

Regional Migration: a feasible option for livelihood diversification for the Mekong's poor?

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April 2009



The Sustainable Mekong Research Network

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost this research received financial and technical support from Sumernet (Sustainable Mekong Research Network) which enabled this important research subject in Myanmar and Thailand, as well as Lao PDR. Secondly, special thanks should be given to head researchers from three countries; Dr. Yaowalak Apichatvullop from Khon Kaen University, Thailand, Winston Set Aung from Asia Development Research Institute, Myanmar, and Dr. Saykham Voladet from the National Economic Research Institute, Lao PDR. Thirdly, this regional synthesis report paper could not have been written without technical guidance, vigorous reading /feed back/ and synthesis support at the end of country field work from Ms Muanpong Juntopas of Stockholm Environment Institute) as the Regional Research Team Leader. We also would like to acknowledge the valuable input from the literature review by Mr. Masao Imamura. Our gratitude goes to Ms Sabrina Shaw for her kind willingness to accept the heavy task of copy editing in the under tight time demand. Finally, the analysis was greatly enriched by the willingness to engage of the migrants and respondent households interviewed during the study. The debt of gratitude to these respondents can only go a small way in recognizing the hardships many of them have endured in their quests.

Summary

Migration is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, people have moved across borders for economic and political reasons. Globally, there were 191 million people living outside their country of birth, or 3% of the world's population (UN, 2005). This number has also increased further with the contribution of transport and communications to facilitating mobility. The remittances sent back home from this rising category of workers abroad have an immense impact on the living standards of people in their country of origin. It is estimated that international remittances reached approximately US\$72 billion globally, which exceeds total development aid flows to the developing world (Ratha, 2003). Over the course of the last few decades, the development debate has increasingly focused on the role of migration remittance and its impact on poverty reduction. The result of a World Bank study (2005) suggests that a 10% increase in the share of remittances in a country's gross domestic product (GDP) will lead to a 1.2% decline in the share of the population living on less than US\$1 a day and a 2.0% decline in the extent of poverty.

Migration is a significant issue in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), which consists of Cambodia, China (Yunnan and Guangxi), Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. International labour migration from GMS countries is steadily increasing, both within GMS countries and to other countries. The estimated number of migrants from GMS countries (except China) was over 6 million in 2004 (IOM 2008). Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar are considered to be among the world poorest countries, classified as least-developed countries by the United Nations. They are also situated in one of the most economically-dynamic regions in Asia. As these countries move from centrally-planned economies to permit greater flows of goods and investment across borders, there has been new regional economic space created, which encompasses shared natural resources. Human mobility follows greater economic integration. Despite the volume and increasing size of international remittances, little attention has been paid to study the poverty impact of migration-remittance transfers on the community and country of origin. The majority of studies so

far have concentrated on living and working conditions and labour rights in the recipient country.

The main purpose of this study is to contribute to the development debate and inform policy related to the challenges and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and resources in the GMS. In particular, it investigates the impact of migration at the level of the community-of-origin of migrants, exploring migration as an option for livelihood enhancement and resilience building. The specific objectives of the project are to identify and better understand the following aspects of the evolving migration debate in the GMS:

- **Role/impacts of international migration** (both positive and negative) on livelihood diversification among rural communities and households.
- **Impacts on country-of-origin of the migrants:** economic, social and environmental impacts at the **household and community level**. These impacts include but are not limited to impacts on social and natural capital and uses, e.g., natural resources, common property resources, resulting from remittances.
- **Function of relevant institutions** (formal and informal) as possible entry points for **pro-poor policy measures and interventions**.

This study contributes to quantifying and qualifying the impacts of migration—remittances on the livelihoods of community and household-of-origin of migrants from the GMS. It also identifies policy support measures and interventions to enable migration to contribute to poverty reduction to the greatest extent possible. The study includes: 1) a literature review of migration in the GMS and a summary of the current knowledge and identification of research directions, especially related to resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and rural development; 2) field study and a policy review conducted in three countries of the GMS by three study teams in eight provinces in Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, with household surveys by questionnaires covering over 600 families; and, lastly, 3) video footage of case studies in Myanmar highlighting the

plight of migrants from Myanmar as an illustration to policy makers and other decision makers of the nature and urgency of concerns linked with migration. This regional report, thus, draws from three country reports and a literature review.

Key findings

This study confirms the finding of previous research that international migration and the remittances it facilitates have a range of benefits to family of migrants and their community-of-origin in GMS countries. These include monetary, but also non-monetary benefits, such as those related with the transfer of skills and new knowledge. The remittances sent home by migrants help their families to enhance their livelihoods (e.g., for food, clothing, shelter, health care and medicine). In some cases, remittances help repay accumulated debt that was incurred prior to migration. The contribution of remittances is often critical to meet basic needs given the limited employment opportunity in the country of origin outside subsistence farming. In addition, remittances enable investment by the migrant's family in better farm tools and seeds. Migrants who return home also bring with them new knowledge and skills that can contribute to generating jobs and better use of resources in the community-of-origin in farming and non-farming activities.

At the community level, remittance flows to communities-of-origin, in many instances, revitalize social welfare activities leading to increased capacity to make and improve public goods. This includes constructing and maintaining village roads and bridges, repairing temples, and building village meeting halls and public spaces.

