

Quality of life of Myanmar Migrant Labours in Samutsakorn Thailand*

คุณภาพชีวิตของแรงงานพม่าในสมุทรสาคร

Buapun Promphakping**

Ninlawadee Promphakping**

Pornpen Somaboot***

Sophie Rot***

Pattaraporn Weeranakin***

Abstract

The previous study on international migration has been traditionally focused on the implication of migration on economic growth while the quality of life of migrants is underrepresented. This study examines quality of life of Myanmar migrant labours in one migrant community in Samut Sakorn Province of Thailand. The empirical evidence is drawn from a survey using structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. This paper found that objective quality of life of Myanmar migrant labours concerned with shelters and diets, education, employment, expenditure and incomes and health are relatively poor. In respect to subject quality of life, Myanmar migrant labours identified five most importance items which included new

* This article is part of research project 'Quality of Life and Well-being of Burmese migrant labor: The Cast study of Sapan-pla community, Mahachai District of Samutsakhon Province' implemented research Research Group on Wellbeing and Sustainable Development funded by The Center of Labor Health Promotion.

** Associate Professor at Social Sciences Department, Director of Research Group on Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (WeSD), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University

*** Researchers at Research Group on Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (WeSD), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University

house, increased agricultural lands, being able to save money, having ability to support parents or kids, and returning to homeland. However, it is found that the actual achievement of the five' highest importance is lower than that of the five lowest important, except for being able to support parents and kids which the achievements are considerably high.

Keywords: Quality of life, Myanmar migrant labours, Migrants labours aspire

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาเรื่องการย้ายถิ่นระหว่างประเทศให้ความสำคัญกับมิติการสร้างความสะดวกสบายทางเศรษฐกิจในขณะที่มิติด้านคุณภาพชีวิตยังมีน้อย ดังนั้นในการศึกษาครั้งนี้เป็นการศึกษาคุณภาพชีวิตของแรงงานชาวพม่าในชุมชนในจังหวัดสมุทรสาคร โดยการสำรวจโดยมีแบบสอบถามและการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก ผลการศึกษานี้พบว่า คุณภาพชีวิตแรงงานด้านภาวะวิสัย อันได้แก่ที่พักพิง อาหาร การศึกษา การจ้างงาน รายได้ รายจ่าย และสุขภาพ อยู่ในสภาพที่แย่โดยเปรียบเทียบ ในแง่ของคุณภาพชีวิตด้านอัตรวิสัยพบว่าแรงงานอพยพชาวพม่าได้ให้ความสำคัญในระดับสูงกับ 5 ปัจจัย ได้แก่ การมีบ้านใหม่ การมีที่ดินการเกษตร ความสามารถในการมีเงินออม ความสามารถในการช่วยเหลือสนับสนุนบิดามารดาและบุตร และการได้กลับไปบ้านเกิด อย่างไรก็ตาม การบรรลุปัจจัยที่สำคัญสูงสุด 5 อันดับนี้ กลับพบว่าอยู่ในระดับที่ต่ำกว่าการบรรลุปัจจัยที่มีความสำคัญน้อยสุด ยกเว้นการมีความสามารถช่วยเหลือสนับสนุนบิดามารดาหรือบุตร

คำสำคัญ: คุณภาพชีวิต, แรงงานชาวพม่า, ความคาดหวังของแรงงานย้ายถิ่น

1. Background and Rationale

The contribution of international migration on economic development has been widely recognized and studied. In conventional view, migration from rural areas into a new economic sector will be positively resulting in the structural change of the economy (Lewis, 1986). Increasingly, studies have revealed the negative side of migration, especially the impact on the origins of the migrants from rural areas. In the case of the older-established European, Northern American and Middle Eastern labor-market systems, the great majority of studies suggested that while many return migrants benefit materially, they rarely stimulate initiative or generate productive investment and employment in their home communities (Connell, 1976; Rempel and Lobdell, 1978; King, 1986; Lewis, 1986 ; Shrestha, 1988). In developing economies, the implications of international migrations on original places were largely conceptualized through remittances, and some studies suggested that remittances from overseas migrants can reduce poverty of the origins (Anyanwu and Erhijakpor 2010). A study of the International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that the free flow of goods and capital has worsened income inequalities and reshaped labor markets (Stalker, 2000). In Thailand, the popular view of the implication of migration from rural areas is inherently negative. It causes loss of farm labor, undermines the sustainability of the local agricultural economy, disintegrates family and community relations, brings indecent culture into the village and generates conspicuous consumption (Mofa, 2015). Apart from the role in economic development, migration is seen as an essential process of ‘human development’ by UNDP. Migration is defined as “a process of enlarging people’s choices,” including improved opportunities to earn greater income, access to education and health facilities, economic and political freedom, freedom of migration, and

environmental safety (United Nations Development Program [UNDP] 1990; Kelley 1991).

