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**3.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION**

**Literacy Campaign: Special Reference with Thit Poke Pin Village (2014)**

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**Abstract**

Literacy campaigns play a key role in rural development, poverty alleviation and youth volunteer's valuable spirit. The main theme of this research is based on Thit Poke Pin village's 99 household lists in 2014. Four case studies are used to expand on these social trends in greater depth, particularly with regard to their specific features, challenges, notice factors and results. This research has raised expectations of improved literacy rates. These include linking large-scale literacy campaigns to processes of social change and development supporting participation in adult literacy programmes through literate environments and opportunities for further learning and improved availability, reliability and comparability of literacy data targeted approach. This paper analyses the status and characteristics of adult literacy campaigns programmes. We hope that students, teachers and researchers will further regional research skills and literate environments.

**Keywords:** UNESCO's educational goals, rural education's features, challenges, success factors

**Introduction**

Despite a traditionally high rate of literacy and importance of learning in Myanmar, its educational system is in a state of underdevelopment and uncertainty. The adult literacy rate in Myanmar has gone up hitting 95.13 percent in 2013, the country's official media said quoting its education Minister Dr. Mya Aye Monday. The Minister attributed the rise in the adult literacy rate to the opening of more than 43,100 basic education schools across the country in the 2013-14 academic years, according to Xinhua. He called for the establishment of a constantly learning Myanmar society

through basic literacy activities of the people. Education officials also stressed the need for all the people to be educated to catch up with the advances in technology. The UN Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) pledged to support Myanmar in development of human resources and flourishing of democracy in the country. (UNESCO, education in India, adult education, literacy, 2013)

The paper analyses the adult literacy campaigns and programmes in 2014. While campaigns have created fresh momentum to mobilize for literacy, most large-scale campaigns have set overly ambitious targets and underestimated the complexity of the task. The continuity of learning processes for newly literates and the integration of short-duration campaigns into national learning systems are major concerns. All the regions and States of Myanmar simultaneously launched the literacy campaign in which the masses will participate as a national task. So it is a significant day for the history of our mother land. In our country there are some people who for various reasons cannot attend even the basic education classes. In this regards, the government launched the literacy campaign for these people to have at least basic knowledge in reading and writing. (The New Light of Myanmar, 7 April 2014)

### **Background History**

Many different kinds of monastic education were found in Kon-baung period. In Myanmar, there was *Gamavasa pwe kyaung* (term applied to Buddhist monks residing within the orbit of lay habitation) who taught basic Pali (Pali language of the Buddhist Scriptures) literature and variety of subjects. Various subjects taught in *Pwe Kyaung* (ancient monastery of training school) gave basic training for war affairs. (See Photo-No-1) The school taught lessons on character and moral codes and they were meant to the character of the citizens. (Tin, 1965) Accordingly in pre-colonial society Myanmar had sound education. Contemporary accounts of foreigners admitted the fact that the literacy rate in Myanmar was high because of the monastic education in Kon-baung period.

Basic schools were opened under the British rule in Myanmar. National school appeared in 1920s in Myanmar anti-British sentiments. More schools were opened to much the population after independence. (Herbert, 1991)

As we were born under the foreign domination, the number of illiterate people in the whole population is about three or four of every ten persons. As a result of the absolute monarchy and colonialism, the percentage of illiterate people in the villages was still considerable, acting as a great hindrance people in the path of progress. Now that the sovereign power has been restored to the people, it has become an absolute necessity to see that the people are literate so that their attitudes and ways of thinking are in the right direction. The aim of the educational system in building a state is the introduction of free compulsory primary education. With this in view, the present literacy campaign is the groundwork as the lowest level of the main plan. I would request those concerned to seriously start learning as it is important to be able to read and write.

The literacy campaign was therefore, according to him, an important aspect of the national revolution. Explaining that for the 1947 literacy campaign, six townships were chosen for operation and that Htan-ta-bin was one of the six, he concluded his speech by requesting the village elders to

regard the young volunteers, who had already arrived to take part in the campaign as their own children and to look after their comfort. (Than Oo, 1974)

Myanmar began the effort to estimate illiteracy as a national duty after regaining independence in 1948. The official illiteracy eradication movement was first launched in Myanmar 1964 to accelerate the then momentum of literacy programs. The government formed a literacy supervisory central committee in 1966. In 1966's literacy campaign, a total of 1985 students from 10 universities participated for teaching 22,417 people in nine townships across the country. Adult literacy rate in the country went up in 2013 to as high as 95.13 percent. Due to its concerted effort in the campaign, Myanmar gained Mohammad Riza Pahlavi Prize in 1971 and Noma Prize presented by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (<http://www.shanghaidaily.com>, April 7, 2014)