Though it is difficult to determine the extent to which internal migration and remittances contribute to national poverty reduction or the poverty rate, it is clear that migration and the resulting remittances from migrants help to reduce the severity of poverty in recipient families and communities. Remittances act to absorb financial shocks, help recipients to cope with adversity, provide some means of accrual for capital and investment in human resources. This is important as farm enterprises are becoming

less important as the sole supporter of rural livelihood. Moreover, there is scant non-farm work available in the country-of-origin of migrants. There is a large body of literature concerning the volume of remittance flows to the national economy as well as the macro-economic contribution towards GDP. However, this research emphasizes the importance of enabling remittances to flow directly to remote rural communities and families. In terms of distribution, remittances have the potential to be more effective for poverty reduction than development aid.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative findings of this research it is evident that migration has a range of positive effects. There also are negative effects that can be addressed with supportive measures. It is further evident that the negative impacts are created mostly by existing policies and complicated procedures both in recipient countries and countries-of-origin. These policies and procedures make migration a high cost endeavor in terms of increasing the financial and social risks of migration. Many countries do not have sufficiently proactive policies to ensure that migration is gainful and safe. Therefore, supportive policies need to be put in place to facilitate migration and to ensure effective use of remittances and the new knowledge gained by those migrants who return to their country-of-origin.

The findings of this research lead us to argue that rural livelihoods are not static. The dynamism of migration is supported by several studies illustrating that rural areas in the GMS, as in other parts of the world, are undergoing deep transformations as a result of increasing integration into the regional and global economy. There is ample empirical research that highlights the nature and extent of the current rural transition. In this context, rural livelihoods are changing as households have devised combined livelihood strategies that go beyond farming. In many parts of the world, rural livelihoods have diverged to the extent that farming has become one activity among many, often a minor one. This is partly due to the emergence of rural-based alternative opportunities and occupations. Diversification can strengthen livelihoods through helping households to increase incomes, and improve skills and natural resource management, as well as cope with adversity and reduce risk (Ellis and Allison 2004). Diversification, thus, is playing a significant role in poverty alleviation. Migration is chosen by many rural

households as one important mean to diversify opportunities and build local resilience that acts to enhance livelihoods. We, therefore, argue that rural development requires new thinking in combination with revitalized strategies and supporting policies to incorporate international migration remittances and trans-border livelihoods.

List of terminologies

<i>"Capacity building"</i>	Building capacity of governments and civil society through strengthening their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
<i>"Certificate of identity"</i>	A document (other than a passport) issued by a government to an individual in order to facilitate his/her entry into or exit from the country.
<i>"Check point"</i>	A location (on the land border or at an airport or seaport) where persons are stopped by border officials for inspection and clearance, in order to enter the State.
<i>"Cross-border migration"</i>	Movement of people from one country to neighboring countries across borders
<i>"Dependants"</i>	Immediate relatives of the principal migrant who are normally admitted in the same migration category as that person. Although the definition of immediate relative varies from country to country, the spouse and minor children of a principal migrant usually qualify as dependants.
<i>"Deportation"</i>	The act of a State in the exercise of its sovereignty in removing an alien from its territory to a certain place after refusal of admission or termination of permission to remain.
<i>"Detention"</i>	Restriction on freedom of movement, usually through enforced confinement, of an individual by government authorities.
<i>"Diaspora"</i>	Refers to any people or ethnic population that leave their traditional ethnic homelands, being dispersed throughout other parts of the world.
<i>"Displaced person"</i>	A person who flees his/her State or community due to fear or dangers other than those which would make him/her a refugee.
<i>"Economic migrant"</i>	A person leaving his/her habitual place of residence to settle outside his/her country of origin in order to improve his/her quality of life. This term may be used to distinguish from refugees fleeing persecution, and is also used to refer to persons attempting to enter a country without legal permission and/or by using asylum procedures without bona fide cause. It also applies to persons settling outside their country of origin for the duration of an agricultural season, appropriately called seasonal workers.
<i>"Emigration"</i>	The act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settle in another.

<i>"Exploitation"</i>	The act of taking advantage of something or someone, in particular the act of taking unjust advantage of another for one's own benefit.
<i>"Forced migration"</i>	General term used to describe a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes.
<i>"Formal channel"</i>	Migration through legal channel. In Myanmar case, migration with passports issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs is formal channel.
<i>"Human smuggling"</i>	Facilitation of movement of people through non-legal or informal channel
<i>"Immigration"</i>	A process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement.
<i>"Informal channel"</i>	Channels through which migrants go to various destination countries illegally. In Myanmar case, cross-border migration with short-term border pass without returning after its expiry is also informal and illegal way of migration
<i>"Internal or domestic migration"</i>	Movement of people from one place to another within the country
<i>"Internally displaced persons or IDPs"</i>	Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.
<i>"International migration"</i>	Movement of persons who leave their country of origin, or the country of habitual residence, or establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another country. This includes movement of people from one country to neighboring countries across borders
<i>"Irregular migrant"</i>	Someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe a country's admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country. It is also called clandestine/ illegal/ undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation.