From the early 1980s, overseas migration from Thailand was growing and evidently contributing to Thai economic growth during this period. Since 1990s, while domestic labour is continually being exported, Thailand has imported unskilled laborers from neighboring countries. Official estimation of the number of migrant laborers and their dependents, from Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Cambodia in year 2009, recorded 1.64 millions, the majority of whom were Burmese. The number was apparently under-estimated, for unofficial records showed more than 2 millions unskilled Myanmar labours in Thailand. This number is 16.7% higher than the domestic labor force (Atchawanitkul, 2004; Punpuing and Guests, 1997). A recent study estimated that, non-Thai population residing and working in Thailand in November 2018 (including professional skills workers and low-skill workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) was stood at 3,897,598 (United Nations Thematic Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

The main reason for which migrants from neighboring countries have been drawn into Thailand is generally to do with the wage differences. Thailand has long been successfully maintaining high level of economic growth and wages have been continually increased. Meanwhile industries employing unskilled and semi-skilled labours are remaining. Domestic labours have increasingly deserted low wage works, as this earning will not be sufficient for them to keep up with the standard of living that has been improved. Migrants from neighboring countries are therefore the need and good choice businesses and industries that require unskilled and semi-skilled labours.

Labour migration of Myanmar to Thailand has long been associated with unsettled political conflict in Myanmar. After independence in 1962, Myanmar, a country of abundant natural resources, was destined to have the brightest future of any of its neighbors. Twenty-five years later, with the adoption of General Ne Win's "Burmese Way to Socialism," Myanmar was designated by the United Nations as one of the world's "least developed countries" in 1987). Along with this policy, General Ne Win imposed the "Burmanization" over disparate ethnic minorities that made up more than one-third of the population. Most ethnic minorities opposed this policy, and fighting between the ethnic groups and Burmese government following the disagreement caused massive influx into Thailand, especially during 1990s. Over the past decade, the minority insurgency groups have been pressured to enter into ceasefire agreements with the State Peace and Development Council- SPDC. At present, Myanmar migrant labours in Thailand are mainly those who seek jobs and better quality of life.

As mentioned earlier, international migration has long been studied and research on this issue has been well-established. However, the focus of the research was primarily on economic aspects, especially the remittances migrants send to their home countries. With respect to Myanmar migrant labours in Thailand, it was estimated that the amount of \$US 367.235 million was remitted from Thailand to Myanmar in 2005, and \$US 300 million in 2007 (Huguet and Punpuing, 2005). This amounted to more than twice the amount of foreign direct investment received in Myanmar and around 5 per cent of Myanmar's GDP in the year of the study. However, the roles of migration on wellbeing and quality of life of workers at their work are underrepresented. This is particularly true for overseas migrants due to the difficulty of access to these migrants. Where quality of life was addressed, the focus was on specific group or domain such as child quality of life (Bryant, 2005), health, HIV, AIDs in migrants, etc.

This study was seeking to understand the quality of life as experienced by migrant labours at the destination, which took into account the contexts these workers were in. The focus of analysis was placed on state of being of their quality of life, what they aimed to achieve and their assessment of what they could manage to achieve. As suggested by previous studies, migrants can be seen as typically seeking wealth. However, the extent to which they are able to achieve what they expect is beyond their capacity to control. By examining the state of wellbeing at their destination and the gap between what they aim for and what they can manage to achieve, we obtained some ideas on the role of migration that extends beyond the economic growth.

2. Literature review : Migration and development: the pursuit of wealth and Quality of life.

Studies of migration at the earlier stage fell into two approaches. The first approach was derived from Ravenstein's (1885) Law of Migration, which was further developed by Lee (1966) and Todaro (1976). This approach emphasized spatial proximity, push-pull factors between the distances, patterns of migration, economic cost-benefit and decision making. The second approach was characterized by the theory of Marxist, or structuralism (Safa, 1982; McGee, 1983 ; Berman, 1985). Migration is seen as an inevitable transition towards capitalism, low level of individual choice, mechanism for exploitation of surplus labour and precursor to modernization.

