.4.18)

In education, there are one primary school, one middle school and one high school in the area and they serve local people. Existing infrastructure not only attracts migrants but also support area development.



Plate 7 High School of Shwekokko (25.4.18) **Plate 8** Clock Tower of Shwekokko,(25.4.18)

According to interviews, they want to establish factories like Maesot in the area. Residents in Shwekokko are satisfied in the area due to accessibility and nearly 20 percent of the local people like the study area due to safety. According to interviews, there is no criminal case in the area.

Until now, there are no impacts and negative consequences of immigration, it is necessary to prepare for solving problems caused by immigration and population growth. Up to now, safety is good for local people and it should be maintained to get peaceful and secured environment for native people and migrants. It is necessary to keep environmental cleanliness and to fulfill the needs of the native people and migrants by creating the more economic opportunity and better environment.

Attitudes of Local People concerned with the Migrants

In order to trace the attitudes of local people concerned with the increasing of migrants, interviews with 218 persons of local people and 15 stakeholders were taken based on seven selected questions shown in Table 3. The results show that 87.63 % of local people satisfy the migrants and 3.98 % of local people unsatisfied the immigration of other people.

Table 3 Attitudes of Local People concerned with Migrants

No.	Feelings of local people due to	Yes	Fairly	No
1	Hindered to the job opportunities of native people			218
2	Impact on environment by migrant	12	25	181
3	increased criminal cases by migrant			218
4	Disturbed and annoyed the local people by migrants	5	15	198
5	Increased social problems associated with the migrants		5	213
6	Slum problems associated with the migrants			218
7	Satisfying of stakeholders upon the migrants	12	2	1

Source: Field Observation conducted in 2018.

Conclusion

Myawaddy Township is located in Kayin State and Pulwepu Village Tract embarrassing Shwekokko Village is one of the 17 village tracts of Myawaddy Township. It is located about one hour drive away from Maesot.

Shwekokko Village is one of the villages located near the border area between Myanmar and Thailand. Because of locational advantage, many job opportunities and safety pursue the migrants from the other areas. Therefore, population increased distinctly and population density also increased.

As the job availability is not concerned with education level of migrants, migrant with different educational level moved to the area and they earn in commercial activities, construction, agriculture, etc. Safety is also one of the pulled factors and there is no criminal case and ethnical problems in the area although it is located near the border area.

As safety, job opportunity and infrastructure development will be attracting migrants from other areas. Therefore, it is needed to maintain present good points of the area especially safety for being peace and developed area in the future. Future researches on environmental problems caused by population growth should also be done.

Future Prospects

Theoretically, migration is a search for a better environment - better jobs, higher wages, nicer climate, or stronger ties to family and friends. As people who dwell in nearby Shwekokko Village want to search an area with better jobs and higher wages than their native regions, they migrate to Shwekokko village. Therefore, it can be predicted that the locational advantages of Shwekokko village associated with abundant job opportunities and better economic chances strongly attract the immigrants, one-way immigrant trend or directional bias of migration of the study area will continue to be going on in the future.

Acknowledgement

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