### **Literacy Campaign Activities**

Many children and the vast majority of adults without school experience struggle to read, write, and calculate (3R) in out-of-school settings. Hence it is important to document and analyze the intellectual activities and accomplishments of children and adults in the context of the environment in which they function. These activities are diverse in function, form and purpose. For adults who are illiterate 3R literacy programmes (See Photo-No-2, Basic Literacy Packages) are being implemented. Education programmes such as the Special Four National Education and the Long Term 30 Years Education Development Plan, and the Education for All (EFA) projects are being put into effect in order to fulfill the State's social objective of Upgrading of Education. In the implementation of EFA programmes both formal and non-formal education are being given equal priority. Non-Formal programmes are being put into effect by the Education for All Coordinating Central Committees and the EFA Executive Committee, under which are the EFA Committees at the state, division, district, township and village levels. As a result of the efforts of these committees the adult literacy rate has been reduced. (Sein Tu, 2002)

The aim of this campaign is to achieve social progress through knowledge dissemination. After teaching them the basic knowledge is reading and writing, they will be encouraged to enhance their reading habit. But the important thing here is constant learning. Without it, everything learned will be gradually lost.

According to government statistics, Burma's literacy rate in 2000 was over 91 percent, Myanmar Education Research Bureau (MERB) is projecting the figure will go up to 95 percent after 2015 following successive campaigns. (<http://www.dvb>) University lecturers and students are volunteering their time during this summer holiday as part of the 2014 literacy campaign in Burma, which aims to provide free classes for children and elderly persons who never learn to read. (<http://www.dvb>, See Photo-No-3)

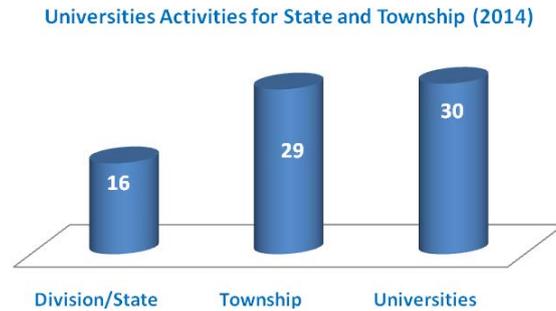


Figure 1: Universities Activities

Source: *The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014 (Henceforth Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014)*

Myanmar is launching a literacy campaign in 29 townships across the country for the development of the country’s education sector, state media reported on Monday 2014.

The campaign covers 46479 persons of 1163 wards and village in 29 townships of all Regions and States (See Map-I). Together with local volunteer teachers, 4261 University students under the supervision of 403 teachers of 30 Universities will teach them basic knowledge in reading and writing for one and a half months starting the first week of April for the literacy campaign. (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 7 April 2014)

Literacy Campaign of Universities Activities in Divisions and States, 2014

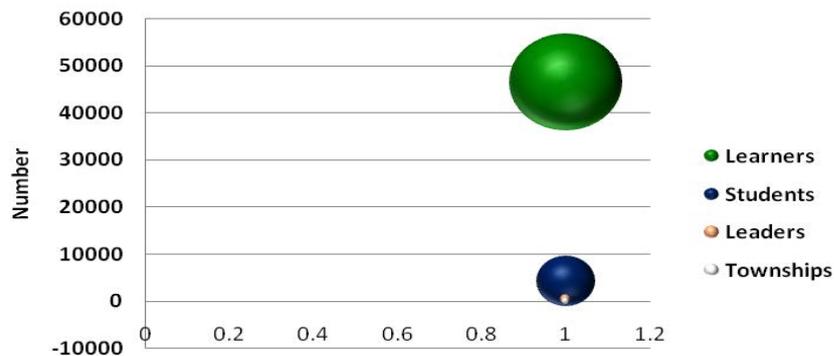


Figure 2: *The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014, 16-17*

Source: *The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014, 16-17*

Among them let me inform the 2014 literacy campaign are being undertaken at 267 groups in village of Yedashe Township in Toungoo District of Bago Region as of 1 April.

The Basic Literacy Campaign list of Villages, Ye Ta Shey Township (2014)

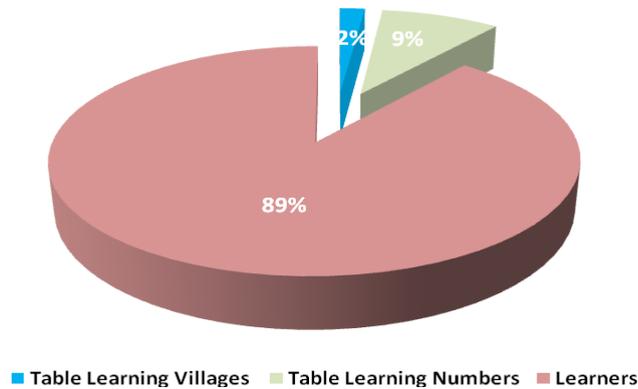


Figure 3: Table learning villages and learners  
 Source: The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014, 72-74

A total of 200 students from Toungoo University led by 20 faculty members as supervisors and 68 led by 7 faculty members of Meiktila University are teaching (<http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/university-students-teach-villagers-in-basic-literacy-ampaigh/>) 2588 local people from 56 village tracts of Yedashe Township from 1 April to 5 May. (The New Light of Myanmar (6 April 2014))