While research on migration has long been established, the relationships between migration and development has been relatively recent and "unsettled" (Papademetriou and Martin, 1991). This is particularly true for international migration. Development at the 'growth pole' (Johansson,

Karlsson and Stough; 2001) can stimulate migration in the short term by raising people's expectations and by enhancing the resources that are needed for migration logistics (Ascencio, 1990; see also OECD, 1992; Nyberg-Sørensen, Hear and Engberg-Pedersen, 2002) However, remittances from migrants invested in their home countries can also propel development outside the growth center. Conventionally, international labour migration is understood to occur as an interaction between labor 'deficit' and labour 'surplus' economies. The most basic assumption is that if growth in material resources fail to keep up with demographic growth, strong migration pressures from LDCs to DCs will evolve. In classical theory, labour migration occurs due to a combination of supply-push and demand-pull factors. Diminishing migration pressures are thus associated with population and poverty reduction policy in LDCs.

The link between international labour migration and development in current academic debates is essentially revolved around "the three Rs" of Recruitment, Remittances and Return (Martin, 1991). In respect of recruitment, recent evidence suggests that worker recruitment eventually creates *networks* linking particular rural or urban communities in the sending countries with specific labor markets in the receiving countries (Gamburd, 2000). When such networks are established, they become valuable assets for those who have access to them. The link of remittance to development is perhaps the most salient theme of research and is highly debated (Massey et al., 1998; Taylor, 1999). Previous research studies show the implications of remittance on development of the LCDs in three areas. First, remittance is spent on family spending and improvement of housing. This, secondly, is followed by spending on conspicuous consumption that can be worsening the position of the poorest. Finally, remittances are invested on productive activities that can result in improvement of land productivity.

In respect of return, it is usually regarded as the end product of the migration cycle. Migrant is expected to have saved capital and acquired skills abroad that can be productively invested in the sending country. However, if skills are acquired, returning migrants often prefer to work in another, generally private, sector back home (Martin, 1991). Home governments may not promote return, especially where remittances play imperative roles propelling economic growth of home countries. Incentive to return of migrants thus rests upon improvement of the government and economy of the origins.

The transnational approach of migration has recently broadened from the three Rs debates. International labour migration is seen as essential social process. It is seen as one element of livelihoods that people adopted among ranges of methods that households move between rural and urban livelihood options. International migration can be taken in diverse forms, with multiple levels of consequences. (Tacoli, 1998 ; Kothari, 2003; de Haan, 1999; McDowell, 1997; Black, 2003).

The studies on quality of life of international migrants are largely approached from the rights-based perspectives. Thailand Migration Report 2019 (United Nations Thematic Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019) highlights the labour rights abuse and illegal fishing practices of fishing industries in Thailand. The Report suggests that the ‘decent’ conditions of works in fishing industries of migrant labours require seriousness of law enforcement (United Nation Thematic Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019). A report of European Union and International Labour Organization (ILO) titled “Ship to Shore Rights: Baseline research findings on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand” also captured the quality of life of international migrant labours from rights-based approach (International Labour Organization, 2018). The Report focuses on working conditions, including signed and written contract, wages, harassments at working place, forced

labours or workers younger than 18 years old. While the Report states that there is some progress regarding the enforcement of the policies and laws, there are some 'persisting' labour abuse and this mostly concerned with practices in seafood industries.

While the objective aspect of quality of life is relatively well captured in these studies, the subjective aspect international migrant remains underrepresented and this considered to be a gap that this study is seeking to contribute. Studies of quality of life have long been agreed that qualities of life are comprised of both objective and subjective dimensions. In objective aspect, the quality of life is referred is a set of 'need satisfiers' (Doyal and Gough, 1991). In respect to subjective wellbeing, WHO defines quality of life as 'an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and relations to their goals, expectation standards and concerns (WHOQOL Group, 1993). This study will use WeDQOL developed by Research on Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) (Promphakping et al, 2017) (to be discussed below)

3. Methodology

Research on wellbeing in developing world has been growing since the past decade. (Gough and McGregor, 2007) This has broadened our understanding of the link between improvement of material wealth and quality of life of people. However, meaning and theorizing of wellbeing is still too far to lead to an agreement among researchers. Wellbeing can be an extended version of 'basic needs', comprising basic materials for good life, physical and mental healthiness, good social relations, and security. (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), 2005; Trevittaya, 2016) Wellbeing is seen to comprise both subjective and objective aspects, yet more

complicated and characterized by having, doing and thinking. This study sees wellbeing as comprising two dimensions; the state of quality of life and the state of their perception pertaining to their quality of life.

