

**LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF BOATMEN LIVING IN  
SAMADUWARR WARD,  
SEIKKYI KHANAUNGTO TOWNSHIP  
ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**M.A (Thesis)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

According to historical evidence, Samarduwarr ward has been existed since 1972 and people in this ward are making a living by relying on Yangon River and Khanaungto creek. Since this ward mainly use waterway, the roles of boatmen are important. The specific objectives of this study are to explore their livelihood strategies, to examine their concept on safety life, to analyze which ways are suitable for their sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Seikkyi Khanaungto Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar. This thesis was used qualitative research method, informal interview (II), focus group discussion (FGD), and key informant interview (KII). In this thesis, boatmen has to be skillful not only about engine but also about water way. Besides, it is learnt that experience and right decision making skill are needed to overcome the sudden danger successfully. Moreover, some people are observed standing at the front motorboat, saying prayers of their respective religion to feel secured and wish for safety. Boatmen include in daily wages laborers and they struggle their lives using their own motorboats as their capital. They have a lot of difficulties to give member fees for their line. When they do not have any saving, they have to borrow money with interest rate is too high. Moreover, since they need to do some repair for their boats once in six month, majority of boatmen have to borrow money and do it. Since their daily wages hardly cover their family basic needs, they solve their family need by doing some work from which they could earn more money in their free time. It is difficult for the boatmen's children to finish high school. Therefore, the children quit school to support their family needs after they have finished their primary school. Therefore, it is observed that boatmen's children have a lot of difficulties to go to middle school even. By observing this, it is learnt that boatmen emphasize on social and religious affairs in their lives. It is observed that boatmen solve their socio-economic needs by using their social capital mainly.

Key words: boatmen, safety life, livelihood, boat, waterway

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# CHAPTER \_ 1

## INTRODUCTION

Human beings have to always struggle for survival. Widespread areas of the world, they have different existential forms dependent on where they live, but their basic needs are the same. Those basic needs, connected with human's survival, cover food, shelter and physical defenses. Malinowski (1944) studied division of labor, distribution of food, defense, regulation of reproduction and social control are needed to fulfill the basic needs. Therefore, integrative needs contributing to psychological security (satisfied by system of knowledge, law, religion, magic, myth, and art), social harmony and purpose in life are consequences of basic needs. As people struggle to fulfill family's basic needs their ways of life as well as livelihoods diversify.

Human beings have to conduct livelihoods based on natural environment and social environment. Livelihood forms vary in urban and rural communities. Some people's livelihood is based on water resources such as ocean, sea, river, creek and lake and so on. Some people's livelihood is based on natural resources such as forest, mountain, land and their products. In particular, boatmen's livelihood strategies were searched out as they live in Samaduwarr Ward, Seikkyi Khanaungto Township which is not far from Yangon City. Most residents' livelihood is based on boat making and rowing in this ward as their main transportation is based on water way. When they want to go to Yangon and neighboring wards, they have to use boats. So boats and boatman became important for their transportation after digging Twentay canal connected with Yangon River and Ayarwaddy River.

So, "livelihood strategies of Boatman living in Samaduwarr ward, Seikkyi Khanaungto Township" was become as a title for Master thesis. Aim of this thesis is to describe the livelihood strategies of boat man from economic Anthropological perspective. Specific objectives are to explore their livelihood strategies, to examine their concept on safety life, to analyze which ways are suitable for their sustainable development and poverty alleviation. As the study area, Samaduwarr Ward, Seikkyi Khanaungto Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar was chosen. When the relevant data were collected, key informant interview, focus group discussion, transact walk and observation were applied.

## **1.1 Rationale for the Study**

Though many researchers on the topic of livelihood have been conducted, there has not been any research on livelihood strategies of boatmen. In other words, boatmen are the skillful of waterway. They have to be skillful at driving to drive safe on waterways and protect passengers' lives. Passengers' lives are in a boatmen's hand. By discovering these important livelihood strategies of boatmen, their livelihood can be noticed by public. This thesis aims are to get technology assistance for boatmen's machine for the development of their lives and new laws which protect the boatmen's safety.

## **1.2 Aim and Objectives**

Aim of this thesis is to describe the livelihood strategies of Boatman from economic Anthropological perspective. Specific Objectives are:

- \_To explore their livelihood strategies
- \_To examine their concept on safety life
- \_To analyze which ways are suitable for their sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

## **1.3 Research Question**

As the research questions are: - What are the livelihood strategies of boatman? – What are the key factors for shaping the safety life, sustainable development and poverty alleviation of the livelihood strategies of people living in the study area?

## **1.4 Composition of Thesis**

This thesis was composed with 7-chapters. Chapter one includes an introduction to this thesis, aim and objectives of the study, conceptual framework, rationale for the study, composition of the thesis. Chapter two deals with the literature review which includes livelihood, livelihood assets and capability, livelihood strategies, safety life and sustainable livelihood approach to poverty. Chapter three covers the research methodology which comprises the study design, study area, study population, study site, study period, research method, research tools, limitation of the study and ethical

consideration. Chapter four includes the historical background of study area. Chapter five includes livelihood strategies of boatmen and finding expressed. Chapter six presents discussion. Chapter seven includes conclusion and recommendation.

### 1.5 Conceptual Framework

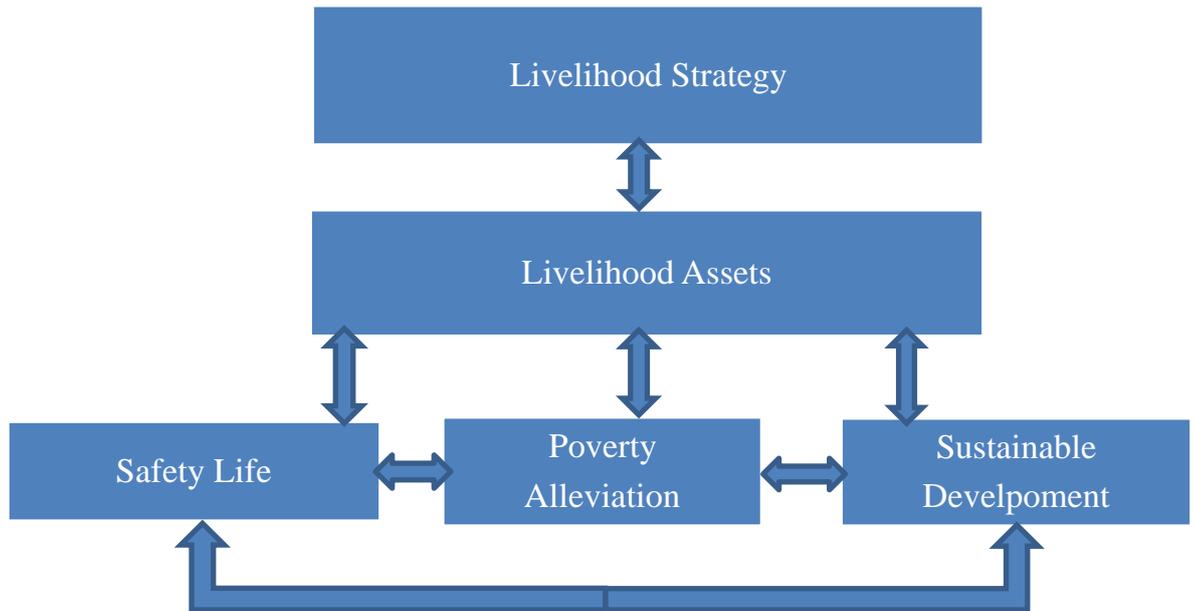


Figure (1) Conceptual Framework

In this study, livelihood assets and livelihood strategies will be studied to see how related. After, the relationship between the livelihood assets and safety life, livelihood assets and poverty alleviation, livelihood assets and sustainable development will be studied. And then the relationship between the safety life and poverty alleviation, safety life and sustainable development, and poverty alleviation and sustainable development will be studied.

## CHAPETER \_ 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Livelihood

Chamber defines the term Livelihood as “the capabilities, assets (store, resources, claim and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provides sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation and which contribute net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the long and short term” (Chamber & Conway, 1991).

According to International Federation of Red Cross Crescent Societies (IFRC), a livelihood is a means of mankind a living. It encompasses people’s capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life. A livelihood is sustainable when it enables people to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses (such as natural disasters and economic or social upheavals) and enhance their well-being and that of future generations without undermining the natural environment or resource base ([www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-managemtnt/from-crisis-to-recovery/what-is-a-livelihood/](http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-managemtnt/from-crisis-to-recovery/what-is-a-livelihood/)).

According to Ellis, a livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household (Ellis, 2000).

#### 2.2 Livelihood Assets and Capability

**Assets** refer to the basic material and social resources that people have in their possession. Livelihood assets are the basic building blocks from which livelihoods are generated. The existence of, and degree of access to, livelihood assets is therefore important in influencing the livelihood options that people may or may not have. The five broad asset areas are natural, physical, financial, human and social assets.

**Capabilities** are refers to a person’s or household’s ability to cope with stresses and shocks and the ability to find and make use of livelihood opportunities natural capital

refers essentially to the resources found in the natural environment. These include land, water, rivers, air quality, soils, marine life, grasses, animals, trees, biodiversity as well as the biophysical processes that are needed to sustain them. Physical capital refers to basic infrastructure, services and equipment, sanitation, communications that are needed to support livelihoods. Financial capital refers to the stocks and inflows of money people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. This might include savings and access to credit and income earned directly, through employment, or indirectly, through welfare grants or remittances. Human capital refers to ability of people to work in terms of their education, health and skills. When using the household as a unit of analysis, human capital refers also to the size and quality of the “household labor pool”. Social capital refers to the social resources that people draw on in pursuit of inter-household co-operation, membership of families groups and the quality of leadership and the degree of cooperation within communities (Chamber & Conway, 1991).