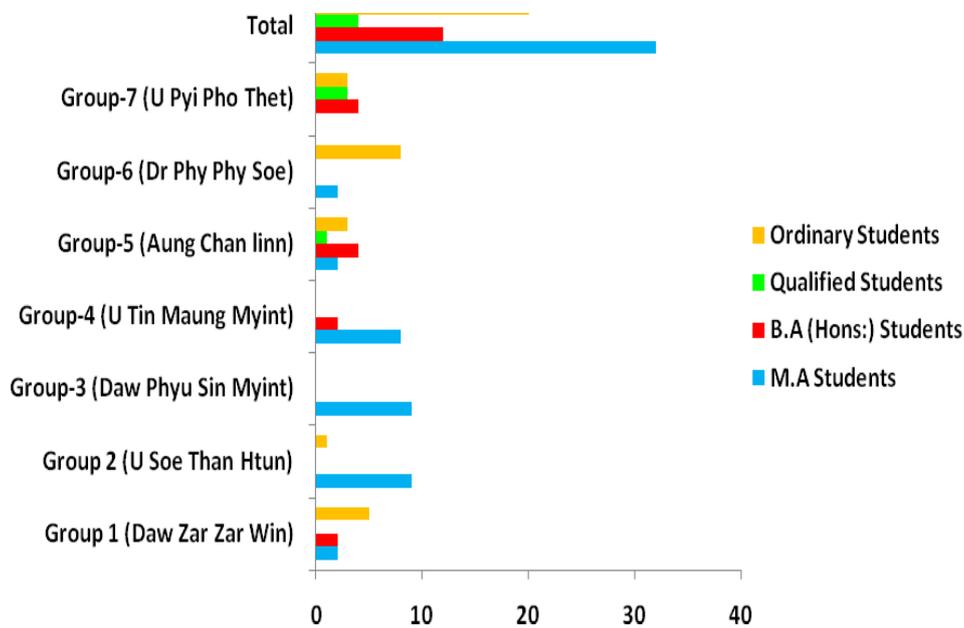


Figure 4: List of Meiktila University Supervisors and Students  
 Source: List of Literacy Campaign Activities, Meiktila University Record, Soe Than Tun Collection

Between them I would like to show the Thit Poke Pin village under Thaing village group. (Thit Poke Pin village, Photo-No-4) It is under the charge of Meiktila University. They stressed the need to place emphasis on giving encouragement to activities of literacy campaign that plays a key role in rural development and poverty alleviation. (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 7 April 2014) The youthful volunteers took part in the literacy campaign (Photo, No-5, 6, 7, 8) with heart and soul and not as discharging a duty imposed upon them by others. One instance would suffice to illustrate this point. I have some questionnaires are as follows:

Where's the Thit Poke Pin village?

How many literate and illiterate persons are there?

What happen illiterate rates are high?

What are they opportunities?

Why did not prevent the child marriage?

### Social Bases of the Study Area in Yetashey

Yedashe Township include in Bago Division. (See Map-II, Thein Pe, 1995) According to 2014 data, total population of the study area was Yetashey, of which 48.4% were Male population and 51.6% were female population. In that year, population concerning the (Rural/Urban) urbanization person was 88.6% of the total population. Regarding the whole study area, populations concerning the rural area were 189,173 person and urban area were 24,420 persons, respectively. (<https://www.citypopulation.de/php/myanmar-admin.php?adm2id=070202>)

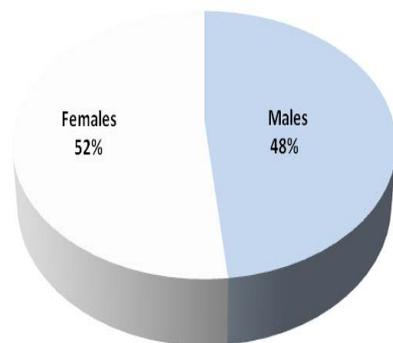


Figure 5: Population Figure in Yetashey

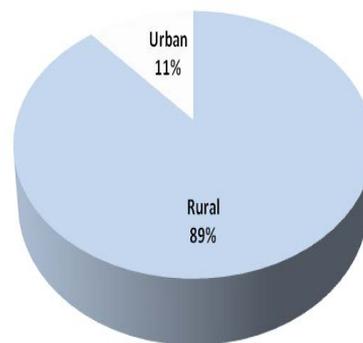


Figure 6: Urbanization Figure in Yetashey

Source: <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/myanmar-admin.php?adm2id=070202>

It is composed of 56 village tracts. (The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014) Among them I would like to show the Thit Poke Pin village. It is located in western part of Yedashe Township (See Map-III), Bago Division, Myanmar, Asia. It lies nearly Forty miles away from Yangon-Mandalay Union Highway road and twenty eight miles away from Tha Ga Ra village.

