

## **2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Burma/ Myanmar Studies**

**16-18 February 2018, University**

### **Challenges emerged after life-style changes on Migrant Northern Chin Nationals living in Sanchaung Township, Yangon**

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#### **Abstract**

Chin ethnic group, one of the ethnic groups in Myanmar mainly lives in Chin State.. Nowadays, some of Chin Nationals have migrated to Yangon and lived in Sanchaung Township since 1980s. In changing their **rural life-style** to **urban life-style**, they faced a lot of **challenges** and this research explored the changes through their social activities and traditional customs. Moreover, opportunities and risks they take due to their changes and how they try to cope these changes according to their own ways were also studied.

The goal of this research was to find out their challenges emerged from life-style changes of their living in rural area to urban area and try to solve these challenges, how they struggle to adapt these changes and, to promote the national interest of Myanmar and also to apply the knowledge to the **economic and social advancement**.

Expected Impact of the research were: to enlighten the concept that how Migrant Chin Ethnic groups have conducted and lived in harmony about their new environment through their social activities and traditional customs, to inform the way they change their life-style from rural to urban area, to deliver the opportunities and risks due to their changes and to differentiate various social problems come out

Descriptive study design were applied during September 2015 to December 2016. Qualitative Research method was used from Political anthropology and Social anthropology points of view. In-depth interviews, Key informant interviews for specific social activities and festivals were conducted, and Participatory learning appraisal methods were used.

The research outputs will be used by communities and *the existing research capacity is used* effectively to solve their challenges and development problems.

**Key words:** rural life-style, urban life-style, challenges, economic and social advancement

## **Introduction**

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### **Background history of Chin ethnic people and how to migrant to Yangon**

Chin State is located in the north- western Myanmar. The 36,019 square-kilometres (13,907 sq miles) Chin State is bordered by Rakhine State in the south, Bangladesh in the south-west, Sagaing and Magway Division in the east, the Indian state of Manipur in the north and the Indian state of Mizoram in the west. It is estimated approximately 502,517 Chin live in Chin State ( Ling-Zaw, 2008). The capital of the state is Hakha. The state is a mountainous region with few transportation links. Chin State is sparsely populated and remains one of the least developed areas of the country. Chin State has the highest poverty rate of 73% as per the released figures from the first official survey.

Nowadays, some of Chin National migrated to Yangon and lived in Sanchaung Township since 1980s especially their education and future carrier development. After changing their rural life-style to urban life-style, they faced a lot of challenges and this research explored how they cope these challenges through their social activities and traditional customs. Moreover, the opportunities and risks due to their changes were also studied in this research.

The Migrant issue is occurred not only in Myanmar but also every countries of the world and it is becoming the common global issue. To understand this migrant issue, need to learn more about the migration theories such as irregular migration and mobility in economic theory and the issue about mobility and markets in UK's Industrial Revolution based from new technology for machine production allowed both the output of manufactured goods and the output per worker ( the productivity of Labour) to rise. It becomes "uneven development "and provided the ideal basis for the reason of economic growth, as workers and capital flowed towards cities and factories from rural areas and occupations. This issue connected to this research basic idea about the mobility of Chin migrants from their rural area to move urban area.

The various jobs that Chin migrant workers living in Yangon conduct and their situation after scare of their natural resources in their hilly regions reflects Bill Jordan & Frank Djivell that the informal economy of illegal taxi drivers, hairdressers, car mechanics, handymen, caterers, contract clothing workers and odd- jobbers in US and German cities during post-industrial development related to the garment industry and sweatshop in London, New York and Tokyo about some characteristics of post- industrialization and cosmopolitanism. And then, domestic work for young and female is structured by gender and race as well as by the relative incomes of employer and employee.

Another interesting issue that need to reflect is about the research question in this book, "Why do they come?" - "push and pull factors" and also Brazil's economic programme in 1980s involve " force migration" of large populations, as rural workforces were displaced by mechanization of agriculture draw towards the new semi-urban settlements and to the informal sectors of the large cities. By 1989 almost 75% of population was classified as living in urban poverty (squatter settlements ) and growth of the urban middle class- the latter being crucial for subsequent emigrations. In addition, reasons for migration and choosing the UK also connected to the basic idea of research issue about why Chin ethnic groups migrant to Yangon and what is the reason for choosing to live in Yangon.