Discussion of above mentioned scholars says that livelihood is made up of natural capital/ assets, physical capital/ assets, financial capital/ assets, human capital/ assets, and social capital/ assets. After studying the livelihood assets, in this thesis, livelihood assets of the boatmen living in Samaduwar Ward, Seikkyi Khanaungto Township will be analyzed.

### **2.3 Livelihood strategies**

The livelihoods approach seeks to promote choice, opportunity, and diversity (Neiland, 2004). This is nowhere more apparent than in its treatment of livelihood strategies—the overarching term used to denote a range and combination of activities and choices that people make/undertake in order to achieve livelihood goals (including productive activities, investment strategies, and reproductive choices). Recent studies have drawn attention to the enormous diversity of livelihood strategies at every level, that is, within geographical areas, across sectors, within households, and over a period of time (Collier, 1999; Stirrat, 2004).

One of the principal distinctions is that between coping strategies, which are short-term responses to a specific shock (such as job loss of a major earner in the household, or illness), and adaptive strategies, which are a long-term change in

behavior patterns as a result of a shock or stress or in an attempt to build asset bases (Singh and Gilman, 1999).

In addition to defining types of livelihoods strategies according to their time frame, and the extent to which they are viewed as part of a long term plan rather than a temporary response to necessity, attempts have also been made to define livelihood strategies, or components of livelihood strategies, according to the nature of the activities that they involve.

Rakodi (1999) distinguishes between the following types of strategy:

- investment in securing more of an asset – this may promote security and also allow for diversification or intensification of activities;
- substitution of one asset for another – for example, compensating for the declining availability or quality of natural capital by increasing inputs of physical capital;
- Disposal – the sale of assets such as livestock, land or jewelry, to compensate for a consumption shortfall or to release funds for investment;
- Sacrifice – for example, not investing time and resources in fostering reciprocal social relations, thereby reducing future ability to draw on social capital; sacrificing children's ability to earn adequate incomes in future by withdrawing them from school because of the inability to pay fees or need for their labor.

The above strategies have been studied carefully. Then, investment in securing of an assets, substitution of one asset for another, disposal and sacrifice will be studied by linking with Boatmen's Livelihood Strategies in my thesis.

## **2.4 Safety Life**

According to University of Harvard dictionary, Safety-being safe; not being dangerous or in danger; I'm worried about the safety of the children, i.e. I'm afraid something may happen to them. I'm worried about the safety of the product, i.e. I'm afraid it may be dangerous. We reached the safety of the river bank, i.e. a place where we would be safe. We're keeping you here for your own safety.

According to Oxford Student's Dictionary of current English, Safety –being safe; freedom from danger: do nothing that might endanger the~ of other people.

In my thesis, boatmen's opinions about safety life are shown by linking with livelihood assets.

## **2.5 The Sustainable Livelihood approach to poverty**

Poverty refers to the fact that whether households or individual have not enough resources or abilities to meet their needs. As one of UNDP's corporate mandates, sustainable livelihoods offers both a conceptual and a programming framework for poverty reduction in a sustainable manner. Conceptually, 'livelihoods' denotes the means, activities, entitlements, and assets by which people make a living. The sustainability of livelihoods becomes a function of how men and women use asset portfolios on both a short- and long-term basis. Sustainable livelihoods are those that are:

- able to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses through adaptive and coping strategies;
- economically effective;
- ecologically sound, ensuring that livelihood activities do not irreversibly degrade natural resources within a given ecosystem; and
- Socially equitable, which suggests that promotion of livelihood opportunities for one group should not foreclose options for other groups, either now or in the future.

UNDP employs an asset-based approach, emphasizing the promotion of people's access to and sustainable use of the assets upon which they rely as central to poverty reduction. To that end it stresses the need to understand the coping and adaptive strategies pursued by men and women. Coping strategies are short-term responses to a specific shock such as drought, while adaptive strategies entail long-term change in behavior patterns as a result of a shock or stress. Both are influenced by people's asset status but also have implications for the composition of the assets themselves, which could be depleted or regenerated. Moreover, UNDP specifically focuses on the importance of technological improvements as a means to help people rise out of poverty.

Timmermans (2004) analyzed poverty, development and natural resources in South Africa, Dwesa/Cwebe. Factors contributing to the vulnerability status of the communities were population pressure and land scarcity, exposure to climatic shocks, poor health status, job losses related to the under performance of the macro economy and corruption and inefficiencies among agents of local governance.

Ribas and Machado (2007) said that a lack of human capital and ownership of physical capital are prominent features amongst people who live in a persistent state of poverty for a long period of time, as well as amongst these who move in and out of poverty.

Eswarappa (2007) said that livelihood is a part of culture and also reflects the poverty of culture. Livelihood is a central and essential focal point of the people which helps to document a socio-cultural reality of the community and also it gets manifested in their socio-cultural reality of the community and also it gets manifested in their social institutions where a lay man can also observe the poverty and richness of culture.

This thesis describes how to cope and try to recover from shocks and stresses through the adaptive and coping strategies of boatman. And it intended to introduce the suitable ways to escape from poverty and vulnerable situation.

## CHAPTER \_ 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Study Design

When the findings were presented, descriptive and narrative study designs were applied.

#### 3.2, Study Area

The study area is Samaduware ward located in Seikkyi Khanaungto Township, South District, Yangon Region. It is situated on the southwestern bank of Yangon River across from downtown Yangon, Myanmar. The township comprises nine wards, and is bounded by the Yangon River in the north, the Twante Canal in the east, and Twante Township in the south and west. Geographically, it is located between 96°16' and 96°18' east longitude, between 16 ° 45' and 16 ° 48' north latitude. It is 3.04 square mile wide. The length is 3.2 miles west from the east and 2.3 miles north from the south.

In particular, boatmen's livelihood strategies were selected to study as they live in Samaduware ward, Seikkyi Khanaungto Township which is not far from Yangon City. Most residents' livelihood is depended on boat making and rowing the boats as their main transportation is based on water way. When they go to Yangon and neighboring wards, they have to use boats. So, boats and boatman became important for their transportation particularly after digging Twante canal connected with Yangon River and Ayarwaddy River.

#### 3.3 Study Population

According to the census 2014, there were 1016 housing, 1059 households in Samaduware Ward. There were 2419 males and 2429 females in this ward.

Table (1) Housing and Household of Samarduware ward

Housing	1016
Household	1059

Source: Ward administrator office

Table (2) Population of Samarduwarr ward

Male	Female	Total
2419	2429	4848

Source: Ward administrator office

For data collection, ward administrator, passengers, carpenters who are specialist in boat making, boatmen's wives, boat owner and boatmen were selected as study populations. A total study population is 48 persons.

Table (3) Joint of Informant

No.	Joint Informant	Number of people
1	Ward administrator	1
2	Passengers	3
3	Carpenters	2
4	Boatmen's wives	2
5	Boat owner	2
6	Boatmen	38
Total		48

### 3.4 Study site

Samaduwarr Ward is formed with 4 parts and parts 2, parts 3, parts 4 are mainly chosen as a study site because most of the boatmen and jetties are found in these parts.