According to 2014 house hold list, the total population of Thit Poke Pin village had a total population of (456) persons, of these (213) persons were male and (243) persons were female. (House hold list of Thit Poke Pin village, 2014) According to 2014 data, the age structure of Thit Poke Pin village can be categorized as follows:

The first group aged from 0 to 14 years of age

The second group aged from 15 to 59 years of age

The third group aged from over 60 years of age

In the first group are included infants and children's of primary schools level, totaling about 123 persons. They are generally regarded as schooling ages are depended on the second group. The people, who are in the age group of 15 to 59 years of age, are recognized as the working people, earning substantial money for their livelihood.

There are 315 peoples in the second age group. Government servants, agriculturists, livestock breeders and extempore workers are included in this age group.

The third age group is made up with the peoples of over 60 years of age and pensioners, totaling 20 persons.

The first age group includes in the non-workable group who are unable to earn money. Also the third age group consists of the aged people who lest vigor and vitality to earn money. Therefore the first age group and the third age group form the dependency class. Only members of the second age are working people, whose number in Thit Poke Pin village is about 315 persons. The growth of population is mainly caused by natural growth and immigration.

### Basic Education

According to the Household list of Thi Poke Pin village in 2014 are as follows:

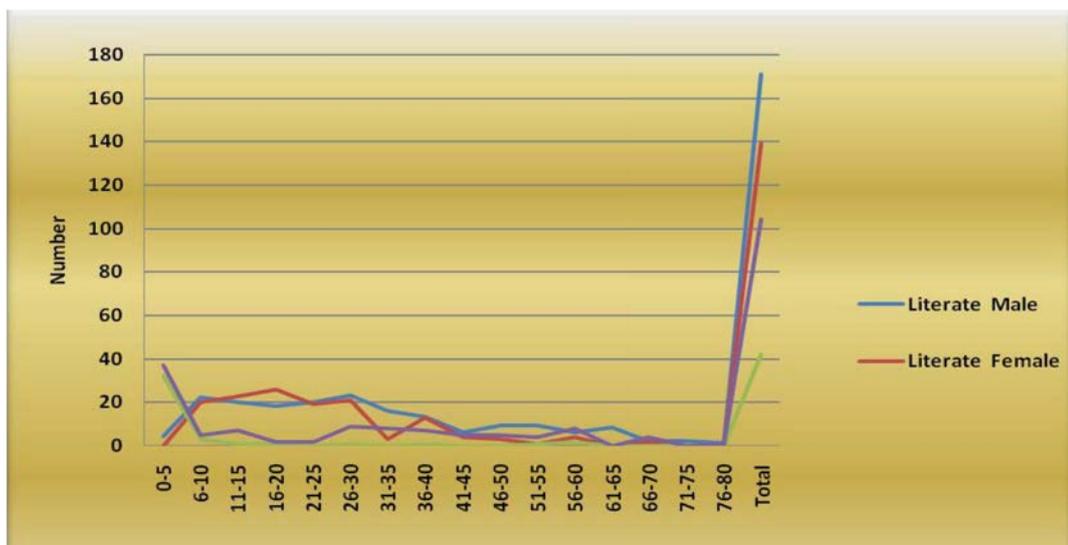


Figure 7: Age Groups of Literate and Illiterate;

Source: House hold list of Thit Poke Pin village, 2014, Khine Mar Oo Collection

This situation is mainly caused to limit age groups of literate and illiterate access to education. As describe above literate persons are more than illiterate person. In the study areas, there is only a literate and illiterate status. Both boys and girls get equal chance to attend to the primary school. If the students pass primary level, they have to attend to the middle school about twenty eight miles away from Tha Ga Ra village. It takes on hour on foot to reach the middle school. Because of physical distance and poor communication, both most of the boys and girls dropped out of the middle school level. If the children attend middle school level in Yedashe Township, parents have to support for their school life. It is the main problem for them. In the poor families, it is believed that both boys and girls are quitting school to engage in economic activities to contribute to the survival of their families. After dropping out school, the boys help with his father in the field works. Girls do domestic tasks as well as field task with their mother. So, there are very few chances to continue high school levels for the children from poor family. Some parents choose son because he will lead his family in the future". So, it can be assumed that boys get a greater chance of education than girls. Parents make a decision for their children schooling. Very few of children from well-to-do family stay in Yedashe Township and attend middle and high school level there. At the Thit Poke Pin village, the number of adult illiteracy students was over forty. It reveals that socio-economic status plays an important role in education.