In order to take the above idea into operation, this study adopted mixed methods from combining qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative approach is taking the view of ‘community study’, seeing groups of migrants staying around their workplace as having a certain type of organized relationships. The community of the workers was analyzed in terms of contexts in which quality of life of migrants was examined. These interviews were held with fourteen key informants – three NGO staff members, a community leader, a monk, a health worker and households of migrant.

In respect of quantitative approach, this research conducted a survey using structured questionnaire. In terms of sampling methods, this study applied the snowball technique to identify respondents. This is due to limitation of access to the target groups and systemic and other types of sampling methods would be difficult.

The questionnaire contains WeDQOL instrument called ‘value and goal’. The initial ideas of this instrument derived from the Person Generate Index (PGI) developed by Ruta et al (1994). PGI is an individualized quality of life measure that illustrates their relative importance and a final score is calculated to represent the shortfall between people’s desired and actual achievement. In this research we asked respondents to identify five items that they considered most important to them. This followed by their subjective assessment of their achievement (needs are met/not met). There were 150 individuals interviewed by the structured questionnaires.

4. Findings

4.1 A migrant community: Sapan (assumed name)

Sapan, literally means ‘fish bridge’ (ท่าเรือ - seaport) is a community of workers of sea-fish related industries located in a sub-urban area of Samutsakorn Province. In long history, Samutsakorn was a seaport of trading between Siam and overseas communities. Locally Samutsakorn is known as “Mahachai” the name given after the canal dug during the Ayudhaya period. This historical background suggested that Samutsakorn has long been housing mix of inhabitants, especially Chinese traders. Later, the growth of Thai economy since the past two centuries has resulted in the decline trading through seaport of Samutsakorn. From the past four decades, seafood industries have been growing, and Samutsakorn has resumed its new role as an important center of seafood industries of the country. The growing of sea-fish industries has drawn laborers, initially from the Northeast of Thailand, and later more and more from Myanmar. The prosperity of fishing industries together with other industries drove the PPP (Provincial Per-capita Product) of Samutsakorn towards the top five of the country, second only to Bangkok and Rayong where the major industrial estates of the countries are located.

In fact, Myanmar migrant labours have resided in this area since long time ago. This is due to several wars between Myanmar and Thailand, and after the war people were relocated based on the victory. In Samutsakorn and Samutsongkram (a neighboring province of Samutsakorn) there are numbers of Mon communities and Mon Buddhist temples that have existed since long time ago. At present although young generations have been integrated into Thai culture and do not speak Mon, a number of Mon identities are maintained and continued. This local historical background provides a conducive atmosphere for the present migrant labours of Myanmar to

work and form their communities surrounding the places of their works. Buddhist temples are the central venue for Burmese workers and communities and support migrant workers in a number of aspects.

‘Wat Pom’, a Buddhist Temple of Samutsakorn, where most entourages and supporters are Mon (minority in Myanmar), can illustrate this point. Most monks residing in this Temple are Mon, a few of these are senior monks who have wide networks of their supporters or followers, both Thai and Mon. Infrastructure and buildings of the temple feature magnificent, glorious temple hall, both completed and under construction. Wat Pom Temple has a glorious structure owing to supports from both Mon and Thai. Meanwhile, the Temple also provides services, in addition to religious services, such as language training and job opportunities (construction work of the Temple). The Temple also plays a key role in organizing celebration of Mon National Day.

Sapan community is located behind and adjacent to Wat Pom. From the back side of the temple there is a small road leading to the Sapan seaport. Both sides of the road are packed with houses, mostly occupied by migrants, factories and houses modified to be seafood processing factories. The travelers on this road, the language people speak, shops, street peddlers give the feeling for visitors that the place is outside Thailand. Not only Sapan community where Myanmar migrants are inhabited, different types of rent houses of migrant laborers are scattered over Mahachai town. According to one NGO’s estimation, migrant workers of Samutsakorn are about 200,000 people. Workers of fishing industries of Samutsakorn are Myanmar migrant labours. In Sapan community most of them are Mon.