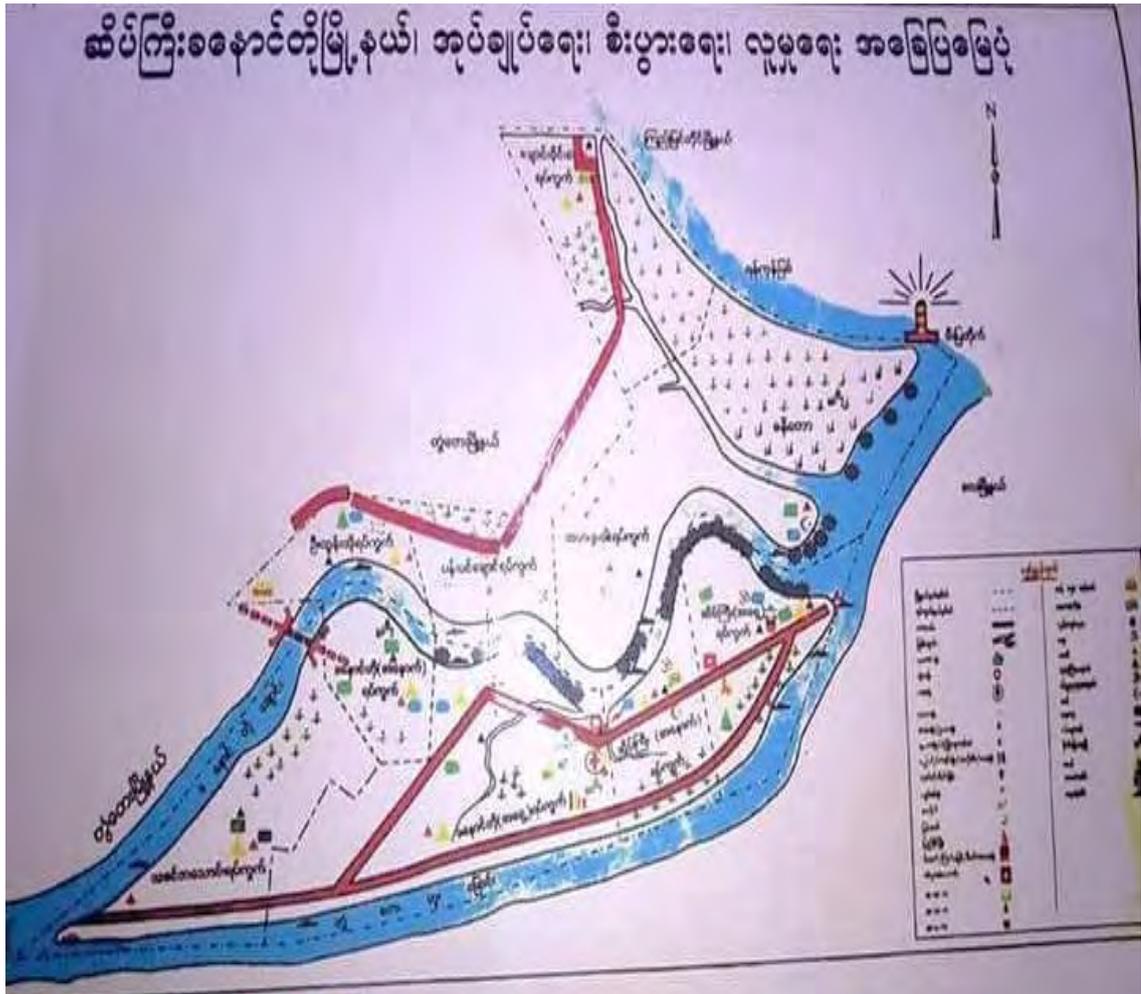


Figure (2) Map of Seikkyi Khanaungto Township

### 3.5 Study Period

The study period was during (2017 – 2018) academic year.

Table (4) Study Period of the Thesis

Activities	2017 – 2018					
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May
Proposal preparation	*					
Literature review	*	*	*			
Data collection and field work		*	*	*		
Thesis Writing			*	*	*	
Regular presentation			*			
Credit seminar					*	
Thesis defense						*

### **3.6 Data Collection Method**

In this thesis, qualitative research method was used. Key informant interview (KII), focus group discussions (FGD), informal interview (II), transact walk, indirect observation and direct observation were applied for data collection.

Among them, the ward administrator was chosen as the key informant to understand the ward's socio economic situation and collect the necessary information for the research. 2 boatmen's wife was chosen as key informants to understand the socio economic situation of boatmen's family, especially; their health, education, and distribution of income and so on. 2 key informants who are specialists in boat making were asked to record the process of boat making, and hiding meaning of boat making activities. 2 boat owners were chosen as key informants to know the relationship of boat owner and boatmen. 20 boatmen were chosen as key informants to get the perception on safety life and how they try to build safety life. A total key informant is 27.

And then, 18 boatmen were chosen for 3 focus group discussions to confirm the data collected in key informant interview and know their attitude and concepts correlated with their sustainable development and poverty alleviation. 3 informal interviewees were chosen to know the relationship of boatmen and passengers, and to know the local condition. Among them, 3 informants are female and others are male.

### **3.7 Research Tools**

In this thesis, social map, note book, camera, and recorders were used for data collection.

### **3.8 Limitation of the study**

In this study, the whole township is not studied. This study is based mainly the boatmen on the lives of Samarduwarr Ward.

Second, the interviewer could not see the boat making view. So, indirect observation method was used.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

The local administrator was asked for permission to make study activities. Before the interview the interviewers discussed the study objectives, the type of interview to be performed, the participants have full right to choose to participate or not in the study. The names of the interviewees will not also be described. The participants' rights and sensitivities were safeguarded and they would not be affected in any way.

## CHAPTER \_ 4

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDY AREA

#### 4.1 The Background History of Seikkyi Khanaungto Township

In 1972, Seikkyi Khanaungto was designated as a Yangon city development zone. However, it is found that Seikkyi Khanaungto has been existed before 1972 (Seikkyi Khanaungto Local Data Book published in February 2018, limited edition). Since that time, Seikkyi Khanaungto comprised 9 wards. Being a jetty township, it is bounded by water, Twante Canal at one side and Khanaungto creek at the other side. Khanaungto creek in Seikkyi Khanaungto Township has many whirlpools (Wae in Myanmar Language). Therefore, Mon ethnic group who lived in that place before named it “Kha Nauk Wae” in Mon language. Nowadays, its name is changed as “Khanaungto”. According to the key informant interview conducted in 5.3.2018, a man who is a representative of Yangon Region Hluttaw, 45 years old said that-

*“Here is how Seikkyi Kanaungto got its name. In the past, there was a large sea port for international ships in Seikkyi Kanaungto. So, named after “that large sea port”, the township was called Seikkyi .Later its name was changed as “Kanaungto”.Long ago, there lived Mon in this area. In Mon language, this area is pronounced as “Kanauk” because Kanauk means “Whirlpool”.It is in Myanmar Language. There were lots of whirlpools here. Later the two names Seikkyi and Kanauk were combined and called “Seikkyi Kanuk”.Then it became “Seikkyi Kanaungto”. That’s as much as I have known.”*

Moreover, there are more than 20 ship repair workshops in Seikkyi Kanaungto. Some fishing boats and cargo ships come to Seikkyi Khanaungto for repairing and maintenance till now. An 80-year-old man said that according to oral history, Samarduwarr was considered that it was named as Samarduwarr in Kachin Language, (the means ‘administrator’) by Captain U Tin Soe during the reign of State Peace and Development Council. In addition, it is learnt that there was rice mill number 6 in

Samarduwarr ward, from which rice was exported to foreign countries so some local people are still calling their ward “No. 6” (A-Mhat-Chauk). In addition, part 4 of Samarduwarr ward is situated at the edge of the bank and waves hit that place so named after the place beaten by the waves; it was called “Hlaing Pote”. However, according to informal interviews, it is learnt that nowadays it is called “Hlaing Bone” in the ward.

#### **4.1.2 Background of Samarduwarr Ward**

Samarduwarr is one of the wards out of nine wards in Seikgyi khanaungto township. It comprises four parts. There are altogether 1016 houses and 1059 households with the population of 2419 males and 2429 females and the total is 4848. Yangon River and light house are in the east of Part 3 of Samarduwarr ward. There is a monastery, a pagoda, two lakes used for drinking water, No.2 Basic Education Post Primary School and a jetty. In the west of the ward, there is Panpin Chaung ward and a cemetery between these two wards. In the south of the ward, along Khanaungto creek, there is a jetty used for going to the western ward of Seikkyi, a jetty used for going to the eastern ward of Khanaungto and a motorboat jetty used for going to Yangon. In the north, there is a main road that connects U Htun O ward, Panpin Chaung ward, Samarduwarr ward and eastern ward of Seikkyi, western ward of Seikkyi, eastern ward of Khanaungto, western ward of Khanaungto and Thakhin Bathaung ward. At the other side of the road, there are plain lands which exist in the area of Twante Township. In the middle of the ward, there are three lakes used for drinking water, a lake used for extinguishing water, a Hindu temple, a monastery, a pagoda near the monastery, a community hall for religious purposes, a post primary school, a library next to the administration office, a dispensary and a boat repair workshop. There are two main roads and 55 streets in Samarduwarr ward. The main roads are 6 feet wide and the streets are 3 feet wide. The roads lie close to the houses. (Source: Ward Administrator and Social Map)

