

1.5. MIGRATION

Factors of Internal Migration: A Case Study of Mandalay Industrial Zone, Mandalay

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Abstract

Internal migration is the movement of people from one place to another place within a country. People migrate for a variety of reasons. It commonly takes place because of push factors of less opportunities within the socio-economic situation and also because of pull factors that exist in more developed areas. Since Myanmar's adoption of a market economy in 1988, Mandalay has seen rapid urbanization. The Mandalay industrial zone is operated based on orders; and therefore, there is a huge demand for labor. This paper focuses on factors of internal migration in the Mandalay Industrial Zone, including push and pull factors for people to move to a new location or to leave their places of origin. The objectives are to explore what are the push factors to move from the place of origin and to reveal the different reasons for migration. Research methods and designs were necessary to formulate the research questionnaires and qualitative approaches and which involved the collection of data; Key-Informant-Interviews (KII), and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). This study is to better understand the here and now – what factors of internal migration are affecting migration today.

Keywords: different reasons, factors, internal migration, industrial zone

1. Introduction

In globalization world of today, people are moving around the world from place to place to fulfill their dreams. Many 'pull' and 'push' factors influence the propensity for people to migrate. According to Blanchflower et al. (2007), the rise in net international migration in the UK coincides both with changes to UK immigration policy and to improvement in the UK's economic position. Migrants decide to migrate to a certain area after having evaluated the costs and benefits of making that move. As a result, it is argued that migrants living in countries with low GDP per capita and high

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unemployment rates may decide to migrate to countries or areas where the standard of life is perceived to be better or where more job opportunities are available.

Moreover, internal migration is the movement of people from one place to another place within a country. Factors of internal migration have a variety of reasons. The main factors of internal migration is pull and push factors; these factors are from the place of origin which makes them leaving and then moving to other place of destination cities for different reasons. Why do they migrate? The push factor from the place of origin is the conditions that can make them to leave. It commonly takes place because of the push factor of less opportunity in the socio-economic situation and also because of pull factors that exist in more developed areas.

However, people have many reasons why they might want to move from one place to another. On the other hand, Mandalay is economically active and fast becoming a major commercial and communication center with border trade routes to China and India. Since Myanmar's adoption of market economy in 1988, Mandalay has seen rapid urbanization. Mandalay industrial zone are operated based on the orders; therefore, there is a huge demand for labor. This has created favorable conditions for an influx of workers from surrounding areas. The labor market at the cities gradually asks for higher requirement of the unskilled workers, male and female migrants stemming from rural areas (Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway Regions).

Mandalay industrial zones have been established in 1990 and approximately 1255 factories, among then 182 total number of food and beverage industry (large, medium and small industry). Workshops and cottage industries are operating providing employment to 15932 persons and 3414 total number of workers at food and beverage industry (Source: Mandalay Industrial Zone Management Committee). The survey does show that what factors of migration and these migrants group are used to work in manually jobs such as food and beverage industries in Mandalay Industrial Zone, Mandalay.

2. Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to examine factors of internal migration in Mandalay Industrial Zone, including what factors are drivers for people to move to a new location or to force them to leave place of origin and to reveal different reasons of migrants.

3. Study Area and Population

The study area has located in the Industrial Zone (1), Pyi-Gyi-Dagon Township, Mandalay Region. My specific study of population are composed of 400 migrant workers (Male=249, Female=151) they are all Burmese and Buddhism (according to questionnaires survey, food and beverage industry (2016-2017).

4. Methodology

The study is based on the review of existing literature, observations and interviews with the migrant workers.

The research methods and designs are necessary to formulate the research questionnaires and qualitative approaches in which involve collect the data, (23) Key-Informant-interviews (KII) were conducted with respondents (migrant workers) and (6) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) will be used.

5. Factors of Migration

There are many factors of internal migration but highlight the study of economy. Because economy is the very important foundation of human life and then it is interrelated with social, cultural, education, and health.

Economic factors were therefore defined by making choices including migration to maximize expected income. In the context of migration choice this implies that the higher the income gain from migrating, the more likely migration occurs. It is no surprise then that almost all models of migration assume the incentive to migrate comes from the expected income differential between the source and destination.

For example, if migration results in deterioration in relative income, people may choose not to migrate even when there is a potentially large absolute income gain from doing so. In study area, majority of the internal migrations are primarily pushed by economic factors. Most of the push factors are lack of job opportunities, low wages, failure the crop and climate conditions. Thus, most of migrants have moved in search of better economic opportunities.

a) Lack of Job Opportunities

Migration is also one of the only means for rural farm households to overcome shortfalls of seasonal agricultural income and employment. Majority of the rural population in Myanmar is dependent on farm incomes which are low and seasonal in nature. The basic economic sources of income in rural area are also important factor for migration.