Migrant labours living in Sapan community can be classified into different types, three of these are the main types. The first comprises young migrant labours working in the factories located nearby or far away from the

community. These migrant labours usually wear uniform of the factories. The second group consists of women migrant working in small food processing businesses located within the community or near Sapan seaport. The job ranges from sea fish or prawn cleaning and peeling, to other food processing. Some of the work is done at Sapan seaport. The third group comprises men migrant labours fish boxes from the boats onto the port or work on the boats that are days at sea. These workers are friends, relatives and neighbors.

4.2 Socio-economics of the Myanmar migrants

Inhabitants of Sapan are above 700 and most of them are Mons. Considering the size of the population, this migrant community is the same size as the general size of rural villages in Thailand. However, the study covered only 150 households with total population 525, of which 274 or 52.2 % are females. Almost 70 percent of these people were above 20 years. Most migrants were born in Myanmar, however, quite a significant number (16.4 % or 86 persons) were born in Thailand and most of these are young and school children. Above 54 percent of the population were married, 93 percent specify their ethnic as Mon and 98 percent are Buddhists. Only 10 workers disclosed that they illegally entered into Thailand, but the actual number of illegal migrants was higher than what was reported.

4.3 Objective quality of life

4.3.1 Shelters and diet

Crowdedness of Myanmar migrants labours' shelters are evident. In one of our home visits, we found that a 30 m² room accommodated two families of 7 members. All households' activities are done in the same area; cooking, sleeping and resting. Our survey reveals that 98.7% or 148 families live in the rented rooms. Pipe water and bottle water is the main source of drinking water for 98% of the households. Ninety eight percent of the families have access to electricity. The fuel used for cooking is electricity (69%) or LPG (27%).

The survey reveals that fresh vegetables and seafood are the most frequently consumed food of most households. This is due to the fact that they are available around the place, as most of their jobs are related to seafood processing. Fruit, pork, eggs and chicken are consumed once a week on average. It was also found that 46% of respondents never have meat. When asking about the adequacy of food, 90% of respondents reported that their food is 'just adequate', and only 4% reported that their food is not adequate. This suggests that in the migrants' view food is fairly enough, and not much a problem for them regarding nutrition.

Table 1 Percentage of diet consumption in households

Diet	Daily	Once a week	Once a month	Scarcely	None	Total
Fruits	11.6	63.0	13.0	4.1	8.2	100.0
Vegetables	91.9	5.4	1.3	-	1.3	100.0
Fish/aquatic animal	67.1	26.2	6.7	-	-	100.0
Pork	9.4	60.4	20.8	4.0	5.4	100.0
Beef	0.7	10.1	25.5	17.4	46.3	100.0
Chicken	3.4	41.6	38.9	7.4	8.7	100.0
Egg	8.1	60.1	16.9	6.1	8.8	100.0

4.3.2 Education

From the total population of 535 in our survey, 14.9% of adults or 78 persons were recorded as uneducated. For those who are educated, about 45% completed their primary school and 22.7% obtained informal education. From our informal interviews' migrants expressed their views that education they obtained prior to their migration was not relevant and not useful. The kinds of knowledge and skills they need is Thai language skills, i.e., understanding, reading, speaking and writing. The language skills

are important for them to be able to acquire necessary information, communicate and negotiate with Thai local officials at health center and public clinic, public transport service, traders/vendors and certainly their own employers.

The demand to learn Thai language is clear and high as it was found their social support center of the monastery offers Thai language classes for Myanmar migrants. However, the migrant labours are encountering a number of difficulties to attend the classes. One important limitation is the time schedule of the classes which is not compatible with availability of their time; the classes are usually taking place during their working hours. The class attendants mostly were the laborers' kids that benefit Thai language classes more than their parents who require it.

Regarding children's education, the survey of this study reveals that about 30 percent of the total population of 525 are younger than 20 years old. Among this group, 9 percent or 48 persons are below 5 years old. Local schools enlist school-age children according to Thailand's law on verification of birth certification and records. However, informal interview reveals that there are discriminations against child migrants. Many Thai's families prefer not to send their kids to school with these 'Myanmar' kids and these migrant laborers' kids prefer the school with more kids of their race.