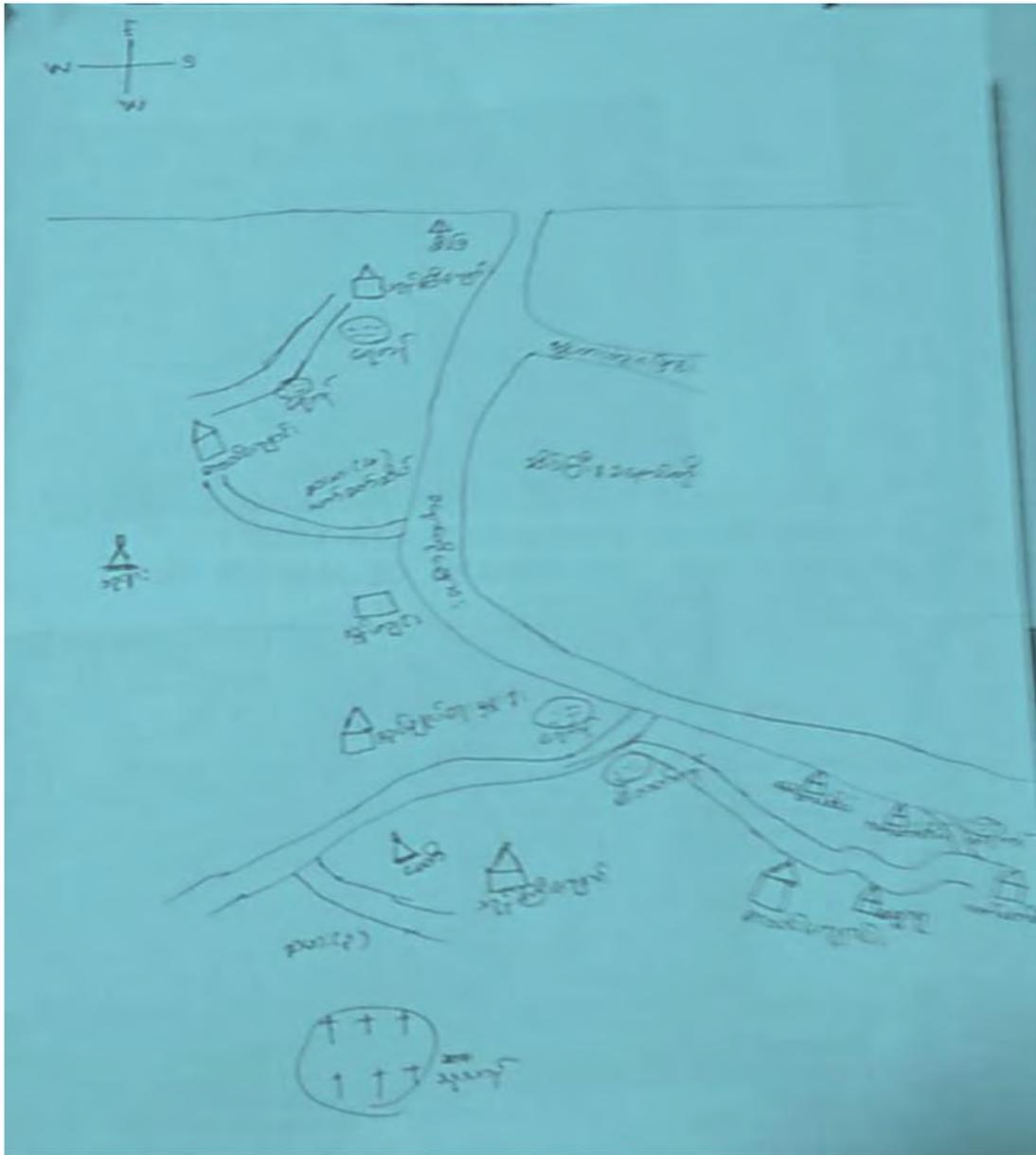


Figure (3) Social Map of Samarduwarr Ward, source: FGD

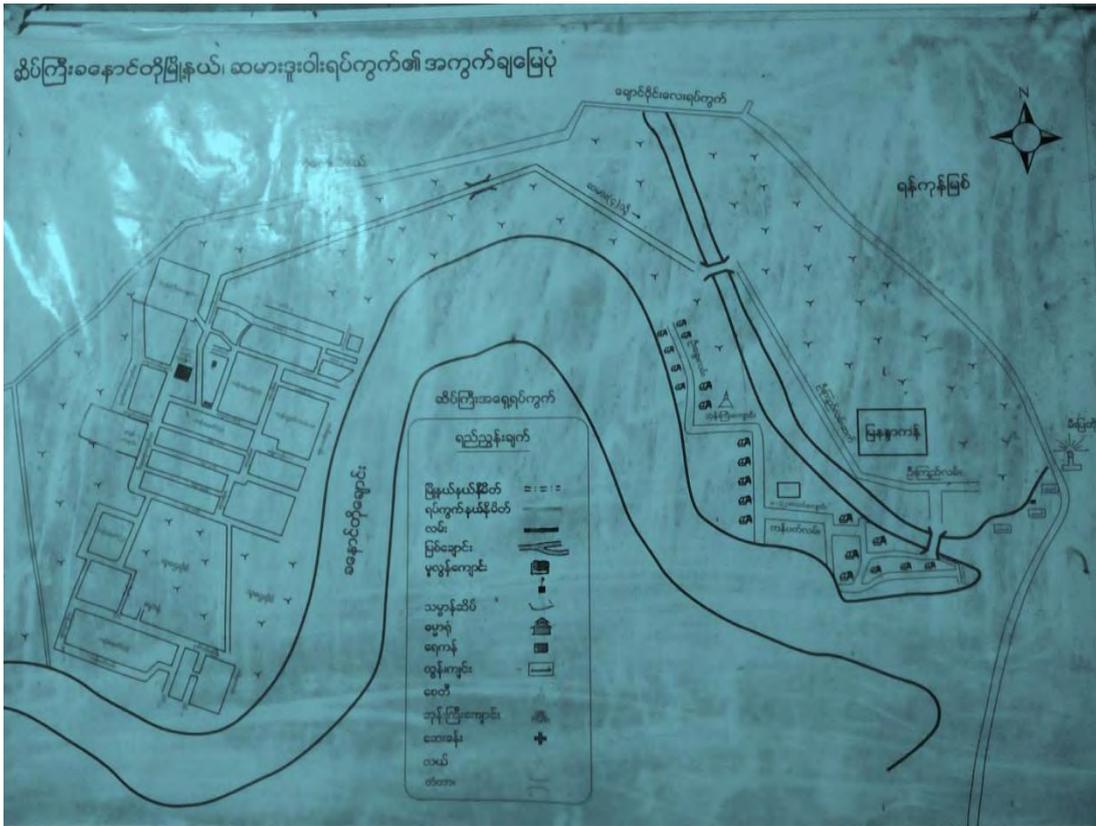


Figure (4) Map of Samarduarr Ward

**4.1.3 Weather Condition**

Seikkyi Khanaungto Township is tropical monsoon climate, highest temperature is 40°C and the lowest temperature is 18°C. So, Samarduarr Ward is the same weather condition like Seikkyi Khanaungto.

**4.1.4 Religion**

Most of the people who live in Samarduarr Ward are Buddhists and they participate in the religious activities actively. Lawkamarazein pagoda and Tharthana New Padaythar monastery are located in part 3. Sakamanaung pagoda and Nandaryarma monastery are situated in part 3 of Samarduarr Ward. People from Samarduarr Ward celebrate the religious ceremony annually. Most of the monthly festival was in the months of April and November.

During the month of April, people celebrate a “Ceremony of Dhamma Delivering”. During the month of November, people there reported that they celebrate “Food and Goods Donation” ceremony and Kahtain Festival-offering robes to the monks. Moreover, there is a minority group of Hindu in Samarduarr ward so they celebrate

Hindu festival named Thimithi (Fire walking ceremony). It is reported that when the festival is celebrated, not only the local people from Samarduwarr ward but also people from neighboring wards come and join. Before the festival is celebrated, people go and ask for donation and they give free refreshments by the money they have collected on the day after Fire walking ceremony. It is reported that not only people from Samarduwarr ward but also people from neighboring ward come to the festival. This is the proof that people from Samarduwarr ward has no religious discrimination among local people and they all live in unity and peace. (Source: FGD)



Figure (5) Focus Group Discussion in Part 3

#### **4.1.5 Economic Condition of Samarduwarr Ward**

Waterway is the main transport for those who live in Samarduwarr Ward. People who live in this place go to Yangon in the morning and come back in the evening by making a living as day laborers and migrant workers in Yangon, lobstermen, workers on boats, carpenters and maids. Some people have grocery stores at home so they stay at home and sell groceries.

Waterway is the main lifeline for those who live in Samarduwarr Ward. People there use waterway when they go to their work in Yangon in the morning and return home in the evening .They mainly cross Yangon River and Khanaungto Creek every day.

Boats and motorboats are used as main vehicles for transportation. Boats are used for going to the other wards and motorboats are used for going to Yangon. There are 50 motorboats drivers and 38 motorboats in Samarduwarr Ward. The vehicles' route starts from Samarduwarr ward and ends at Mawtin Jetty. In this study, the highlight of the study will be on livelihood strategies of motorboats drivers. (Source: Ward Administrator and Gatekeeper)

## CHAPTER \_ 5

### LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF BOATMEN

#### 5.1 Boat Making Process

Names of the boats vary in different places of the world. In this study, “*Thanmen*” (in Myanmar), which is the name used by local people, has two oars and the rower has to row in a balanced position. A boat (“*Hlay*” in Myanmar) has only one oar, the rower grips the oar in his hand and rows the boat. When rowing the boat (“*Lat Khat Thanmen*” in Myanmar), the rower has to hold the oar by switching from his left to right hand. Though a motorboat (“*Sat Thanmen*” in Myanmar) has two oars, engine is mainly used for propulsion. Although the same method is used to build motor boats (“*Sat Thanmen*”), *Thamens* (“*Lat Khat Thanmen*”) and boats (“*Hlay*”), boats are smaller than the other two and can hold only two or three passengers. “*Thamens*” can hold 5 passengers and 1 driver so 6 people in total, which is twice larger than a boat. Motorboats are built depending on the estimated numbers of passengers so some motorboats can hold 30 passengers whereas others can hold 25 passengers. In this study, the highlight is on motorboats which are built for 15 passengers.

In Samarduwarr Ward, boats with motors (“*Sat Hlay*” in Myanmar) are used for catching fish and lobsters. “*Thamens*” are used as vehicles for going to other wards. Motorboats are taken for round trip by those who work and who do shopping in Yangon. Most people who build boats are house carpenters. There is no particular carpenter who builds “*Thamen*”. It is rare to build a new “*Thamen*” after being built one. Most “*Thamens*” are repaired twice a year so it is difficult to observe how a new “*Thamen*” is built. Therefore, in this study, how a “*Thamen*” is built step by step is asked to a “*Thamen*” carpenter using indirect observation method.

##### 5.1.1 Hiring Carpenter and Cost

The way of building a motorboat is an art. Some specific parts are needed to build a motorboat. It is impossible to skip any step and needs to go step by step in order. There is a head carpenter and his assistant to build a motorboat. The assistant is just an apprentice and his duty is to plane the wood and cut the wood into required sizes. It takes only 2 weeks to build a “*Thanmen*” but it takes one month or one and a half

month to build a motorboat which can hold 15 passengers, and it takes about 2 months to build a motorboat which can hold 25 passengers because motorboats are larger in sizes than “*Thanmens*”.