The major reason for internal migration is the lack of sufficient and year-round livelihood opportunities at the source communities. For the households in the native, migration is often a risk minimizing strategy to overcome the unstable farm production due to adverse climatic conditions and the high percentage of landlessness. Thus, whereas internal migration is more a survival strategy, internal migration is more a wealth accumulation strategy. Migrants are mostly employed in industries, construction, restaurants, tea-shop, etc.

According to Nyi 2013, economic growth and development processes affect and are affected by migration of people. In traditional viewpoint, people migrate when they are both pushed by lack of opportunities at home and pulled by the hope of economic gains elsewhere. Thus, the hope that migration will help associate migrants more closely with available economic opportunities, employment and services elsewhere is a major incentive for migration.

b) Low Wages

The Pull Factors are factors which attract the migrants to an area. Opportunities for better employment, higher wages, facilities, better working conditions and attractive amenities are pull factors of an area.

However, majority of the rural population in Myanmar is dependent on farm incomes which are low and seasonal in nature. Thus, Myanmar has very high mobility of people within the country boundaries for labor purpose. Much migration was temporary or permanent movement to nearby cities, towns, factories.

c) Failure the Crop

Migration is no more a survival strategy, but an opportunity to further skills development and better career prospects. Failure of the farm sector, the major economic sector for the rural farm households, is also a major cause for people to migrate as seen in the case study below (Box No.1);

Box No. 1: Case study 1: Farm Loss Leading to Migration

Ma Thuzar is come from in Taungtha Township, Mandalay Region, where most villagers are landless or near-landless. She is 28 years old and single. She comes from a farming family. She finished secondary school and then worked in agriculture but the work was very seasonal and low paid. Her family has little land and since she was the eldest of five siblings, she has more or less no option but to migrate to Mandalay. The main crop is dependent on the onion crop. In this case, our female informant practiced river bank onion cultivation. River bank area is public land. However, for consecutively 2-3 years, onion prices were at record low. The income was not even sufficient to pay the costs of inputs. Thus, she was forced to sell her little land to pay the debt incurred in onion crop loss and, together with her family; her family left the village for their survival. Through a relative, she managed to find work in Industrial Zone (1), Mandalay to work when she was just 24 years old, where she has been officially registered since 4 years. For the youth, economic reasons are only reason for people migration.

d) Climate Conditions

Climate change is not directly displace people or cause them to move but it produces environmental effects and exacerbates current vulnerabilities that make it difficult for people to survive where they are. Climate change is expected to make the world hotter, rainfall more intense, and result in more extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods. These changes, in turn, will likely result in further population movements.

In my study area, majority of migrants are coming from Upper Myanmar (Mandalay Region; Myitnge, Palate, Nathtogyi, Myingyan, Kyaukpadaung and Patheigy Township, Sagaing Region; Sagaing, Ayartaw and Yinmarpin Township, and Magway Region; Magway, Yaysakyo and Myaing Township). This region has average less rainfall (the dry zone has been named because of climatic reasons) and has large areas of light sandy soils.

On the other hand, individual well-being, which in the most basic sense means the ability to feed oneself, can be attributed largely to household farming failure. In the absence of alternative subsistence strategies, individuals who live in farming households that are experiencing shortages in food supply.

However, their household may be reached, where there is little choice left but to move. The extent to which the environment, push factors of migration are also including climate change. So, migration

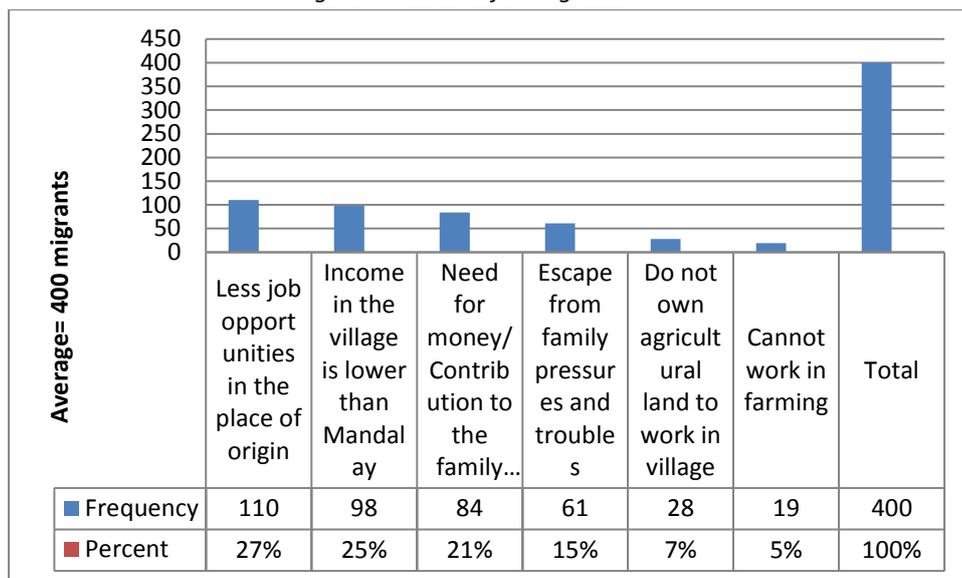
can also affect the environment in terms of additional stress on already degraded lands and competition for scarce resources in the place of origins.