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage of education of Myanmar migrant labours

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	78	14.9
Non-formal education	119	22.7
Primary school	241	45.9
High School	38	7.2
Higher than high school	1	0.2
Younger than 5 years	48	9.2
Total	525	100.0

When asking about adequacy of education of the family members, most respondents reported ‘not adequate’ and ‘just adequate’ (22.0% and 22.3%, respectively). The great proportion of the respondents (55%) did not give answer to this question.

4.3.3 Employment, incomes and expenditures

The survey of this study found that 56.9% of the migrant labours work in fishery industry, where they unload and load, peel, and clean sea fish (all sea products), etc., or doing jobs outsiders may regard as dirty and risky. There is a clear division of labor between men and women. While men are working in ‘*Long Log*’ (loaded and unloaded sea stuff) that requires physical strength, women are working in ‘*Luong*’ (sea stuff sorting, cleaning and pre-processing). A significant portion of women’s work can be considered as sub-contracting work from which wages are paid on the piece-by-piece basis, and work can be done at their residence. The survey also reveals that 44.9% out of 410 workers (184 workers) reported working night shift. There are 33.4% of respondents (137 workers) who viewed that their work is dangerous and risky; 7.8% reported accidents at work.

Although they work in such an inconvenient environment, over 86% of these workers reported that the environment of their work is 'acceptable', and 12% of them view that their work place is clean. For migrant laborers, the choices or alternative jobs for them are limited. The situation they are in therefore is to accept what are available to them or else they would be unemployed. From our survey 33 workers or 6.3% of workers were reported jobless. The situation of unemployment is worse than working in undesirable environment.

Table 3 Frequency and Percentage of main types of work of Myanmar migrant labours

Work types	Frequency	Percentage
Unloading (fishing boat to pier)	135	25.7
Shrimp processing as sub-contractors	164	31.2
Factories	96	18.3
Construction labor/house maid/ servant at shops and low skilled jobs	15	2.9
Jobless	33	6.3
Children	82	15.6
Total	525	100.0

When asking about satisfaction with their income, most migrant workers viewed that the situation of their income does not change (42.7%), and only a small number of workers (9.2%) reported that their income situation has improved. A great number of workers viewed and reported that their income situation is slightly worsened and significantly worsened (32.0% and 11.3%, respectively). Under such circumstance, a significant number of workers still made effort to save money for sending home, 120 workers reported sending remittance regularly.

With respect to expenditures of five selected items, the survey revealed that food expenditure is the highest, followed by expenditure on accommodation, clothing, health, while expenditure on education comes at the bottom.

4.3.4 Health

From our survey, over 46% out of 525 population reported having health problem in the past three months. Three main sources of health services they obtained are self-medication, private clinic and public health center or hospital (43.2%, 40.9%, and 14.8%, respectively). However, 83.4% of the population are eligible for and registered in universal health care scheme. The low rate of using public health care services suggests that although these migrants are entitled to them, the access to these services remains practically difficult. Migrant labours feel uncomfortable to go to public health center or hospital partly due to their language problem to communicate to medical staff. In terms of expense on health care from the previous three months, the average spending per household was slightly above 250 Baht. Low income could also prevent them from having access to health services, albeit the state health services are free. From informal interviews some workers turned to alternative health care, traditional health care and spiritual and mental therapy/healing. These migrants preferred to see their healers when sick instead of visiting the modern medical services.

4.4 Subjective quality of life: Shortfall between the desired and actual achievement

As mentioned earlier, the subjective quality of life will be measured using WeDQOL instrument call value and goal. The subjective quality of life of Myanmar migrant labours is summarized in the table below.