According to age group of 5 to 10 (the age level of primary schooling) are 92 persons of these (48) boys and (44) girls are as follows:

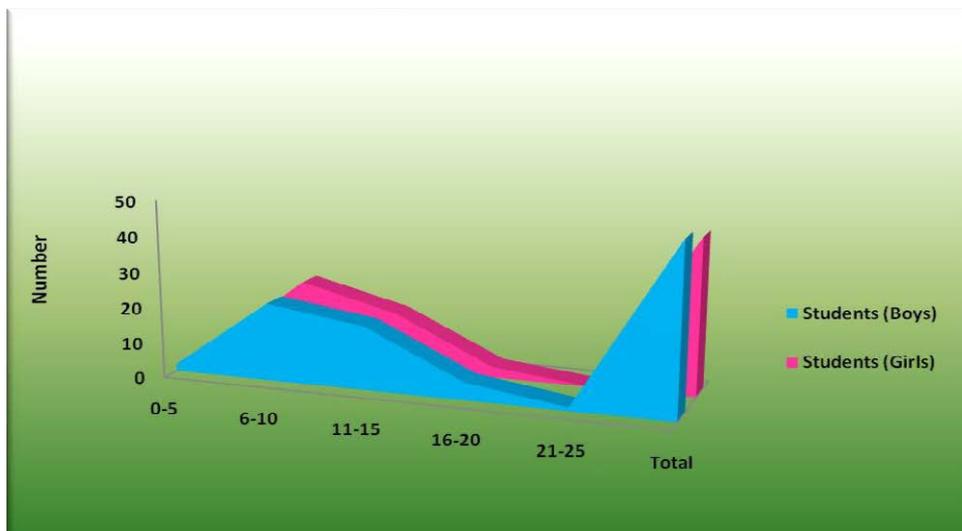


Figure 8: Age Groups of Primary Level

Source: House hold list of Thit Poke Pin village, 2014

Table.2 showed that the numbers of boys and girls students attending in the primary level within 2014. According to field survey, after the primary level, the numbers of students in the middle and higher level were gradually reduced. According to the information from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011, there were no female students in the middle school level in the study areas. Reports indicate that only one third of all primary school children finish the first five years. Many students drop out due to poverty, lack of support, and poor health. While school attendance is high in urban areas and among male students, village schools in a vastly rural-agrarian country are handicapped by poor attendance,

especially among the female students.

(<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1037/Myanmar-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVER-VIEW.html>) It can be seen that even the numbers of attending male students at the middle also are not much if it is compared the numbers of passing fourth standard in the local areas. Even schooling is free for both males and females, as their labor is needed in their field, home and work place, they did not apply to attend the school.

The layout of Basic schools in area extent, school building, number of staff and students are not similar with another. Literate persons are very low rate in this area. It is probably that the bad communication and thin population. Moreover, Myanmar's educational system has been suffering from a proportionately declining budget. While there has been a sizable increase in the number of schools, colleges, universities, and teachers during the last five years, the percentage of total education expenditure declined from 4.65 percent in 1995 to 2.52 percent in 1999. (<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1037/Myanmar-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVER-VIEW.html>) Another education disturbance factors showed that the marriage age in Thit Poke Pin village.

As we have documents in relation with the marriage age of the people we can prove that there had existed child marriage in the Thit Poke Pin. Also we come across child marriage at the age of 14 years or so. The figures of marriage age are as follows:

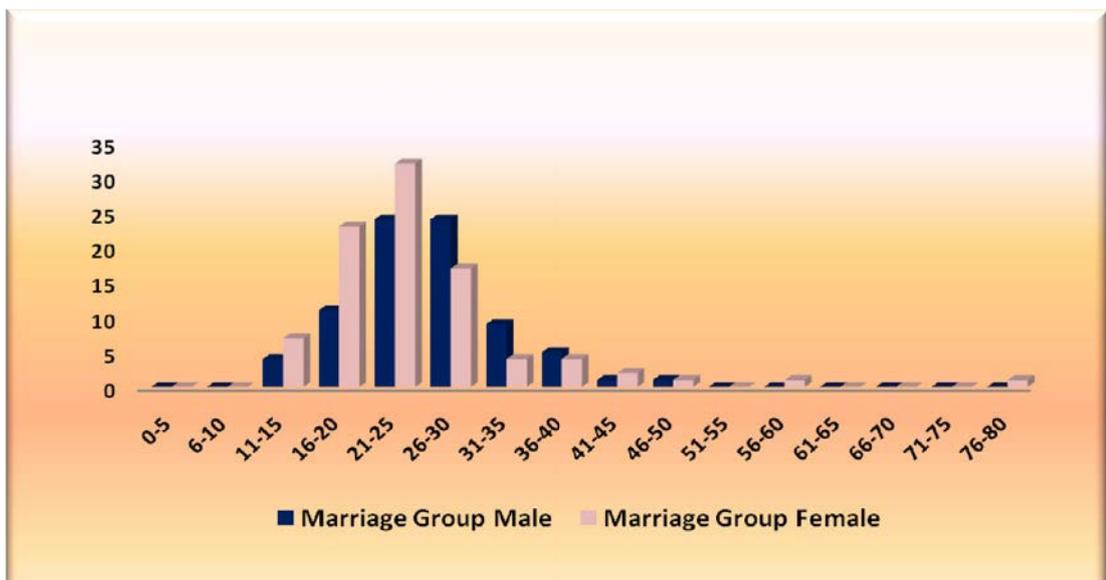


Figure 9: Marriage Groups

Source: House hold list of Thit Poke Pin village, 2014

The child marriage was prevalent in the society and teenage pregnancy was expected, infant mortality rate might be high and life span of the females might also be accepted shorter when we see more widowers than widows in the Thit Poke Pin village. It might be illiterate and ignorant persons who did not know or take care of health education. One can find the house hold numbers are as follows:

