

MIGRATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN RURAL AREA: A CASE STUDY OF HPA-AN TOWNSHIP

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Abstract

Hpa-An Township is located in Kayin State. Although rural population is greater than urban population and agriculture is major economy of the area, all households have at least one migrant and they depend on remittance of the migrants. Remittance varies from one migrant to another depending on types of job. All adults in the area move to urban areas in Myanmar as well as Thailand. Most migrants are of international migrants because of nearness to Thailand. Migration of the area has consequences such as social consequences, economic consequences, etc. The main aim of the paper is to examine major supporting factors causing migration. The objectives are to explore types of migration and remittance, and to find out the social and economic consequences of migration on local people. Primary data such as types of migrant, remittance, types of job, and consequences will be collected through questionnaires because secondary data on migrant is unavailable. Quantitative qualitative mixed method and SWOT analysis will be used in presenting paper.

Keywords: migrant, remittance, types of job, social consequences, economic consequences

Introduction

In Myanmar, rural population was 73 percent of the total population in 2000, and it decreased to 65 percent in 2015 even although fertility rate of rural area is distinctly higher than that in urban area (World Bank, 2015). It somehow highlights migration from rural area is gaining momentum in Myanmar. Like other developing countries, low and irregular agricultural income, agricultural unemployment and underemployment are considered as basic factors pushing the migrants towards other areas with greater job opportunities in Myanmar.

In Myanmar, three types of migration: permanent migration, temporary migration and seasonal migration (Nyi Nyi, 2013) are generally found. Most migrants are temporary migrants and they come back to their home places yearly once or twice.

In Hpa-an Township, like other townships in Myanmar, agriculture is major economy but income derived from agriculture sector is low and insufficient. Therefore, one or more migrants move to other areas such as urban areas in Myanmar and Thailand. Because of nearness to Thailand, most migrants move to Thailand where job opportunities are high.

Education level of migrants is low and they earn as workers in textile factories, etc. Most are young adults and they send back their remittance to their family and it is a major source of income for local people. Ellis, 2003; Hall, 2007; Maphosa, 2007; Ncube, 2010, said the fact that remittances have a positive effect on the asset base of remaining residents. Meerza, 2010, pointed that adult male migration makes heavy burden on family members especially on children who are

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left behind in rural area to take the responsibility for agriculture production and food security in some countries.

Savage and Harvey (2007) and Maphosa (2007) argue that remittances form an important part of many people's lives around the world. Turnell, Vicary and Brandford, 2008, express that a small proportion of remittances in Burma are used in investments such as buying and developing farm land, establishing businesses and paying for education. In Hpa-an Township, remittance is used in building homes, education cost for younger people, and cost on health for the elders.

To present migration and its consequences, Hpa-an Township was selected and presented from the geographical point of view.

The main aim of the paper is to examine major supporting factors causing migration. The objectives of the study are-

- to find out the types of migration,
- to understand characteristics of local people and migrants,
- to examine remittance of migrants and
- to explore the consequences of migration on the family lived in the area.

Materials and Methods

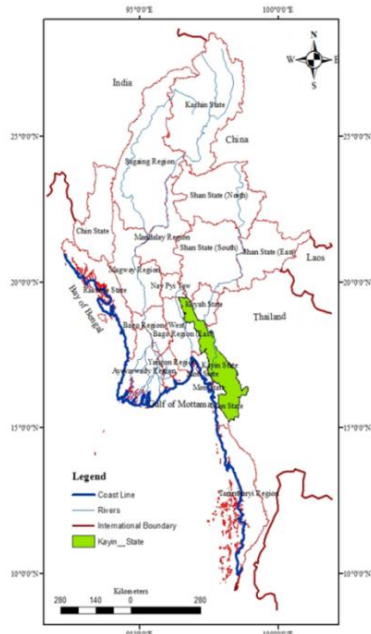
To get thorough understanding on migration and consequences of migration, migrant profiles such as age, education level, income, social contacts, job opportunities, etc were collected.