<i>"Irregular migration"</i>	Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries it is illegal entry, stay or work in a country, meaning that the migrant does not have the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations to enter, reside or work in a given country. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity is for example seen in the cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfill the administrative requirements for leaving the country. There is, however, a tendency to restrict the use of the term "illegal migration" to cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.
<i>"Labor migration"</i>	Movement of persons from their home State to another State for the purpose of employment.
<i>"Migrant flow"</i>	The number of migrants counted as moving or being authorized to move, to or from a country to access employment or to establish themselves over a defined period of time.
<i>"Migrant stock"</i>	The number of migrants residing in a country at a particular point in time.
<i>"Migrant workers"</i>	A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.
<i>"Overstay"</i>	To remain in a country beyond the period for which entry was granted.
<i>"Passport"</i>	A government document identifying a person as a national of the issuing State, which is evidence of the holder's right to return to that State.
<i>"Push-pull factors"</i>	Migration is often analyzed in terms of the "push-pull model", which looks at the push factors, which drive people to leave their country and the pull factors, which attract them to new country.
<i>"Real income"</i>	Income of individuals or nations after adjusting for inflation. It is calculated by subtracting inflation from the nominal income.
<i>"Receiving country" or "host country" or "destination country"</i>	The country that is a destination for migratory flows (legal or illegal).

<i>"Refugee"</i>	Any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.
<i>"Refugees"</i>	Foreign persons granted refugee status either at the time of admission or before admission. This category therefore includes foreign persons granted refugee status while abroad and entering to be resettled in the receiving country as well as persons granted refugee status on a group basis upon arrival in the country.
<i>"Regular migration"</i>	Migration that occurs through recognized, legal channels.
<i>"Remittance"</i>	Monies earned or acquired by migrants that are transmitted back to their country of origin.
<i>"Return migrant"</i>	A person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country. This return may or may not be voluntary.
<i>"Seasonal migrant workers"</i>	Persons employed by a country other than their own for only part of a year because the work they perform depends on seasonal conditions. They are subcategory of foreign migrant workers.
<i>"Sending country" or "source country" or "country of origin"</i>	The country that is a source of migratory flows (legal or illegal)
<i>"Trafficking in persons or human trafficking"</i>	It is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
<i>"Transit country"</i>	The country through which migratory flows (legal or illegal) move.
<i>"Working permit"</i>	A legal document giving authorization required for employment of migrant workers in the host country.

Map: Migration Flows within the GMS and from the GMS



1. Introduction

The trend towards regionalization has been solidifying over the past few decades. This is evident in the numerous bilateral and regional agreements on trade and investment. Regional economic integration has significantly contributed to economic growth and reduced overall levels of poverty in the Mekong countries. While economic prosperity has created economic opportunities in the region, it has also served as a “pulling factor” for labor migration. As natural resources are being reallocated to capitalize on greater regional economic and investment liberalization and integration, there has been much less emphasis on the labor mobility and economic migration. Migration represents a coping strategy for the rural poor to enhance their livelihoods and take advantage of emerging employment opportunities.

The nature and pace of migration is fundamentally changing social structures in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). In the Mekong region, it is clear that migration is becoming a major strategy for rural households, in particular, to diversify the portfolio of their livelihood assets and activities. Diversification can strengthen livelihoods, help to cope with adversity, smooth consumption, and contribute to improving income and labor opportunities.

It is certain that cross-border migration in the GMS will accelerate in the context of increasing international connectivity. In the coming years, there will likely be a steady increase of non-agricultural employment options in the GMS. Increasingly, rural farmers will seek occupational and income diversifications in pursuit of improved livelihoods. In this light, the region is in need of proactive policies and practices to facilitate diverse and dynamic livelihood strategies that are being pursued particularly by the poor.

2. Literature review

2.1 Literature on migration and its links to sustainable livelihoods

This review presents a summary of the existing literature that informs a research project on migration and sustainable livelihoods in the GMS countries, focusing on Thailand and its three neighboring countries—Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. The

purpose of this review is to highlight the state of knowledge on migration and sustainable livelihoods. It also identifies major gaps and identifies promising directions for further research. This literature review consists of two sections. The first covers the theme of migration in relation to sustainable livelihoods in general. The second deals with this theme with a focus on the Mekong region.

2.1.1 Migration, and population movement—under researched topics

Until recently, migration has been considered undesirable for all; migrants themselves, their families and the sending and receiving societies. Migration has been portrayed as causing negative impacts in the sending areas in term of loss of labor and capital. However, recent empirical studies have shown that migration could have a range of positive effects. Today, we understand that migration and remittances provide flexibility in livelihood options, and returning migrations might enrich the stocks of human capital, social, and cultural capital of origin communities by bringing with them links to trans-national networks (Adger 2000:359). In response, development agencies have made more explicit efforts to address migration in development policies.

Despite a recent surge of interest in international migration and its remittances, research on human mobility and labor is still largely lacking. In De Haan's view, many studies on sustainable development ignore the complex reality of migration, possibly seriously influencing the results.¹ Many of the studies that do try to factor in the effects of migration often fall short of capturing the dynamics of this complex issue. Some studies use 'stocks', rather than 'flows' of migrants as an indicator to analyze the impacts of migration on economic convergence across regions, which conceals movements of in- and out-migration by the same people. This type of study conceptualizes migration as *one-time event migrants*. As a result, there are fewer studies conducted in areas of origin of migrants. This is partly why there is a lack of understanding surrounding the effects of migration on the areas of origin, including impacts on agriculture and natural resources.