In Brazil, personal growth and investment in themselves and their future careers- focused on the limited opportunities for self-development work experience in their home city. And then, political accounts of their journeys in search of freedom and safety emphasized the dangers and threats of the Turkish political environment. To gain knowledge or experience that would be valuable for them (including learning English, or gaining other qualifications, but it also consisted in work experience). After learning this point , the migration strategies of European countries and Myanmar with the interview quote examples in the UK as a Case Study, various

ways and reasons for migration and migrant's strategies for survival and security with examples of UK, Brazil, Poland and Turkey could be reflected and compared.

In addition, other theories about Irregular migrations shifted towards greater awareness of the potential economic benefits of lifting some restrictions on movements into First World Countries ( face tax development and benefit system), some specific policies for labour market recruitment from developing world could be reviewed for the research. Moreover, changes can be seen as marginal and do not address the central issues relevant for migration from the poorer countries of the world, or the question of global justice that lie behind them. And then, background which against steps towards opening borders might be taken- general principles to inform detailed measures could be learnt.

Furthermore, Bill Jordan & Frank Djivell ( 2002) stated that the political culture in the EU, migration and open the idea of welfare-enhancing, challenges to find ways in highly skilled recruitment and restrictive policies, some encouragement in the UK in more active engagement between government and immigrant support organization, tentative moves towards amnesties and recruitment from the irregular migrant population could be reflected and got the idea about the irregular migration is the thorniest issue in complex questions of justice in migration management and it provides important clues about larger forces at work in global economy and also globalization makes it inescapable for policy, how government might deal with them for the sake of justice between members of the world community.

The migrant issue cannot cope alone. It is related to religion, politics and economy of global. For that reason, further study about migration theories need to reflect. According to the article of Nina Glick Schiller, Ayse Caglar, Thaddeus C. Guldbrandsen (2006) many interesting elements connected to migrant issues with religion, politics and economy of global and gateway cities and methodological nationalism, the role of city scale in shaping migrant pathways of settlement and transnational connection could be found. Moreover, the scale of cities reflects their neoliberal process position of local, national, regional, and global rescaling by comparing in two-small- scale cities; one in the United State and the other in Germany. In addition various conceptual vocabulary and anthropological theories such as super diversity, methodological nationalism, container theory of society, new assimilations and, integration could be learnt.

By learning theory of locality, ethnic group as the unit of analysis and promoting the study of multiple pathways of incorporation and the idea of scale theory allows taking locality into consideration but within the intersection of hierarchies of power could be analyzed. The question of migration from the perspective of their city's struggle for positioning with respect to regional, national, and global flows of capital can also learn. And then, comparative study of two small-scale cities, some problems like multi-language in urban life come out and how to handle cultural diversity problems and using media access and gain public resources and can direct access to a broader public and recognition that reinforced to the political arena could be studied. After that, comparative study about migrant not only in public policies, resources and services

but also small-scale cities and larger- scale cities migrant concern case study of ethnicities on the basis of a broader non ethnic constituency.

For solving the challenges by hometown associations of religion based issue also need to learn by other countries' hometown associations. This issue can be studied by Ayse Caglar (2006) a Hometown Association is an organization of migrants from the same town or parish in a host country who congregate primarily for social and mutual-aid purposes. Although there is several different kinds of Hometown Associations, their main defining characteristics are their informal and voluntary structure and their sporadic relationship with their hometowns. Their relations with their hometowns are geared to improve their economic and social situation. That issue could be found in Chin ethnic groups' Home-town associations of Christian Church existing in Yangon.

### **The way the Chin people living in Yangon integrate and manage to live in society**

Yangon Chin ethnic community mainly based by religious groups or Church Associations and support their people's network for Church-based learning on Chin language, English language, Myanmar (Burmese) language classes, music and instrument classes, Youth-class for Sunday school, Basic and Advanced Bible learning classes, cultural and social activities, traditional festivals under the authorized pastors from their rural origin in different townships of Yangon city. Moreover, everyday customary practices among the Chin ethnic group such as disputes between inheritance, funeral service for poor family, Advanced Bible learning classes in abroad, financial support of higher education for orphan, drug-abuse for youth also analyzed and coped according to their conditions of exit by religious leaders of Church and related elder relatives in Chin community.

They also integrate to attend their Church every Sunday according to their native towns or city session. Reverends preach to their people and shared some information and activities together. For that reason we can call the migrant Chin ethnic group as Home-town based association members and they do their social and religious affairs under their respectful reverends.

In addition, they can manage their ethnic identity to maintain and unite with living nearer together, shared their problems among Home-town Association and advice by Reverends and elderly persons. Every Sunday, they can meet at Church and occasionally meet at their New Year Festivals, Christmas Festivals, Weddings, Funerals, English Proficiency classes, educational programs classes and try to solve all of their problems and try to promote their future development and job opportunity together.