The carpenter for building a motorboat can be hired either pay per piecework (“*Poat Pyat in Myanmar*”) or daily wages. If a carpenter is hired by piecework (“*Poat Pyat in Myanmar*”), the work can be done quickly but if hired by daily wages, it is uneconomical for motorboatmen. Therefore most motorboatmen hire the carpenters by piecework (“*Poat Pyat in Myanmar*”) and serve them tea and snack. A motorboatmen said that \_

“This kind of serving is a lovely custom for Myanmar people and it is considered that the hired worker can perform his task in a responsible way,”

The carpenter fee for building a motorboat is 300,000 kyats and the cost for the complete motorboat is 30 lakhs and more. Therefore boatmen buy the old motorboat instead of building a new one. In other words, the wood of the old motorboat cannot rot easily since it was fully rubbed with oil dreg. Therefore, it is learnt that motorboatmen buy the old motorboat, rub the boat with oil dreg, paint the boat and repair other necessary parts.

### **5.1.2 Kinds of Wood Used for Building Thanmen and Step by Step of Building**

Teak, pyinkado (Iron wood) and padauk wood are mainly used to build a motorboat. Teak is used for building the hull for most motorboats. Padauk wood is used for the other parts. Teak used for hull costs 2000 kyats per foot, which is the price updated in 2018. Pyinkado is 1500 kyats per foot. Though pyinkado is cheaper than teak, it is not commonly used for building a motorboat since it is heavy. Therefore, when a motorboat is built, teak is used for the hull mainly and pyinkado and padauk are used for the other parts. Padauk costs 500 kyats per foot. When a motorboat is built, stem (Yaza taing or Noak kan hmwe), which is the front part of a motorboat is built first. After building the (Yaza taing), the hull and the rest front parts of the motorboat are built. Then the stern is built. After finishing them, the next step is to assemble the motor. The motor is assembled at the right hand side of the stern so that the driver can hold the oar in his left hand. After building the inner body parts of a motorboat,

rubbing motorboat with oil dreg is started. The hull of a motorboat is rubbed with oil dreg mainly because oil dreg cannot be rotted easily by water. Marine paint is used to paint the motorboat because it cannot be washed away by water when the boat touches with water. Afterwards, the vehicle's number is written in red colour on milky colour background of the number plate, which stands for Seikkyi Kanaungto Water Vehicle Line. The reason of having the symbol in motorboat is to be recognized easily in case the motorboat is in any danger. After rubbing with oil dreg painting, the motorboat can be launched into water for the first time.



Figure (9) Yaza Taing Picture

### 5.1.3 Customs of building a motorboat

When a motorboat is started to be built, an auspicious day, (“*Yat- yar- zar*” in Myanmar Calendar) marked is mainly chosen. As we have expressed above, the stem (Yaza Taing), which is the front part of the motorboat, is built first. The way of building the stem (Yarza Taing) is similar to the way of building houses, which needs offering a plate of tea leaf salad, sprinkling scented water and sprinkling with the sprigs of Eugenia (Thabyay) leaves. Some people offer coconuts and bananas bowls to the guardian spirits. Besides, people put at least 1000 kyats in these bowls, with the purpose of possessing blessing on their boats in the future. A motorboatmen said that

*“This amount of money is taken by the motorboat carpenter,”*

After building a motorboat, motorboat can be launched into water. It does not matter if the day is auspicious or not and any day to launch a boat. However, good days are carefully chosen for the very first day to drive a motorboat. It was learnt that auspicious day (“*Yat yar zar*”) is marked as a suitable day and a bad day (“*Pyat tha dar*”) is never chosen for the very first day to drive a motorboat. If a motorboat must be started driving anyway, days except bad days (“*Pyat tha dar*”) are chosen as a starting day. (Source: Key Informant Interview) (“*Yat yar zar and Pyat tha dar*” days are mentioned in Myanmar Calendar)



Figure (7) Repair the Boat

## **5.2 Natural Capital of Samaduwar Ward**

Samarduwar comprises 9 wards and it is one of the townships in southern district of Yangon. The difference between Seikkyi Khanaungto and other townships from Yangon is transportation. The main transport of Seikkyi Khanaungto is waterway. Samarduwar Ward is the ward that uses waterway mainly. There are many reasons why only waterway can be used for transportation. Among them, some reasons given by local people, a resident of Samarduwar Ward is shown. According to the key informant interview conducted in 6-3-2018, a local people, casual labour, 43 year old said that-

*“People from Samarduwarr Ward communicate mainly with Yangon. For other places, they go just for paying a visit. Most people go to Yangon because they work there, too. The main transport from here to Yangon is waterway. There is a road connected to Hlaingtharyar Township but most of the working places of local people are in downtown so it is too far for them to reach downtown from Hlaingtharyar. If they go to work from here, it is nearer than going from Hlaingtharyar. And they do not need to wait for motorboat because there are many motorboats here. Taking ferry boats make us busy catching them in time because they depart with the fixed schedule. And the motorboat fare from here is only 300 kyats. If we go by ferry boats, we have to go to harbour first by taking motorboat. It costs only 50 kyats if the motorboat has full passengers or we have to pay the extra fare to cover the motorboat’s target amount. And the ferry ships fare is 200 kyats. Since the ferry floor is dirty, it is better to sit on the seat which costs 100 kyats. That’s why; it costs more time and money. So, most of the residents from the ward go by motorboats.”*

By observing what she has discussed above, the residents from the ward use waterway mainly and they prefer using motorboats to ferry boats when they go to Yangon and to other neighbouring townships.

### **5.2.1 Process of Transportation**

There are two types of “*Thanmen*”: (1) “*Thanmen*” rowed holding oars in hand and (2) “*Thanmen*” with motor (size larger than *Thanmen* with oars) are used for transportation. Motorboat (“*Thamen*” with motor) drivers from Samarrduwarr Ward send passengers to Yangon. Their passengers are from the same ward of theirs. They charge 300 kyats per passenger and one motorboat can hold only 12 passengers.

According to the Focus Group Discussion conducted in 31-1-2018, driver of motorboat (Thanmen), 35 year old said that-

*“It’s not easy to get 2 full rounds. Travel route can be counted in this way: sending the passengers from Samarduwarr Ward to Yangon is called “half round” and bringing back the passengers from Yangon to Samarduwarr Ward means two halves and which is counted as “full round”. It was learnt that “two halves” means “one full round.”*

According to the words of motor boatmen, motorboats from Samarduwarr Ward receive less fare than other boat lines though the route is farther than any other routes. Although they want to raise boat fare, they feel reluctant to raise the price because the passengers are from the same ward and they empathize that the passengers are living from hands to mouths though they go and work in Yangon. If passengers from other wards come and take their motorboats, their business will be good.

Another boatman discussed this issue as follow. According to the Focus Group Discussion conducted in 31-1-2018, driver of motorboat (Thanmen), 61 year old said that-

*“If we have safety transportation, passengers from the wards can come and take our motorboats. For the time being, not all people from our ward can take our motorboats. For those who live near eastern jetty of Kanaungto go to that jetty by rowing the boat. And they take a ferry from there. So, expecting passengers from other wards is in vain.”*

### **5.2.2 Seasonal Work Plan and Income**

When seasonal work and income of motorboat drivers are observed using seasonal calendar, most boatmen from Samarduwarr Ward do not have proper work during the rainy and cold seasons. In summer, they could make enough income for basic needs. Since residents from the ward do not usually go out during the rainy season, they can make only one “round” though they have two “rounds” during the summer. Similarly,

during the winter, since it is foggy, residents from the ward do not go to work. They have only one round if they encounter these conditions.

Moreover, since ships anchor in Khanaungto creek, they are repaired and done some maintenance from April to August. During this time, if boatmen are friendly with clerks and sailors from the ships, they could be hired. A motorboat driver discussed the matter concerned with this as follows. According to the Focus Group Discussion conducted in 31-1-2018, motor boatmen, 48 year old said that-

*“The best time to work in 12 months is from April to August. During this time, the ships come here and get repaired. If the sailors want to go to shore during their leisure, they hired our boats. Those who hire us include clerks and sailors. They phone the motorboat drivers who are friendly to them or they use gesture and hail a motorboat driver when they see a motorboat driver driving his boat. Some sailors are from the country so they hire us one round trip. We are happy if those days come. Besides, we can bring passengers who return from Yangon and we have been hired so we could afford good food,”*

He discussed openly with light heart. A motor boatman discussed that there is a downturn during the rainy season and the cold season as follow.

*“Working in the rainy season is not good. During the rainy season, residents from the ward do not usually go out. Only those who work in Yangon go out and the rest do not. They go shopping once in two days so we have only one round a day. The winter is also the same. It is foggy in the morning so motorboats cannot go. When the fog disappears, it is already late for the workers and they do not go to work. So, we have no passengers. Sometimes we go to Yangon with passengers but for the return round, we have to come back with empty boats.*

Motor boatmen from Samaduwarr ward run their motor boats every other day because they have only few passengers. Though there are 38 motorboats under licensed in line, only 20 motorboats can go daily and the rest cannot leave. Moreover, if there is a public holiday, only 10 boats can go and the rest 18 boats go back home due to the lack of passengers. The boatman who can put the token number earliest is likely to have passengers and those who come late have to go back home if they do not have any passengers. Most boatmen own their motorboats so they could endure it but the drivers who rent motor boats need more diligence than others. A motorboat driver discussed the matter concerning this as follow. According to Focus Group Discussion conducted in 31-1-2018, motor boatmen, 29 year old said that-