¹ De Haan presents two recent examples: two studies on poverty reduction in India have ignored the role of remittances, possibly underestimating the poverty reducing impact of urban-based economic growth (Ravallion and Datt 1996; Besley et al. 2004).

2.1.2 Role of labor migration and population mobility in rural development policy

Sedentary bias about rural population

Conventional rural development policies have pursued the reduction of migration. This is based on the assumption that out-migration from rural areas is caused by external pressures, and out of distress. However, empirical studies (Mosse et al. 2002) show combinations of reasons for out-migration. Much of the rural development research and policy assumes the view that rural dwellers are “attached” to their place and occupation, small-scale farming, and traditional ways. This orientation is called the *subsistence and sedentary bias* by some scholars. In the history of research and policymaking in developing countries, there has been an entrenched antipathy to the aspects of rural livelihoods that were spatially dynamic and non-agricultural

The bias in favor of permanent settlement (that is, against migration) or sedentaristic' assumption has been a crucial limitation of conventional development research (McDowell and de Haan 1997). This bias assumes that movement is a rupture to normal patterns of society. Instead, we argue that in order to allow a deeper understanding of rural development, we must take migration as the rule rather than the exception.

Reality of rural change

Several studies have shown that many rural areas are undergoing deep transformation. Rigg summarizes the changes that we should expect as the following:

- A shift of the labor force out of agricultural pursuits
- A loosening of the links between land and wealth
- An increase in the role played by labor earnings in determining household income
- An increase in the share of non-farm income in total income
- A movement of people from rural to urban areas
- a change in agricultural methods and cropping patterns

These changes urge a rethinking of rural development. Bryceson puts forward the argument that poverty in rural areas of Africa can be systematically addressed through a *reorientation of livelihoods* and not just through a revitalization of agriculture. These scholars contend that policies need to recognize that it may be just as important to help engineer the means for some rural people to extract themselves from farming as it is to provide the agricultural support (seeds, fertilizers, credit, extension, marketing) to extend and intensify farming systems as a way of increasing production (Rigg 1994:184).

This argument is a challenge to the conventional rural development policymaking which has invested so much energy in agriculture and farming in rural development. Rigg acknowledges that to challenge localism in rural development is a contentious position to take, especially for those who have become comfortable with the idea that the key to poverty is a boosting agricultural production and, therefore, rural incomes.

2.1.3 Migration as one strategy for diversifying livelihoods

It is the perspective of sustainable livelihoods that allows us to see migration as a strategy chosen by some rural population. Livelihood is sustainable “when it can cope with, and recover from stresses, able to maintain its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base” (Chambers and Conway 1992; Carney 1998). Scholars have argued that migration decisions often are part of family strategies to raise income, spread risk, provide capital for investment, and loosen constraints in the sending areas. Thus, the decision to migrate is not exclusively taken by an individual, but rather in the context of the family and the household. Migration is seen as a form of portfolio diversification by families (Stark 1991). The improvement of livelihoods can consist of intensification of agriculture, diversification of employment among which migration is one. In the context of increased regional economic integration, households may combine different strategies, and it is likely that the strategies affect each other. Migration is likely to affect the possibilities of agriculture intensification because out-migration can affect agricultural practices. While at the same time, remittance can change these agriculture practices.

a. Migration as “Portfolio diversification” by families

A standard model established in development economics focuses on the individuals as rational actors, but the ‘new economics of migration’ emphasize the family as unit of analysis. Even though the entities that engage in migration are often individual agents, the notion of individuals optimizing behavior has limited explanatory value. The family can be conceptualized as a coalition in which members share the costs and benefits of migration. Migration can be seen as a form of portfolio diversification by families. In this view, remittances exemplify the ‘inter-temporal contractual arrangement’ between migrant and family.

The idea of household livelihood diversification deserves a closer analysis. A number of studies in various parts of the world have shown that diversification can strengthen livelihoods, help households cope in adversity, smooth consumption, income and labor requirements, result in higher income, improve skills and improve uses of natural resources (Ellis and Allison 2004)—thus contributing to poverty alleviation. In the context of South Sumatra, Leinbach and Watkins (1998) view migration decisions as made by the family with a view to maintaining stability of income. Thus, remittances become “not a casual product of migration but an explicit and integral part of a family’s economic survival strategies.” Fall (1998: 142) views this as a “collective strategy” among rural households in Senegal, who sought to diversify incomes sources and thus spread risks in a context where agriculture is in deep crisis.

b. Mobility has become a very important part of rural people’s livelihoods

In many parts of the world, rural livelihoods have diverged to the extent that farming has become one activity among many, often a minor one. This is partly due to the emergence of rural-based alternative opportunities and occupations. There have been numerous empirical researches that help illustrate this transition. These include the rural industrialization in the Philippines based on metal craft manufacturing (Hayami et al. 1998), study of artificial fruit and flower production in northern Thailand, large-scale garment and textile factories in rural West Java (Wolf 1990, 1992) to the craft-based activities described by Parnwell (1990, 1992, 1993, 1994) in the Northeastern Thailand

and village enterprises that can be found throughout rural China. A clearly emerging picture here is that there is a great deal more going on in rural spaces than farming. Rigg points out that it is not only a case of a diversification of rural-based opportunities. Even more important has been a progressive *delocalization* of non-farm work. Household livelihoods are now based on activities that are spatially far removed from the village. This is certainly based on higher levels of mobility (Rigg Laos YEAR: 151). Mobility has become a very important part of people's livelihoods.