### **Life-style changes according to their living in rural area to urban area**

Traditionally, Chin people relied on agriculture for their sustenance and they are known as hard work cultivators. According to geographic situation, they cultivate crops on the mountain

side. Land is cultivated in rotation and they move from one place to another yearly to be near the farmland for easy transportation of crops ( Houn- Kyaw- Gei, 2011).

They cultivate the crops that are divided into four classes such as grains, pulses, roots and vegetables. Grains include rice, corn, millet and maize. Pulses include sesame and different kinds of peas. Roots include potato, taro yam, ginger and sweet potato. Vegetables include pumpkin, cucumbers, chili, garlic and onion. Their major food is rice ( Ling- Zaw, 2008).

According to the modern technique, Chin people changed terrace agriculture on the slope of the mountains. Moreover, Chin people worked outside of their cities and abroad. With the help of Church Association, they can study abroad and worked overseas and supported back to their family who live in Chin State.

Nowadays, Chin people living in Yangon change their livelihood as company staffs and Church- based jobs. Some are selling the traditional dress like Yoyar May Shop at Boyoke Market and Reeve Traditional Costume Shop some are selling traditional Chin food and one restaurant called Hlaing Thukha is famous.

### **Adaptation of their environment through their social activities and traditional customs**

In Yangon, eating habit is different for them. They prefer to eat their traditional food like Sa-bu-the(qmblōD; )( corn with meat soup) and think their food are healthy because they do not use much oil and salt. So they order to get these foods from their native area and cook themselves in their house. When they celebrate the New Year Festival (Harvesting Festival) and meeting their siblings in Yangon, they eat their traditional food.

Chin people like to drink their traditional rice beer ( Khaung Ye) a lot in their rural area. But here in Yangon they changed to drink some of Myanmar beer. But they bring grape wine of Chin State and also sell them in Yangon. They can get success to produce grape wine within 3 or 4 years but apple wine is difficult to success in their Chin State because apple cannot grow everywhere and it choose the place to grow. Also pickle tea leaf cannot get successful to grow in Chin State. One green leaf called Gaw-ra-kha Nyunt can be planted greatly. Nowadays, these kind of leaves are popular in Yangon Hot-pot Restaurants.

They wear their traditional costumes every Sunday to attend the Church and also some occasion like Harvesting Festival and Chin National Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day. In Mother's Day, they invite all the mothers to the church and serve with food and celebrate the ceremony with talking their honorable act, reciting the poem and singing the special song for them. The Reverend praise all the mothers' reputations and preach the children to respect them.

After harvesting time, in their native village in Chin State they celebrate New Year Festival elaborately and entertain the guests with cows and pig meats and also celebrate physical competition games within the whole village.

At the city of Yangon, they celebrate this New Year Festival and Harvesting Festival at Church and try to substitute the habit of traditional Super-natural spirits worshipping as this festival. They also celebrate Christmas Festival yearly. Before Christmas Day, they go around their relatives and neighbours' house for carol singing and collect the donations. After getting donation money, they offer these money to the parentless children, blind school, Muslim Free Maternity Hospital, AIDS children supporting Association like Thu-kha-yeik-myon , Blood cancer department etc. They collect the donation money the whole year sometimes and get 800000-900000 kyats ( about 800 US\$) and donate all of them. In 2015, they donate all the cancer patients about 5000 kyats per each at Cancer Hospital. At Christmas Day, some Chin youths collect their pocket money and search the whole night for the beggars and donate chicken curry and rice to them.

When they marry at Church, they prefer to wear Western style and in their native village prefer to wear traditional style. Sometimes, they wear both styles. They live harmoniously with Bamar and Kachin neighbours. Sometimes they pray at their houses and do the meetings but they never quarrel with them. When they celebrate their festival they also come. Phalum A-thin-daw , Tedim A-thin-daw and International A-thin-daw are renting the same buildings and do their job according to their own ways.

After 2000, within 16 years of their migration, some Chin youths attended MIT\_ Myanmar Institute of Theology, Insein Township, Yangon. At that school teach the Secular University Course about English, Economics, Language, Computer, etc. MIT School can attend all the religions; Buddhists, Hindu, Muslims and Christian people because they want to educate all of them for educational support. If someone passed the Matriculation exam, they need to sit for the entrance exam and can attend the Bachelor of Theology course. If he or she would like to attend further studies, MA and PhD level courses also exist. For PhD course, local teachers and sometimes visiting professors from western countries teach them. For Bachelor degree, they need to attend four years and for MA degree, they need to attend three years and for PhD degree, they need to attend 4-5 years. But these degrees were not recognized by Myanmar Government and because of that they do their job in religious affairs. For Reverend, their Association gives salary, housing accommodation and supporting for their children daily expense. Bar degree (Religious degree) was recognized by Norway and Chaing Mai (Thailand). So they can get the opportunities for oversea jobs. Chin language is different dialects. For example, Phalum Chin Language and Tedim Chin Language are totally different. According to the areas, the same language persons are more close and unity. Even they have different dialects, they accept all of Chins are brothers and sisters.