*“We have 38 motor boats in our line but only 20 boats can go daily and the rest 18 boats cannot go due to the lack of passengers. If there is any public holiday, only 10 motor boats can go and the rest boatmen are just to go back home but nothing can be done. It depends on diligence of the boatman. If he gets up early and takes the early token number, he can have passengers early. The late comers cannot get passengers. Even if he insists going back home and waits in the boat, there is no use waiting except getting the skin dark and wasting time. Boatmen who wait for passengers are those who are scared of their wives’ pouting lips but it is a daydream to get passengers because few people go out during the daytime and it is impossible for one or two passengers to hire the whole boat except for urgent case. If it is not an urgency, passengers take the boat with oar and go to eastern ward of Seikkyi, there they take either a trishaw or a motor cycle to go to the jetty where they can take ferry to Yangon. It is a crowded place so they go to Yangon from there. Even though it costs more travel fare, it is still less than hiring the whole boat. It is no use sitting and waiting there. No passengers can be got if we encounter these days. We cannot earn enough to support daily expenses to*

*our families. Here most motor boatmen are owners so they can endure this situation but it is not easy to face the situation for those who rent boats and drive so diligence is needed for driving boats and we have to earmark 2000 kyats for giving rental fees to owners and they have 3500 kyats left to take homes,” he patiently explained.*

There are 38 boats that are under licensed of private water line. Most of the motor boatmen for these boats are owners but there are 5 motor boatmen who rent boats and drive. Therefore, owner boatmen do not need to pay rental fees to owners so they could have some extra money but the drivers who rent and drive must have more diligence than owner motor boatmen. Moreover, though Samarduwarr Ward mainly use waterway for transport, during the daytime, boats from that ward are not used and passengers go to other ward, instead. The reason is that passengers rarely go out during the daytime and the travel cost is too high if a passenger go from Samarduwarr Ward alone so they go from other ward. By studying the above matter, it was found that the residents from Samarduwarr Ward are facing with high travel fare, taking extra time for transport and danger since their lifeline is only waterway.



Figure (8) Motorboat jetty at Samarduwarr ward

### 5.3 Social Capital of Boatmen

When livelihood assets of boatmen are studied, from April to August, there come and anchor cargo ship in Khanaungto creek. During these months, motor boatmen get extra income. When sailors from these ships want to go to the shore for shopping or paying a visit, motorboat drivers get extra income if they are hired. A motorboat driver discussed this as follows. According to Key Informant Interview conducted in 2-2-2018, motor boatmen, 44 year old said that-

*“From April to August, ships anchor at Kanaungto creek. Some ships do repair and maintenance. When they do so, they invite people whom they have known and go to the shore. If they are friendly with us, they invite us with telephone and if not, invite others. If these days come, we could support more for our families at home. Sailors are generous. We have to be friendly with sailors. Some ships come and anchor at Kanaungto creek only. There are many boat repair workshops here. So, it is important to be friendly with them. Sometimes they give away pieces of wood which they have on their ships. These can cover for meals when these were sold when money is tight for us.”*

He discussed friendly matters for solving food, shelter and clothing problems (basic needs). Motor boatmen work only in the morning and the evening so during their day time interval, they want to work but they cannot. This matter is discussed as follows.

*“In the morning we left Samarduwarr Ward and arrived in Yangon but we can't go away from our boats even if we want to work. We have to sit in our boats and care our boats not to be swept away by the tide and not to cause any damage to our motorboats because there come and stop many boats from other boat lines, not only ours. Since we have to guard our motorboats, we have to sit and wait in our boats till passengers come. If a passenger places an order for our boats, we can go or if there is not any order, we just need to sit in our boats.”*

According to motorboat driver's words, there is some work like fetching goods from the markets but that cannot interfere in driving motorboats under the lines. Before having the roads that reach to Hlaing Thar Yar, fetching goods from the market can earn extra money but nowadays there is a downturn for doing it since the road to Hlaingtharyar has been built, discussed by a man of 40- year- service in motorboat driving.

A few boatmen have an own business apart from driving motorboats which is to send air-bags to ship repair workshops. A few motor boatmen bring the air-bags from Yangon by their own motor boats and they send them to the ship repair workshop if they are hired. It is learnt that this work can bring extra income for supporting family basic needs: food, shelter and clothing.

### **5.3.1 The Boatmen are Skillful upon the Weather**

According to a motor boatman driver, “during summer, there is strong current so rubbish carried by water flow cause the trouble for motor boat drivers. During the summer, cargo ships anchor at Kanaungto creek from April to August. Since the ships anchor in the middle of the creek, rubbish carried by strong current in this season get caught up in the propeller of motorboat. While the rubbish is being removed, the boat washed away and pushed under big ships by the current. When boatmen face this kind of problem, skills are essential. When it is the rainy season, there come strong waves so the drivers have to drive carefully.

According to gatekeeper, it is learnt that when it is heavy rain, the gate do not allow the boatmen to depart their boats. Moreover, during the month of January and Febuary, snow falls so drivers have to drive in a skillful way. The gatekeeper does not allow the boatmen to go during the snowfall, too, that was learnt by the words of motor boatman, 45 years old. He said \_

“Here boatmen are not allowed during heavy rain or snow fall. This is for the sake of our own safety. We need skills like stopping our motor boat at the nearest shore if we face with sudden strong wind although we have thought it is a fine day”. (Source: Key Informant Interview)

### **5.3.2 The Relationship between Passenger and Boatmen**

During the rainy season, there are a lot of difficulties for boatmen and passengers. Since the motorboats have no shelter, when it rains, the passengers use umbrella to cover their bodies. It is learnt that passengers make the trip dangerous when they cover their bodies with umbrellas because it blocks the boatmen's visibility so the boatmen drive without seeing the route, which is dangerous, said motor boatmen, 35 years old, betel seller on 13.2.2018.

*“During the season like the rainy season, there are a lot of difficulties for boatmen and passengers. Since there is no shelter that can cover them in boats, passengers count on their umbrellas. If there is a downpour, umbrellas cannot help them. If the rain is accompanied by wind, it worsens the situation. The wind blows away the umbrellas. If possible, I wish boats have shelters so that passengers don't take the trouble to use umbrellas and they can stay safe. And the next thing is about life jackets. It would be better if there are clean the life jackets for passengers. Now, life jackets are dirty so nobody wants to wear it on going to work though they don't mind wearing it on returning home. Everyone wants to go to work with clean clothes. Since life jackets are dirty, nobody wants to wear it,”* he discussed openly. (Source: Key Informant Interview)

### **5.3.3 The Relationship between Boat Owner and Boatmen**

Most of the motor boatmen from Samarduwarr own their boats except for 5 motor boatmen. There are a few boatmen who rent boats and drive. The owner and the driver meet each other and negotiate. If they agree, the deal is over. Owners live in the same ward with the drivers so it makes easy for the driver to rent boats. Rental per day is 2000 kyats and some owners take fees even for the days when boatmen cannot have any passengers. The driver who rents the boat must go by himself to the owner or on the recommendation of the owner's friend to rent a boat. When the driver and owner negotiate, they mainly negotiate the cost for repairing the boat. The owner will

take responsibility for bearing either one third or half of the total cost of repair (such as water leaking into boats and paint rot by water). Some owners take less fees for the days when they cannot drive but some take full fees, according to motor boatman, 26 year old said that-

*“Some owners understand boatmen and take only half fees (1000 kyats) for the days when boats cannot be driven. For my owner, he takes half only because we are personally friendly with each other. Other owners do not understand so full fees must be paid. Boat repair cost is shared half by half between me and my owner. My rental boat does not need much repair and I need to have it repainted twice a year only. Water does not leak into my boat because water enters only when the boat has a leak,”*

Then, motor boat owner explained about motorboat rental as follows.

*“I rent a motorboat is to get extra income. I bought it to drive when I am incapable of working in other places anymore. I think I could make a good living by driving a motorboat, then. There is no use keeping it so I rent it, which makes some money for me. I charge only 2000 kyats per day for rental. Sometimes I have to allow them delayed payment for a particular day together with the next day fees. However, they settle the debt back. The previous driver whom I rent my boat always put off the fees the day after again and again when he has to give me fees. When I went and asked, he avoided me. Later I kept my boat back thinking that I could not get any fees and I have to repair with my own money if the boat is something wrong. The current boatman is quite good. He gives owner fees regularly. And he drinks with a limit so I don't need to worry.”*

Concerning with this matter, it is observed that owner fees 2000 kyats per day is all right for the boatmen who got orders from customers but the boatmen who have a few orders find it difficult to pay the owner fees. The owner and the boatmen have no rental contract but only friendship is used between them.



Figure (9) Working Time in the Morning

#### **5.3.4 Social, Cultural and Religious Affairs**

Man cannot live alone so he needs to get on well with surrounding people which means living in harmony not only in the surrounding they live in but also in different surrounding. Man expresses friendship by participating himself in doing social works, cultural and religious affair. Similarly, residents from Samarduwar ward, whom are observed in this study, express unity by cooperating actively in Samarduwar Ward social works and religious affair. Similarly, boatmen observed in this study also participate in these affairs.