c. Remittances

In recent years, the focus of the thinking on the impacts of migration has been the question of remittances. Economic theories tend to have rather different interpretations of remittances as they have of migration more generally. De Haan provides a useful summary to review the historical shift in scholarship in the past forty years. He notes that the evaluation of the impact of remittances has shifted since the 1970s, when stress was placed on the 'conspicuous consumption' of migrants and their relatives, towards more positive views upon the *conditions needed to secure the investment of remittances*. Internationally, the emphasis has shifted to focus on the increasing amount remittances and how they have far outstripped official development aid. Authors that have emphasized the lack of productive investment include Oberai and Singh. They concluded that only 6% of remittances flowing into the Indian Punjab were used for productive investment (though remittances did improve distribution of income). Literature that emphasizes productive investments includes Papademetriou and Martin (1991) and various publications by Adams (1991, 1996: 149-70, 1998), Durand et al. (1996a, 1996b). This literature shows how income from migration stimulates economic activity, both directly and indirectly. It illustrates how migration leads to significantly higher levels of employment, investment, and income. Levels of remittances vary widely—depending on various factors such as accessibility of the home village, employment opportunities, costs of living, ease of remitting, and the 'orientation' of the migrant. Finally, it is important to point out that even very small amounts of remittances can be vital for poor people, and their food security.

There is no doubt that remittances can have negative and positive consequences—evidence suggests that the way remittances are used depends on the form of migration, the characteristics of the migrants and those who stay behind, and conditions for use of remittances and returning migrants.

2.1.4 Migration and poverty reduction—context dependent

From the literature review, there are many contradictory findings about the relationship between poverty and migration, which leads us to assume that the correlation is heavily dependent on the context. De Haan (1997) argues that the link between the two are context dependent, complex, multi-sectoral, that assessments depend on indicator of well-being chosen, and different effects possibly off-set each other. McDowell (1997) also stresses that the contribution of migration to livelihoods depends on various factors, including “the seasonality of movement, the length of time spent away, assets, and social structures and institutions allowing for women (if men migrate) and others to pursue activities previously reserved for men and household heads.”

Difficult generalizations

Reviews of migration literature consistently stress that migration is so complex that it is “impossible and perhaps even meaningless” to formulate generalizations about the impacts of migration. Few straightforward conclusions or easy generalizations emerge. However, some conclusions can be drawn (de Haan 1997). Recent scholarship pays more attention to the notion of household strategy and positive impacts of migration. Ellis (1998) points out that diversification may occur either as a deliberate household strategy, or as an involuntary response to crisis. It is found that migration can diminish and accentuate rural inequality. It can act both as a safety valve for the rural poor and as a means of accumulation for the rural rich. It can benefit farm investment and productivity or impoverish agriculture by withdrawing critical resources (Ellis 1998).

While remittance has emerged as a major development issue in the recent years, there are still few empirical studies tracing the effects of remittances on villages of origin, even in areas with long histories of emigration. The existing studies thus far present

mixed findings. Some studies show that migrants contribute to building of schools or other community activities (Russell et al. 1990). For example, migration can help to alleviate unemployment (Ghosh 1992). At the same time, other studies show that out-migration lead to a shortage of labor. To conclude, it can be said that effect of migration is understudied and so far researchers have learned that migration's effects are very varied.

There does not seem to be much we can generalize about concerning the role of remittances on enhancing efficiency in agriculture either. Migration has certainly contributed to the spread of technology and knowledge for agriculture for centuries. Lakshmanasamy's (1990) literature review concludes that migration and remittances modernize the rural sector. This modernization chiefly refers to the increase of production due to increasing technological and institutional changes in the agricultural sector. The positive impacts of migration and remittance are, nevertheless, contingent; they depend on many factors including "seasonality of movement, educational levels of migrants, length of time spent away, assets, and social structures and institutions allowing women and others to pursue activities previously reserved for men and household heads" (de Haan 1997)

2.1.5 Two general issues for further research

While it is difficult to make general statements on the linkages between migration and poverty reduction, there are three general issues that should be explored in future research: 1) the role of social networks; and 2) inequality of access to migrate 3) How does labour migration change rural livelihood, especially its implication for agriculture, water resources development plan and the link to poverty reduction plan ?

Social networks play a crucial role in facilitating migration

An important general finding on the migration–development links is found in the *role of networks* for facilitating migration. Migration streams are highly segmented (and how they 'mature' over time), and migrants tend to come from specific areas. As McDowell (1997) points out, migrants come from a variety of districts, not necessarily the poorest.

Some areas have developed a tradition of migration, and once certain patterns of migration exist, they do not change easily. Networks facilitate migration even when government policies are specifically intended to restrict urban migration. This notion also explains the discrete manner in which villagers from one locality are channeled into particular jobs and factories (Hugo 1997: 290-92; Rigg 1997: 212-214). People continue to maintain strong links with their areas of origin over extended periods of time, and family and other personal networks are crucial in maintaining links between areas of origin and destination (McDowell 1997: 15). Inter-personal networks founded on geography, ethnicity, kinship, friendship, membership, patronage and clientage mould the human landscape (Rigg 1997: 212).