6. Reasons for Migration

Internal migration may begin for a variety of reasons. Migration has become an important livelihood strategy for many poor groups across the world. People decide to migrate because of push factors and pull factors. A push factor induces people to move out of their present location, whereas a pull factor induces people to move into a new location. As migration for most people is a major step not taken lightly, both push and pull factors typically play a role. To migrate, people view their current place of residence so negatively that they feel pushed away, and they view another place so attractively that they feel pulled toward it.

Reasons for migration are income generation, employment opportunity, better pay and employment opportunity, and employment with possibility of gaining additional skills. The major reason for migration in Upper Myanmar (Mandalay, Magway, and Sagaing Region), is the lack of local employment opportunities. However, reasons for migration are also vary according to gender, age, skills and socio-economic situations. Based on reason for migration are also vary conditions, types, and patterns (See Figure No.1).

Figure 1: Reasons for Migration



Why do they migrate to Mandalay Industrial Zone? In the study of questionnaire (400 respondents), the most common reason (27%) concerns the less job opportunities in the place of origin. Followed by a similar reason, income in the village is lower than Mandalay (25%), contribution to the family (21%), escape from family pressures (15%), do not own agricultural land/landless (7%), and they can't working in farm (5%). Some of questionnaire respondents summed up the dire situation with regard to rural jobs as follows;

a) Less Job Opportunities

“Job opportunities are almost non-existent there (in the village). In case I find a job, it will be for 3600 a day”. (Female worker, age 26, Mandalay Region)

“I realized that there were no opportunities to work there in the village – so I came to Mandalay”. (Female worker, age 28, Magway Region)

“My dream is to find a more permanent job in order to enjoy some stability in his life. I would like to resettle in his place of origin, provided that he can find a job there”. (Male worker, age 24, Sagaing Region)

“My work is an agricultural laborer. Work in the village was short-term and seasonal, linked to harvesting cotton farm, the main crop in Magway. I first came to Mandalay to try her luck 2 years ago”. (Female worker, age 30, Magway Region)

b) Income in the Village is Lower than Mandalay

The migrant laborers are doing migrate to benefit from the difference wages between rural and urban sectors. Many of the reasons given by migrants are related to the much different wages in the village than Mandalay. In addition to high demand for unskilled labor in food and beverage industries, the difference in income level between rural and urban areas is one of the key pull variables for the migrants. Many of the reasons given by migrants are related to the much different wages in the village than Mandalay.

“Here, I can go working for 3600 kyats and more a day according to what is available, and I might be extra money as a save. It is much better than my hometown”. (Male worker, age 23, Mandalay Region)

“On my best day, I earn over 3600 kyats. My daily income here is more than to my daily income in the village”. (Female worker, age 25, Mandalay Region)

“One can find a job there in Mandalay Industrial Zone, but in my place of origin is a lower income than Mandalay”. (Male worker, age 22, Magway Region)

“We have only a small area of farming field so it is not possible to generate enough income for the whole family”. (Female worker, 27 years of age, Magway Region)

“Low income from agricultural production: “There is only a small area of farming field at home generating unstable income” (Male worker, 25 years old, Sagaing Region)

c) Contribution to the Family

Family background is always an important impact of migration. Family-related issues can be either push factors or pull factors. This issues related to family background such as economic conditions; big family having sick or disabled or old members unable to work to earn income, are commonly pushing to decide migration. According to survey findings, family are seen one of the main reasons which push factor to migrate in order to find jobs and create additional income for the family. There are a great many specific backgrounds which constitute economic difficulties observed during the conduct

of qualitative survey. Most common observations with regard to difficulties in family background are also leading to reasons of migration;

“There are only fields in our hometowns, jobs are gardening and feeding pigs and chickens the whole day, which bring enough for surviving, but I cannot produce everything. Many things need to be bought with money, so without jobs there is no money for such daily living expenses. My child is studying here, I am living here to take care of her and earn money to buy her a computer as her friends have. I borrowed money from others living here to buy it already, now I have to work to return the loan.” (Male worker, age 40, Mandalay Region)

“I am working in the city and have to earn money for my family, I am a driver. This life is a heavy burden to place on my mind; but my family members’ living conditions depend on me. So I always have to try my best to support my family.” (Male worker, age 36, Sagaing Region)

“My family has always been in need of money in order to live. My father is a farmer. The money we get from cultivating certain crops on our land is very little, and such money is always raised over too long intervals. Yes there are other crops that can be cultivated, but their revenue is insufficient to meet our needs” (female worker, age 28, worker, Magway Region).