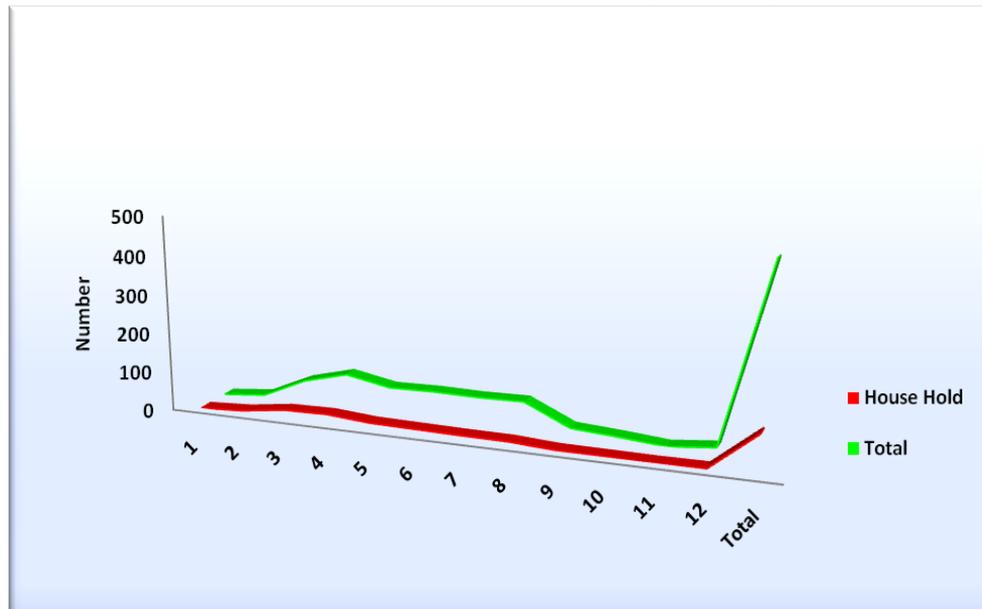


Figure 10: Household Members

Source: House hold list of Thit Poke Pin village, 2014

As describe above table, we can study the very low education standard and lack of the control of family members. In a word, Evidences are ample which are still untapped by historians; and they are very much useful and reliable in writing social and education history.

### Suggestion

The growth of population in Thit Poke Pin village has to need the substitution a more complex organizational structure including space for dwellings become higher year by year. Measures should be undertaken are-

- a) Construction of work comprising modern shops, offices, residential apartments, good communication and electricity.
- b) To safe water in the rural area,
- c) Promoting the construction of middle schools, dispensary, residential buildings and
- d) Share to knowledge of the agriculture process for village society.

In addition, the all-round development of the study area, social welfare services, creation of employment opportunities, fire protection services, and provision of safe drinking water supply were being carried out extensively.

### Outcome

The public spirit of these young people was truly to be admired. Each village household took the responsibility for their lunch or dinner. This arrangement was appreciated as much by the young voluntary teachers as by the people of the villagers because in this way the young people were given ample opportunity to observe the economic, educational and social aspects of their village life apart from the chance of being intimate with the members of the household. If the personal interest and

good intention born of the attachment shown by these young men and women for the people of the villages were instrumental in bringing tremendous success to the national undertaking of removing illiteracy in the whole country.