Table 4 Subjective quality of life: Shortfall between the desired and actual achievement

ITEM	Respondents		Satisfaction		Unsatisfaction	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Having new house	132	29.8	30	22.7	102	77.3
Having agricultural land	111	25.1	24	21.6	87	78.4
Having saving money	49	11.1	15	30.6	34	69.4
Having ability to support parents or kids	33	7.4	26	78.8	7	21.2
Returning homeland	25	5.6	4	16.0	21	84.0
Having money spend	23	5.2	15	65.2	8	34.8
Having job	21	4.7	16	76.2	5	23.8
Donation/making merits	15	3.4	11	73.3	4	26.7
Having good health	15	3.4	8	53.3	7	46.7
Having enough food	13	2.9	9	69.2	4	30.8
Having education	6	1.4	4	66.7	2	33.3

From the above table, there are 11 items identify as most important by 150 respondents. Base on frequencies of the answers, the five highest importance prioritized by Myanmar migrant labours are new house, increased agricultural lands, being able to save money, having ability to support parents or kids, and returning to homeland. Meanwhile the five lowest importance rated by migrant labours includes education, having enough and good foods, good health, being able to donate money or making merits and good jobs. It is also evident that the actual achievement of the five' highest importance is lower than that of the five lowest important, except for being able to support parents and kids which the achievements are considerably high.

5. Conclusion and discussion

The objective quality of life described above is considerably poor, and the results pronounced most studies mentioned in the literature reviews. However, the objective criteria are relative, even though these criteria are justified by ‘objective indicators. This is not only relative to the existing environment of the destination (where they are currently work), but also relative to their origins. These migrants left their natal place with the feeling of desperate, in seeking something better than what they were faced with in their home villages. The hardships regarding shelters and diets, health, education and the poor conditions of work they experienced in the destination are bearable in comparing to their original places from which they were escaped.

The analysis of subjective quality of life leads us to conclude that there are large shortfalls or gaps between ‘aspiration’ and the ‘actual achievement’. On the one end, the higher they aspire for, the lower they achieve, and on the other end, the lower they aspire fore, the higher they achieve. This finding suggests the low satisfaction of Myanmar migrant labours to their living environment, and therefore the poor subjective quality of life.

Number of previous studies suggest that health related aspects of quality of life is frequently ranked as the highest importance (Locker & Allen, 2007 Trevittaya, 2016). This results of this study suggest the contrast which education, food and health are ranked among the lowest. This finding encored Jongudomkarn and Camfield (2006) report, in her analysis of quality of life of people in the Northeast of Thailand, where people migrating from their home villages giving higher priority on income than health.

Based on the analysis, this study recommends to improve quality of life of Myanmar migrants by using community-based approach. The community

study of this reveals that there is a strong link between Buddhist temple and Myanmar migrant labours. The temple is currently playing roles in providing education, temporal shelters, and meeting places for Myanmar migrants. The roles of the Buddhist temple could be enhanced and expand in order to improve quality of life of the migrant labours.

6. References

- Anyanwu, J. C., & E.O. Erhijakpor. 2010. "Do Remittances Affect Poverty in Africa?" *African Development Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 51-91.
- Atchawanitkul, K. (2004). Unpublished paper for *the workshop on "illegal migrant workers and health dimension with management programme of the Thai government"*, 10 September 2004 at Royal Rattanakosin hotel, Bangkok.
- Breman, J. (1985). *Of Peasants, Migrants and Paupers: Rural Labour Circulation and Capitalist Production in West India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Black, R., Sabates-Wheeler, R. Skeldon, R. Waddington, C. & Winters, A. (2003) *Mapping Study of Migration Issues*, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, March, processed
- 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*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Florence.
- Connell, J., et al. (1976). *Migration from Rural Areas: The Evidence from Village Studies*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- de Haan, H. (1999). "Livelihoods and Poverty : The Role of Migration- A Critical Review of the Migration Literature." *Journal of Development Studies*, 36(2), 1-47.

- DFID. (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, from [www. Livelihoods.org](http://www.Livelihoods.org)
- Doyal. L and Gough, I. (1991). A Theory of Human Need. Basingstoke: MacMillan.
- Gamburd, M.R. (2000). *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle: Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's Migrant Housemaids*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Huguet, J. W. & Punpuing, S. (2005). "Child migrants and children of migrants in Thailand", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, 20(3), 123-142.
- International Labour Organization. (2018). Ship To Shore Rights: Baseline research findings on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand. https://shiptoshorerights.org/wp-content/uploads/ilo-shiptoshore_A4-EN_2018-02-23_web-v2.pdf
- Johansson, B., Karlsson, C. & Stough, R. (2001). *Theories of Endogenous Regional Growth: Lesson for Regional Policies*. Berlin: Springer-Verlogg.
- Jongudomkarn, D., & Camfield, L. (2006). Exploring the quality of life of people in North Eastern and Southern Thailand. *Social Indicators Research*, 78(3), 489-529.
- King, R. (ed.). (1986). *Return Migration and Regional Economic Problems*, London: Croom Helm.
- Kelley, A. C. (1991). The human development index: "Handle with care". *Population and Development Review*, 17: 315-24.
- Kothari, U. (ed). (2003). Policy Arena: Migration, Staying Put and Livelihoods, *Journal of International Development*, 15(5), 607-609
- Lee, E. (1966). A Theory of Migration, *Demography*, 3(1), 47-57.
- Lewis, J. (1986). International labour migration and uneven regional development in labour exporting countries, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 77, 27- 41.