For Reverend, he can travel US, Norway, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thai and give lecture about one- two week. These countries invite Chin Reverend and give sponsor for airfares, accommodation. No daily expense but the believers from abroad gaive presents for the Reverend. For health issue, they prefer to practice Western medicine and also do some Myanmar

Herbal medicines but they do not practice traditional medicine and therapy nowadays. At Kalay City area, liver disease was cured at Phyu-sin-mitta Clinic (Western Medicine Clinic).

For their eating habit, they like steamed-rice and corn. Sabuthi (traditional chin food) is their social food. It is the soup mixed the corn with meat and vegetables. Pig and Chicken meat were cooked according to their traditional style (use little oil and mostly soup style). For rice they eat Bamar rice and some persons order corn rice from Chin State. Dried cow meat, pickle tea leaves, traditional Chin dress are carried to abroad.

Most of the elder persons do not like to live in Yangon because the apartment is narrow space for them. Moreover, they don't like to close the door. So the youths go back Christmas time and Myanmar Thingyan time (New Year Festival of Myanmar) and live the family members together. Sometimes, they visit to other cities such as Pyin Oo Lwin (May Myo), Kalaw, Pathein, Hpa-an, Taunggyi, Ayeyarwaddy delta areas for camping.

For naming systems (Mu Hi in local call), some Yangon -born child becomes urbanized and they give the names mix with Bamar and English name. Even in Chin Hill, some people give Bamar name for their children but most of the Chin people prefer to give Chin names. At Tedim, they give patrilineal name to the child and at Phalum, there do not practice this system.

### **The opportunities and risks due to their changes**

After changing their life-style as Yangon Urban life, the youths of Chin can get better educations and open the international doors for them. They can also get much knowledge about food, living status, economic development, opportunities for various jobs such as NGO workers, Company workers and Church-based jobs compared with the under-developed Chin hill areas.

The most common risk they see due to their changes is: the new generation forgot their mother language. Their parents did not speak Chin language in their homes and reduce the national spirit. To cope this problem, the Reverends teach Chin language during summer holiday times about two weeks. At Phalum A-thin-daw, altogether 40 children attended the Chin language and during this course, they teach traditional stories, beliefs and proverbs. There exists 17 Reverends and teach the children.

For the person who needed to support about funeral services, he or she can request the Church based Association and they arrange them well. One person can get the fund about 400000- 500000 kyats. Some of social problem and family problem were solved by the committee members of A-thin-daw (Christian Association based on Church) and they are like the village elders.

One of the difficulties they face is that when they did the funeral at the upper apartment of the building, they have conflicts with the neighbours because all the relatives of the dead person near and far came and made noise by climbing the stairs the whole week. Also they sang

the songs made noisy and disturbed the neighbours. At one week later, after the Myanmar owner of the building and Chin people negotiated each other, Chin people celebrated the memorial ceremony and then the preaching Reverend went to the house for praying according to their traditional way.

One specific issue for the job opportunity is that Myanmar government support the government workers of remote area with giving double salary and because of that, nowadays, some of Chin youths want to attend Kalay University and apply their job in their native town. Because the expense to attend Bar School is more and some people can't afford to attend and go to Yangon.

## **Conclusion**

After comparing the rural and urban life-style changes on Northern Chin National living in Sanchaung Township, Yangon, much knowledge about their traditions, beliefs, customs, struggle for their future carriers and how to solve their social and economic problems. They migrated to Yangon according to their own consents and try to promote their future carriers. Even they get more opportunities for job and education, they miss their traditional houses, food and dress in rural life. Like Yoyamay ethnographic textile job can promote the Chin people prestige in international standard and can support the native women's income and job opportunities. In addition, Church-based Association and Home-town Associations support to cope their problems and they can live unity among themselves and also try to adapt the urban life. Giving double salary by Myanmar Government can support the Chin Hill area development more with their own people to go back their native towns and also migration to city and changing life style can reduce. Finally, these life style changes of Chin national not only promote their life but also get the national interest of Myanmar to apply the knowledge to the economic and social advancement.

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