Primary data were gathered by using questionnaires. To distribute questionnaires, 5 village tracts of Hpa-an Township as sample villages and twenty households from these villages were selected by using purposive sampling. To get in-depth understanding, interviews were done with local authorities. In the paper, primary data was chiefly applied and quantitative and qualitative mixed method was mainly used.

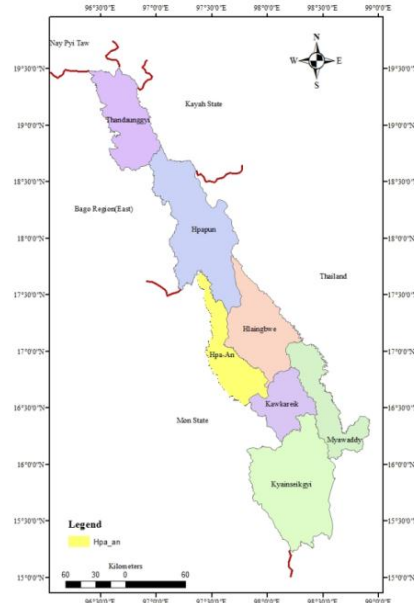
Findings and Discussions

Physical Factors

Hpa-an Township situated on the eastern bank of Thanlwin River lies in the southwestern part of Kayin State. The astronomical location of township is between 16° 41' 53" and 17° 44' 0" North Latitudes and between 97° 36' 50" and 97° 40' 20" East Longitudes.



Source: Agriculture Atlas, 2002
Figure 1 Location of Kayin State in Myanmar



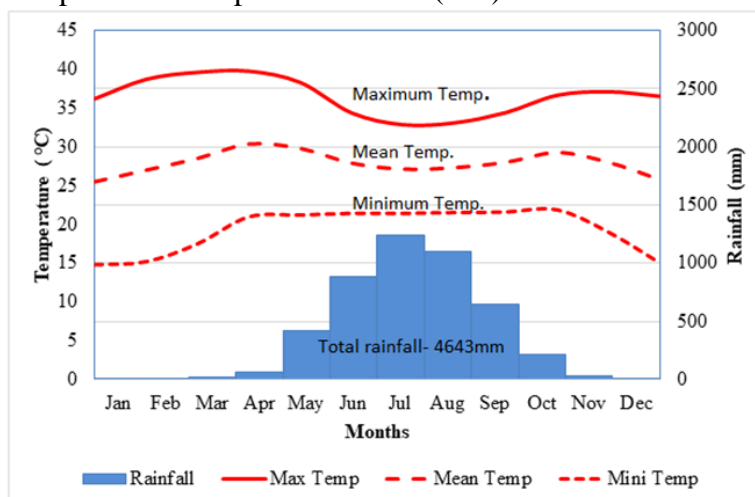
Source: Agriculture Atlas, 2002
Figure 2 Location of Hpa-an Township in Kayin State

The area of Hpa-an Township is 2901.02 sq km (1120.09 square miles). Hpa-an Township is composed of 9 wards and 94 village tracts.

It has locational advantages due to three hours drive to Myawady, a well-known town in located in border area close to Maeosk of Thailand. Nearness to Thailand is one of the push factors for migration.

Since Hpa-an Town is located on the eastern bank of Thanlwin River, relief feature is nearly level land. It supports agriculture land and most of the people work in agriculture.

The highest maximum temperature is 39.75°C in April and the lowest minimum temperature is 14.8 °C in January. The highest rainfall obtained from southwest monsoon of July, is 1240.77 mm. In July and August, it often receives continuous rainfall about a week or ten days. The area experiences Tropical Monsoon (Am).