##### **5.3.4.1 Cultural and Social Affairs of Boatmen**

Not only affairs from the ward but also social affairs concerned with the boatmen are helped by the motorboat men from Samarduwarr Ward. If a boatman passes away, all

boatmen share 50000 kyats and for some joy celebrations, all boatmen share 30000 kyats, which means for funeral, they share more. The gate supervisor, who takes part in Social Team said-

*“I participate in a social team in this ward named “SA SA” and I am the leader of the team. Our team rent receptacles, utensils, tables and table clothes free especially for funeral ceremony and offering ceremony. If these are broken or lost, the borrowers have to compensate with the same utensils. We have to take compensation because these things are donated as fund things. For wedding, we charge rental because people can afford when they celebrate weddings but we do not refuse if those who cannot afford come and borrow.”*

#### **5.3.4.2 Religious Affairs of Boatmen**

Boatmen actively participate not only in social affairs but also in religious affairs. As a fund of a boatman committee, they save 5000 kyats per month. That fund is used to donate as much as they can in a needy monastery during “Ka Htein”, which falls in the month of November (“*Tan Saung Mone*” in Myanmar Calendar), and in food and goods donation ceremony (robe offering ceremony) in the ward. Moreover, before July (“*Warso*” in Myanmar Calendar) and after October (“*Thatingyut*” in Myanmar Calendar), offering food to “*U Shin Gyi*”, is done twice: one in Yangon harbour and the other is at jetty in Samarduwarr Ward. (“*U Shin Gyi*”, a masculine spirit of the brackish and salt waters, who is include one of the under 37 spirits or nats)

“*U Shin Gyi*” can be called upon by offering these: a tray table, Eugenia sprigs (Thabyay), coconut leaves, a plate of tea leaf, betel leaf with slaked lime, tobacco and betel nut , candals, joss sticks, bananas and sticky rice flakes with sugar. These ingredients are placed on the tray- top table used while calling upon U Shin Gyi. And a man in the ward who knows how to call upon him is requested to call upon “*U Shin Gyi*”. By this way, boatmen offer food and worship “*U Shin Gyi*”.

A boatman explained about why “*U Shin Gyi*” is worshipped as follows.

*“There is a saying, “In upper Myanmar, **Ko Gyi Kyaw** is to worship and in lower Myanmar, **U Shin Gyi**”. It means that in Upper Myanmar, spirit named **Ko Gyi Kyaw** is worshipped and in lower Myanmar, down the Ayeyarwaddy River, **U Shin Gyi**. In other words, people believe that worshipping **U Shin Gyi** makes them free from danger. It’s the belief since long ago. Some hold this belief till now but some don’t. However, non-believers also do this to feel secure, which means that they do not feel anything even if they encounter any danger. If they don’t worship and encounter any danger, they might feel guilty thinking that lack of worship can cause danger. So they worship **U Shin Gyi** not to feel like that.” (**“Ko Gyi Kyaw”** is include one of the under 37 sprits or nats)*

### **5.3.5 Boatmen Committee**

If there is any problem, boatmen committee have to inform the chairman of boatman committee. From the chairman, respective departments will take responsibility to solve boatmen’s problems. If a motorboat has any danger in Yangon River, police from a particular township take responsibility for it and if the danger is in Khanaungto creek, they have to inform the head of the ward first and then the head will inform the township administration officer and police. Most boatmen from Samarduwarr Ward drive under private water transport company so administrator and police from the township take responsibility and solve their problems. A representative of Hluttaw explained about the above matter. (Source: Key Informant Interview)

#### **5.3.5.1 Daily Routine of Boatmen Committee**

There is a committee for motor boatmen in Samarduwarr Ward. The committee cooperate with administrator of the ward, department of administration and work for safety of boatmen, safety of passengers and building good communication between passengers and boatmen. There is a chairman of boatmen committee (gate supervisor), two secretaries and members.

Chairman of boatmen committee (Gatekeeper), 2 secretaries and 2 members have to take duty as heads of 10 households in Samarduwarr ward by the words of chairman of boatmen committee. Officials from general administration department, head of the ward and chairman of boatmen committee check safety of boats and licenses. Moreover, chairman of boatmen committee watch boatmen affairs daily by the words of chairmen of boatmen committee.

Gatekeeper, himself is a boatman who supervises the boatmen not to go out of turn, whether boatmen hang token correctly or not in the morning. So, he has to depart his motorboat late. Besides, he guards the boatmen not to drink alcohol and gamble during their leisure. Moreover, he is responsible for holding boatmen meeting in which rules and safety for boatmen are discussed once a month. There are only 20 members who attend the meeting because the rest motorboat men come back late. In boatmen committee, 5000 kyats is collected monthly as a fund. Some boatmen cannot afford to give it and they delay. Therefore 5 additional days are given to them. If they cannot give it during these allotted days, they get a driving ban till they come and give their share. Gate supervisor discussed the matter concerning with this as follow.

*“Nobody is allowed to get away with this since we have to do with community. And this money is not for personal use but for raising fund to donate if there is any occasion like “Dhamma Delievering Ceremony”, “Khatein Festival (Robe offering) and Food and Goods Donation Ceremony. If this money can’t be paid, someone gets driving ban. Some people borrow from others and give if they cannot afford to give their share. Actually their share 5000 kyats per month mean less than 200 kyats per day. So if they save 200 kyats daily, they don’t need to be panic at the end of the month.*

(Source: Key Informant Interview)

### **5.3.6 Leader of Household, Father and Leisure Time**

Ways of living of boatmen such as Father and Leader of Household and Leisure time are observed as follows. Since boatmen’s workplace is near their native town, they

can be of any help for their family if something happens. The role of a father is discussed by motor boatmen, 38 year old.

*“I, myself as a breadwinner and solve financial problem not to let my wife and kids down. She should spend no more than I could earn. If there is any case to borrow money, only I, I go and borrow. We both discuss and decide if there is a matter concerned with the kids. Since I am the head of the house, she never does anything on her own without telling me.”* (Source: FGD)

According to informal interview, it is learnt that motorboat men from Samarduwar ward spend their leisure time on playing football, cane ball, drinking and sometimes playing cards.

#### **5.4 Distribution Income (Education, Health, Social and Economic Affairs)**

Main income for most motorboat men is earned from driving motorboats. The average wage for a boatman is 4000 kyats or more. Since their daily income cannot support for the family basic needs, their wives and children have to supplement the family income, too. Though they also work, they are still living from hands to mouths. Concerning with the above matter, motor boatman’s wife said,

*“My husband income is just 4000 or 4500 kyats per day. It is not enough even for our small family. So, I sell betel to make extra money. My elder son is 12 so he could be asked to work in a food shop in Nyaung Pin Lay market. The younger son is still attending Grade 4 so he can’t be asked to work. We cannot save money even though I and my kids are working. Our money is spent mainly on food. And we spend for donation and social affairs. And school fees, too. My kid is in Grade 4, in which the exam is administrated by the board of education in Myanmar, so I have to pay a tuition fee.*

*The tuition fee in our ward is cheap and cost 200 kyats only per day. Besides, the cost for required books and so on. Actually, schooling a kid is not easy. Sometimes, we cost paying respect to the teachers, farewells for teachers and so on so schooling years after years is costly. Though I want to school my kid till he becomes a graduate, our business is not good so I'm waiting for when he will finish exam. As soon as he has finished it, he could be sent to Myikyina to work in his aunts' food shop since his aunts live in Myikyina and they want him. Our business is not good so we could not encourage his education. At current, I have some debt and I want to settle it back so I have to send my kid there. Actually, I do not want to send him but he also wants to work, too. Now, he lost interest in learning. I urge him to attend till Grade 4 finished. We don't have any saving for future use when we get old or sick."*

Concerning this matter, motor boatman's wife said-

*"We do not have any kids because we were married recently. The money earned is to be spent on food, donation and religious affairs. At home, we rely on his income only. 4000 kyats or 4500 kyats per day is not enough but we feel relieved since we own our motorboat. He doesn't know how to get order like others. We are still asking money from our parents till now. We live in our parents' house and give 3000 kyats per day to our parents as the cost for meals. The rest money can't be saved because I have to give him back some money for tea and I spend some for snack. I also want to go out and work but can't because I need capital to sell goods and I need education to go and work in Yangon. As I am married, I am unlikely to get a job because many jobs do not want to employ a married*

*woman. Now, I have a burning desire to sell goods. If I finish settling my debt, I am thinking of selling something by borrowing some money again.”*

Apart from what they have said, it is observed through informal interviews that most residents from Samarduarr Ward waste their money on gambling. Boatmen and their wives are also involved in gambling (playing card and play illegal two or three digit lottery). Therefore, not only boatmen but also residents from Samarduarr Ward have lots of debt and they spent more money on gambling than on food and social affairs.



Figure (10) Informal Interview

#### **5.4.1 Daily Routine**

Boatmen have to arrive at work at 6 a.m. scheduled by the gate. As soon as they have reached the gate, they have to pump, check the safety equipment and license while

they are waiting for their turns. They have to wait in a line to get ready for their turns come. When their turn comes, they have to take 12 passengers on board, cross from Kanaungto creek to Yangon and jetty at Mawtin. When they arrive in Yangon, they have to hang their gate plate at the designated place and wait for their next turns. While waiting, they eat breakfast, check their motorboat safety and take a rest in their motorboats. If they are hired by name during their rest time, they can take the order. After sending the passengers and coming back, they can wait for their turns if their turns have not come yet. If their turns are over, they have to take their gate plates and hang it at the last place. This is the rule set by the gate supervisor. It's difficult for boatmen to get passengers after they have arrived at Mawtin jetty. Motorboat men who could go second round are those who could take the gate plates early. It's rare to get passengers for boatmen of Samarduwarr Ward during the daytime. So, most motorboat men wait on board till evening and take passengers who return home from Yangon. When they return Samarduwarr ward, it is about 7 p.m., which is the time scheduled by gate to stop driving. So they cannot go to Mawtin again, and tie up their boats and go back home. This is the daily routine done by boatmen from Samarduwarr ward. Concerning with this matter, a group discussion is made and a boatman leads the discussion and four boatmen added the necessary points.