Inequality persists

The importance of networks raises the question of access, and importantly concerns surrounding *equality of access*. Empirical studies show that being linked to a network is crucial for the facilitation of migration, but the link or access is not accessible to everyone. Absence of certain types of social capital—for example networks or contacts with prospective employers—may preclude some communities, households or individuals from having the option to migrate. De Haan (1997) points out that the poorest, least skilled, least physically capable and without networks tend to migrate less. There is some evidence that the landless are less likely to migrate because they cannot afford the necessary investment—but this also seems quite dependant on the specific context (McDowell 1997). When the poorest migrate, it tends to be a survival strategy, whereby “migration may reinforce exploitative structures like debt-bondage relationships” (de Haan 1997). It is important to recall that there is a major knowledge gap regarding the poorest and migration. Conventional research methods such as surveys and census are likely to fail to capture the types of migration undertaken by the poorest migrants (de Haan 1997). In general most migrants are not from the poorest regions, usually not the poorest in the areas of origin, and often slightly better educated or skilled. Further, migration patterns are structured by social divides; such as caste in India, or religion and ethnicity in Vietnam.

It is important to note that migration and remittances can lead to increased inequality within a country. This problem was highlighted in the Indian Village Studies project in the 1970s, which showed that rural–urban migration did not tend to equalize incomes *between* or *within* regions. A study by Islam (1991) concluded that the negative effects of migration to the Gulf from Chittagong in Bangladesh outweighed positive ones: land became concentrated in the hand of migrant families, who turned into non-farmers, and further contributed to an overall decrease in production. Land prices went up, and so did the cost of labor, though not high enough to retain labor in agriculture. McDowell remarks that differential access to non-farm income and urban remittances lead to a polarization of landholdings (1997: 18). However, here again it is too often crude to make generalizations. Research by Stark (1991) in Mexico, and recently Adams (1996) in Pakistan has shown that international migration increases inequality, whereas national migration decreases it.

The unit of analysis matters, too, as increased male income does not necessarily translate into increased well-being of women. At the same time, some studies indicate that the feminization of work has resulted in higher unemployment among men with low educational attainment level.

2.2 Migration in the GMS: Thailand and its Neighboring Countries

The above section reviewed the general literature on migration and sustainable livelihoods, the following section will now focus on Thailand and its neighboring countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). The GMS is composed of six countries through which the Mekong River flows, i.e., Cambodia, China (Yunnan and Guangxi provinces), Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The total population of GMS countries is 260 million, Although economic disparity between GMS countries is very high, the average pace of development in GMS countries is significant. Cross-border migration between GMS countries, especially between Thailand, Myanmar, and Lao PDR has been in existence since time immemorial.

Despite efforts by GMS governments to regularize migration, migration has been occurring in the GMS with a great momentum largely based on informal and irregular channels. There has been little knowledge and few statistics on this rapidly increasing phenomenon. Systems to regularize irregular migration tend to be unattractive due to high costs and complicated processes. Due to a lack of legal status, most migrants are vulnerable to various forms of abuses in the host countries. Based in negative perceptions of migration, most GMS countries lack specific and explicit policy measures to take advantage of the opportunities provided by migration, while simultaneously mitigating its possible negative impacts. Moreover, a subregional approach to migration is only beginning to emerge in the wake of several migration crises. Since Thailand is the biggest receiving country in the GMS, there is a growing body of literature on the possible benefits and costs of migration.

Research undertaken for the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI 2002) estimated that the removal of all foreign migrant workers in Thailand would lead to a decline of around 0.5% of GDP per year. This, in turn, would lead to increased wages of unskilled workers by 4% and decreased wages of skilled workers by approximately 4%. The Thai National Economic and Social Development Board (2003) estimated that competition from migrant workers would lead to decreased real income of the poorest 60% of households in Thailand by 0.4% and increased real income of the richest 40% by 0.3%.

With a view to regularize labor migration in the subregion, bilateral Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) were signed between Thailand and Laos, Thailand and Cambodia, and Thailand and Myanmar in October 2002, May 2003, and June 2003 respectively. Another serious issue in the subregion is trafficking in persons, especially from underdeveloped countries to more developed countries like Thailand and China. As a main receiving country, Thailand initiated a subregional process to address issues of trafficking in persons, the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT). An MOU was signed by six participating governments in October 2004 in Yangon, Myanmar containing priority actions to address human trafficking.

In this section, we will first review domestic migration within Thailand, its out-migration and then turn to cross-border migration into Thailand from the neighboring countries of Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar.

2.2.1 Thailand: Rural change and migration

2.2.1.1 Thailand: Internal migration

It is well established that rural-urban migration has been very high in Thailand for the past several decades. This has been most significant in Thailand's poor and environmentally marginal Northeastern region where there is a long tradition of migrating for work. In his study of 97 villages across the province of Yasothon, Funabashi writes that in most village older people and young children are conspicuous, while it is rare to see young people" (1996: 108). There are numerous studies of domestic migration within Thailand. Rigg (2000) presents an excellent summary in *"More Than the Soil: Rural Change in Southeast Asia"*. In this review, following Rigg's critical assessment, some of the problematic assumptions that are common in the studies will be explored —namely the use of statistical data.