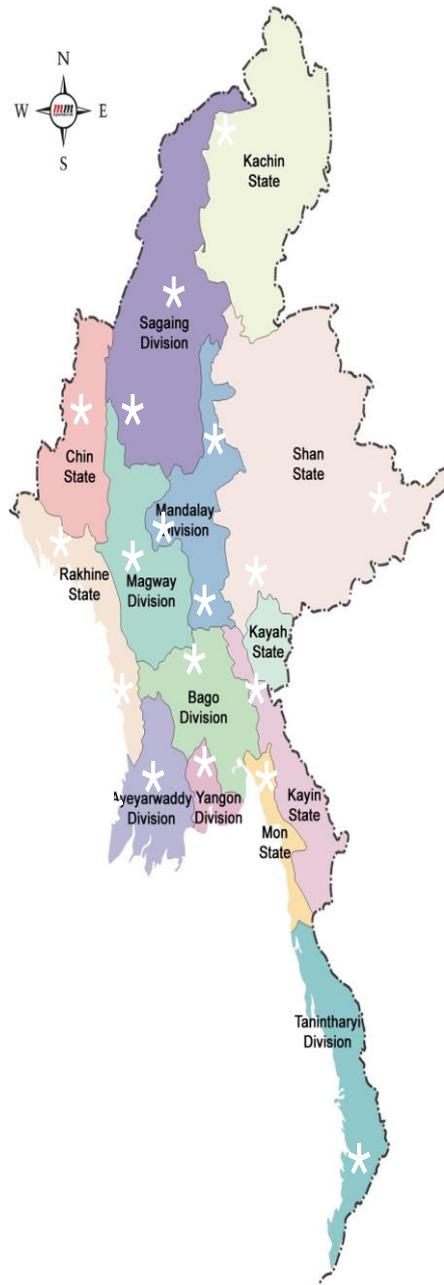
### **Conclusion**

The basic problem-solving skills required in technology-rich environments for both learners and teachers with relevant training opportunities. This includes more complex studies to assess levels of literacy and numeracy skills, such as UNESCO's Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP). So that we can achieve the development for the whole village community, rural dwellers must be active and alert, knowledgeable, united and motivated.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to record my thanks to Dr. Maung Thinn, Rector, Meiktila University for giving permission to do research. I am greatly indebted to Dr Naw Shee Phaw Professor (Head), Department of History, Mandalay University of Distance Education for her encouragement. I also special thank Ma Zin Mar Wai (M.A, Thesis, Meiktila University) who helped me in my research. Thanks are due to my parents, siblings, friends and Second Year Honors students (Meiktila University) for their encouragement and various ways.

Picture 1: The Basic Literacy Campaign Activities in Regions and States



Source: *The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014*

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/1a/6f/b9/1a6fb911655f1733d52c93b0ef24d576.jpg>



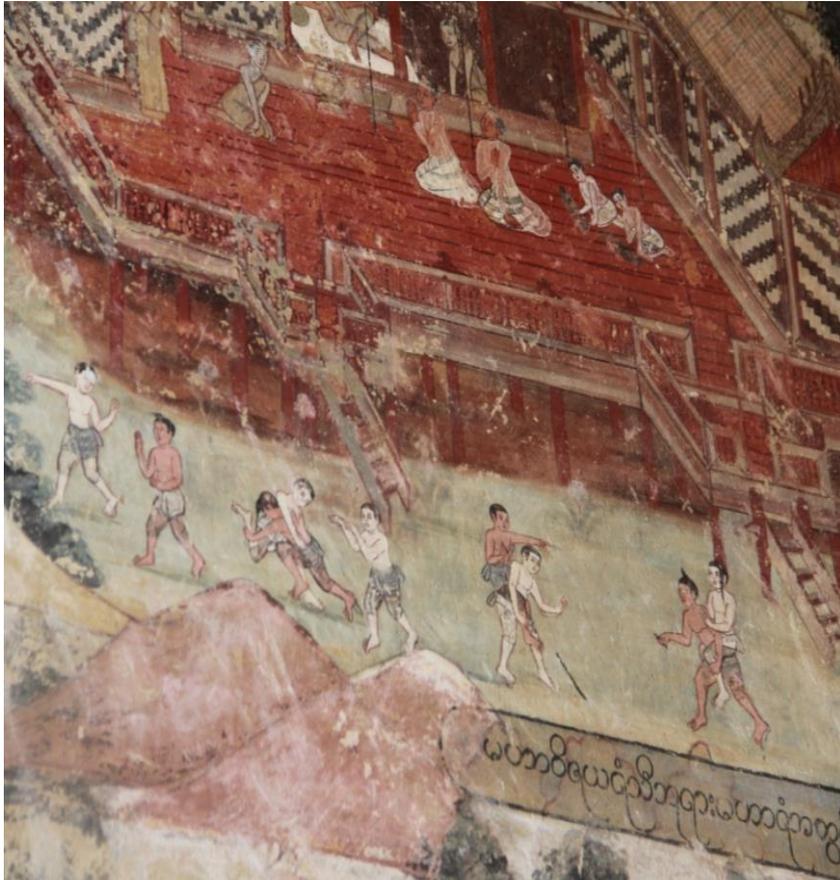
Picture 2: The Basic Literacy Campaign Activities in Bago Division  
 Source: Region\_Map\_District\_Bago\_MIMU764v04\_23Oct2017\_A4

Picture 3: The Basic Literacy Campaign Activities in Thit Poke Pin Village



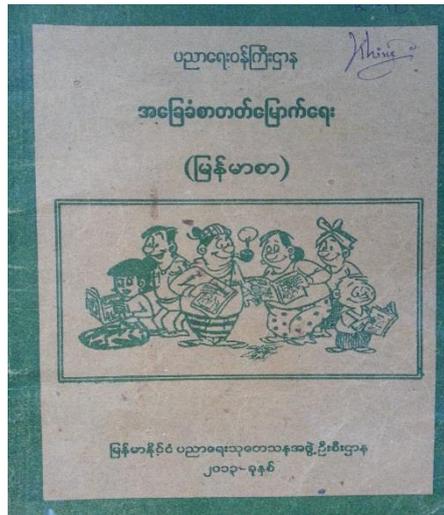
 **Thit Poke Pin Village**  
The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014