- Locker, D., & Allen, F. (2007). What do measures of 'oral health-related quality of life' measure?. *Community dentistry and oral epidemiology*, 35(6), 401-411.
- McGee, T.G. (1983). "Labour mobility in fragmented labour Markets. The role of circulatory migration in rural-urban relations in Asia", in: H.I. Safa, (ed), *Towards a Political Economy of Urbanisation in Third World Countries*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 47-66.
- Martin, P. (1991). The Unfinished Story: Turkish Labour Migration to Western Europe, *International Labour Office*: Geneva.
- McDowell, C., de Haan, A. (1997). *Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods: A Critical Review of the Literature*. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies (IDS).
- Massey, M., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J.E. (1998). *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). (2005). *Ecosystems and Human Well-being : Synthesis*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Mofa, A. (2015). Effect of Akha tribe labor's movement from Ban Huay Khee Lhek, Wawee Sub-District, Maesuai District, Chiang Rai. *Graduate School Journal*, 8: 166-175 (in thai)
- Papademetriou, D.G. & Martin, P.L. (eds). (1991). *The Unsettled Relationship. Labour Migration and Economic Development*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Promphakping, B., Promphakping, N., Somaboot, P., Weeranakin, P. & Ratanaprathum, N. (2017). *Changes of Wellbeing of Rural the Northeast of Thailand during a decade of 2005-2016*. Khon Kaen: Research Group on Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (WeSD)

- Punpuing, S. & Guest, P. (1997). *Project Outline: Assessment on Dependents of Migrant Workers in Thailand*: Bangkok.
- Ravenstein, G., (1885). The Laws of Migration, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 48(2). 167-235.
- Rempel, H. & Lobdell, R. (1978). The role of urban-to –rural remittances in rural development. *Journal of Development Studies*, 14: 324-341.
- Ruta, D. A., Garratt, A. M. and Leng, M. (1994), ‘A New Approach to the Measurement of QoL: The Patient-Generated Index (PGI)’ , *Medical Care* (32), 1109-1126.
- Safa, H.I. (ed). (1982). *Towards a Political Economy of Urbanization in Third World Countries*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Samorapoom, C & Jantriwong, S. (2018). Factors related to quality of roeign work’s life in Surin Province. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Surin Rajabhat University*. 19(2), 97-110.
- Shrestha, N. (1988). A structural perspective on labour migration in underdeveloped countries. *Progress in Human Geography*, 12: 179-207.
- Stalker, P. (2000). *Workers without Frontiers: The Impact of Globalization on International Migration*. JLO, Lynne Reiner Publishers: USA.
- Todaro, M.P. (1976). Internal Migration in Developing Countries. *International Labour Office*, Geneva.
- Taylor, J. (1999). “The new economics of labour migration and role of remittances in the migration process”, *International Migration*, 37(1): 63-86.

- Tacol,i C. (1998). "Rural-Urban Linkages and Sustainable Rural Livelihood"
- Carney Diana (ed). (1998). Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: What Contributions Can We Make?. DfID: London.
- Trevittaya, P. (2016). Concepts of quality of Lif. Bull Chang Mai Assoc Med Sci. 49(2), 171-184
- United Nations Development Program [UNDP]. (1990). *Human Development Report 1990* (HDR), New York: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations Thematic Working Group on Migration in Thailand (edited by Benjamin Harkins). (2019). Thailand Migration Report 2019. Bangkok; Ainergy Studio Company Limited.
- The WHOQOL Group. (1993). 'Study Protocol for the World Health Organization Project to Develop a Quality of Life Assessment Instrument (WHOQOL)' in Quality of life Research 2, 153 – 159.