Reality of migration and unreliable official statistics

While it is abundantly clear that migration is common in Thailand, country-wide statistics released by national agencies (and international agencies that depend on them) present a picture of the Northeast that is stubbornly rural and agricultural. Empirical studies conducted at a local level show a fundamentally different picture; they show that employment and residency patterns have undergone significant change. Rigg questions the national statistics and asks how this misrepresentation has arisen. He identifies five critical areas to consider to explain the distortion: 1) household registration systems in the region are inadequate given the high levels of mobility typical of many population groups; 2) labor force surveys are inaccurate; 3) definitions of rural and urban tend to be too static, failing to pick up the extension of urban forms into rural areas; 4) the categories used—rural/urban, agriculture/industry/services—are insufficiently nuanced to take into account of the nature of lives and livelihoods in

modern Southeast Asia; and 5) these works ignore or play down the growing role of rural industries (Rigg 2000: 64-65).

Household registration systems and labor force surveys

One important point made by Rigg is that household registration systems in this region of Thailand largely overestimate the population living in rural areas and thus also underestimate the numbers living in urban areas. There are two core reasons for this state of affairs. First, the registration systems make the implicit assumption that people are relatively static and, that when they do move, they move on a permanent basis. And second, these systems are very bureaucratic, inhibiting people from registering a change of residence once they have made a move.

The registration records in Thailand, for the above reason, appear to not reflect the dynamism of migration. Migrant workers who move to the city rarely register a change of residence. One reason is that they do not necessarily plan to make a long-term stay and thus do not consider registration necessary. Another reason is the bureaucratic complexities. And for those who are tenants—as many industrial workers are—there is the added requirement of ensuring their landlords enroll and support their application (Fairclough 1995: 17). Taken together, several million urban workers are registered as living in rural areas (Rigg 2000: 68).

This also points to the seasonal variations missed by survey unless they are conducted at different times of the year. In Thailand, the labor force survey of 1998 shows that the proportion of the total labor force employed in agriculture rose from 39% in May to a high of 51% in August. This reflects the movement of people in and out of villages throughout the year. May marks the end of the dry season when in most parts of Thailand rice cultivation is impossible, while August is the peak period for rice agriculture (Rigg 2000: 65).

Post-agrarian village?

In Molle's (2001) detailed survey of three villages in the 3 central provinces in Thailand (Suphanburi, Lopburi and Ayutthaya) undertaken between 1998 and 2000 shows that

only 43-60% of households have farming as their *main* occupation. Molle concludes that the “overall picture emerging is that the income from crop production is not likely to exceed one half of the total income” (Molle et al 2001: 29 and 49).

The ‘post-agrarian’ rural society is one in which livelihood activities are increasingly disconnected from the land. Firmly founded assumptions about the relationship between land and livelihoods have been challenged. The assumption, for example, in which large landowners will be better off than small landowners, no longer stands up to scrutiny (Rigg Laos 2000) Molle concludes that there is a strong case to be made that it is misleading to judge the precariousness of small farms based solely on farm size: “intensification (triple cropping), diversification (high value-added crops), multiple-activity and multi-incomes (including remittances) outline a complex family economy which cannot easily be grasped” (Molle and Thippawal Srijantr 1999)

The abandonment of farming may be an indicator of economic hardship and the poverty-creating side-effects of agricultural modernization. Conversely, it may be the outcome of the higher educational achievements of the children of middle and rich farmers who are then able to access higher return non-farm work (Rigg Laos 2000 41). Rigg stresses that there are many villages in the region where livelihoods remain sharply focused on the farm, but that the *trend* is towards greater “plural-activity, occupational multiplicity, de-agrarianization, and the delocalization of livelihoods. In such a context, the role and significance of agriculture and farming is changing. This change is highly significant when it comes to understanding livelihoods and the production and reproduction of poverty

2.2.1.2 Thailand: International out-migration

While domestic migration has been highly significant, Thailand is a large receiving as well as sending country in the GMS. It was estimated in 2001 that 261,626 Thai nationals were living in developed countries, such as the United States, Europe and Japan, with 66,243 Thai students studying at various educational institutes in 2000 (Hugo 2005). Estimates are that in 2007, there are 161,917 Thai workers officially deployed in various overseas destinations, mainly in the Middle East (accounting for

21% of total Thai workers officially deployed abroad), such as Israel and Asia (accounting for 67%), such as Taiwan (Thailand Overseas Employment Administration (TOEA) 2008).

2.2.1.3 Cross-border migration to Thailand

Limited and unreliable data on cross-border migration

Sustainable livelihood literature on cross-border migration in mainland Southeast Asia is scant, and our knowledge is very limited. A useful starting point for cross-border research in Thailand is the overview by Huguet and Sureeporn (Huguet 1994). Huguet and Sureeporn provide a summary of the existing information, especially statistical figures. Their report covers a wide range of international migration—from the documented migration of professionals to undocumented laborers, and displaced persons to refugees and asylum seekers. Since most studies tend to focus on one kind of migration and one kind of population, this comprehensive report presents a very useful overview. Their report benefited from the data generated by the registration of migrants implemented in July 2004 by Thailand's Ministry of Interior and the subsequent process of issuing work permits. The following highlights the major findings.