## **5.5 Safety Life of Boatmen**

In this study, the main focus is on opinion of boatmen about safety. Motor boatmen make their lives safe by using the things that they possess. According to interview with motor boatman, 29 years old, he said,

*“For safety, boats are fully equipped with the life safety equipment instructed by the government. And we have to keep in our mind that we are responsible for our passengers’ lives. We never drive motor boats carelessly. While driving motor boats, we do not drink alcohol. If there is any drunken man in our boat, we do not let him sit on the bow the boat and let him sit in the hull only. We inspect our boats whether water leaks in or not. We drive motor boats only when we are capable*

*of driving skillfully. Passengers' lives are in our hands.  
Waterway is dangerous."*

A boatman has to be skillful not only about engine but also about water. Besides, it is learnt that experience and right decision making skill are needed to overcome the sudden danger successfully. Moreover, some people are observed standing at the front of the motorboat, saying prayers of their respective religion to feel secured and wish for safety. Concerning with this case, motor boatmen, 25- year- service in driving boats said as follow.

*"Danger can occur at any time since we are making a living by using waterway. If there is any danger, skills are required to manage. Sometimes luck matters though we are proficient in our work. We can't do anything unless we are lucky. But there is one thing I could do to be free from danger, that is to say the prayers by standing on the bow before our boats depart in the morning. Then I recite "Thanbuday mantra". Anyway, I feel secured in my mind if I do so. If I fail to do this routine, I feel worried for that particular day."*  
(*"Thanbuday mantra"* is a powerful mantras that is believe to make reciters free from danger)

According to the words of chairman of boatmen committee, it is learnt that even if boatmen have never been in serious danger, they have encountered a collision with a boat at least.

*"However, boat line from Samarduwarr ward has been designated as the safest line by township administration office,"* the chairman of boat committee said proudly.

## **5.6 Limitation of Boatmen**

When livelihood strategies are observed, it is observed that there are many limitations for boatmen. Their main responsibility is to protect not to cause any danger on passengers because most of the boatmen's duty is transportation service. However, passengers also need to help boatmen if they have any trouble. Motor boatmen

discussed that all current rules for boatmen can't be obeyed in practice by the boatmen who actually struggle with a difficult situation at work.

*“Though we obey all rules, we cannot do anything if we encounter danger in reality. For example, there was an accident happened recently in Maw Set. Why this happened was due to the rubbish caught up in the motorboat propeller. If this rubbish is normal rubbish, we could go into water and remove it but for the rubbish like banana leaves can't be removed only with our bare hands. We have to cut it with knife. While the boatman was going in water and cutting it, there was strong current so the motorboat was washed away by water and it went under the big ship. We can't do anything in such situation. We have all equipment mentioned in the rules. When a boat capsizes, there is one certain thing that passengers can do-wearing life jackets, which can save their live but they don't like to wear them and they also don't know how to wear them.The boatmen cannot help them in such situation.”*

Safety equipment which must be kept on the boat is as follows: 13 life jackets, a whistle- to hear signal from faraway place, a flag, a rub rail rope-for using in case motorboats capsize, an emergency flashlight- to be seen the motorboat at night, 2 buckets- to take out water if water leaks into the boat emergency, an anchor and a pair of oars- to stop the motorboat if engine stops working, a mooring rope- when the boat capsize and other boats can pull it, a business license and a driving license. These are the must equipment for a motor boat. According to a motor boatmen said,

*“Among this safety equipment, only life jacket is essential when the boat is in danger and the rest are not really required. Only if a passenger knows how to wear life jacket and wears it whenever a passenger takes a motorboat, he could survive during emergency time,”*

The above matters are the limitations for the boatmen. Besides, passengers' lack of co-operation with the boatmen for safety during the trip is also a limitation for the boatmen. When people throw litters into creek and water, it can cause danger not only for those who are using waterway for transport but also for those people who are making a living using waterway. The reason is that the fans in the motorboats are small so the boats must be stopped for removing the rubbish. While the rubbish is being removed, the boat can be washed away by strong water current so it is too dangerous not only for boatmen but also for passengers. During this time, however proficient a boatman is in driving motorboat, his life is at risk. Though it cannot harm anyone's life, the boatman can be sued for reckless driving by the police even if passengers do not sue him. This is because there is no law that protects boatmen.

## **APTER \_ 6**

### **DISCUSSION**

When the thesis livelihood strategies of boatmen were conducted from the economic Anthropological perspective, World Bank (2000) said poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being. In this thesis, most boatmen are facing with poverty and vulnerability. Their livelihood strategies are also prevented by climate and physical environment.

Chamber (1991) said that, assets refer to the basic material and social resources that people have in their possession. Livelihood assets are the basic building blocks from which livelihoods are generated. The existence of, and degree of access to, livelihood assets is therefore important in influencing the livelihood options that people may or may not have. The five broad asset areas are natural, physical, financial, human and social assets. In this thesis, the boatmen have natural, physical, human and social assets. But they have no financial asset.

Rakodi (1999) distinguishes; (1) investment in securing more of an asset – this may promote security and also allow for diversification or intensification of activities, (2) substitution of one asset for another – for example, compensating for the declining availability or quality of natural capital by increasing inputs of physical capital, (3) sacrifice – for example, not investing time and resources in fostering reciprocal social relations, thereby reducing future ability to draw on social capital; sacrificing children's ability to earn adequate incomes in future by withdrawing them from school because of the inability to pay fees or need for their labor.

In this thesis, it is observed that his motorboat and his body are capital for a boatman. As a substitution, they take orders. Getting orders depend on their social network. As a sacrifice, boatmen quit their children from school and asked them to work. Since they do so, their children have no opportunity to attain education and become white collar workers so the children have to live only as blue collar workers in their lives. Therefore, it is observed that children born by the poor are forced to be the poor.

Ribas and Machado (2007) said that a lack of human capital and ownership of physical capital are proponent features amongst people who live in a persistent state of poverty for a long period of time, as well as amongst these who move in and out of poverty. In this study, it can be said that their bodies were their property. Although they chose boatmanship, it is not sufficient for their socio-economic needs.

Timmermans (2004) analyzed the factors contributing to the vulnerability status of the communities were population pressure and land scarcity, exposure to climatic shocks, poor health status, job losses related to the under performance of the macro economy and corruption and inefficiencies among agents of local governance. In this study area, the main factors contributing to the vulnerability were not good climate, less of educational support, less of job opportunity and less or no financial support. It is difficult to escape from poverty as they prefer gambling and drinking alcohol. Because of gambling, they cannot save and use money for their family's needs. Because of drinking alcohol, they cannot do their jobs and take-care their health and prevent to focus on their family affairs.

Eswarappa (2007) said that livelihood is a part of culture and also reflects the poverty of culture. Livelihood is a central and essential focal point of the people which helps to documents a socio-cultural reality of the community and also it gets manifested in their socio-cultural reality of the community and also it gets manifested in their social institutions where a lay man can also observe the poverty and richness of culture.

In the morning, before they depart their boats, each and every boatman says the prayers to feel secure since most of them are Buddhists and believe in Karma. Though boatmen make a living in waterway and may face any danger, they need to overcome it skillfully. Boatmen committee does not allow the boatmen to depart the gate if the weather does not permit. All boatmen obey this.

By studying this, they care not only their safety but also passengers' safety. Moreover, some are pious to feel secure in their mind. By observing the custom of worshipping "*U Shin Gyi*", it is obvious that boatmen try themselves for their safety.

Livelihood strategies of local people are not same. People from upper and middle class are money loaners, grocers, liquor sellers, people who run motorboat rental and government staff. Most people from lower class are general labourers. Most boatmen

include in lower class. Their capital is their own boat only and it is difficult for them to make extra money. They have no saving to use if they have any health problem. For those who are from grass root level, middle school is the end for their children education. There are many child labourers because of financial needs. Children prefer working to schooling, since their parents' financial status is not good.

By observing this, it is found out that local people's children could not attend school till the end. To discuss more about the above matter, boatmen livelihood strategies do not suit their socio-economic needs. During free time, playing cards and drinking alcohol is one of the reasons that could lead to poverty. Moreover, since there is no micro finance, they borrow from their nearby people. Therefore, they can never have enough money though they work.

## CHAPTER \_ 7

### CONCLUTION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 7.1 Conclusion

According to historical evidence, Samarduwarr ward has been existing since 1972 and people in this ward are making a living by relying on Yangon river and Kanaungto creek. Since this ward mainly use waterway, the roles of boatmen are important. Boatmen include in daily wages labourers and they struggle their lives using their own motorboats as their capital. They have a lot of difficulties to give member fees for their line. When they do not have any saving, they have to borrow money with interest. When they cannot pay the interest, compound interest is charged so the boatmen can hardly clear their debts.

Moreover, since they need to do some repair for their boats once in six months, majority of boatmen have to borrow money and do it. Since their daily wages hardly cover their family basic needs, they solve their family needs by doing some work from which they could earn more money in their free time.

It is difficult for the boatmen's children to finish high school. Therefore, the children quit school to support their family needs after they have finished their primary school. Therefore, it is observed that boatmen's children have a lot of difficulties to go to middle school even.

It has been shown above that boatmen willingly participate in social works. Although the motor boatmen do not have enough money to cover food, shelter and clothing, they are generous to that they never hesitate to make donation. By observing this, it is learnt that boatmen emphasize on social and religious affair in their lives.

In summary of the above matters, it is observed that boatmen solve their socio-economic needs by using their social capital mainly.

## **7.2 Recommendation**

The recommendation of this thesis is as follows:

- To lend money with fair interest rate.
- To implements either by government or non-governmental organizations.
- To promote tourism industry.
- To cut down drinking and playing cards in their free time and should support their children education.
- To know the laws that protect them.
- \_To raise living standards of the boatmen and the researches should be carried out to alleviate poverty

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ရန်ကုန်တောင်ပိုင်းခရိုင်၊ မြို့နယ်အထွေထွေ အုပ်ချုပ်ရေးဦးစီးဌာန၊  
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