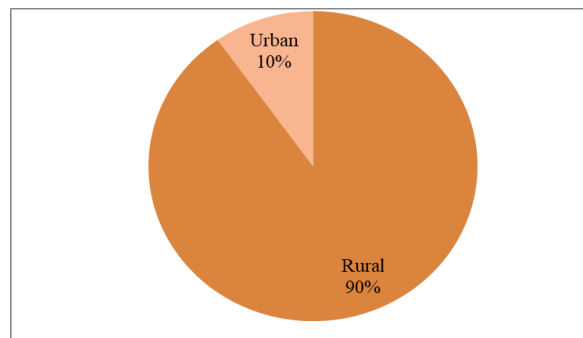
Source: Meteorology and Hydrology Department, Yangon
Figure 3 Climograph of Hpa-an Station (2008-2017)

In Hpa-an Township, soils of hilly regions are mountainous red brown forest soils and yellow brown forest soils. Lateritic soils are found on higher areas. Meadow soils and meadow swampy soils develop in the plain area. The alluvial plains in the south have meadow soils. The soils near Hpa- an are waterlogged swampy soils. Most of these soils are suitable for perennial and annual crop cultivation. Therefore, agriculture is major economy but it gives low income for local people.

Social Factors

Hpa-an Township is composed of 94 village tracts and 9 wards. In 2017, township has the higher population number 432,931 persons and 149 persons per square kilometre in population density.

In 2017 population statistics, urban population was 42,566 persons (10 percent) and rural population 390,365 persons (90 percent) of total population in area. Ninety percent of the population living in Hpa-an Township are engaged in agriculture. Low and irregular income is one of the major factors causing migration.



Source: Immigration and Population Department, Hpa-an Township

Figure 4 Urban and Rural Population of Hpa-an Township (2017)

As general land uses of Hpa-an Township, le, ya, kaing-kyun, garden land and taungya, forest land, cultivable waste land and others land are found. The total area of the township has 299,654 hectares (740,459 acres) which comprise 148,333 hectares (49.5 %) of cultivated land, 27,974 hectares (9.34 %) of forest land, 24,269 hectares (8.1 %) of cultivable waste land and 99,077 hectares (33.06%) of others land.

Household Characteristics

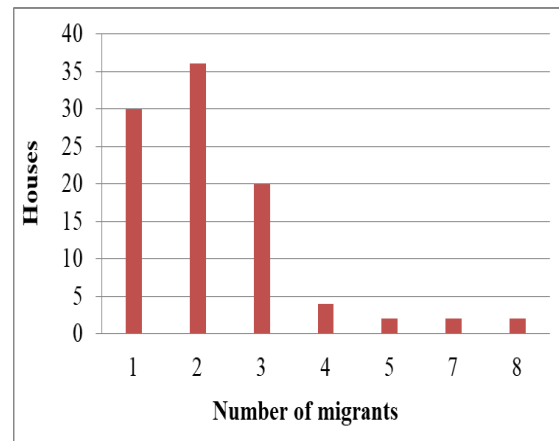
According to questionnaires result, 17 per cent of the household has family members of between 1 and 3, and 31 per cent more than 6 family members.

According to field survey, 218 migrants of 577 persons who live in the area move to other area for various reasons such as economic, education reason, etc. Most of the house has one or more migrants. In the study area, the houses having 2 migrants are largest in number with 36. The number of houses having one migrant is 30 and it ranks second. The houses having 3 migrants are 20 and it is third largest. It shows that migration is distinct and local people thinks that migration is one of the major income sources in Hpa-an Township.

Table 1 Households Characteristics of Hpa-an Township (2019)