“Indeed, my family has two acre of farming land but that is the only means to generate income. Farming does not bring about any savings; just some festival or death celebrations already eat out money gained for one crop.” (IDI. 13, male worker, 37 years of age, Mandalay Region)

“My family is very poor with lots of stresses, the farming area is small; mother is old and there are many members in the family. My younger sister and brother now at grade 8 and 9.” (Female worker, 27 years of age, Mandalay Region)

“My younger siblings at home go to school; the family is poor so that I have no way but to go and work elsewhere.” (Male worker, 25 years of age, Sagaing Region)

Lack of saving money to raise little children: “Children have grown up, more costs for them and the family is required when I can’t afford. I need to go out to work”. (Female worker, Magway Region)

d) Escape from Family Pressures

Respondents from Magway highlighted how economic reasons were paramount in their decision to come to the Mandalay industrial zone, but existing social links were important too:

“I had just finished my study and I was struggling to find a job, any job actually, it was very difficult at the time and it was at the same time when my husband lost his job. So I decided I am going to try something different. It was a good idea because my friend from college, she lives here for a few years and she suggested when you come; you can have some place to stay. So I decided to come.” (Female worker, age 36, Magway Region)

“There is more money/job in Mandalay Industrial Zone”, “I love freedom and want to work in Mandalay”, and “I just want to live in Mandalay”, (male worker, age 29, Magway Region)

Male respondent indicated how economic reasons and a desire to improve his family had prompted his decision to come to the Mandalay and Sagaing Regions:

"I work in a food and beverage industry...I like it because the salary is much better than at my native. That was my first, or the second reason why I came here. The other one is to improve my family income. This is my first workplace. But anyway I'm working now as well". (Male worker, age 26, Mandalay Region)

The fact that many migrants had other options than Mandalay may explain that this group of migrants were not under the same kind of pressure as other migrants. *"What made me leave my town were the living standards of course. It is very difficult there; who is poor remain poor and who is rich stays rich"*. (Male worker, age 32, Sagaing Region) and some of the key factors nominated by the respondents who felt that they had other options apart from the reasons to migrate.

e) Landless

Landless households find it easier and preferable to migrate with their family or leaving just 1-2 members behind to look after back home. Some migration is a livelihood and survival strategy with little wealth accumulation. The basic principle is to reduce the number of mouths to feed from limited resources at home.

"I do not have jobs in my hometown and I do not have any agricultural land". (Male worker, age 36, Sagaing Region)

"It is hard to find a job there except at harvest time. One cannot buy neither rice, nor oil. I not land to be cultivated. I come to Mandalay Industrial Zone". (Male worker, age 41, Mandalay Region)

"I come from big family and eight family members. I don't have a farm, and scarcely enough to eat in place of origin, so my younger brother and I moved to Mandalay". (Female worker, age 36, Magway Region)

f) They Can't Working in Farm

Some migrant workers (5%) told that they are not working in farm because in their farm works are hard-working and very tried and low income than food and beverage industries.

Figure No.1 shows that the varieties of reasons, it is not difficult to appreciate that most of the reasons are basically saying the same thing: lack of job opportunities, low wages. Therefore, these reasons are dealing with internal migration for survival.

Conclusion

Internal migration is the movement of people from one place to another place within a country. In the study area, majority of the internal migrations are primarily pushed by economic factors. Most of the push factors are lack of job opportunities, low wages, failure the crop and climate conditions. Thus, most of migrants have moved in search of better economic opportunities. On the other hand, opportunities for better employment, higher wages, facilities, better working conditions and attractive are pull factors of Industrial Zone. The major reasons of migrant workers are lack of local employment opportunities. However, family background is always an important impact of internal migration. Family-related issues can be either push factors or pull factors. Moreover, internal migration is not only undertaken to reduce poverty, but also to develop and improve ways of life. Internal migration needs to be understood from a livelihoods perspective and policies need to be designed through multidisciplinary study and analysis. In fact, factors of internal migration are very important effects of our society because the main reasons of migration are economy during the study period in food and beverage industry, Mandalay.

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