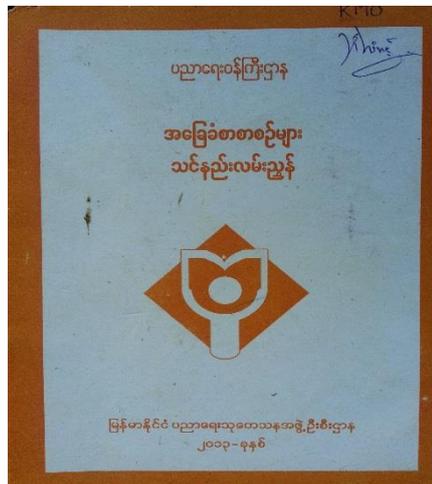


*Picture 4: Monastic Education of Kon-baung Period*  
*Source: Kyauktaw Gyi Pagoda Mural Painting, Moe Moe Oo Collection*

*Basic Literacy Packages*



*Picture 5: Myanmar Language*

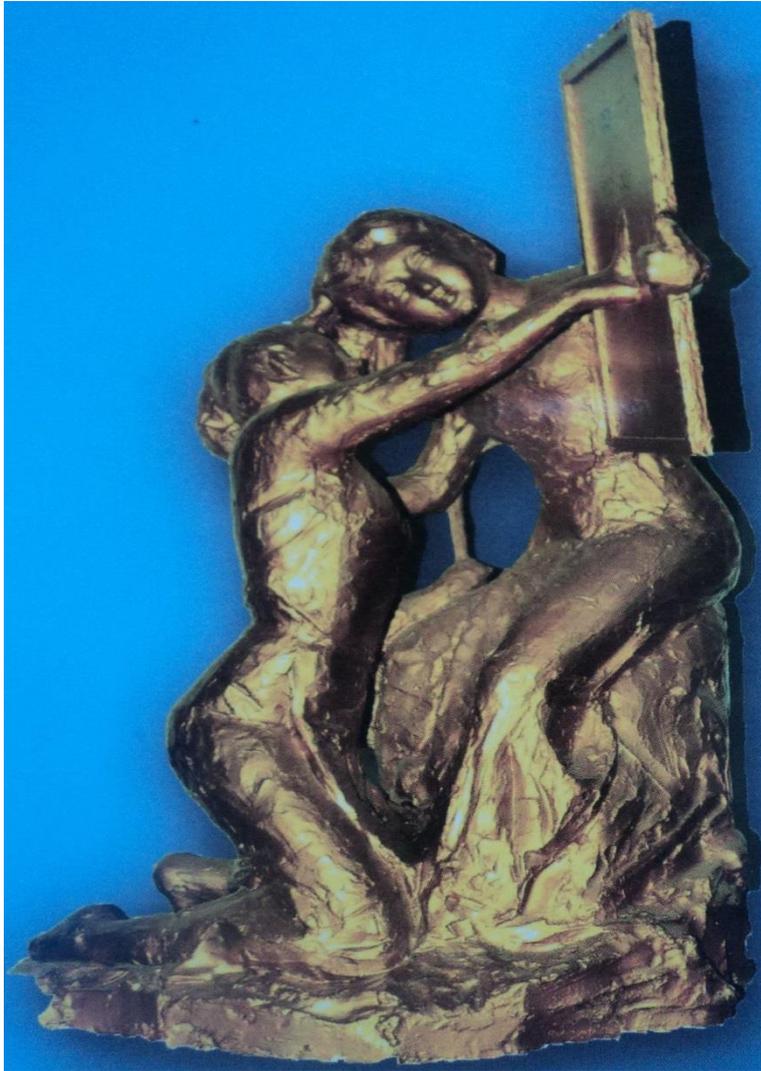


*Picture 6: Teaching Guide*



*Picture 7: Basic Mathematic*

*Picture 8: Literacy Campaign Statue*



*Source: The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014, Front Cover*

*Picture 9: Thit Poke Pin Village*



*Source: Ma Zin Mar Wai Photo Collection*

*Literacy Campaign Activities*



*Picture 10: The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014, Back Cover*



*Picture 11: Table learning, Ma Zin Mar Wai Collection*



*Picture 12: The Basic Literacy Campaign, 2014, Back Cover*



*Picture 13: Table Learning, Ma Zin Mar Wai Photo Collection*

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Picture 5: (2013). Myanmar Language, Basic Literacy Packages

Picture 6: (2013). Teaching Guide, Basic Literacy Packages

Picture 7: (2013). Basic Mathematic, Basic Literacy Packages

Picture 8: (2014). Literacy Campaign Statue, the Basic Literacy Campaign

Picture 9: Thit Poke Pin Village, Zin Mar Wai Photo Collection

Picture 10: (2014). The Basic Literacy, Back Cover

Picture 11: Table learning, Ma Zin Mar Wai Collection

Picture 12: (2014). The Basic Literacy Campaign, Back Cover

Picture 13: Table learning , Ma Zin Mar Wai Photo Collection

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