	Household	per cent
Between 1 and 3	16	17
Between 4 and 6	50	52
more than 6	30	31

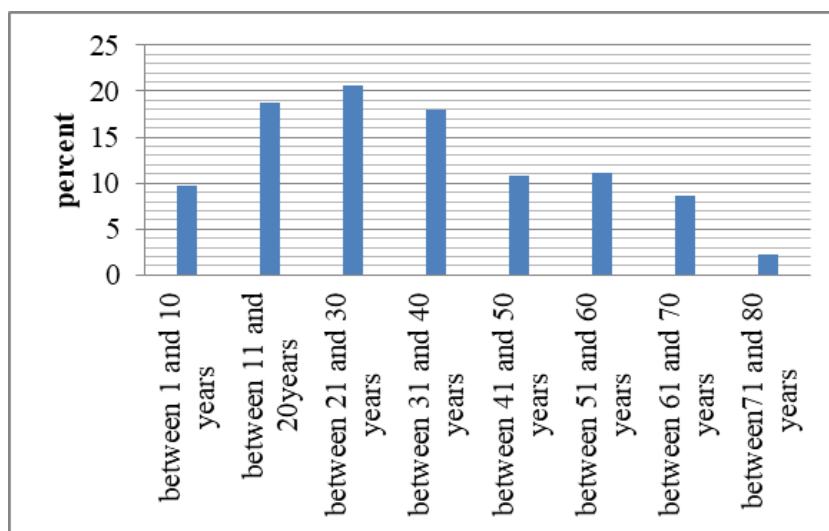
Source: Questionnaires' results



Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 5 Number of Migrants in Hpa-an Township (2019)

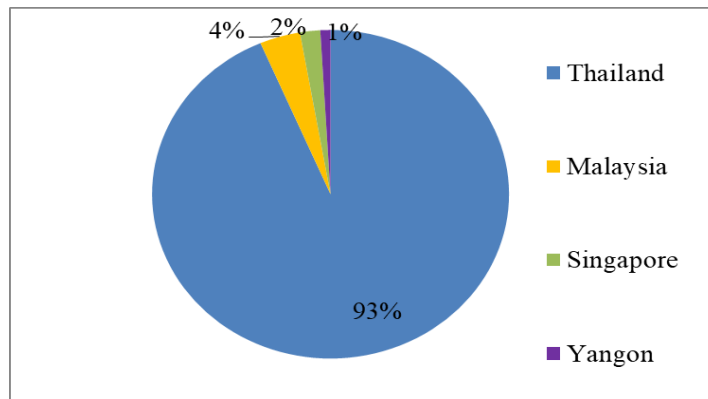
In Hpa-an Township, according to questionnaires' results, largest population group is between 21 and 30 years old with 114 persons (21 per cent). Smallest group is population at the age of between 71 and 80 years old with 12 persons (2 per cent). Nearly 65 per cent of the population is labour force with the age between 18 and 60 years old. High percentage of working age population is one of the factors supporting migration in the area.



Source: Questionnaires' results

Figure 6 Age of the Household Members of Hpa-an Township (2019)

In the area, both internal migration and international migration are found but number of internal migrants is only 2 persons (only 1 per cent) who moved to Yangon to attend university. Four persons (2 per cent) and 8 persons (4 per cent) went to Singapore and Malaysia respectively to earn higher income. The remaining 92 per cent of migrants went to Maesok and Bangkok of Thailand because of nearness to Hpa-an, high job opportunity, high accessibility between Hpa-an and Maesok of Thailand.



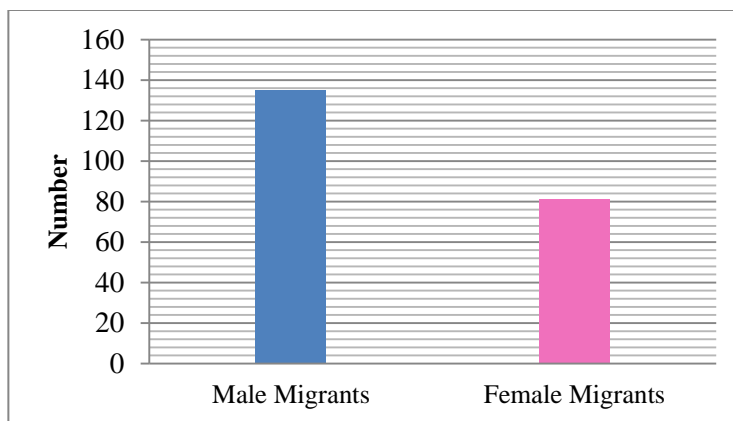
Source: Questionnaires’ results

Figure 7 Destination of the migrants in Hpa-an Township (2019)

Characteristics of Migrants

Gender of Migrants

Oishi, 2002, stated that feminization of international labour migration is a global trend. The percentage of women in the migrant population (both permanent immigrants and temporary migrants) has been increasing in the post war period, and now women comprise the majority of international migrants. Zhao (2003) said that females are much less likely to migrate than males. In the study area, number of male migrants exceeds that of female. It was due to low job opportunity for male labour in Hpa-an Township.



Source: Questionnaires’ results

Figure 8 Gender of migrants in Hpa-an Township (2019)

The proportion of young migrants is higher in developing countries than in developed countries, while the proportion of girls and young women who migrate is higher in developed countries than developing countries. In developed countries young women made up 48.9 per cent of young migrants; and 43 per cent of young migrants in developing countries (United Nations, 2016).

Age Groups of Migrants

In Hpa-an Township, most migrants are at the age of between 21 and 40 years old with 68 per cent. Therefore, they can work effectively in the work. The migrants who are at the age between 51 and 60 years old are smallest in amount with 8 per cent. In the age group between 11

and 20 years, although there are 22 migrants (10 per cent) of migrants in which 10 migrants are at the age of under 18 years old. It shows the child labour problem in the area.

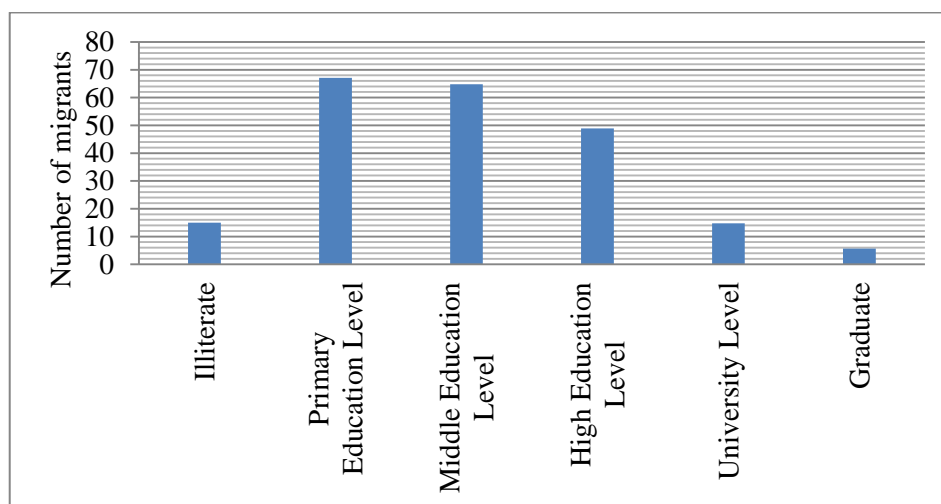
Table 2 Age of the migrants of Hpa-an Township (2019)

	Number of migrant	Percent
between 11 and 20 years	22	10.09
between 21 and 30 years	72	33.03
between 31 and 40 years	77	35.32
between 41 and 50 years	29	13.30
between 51 and 60 years	18	8.26
	218	100.00

Source: Questionnaires’ results

Education of Migrants

Sixty one per cent of the migrants are of primary and middle education level. Among migrants, number of graduate is only 6 persons with 3 per cent.



Source: Questionnaires’ results

Figure 9 Education Level of migrants in Hpa-an Township (2019)

Most of the migrants are suitable and they get jobs easily because of many job opportunities. Most of the work is available for the migrant regardless to education level.

Jobs of Migrants

World Bank (2013) said that migrants mostly find works in informal labour markets in construction sites, restaurants and tea shops in urban areas. A minority enjoy more formal employment in garment factories. 95 migrants from Hpa-an Township earn as casual labour and they work in construction, etc. Migrants in industry rank second with 48 persons (22 per cent) because Maesok and border areas between Myanmar and Thailand have many factories that give job opportunities for migrants from Hpa-an Township. Most female migrants work as housemaid in Maesok and Bangkok.

Table 3 Jobs of the migrants of Hpa-an Township (2019)

	Number of Migrants	Percent
Housemaid	22	10.1
Industry	48	22.0
Fishing	17	7.8
Marketing	35	16.1
Casual labour	97	44.5
	218	100.0

Source: Questionnaires' results

Remittance

Prominent migration scholars such as De Hass (2010) suggest that remittances are an effective instrument of income redistribution, poverty reduction as well as economic growth, relative to development aid and other governmental development programs. Savage and Harvey (2007) and Maphosa (2007) also stated that remittances form an important part of many people's lives around the world.

Table 4 Remittance of the migrants of Hpa-an Township (2019)

	Number of Migrants	per cent
less than 200,000 ks per month	34	15
between 200,000 and 300,000 ks per month	57	26
between 300,000 and 400,000 ks per month	86	40
more than 400,000 ks per month	41	19
	218	100

Source: Questionnaires' results

Eighty six migrants (40 per cent of the migrants) send back the remittance between 300,000 and 400,000 ks per month and 41 migrants more than 400,000 ks per month. Therefore, the remittance surely supports the socio-economic conditions of the local people. Rural economic activities do not provide sufficient income for their survival. Therefore, remittance is one of the supporting factors for migration as well as socio-economic conditions of the local people live in the area.

Nearly 168 migrants send back their remittance more than 9 times per year and 29 persons between 3 times to 6 times per year.

All migrants have an intention to support their families but they cannot support their family regularly. Remittance of international migrants is larger than that of internal migrants, According to interviews; remaining family members use that remittance in education of the younger, health for the elder persons, daily consumption and home upgrading. Most of the homes in the sample areas were upgraded after getting remittance from the migrants.

Table 5 Remittance of the migrants of Hpa-an Township (2019)

	Number of migrants
Less than 3 times per year	7
Between 3 times to 6 times per year	29
Less than 6 times to 9 times per year	14
More than 9 times per year	168
Total number of migrants	218

Source: Questionnaires' results

According to questionnaire survey and interview, thirty three percent of migrants have to live in a rental house or apartment in which migrants stay together. More than 60 percent of the migrants stay at places provided by the employees. Remaining migrants stay in relatives' homes.

Consequences of migration

Significance of the agricultural sector is gradually losing. The majority of young adults have left their home to other countries, particularly to Thailand to earn more income. The migration of people to other countries as migrant workers results in the shortage of labor for farm work. It will be the problem in the future because agriculture is one of the major economic activities of the area.

Although one or two family members move to the other areas as temporary migrants, other family members left the rural area and it reduces problem off abandoned land. On the other hand, there is no problem of old age persons due to low life expectancy.

Migration is one of the major income sources in Hpa-an Township. Nearly all migrants have an intention to support their families. The remaining family members use that remittance in education of the younger, health for the elder persons, daily consumption and home upgrading. Most of the homes in the sample areas were upgraded after getting remittance from the migrants. Therefore, the remittance surely supports the socio-economic conditions of the local people.

World Bank (2013) expressed that migrants primarily seek jobs through social networks in their villages rather than through paid brokers. Massey (1990) also said that the rural urban migration is also controlled by their social networks. Social networks play an important role in decision making on migration. Chain migration is distinctly found in the study area and migrants moved to urban area with the help of the people who live in Myawady, Maesok, etc.

Conclusion

Hpa-an Township is located in the border area, it has locational advantage. Many job opportunities are available for migrants. Agriculture is major economy of the area but it gives insufficient income and irregular for local people. A greater number of such migrant workers can earn and save a considerably large sum of money. They got sufficient capital to build new house, and buy piece of land.

Although migrants moved to Singapore, Malaysia, Yangon and Thailand, large amount of migrant move to Thailand due to job opportunities and nearness. Most migrations caused by economic reason have become more pronounced in the study area but the remittance sent by migrants is important for the families living in Hpa-an Township. It is clear that remittance supports socio-economic conditions of the area and local economy is somehow dependent on the remittance of migrants. Remittances seem to be a tool used to boost local economic activity.

Like other countries such as Japan, pronounce problems such as old age caring problems, depopulation problems, etc. are not found because of high fertility rate last 30 years ago. Moreover, although one or more migrant move to other areas, there is no problems on remaining family member because of large family size.

In the future, migration in the area may be more pronounced due to higher accessibility and better communication. To get detailed understanding on migration of the area, further researches on local people attitudes, local job opportunities, etc. should be done.

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