Number of alien workers in Thailand

Thailand, as one of the most developed countries in the GMS, has become a major receiving country for most cross-border labor migrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. During the registration drive in Thailand in 2004, 1.28 million migrants were registered out of which approximately three-quarters were from Myanmar. Out of 1.28 million registered migrants that include dependents of workers, 849,552 received work permits. A Cabinet Decision in May 2005 allowed those migrants who had previously registered with the Ministry of Interior to apply for work permits valid up to 30 June 2006. However, the number of work permits issued went down to 705,293 in 2005. In 2006, 460,014 work permits were renewed and 208,562 new work permits were issued. In 2007, 532,305 migrants renewed their work permits out of which 91% were from Myanmar, 5% from Cambodia, and 4% from Laos. However, the official registration data

does not reflect actual numbers of migrant workers in Thailand, since there still are many migrants working in many places in Thailand without any legal documentation or registration.

In principle, migrants with work permits are covered by the same labor regulations and standards as Thai nationals. However, these work permits are only for a specific employer. While children of registered migrants have the right to attend Thai schools, it is thought that only a very small percentage of international migrants in Thailand actually receive any formal or informal education. Many of the older children are believed to be working without permission and often in exploitative situations. Huguet and Sureeporn (1994) stress the unreliability of the macro-level statistical figures for irregular migration, emphasizing that there is no reliable estimate of the number of persons living in Thailand with irregular immigration status. These include persons overstaying valid entry visas and those who have entered from nearby countries but have not registered with the Thai Ministry of Interior. It is believed that the total number in these categories could equal hundreds of thousands.

Current estimates have such a wide range and it is rarely explained how the figures have been derived. It is not surprising, thus, that the number of unregistered migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar are the least reliable. Extensive interviews with officials from the Ministry of Interior, the Chamber of Commerce and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) did not yield any estimate with a scientific base. The Ministry of Interior officially estimated that only about 100,000 migrants did not register. Huguet and Sureeporn (DATE) give a conservative estimate of 200,000. A survey by World Vision in Chiang Mai, Tak and Ranong provinces notes that about 12% of migrant workers could be trafficked into those provinces for employment. Over 5% of the respondents in the survey reported that they had been forced into prostitution. The reliability of this survey work is not assessed. However, it is clear nonetheless that because of the large numbers of migrant workers in Thailand, even low percentages of trafficking implies that many tens of thousands of migrants are likely to have been trafficked. There are various levels and kinds of risks for migrants in Thailand. Huguet and Sureeporn (DATE) urge that attention focus in particular on female domestic

workers, as they are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because they work in relative isolation in individual homes.

2.3 Rural change in the neighboring countries and migration

2.3.1 Cambodia's migration flows

Cambodia, being a sending as well as receiving country in the GMS, is faced not only with its out-migrants going to Thailand, but also with in-migrants from Vietnam. The main destination for Cambodia's out-migrants is Thailand, with other primary destinations including Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Middle Eastern countries, and Taiwan. Cambodia has signed an MOU on labor migration with Thailand, a labor agreement with Korea (with an employment permit system), and an agreement with Malaysia (with recruitment procedures for Cambodian nationals employed in Malaysia). According to official registration data, Cambodian migrant workers are concentrated in fishing, agricultural, livestock rearing, and construction. There are about 10,000 regular and irregular Cambodian migrant workers in Malaysia (Bruno Maltoni, 2006) Situation report on international migration in East and Southeast Asia 2008), of which 6,637 were officially registered as of 2006, mainly in the construction, manufacturing and entertainment sectors (Dept of Statistics, Malaysia 2006). Most female Cambodian migrants are working as domestic workers in Malaysia. Cambodia is also receiving skilled migrant workers from China and Vietnam. It is estimated that there are about 1 million Vietnamese migrants in Cambodia, out of which around 70,000 were registered with the Cambodian government in 2002.

2.3.2 Myanmar's migration flows

Myanmar is a major sending country in the GMS and its migrants are concentrated mostly in Thailand and Malaysia. Other primary destinations include Japan, Korea, Middle Eastern countries, and Singapore. It is estimated that about 10% of Myanmar's population of around 50 million are international migrants currently working in various

destinations.² Although the majority of Myanmar migrants are economic migrants, there are about 140,000 refugees in Thailand, 10,000 Rohingya in Bangladesh, thousands of Chin refugees in Malaysia and hundreds in Japan.³ Among Myanmar migrants in Thailand, it is estimated that less than 10% did not obtain any legal documentation when entering Thailand. It is also estimated that there are about 2 million Myanmar migrants in Thailand under different categories of migration,⁴ of which 485,925 have work permits as of June 2007. Most Myanmar migrants are concentrated in fish processing, agriculture, and construction (Huguet and Punpuing 2005).

Another significant destination for Myanmar migrants is Malaysia. It is estimated that there are at least 0.5 to 1 million Myanmar regular and irregular migrants in Malaysia,⁵ out of which 99,020 are registered in Malaysia, accounting for about 5% of Malaysia's foreign migrant workers in 2006.⁶ Most migrants who have migrated to Thailand went through low-cost, illegal channels, whereas most of those who have migrated to Malaysia went through high-cost, legal channels. Thailand and Malaysia are major destinations for most unskilled Myanmar migrants because other recently popular destinations, such as Middle Eastern countries, require a certain level of skill. Regarding in-migration, as of 2005, there were 78,323 officially registered migrants in Myanmar, of which 43% is Chinese, 39% Indian, 4% Pakistani, and 1% Bangladeshi.⁷ However, it is estimated that there are about 250,000 Yunnan Chinese migrants in Mandalay, which is the third capital of Myanmar, and half of the population in Lashio, which is closer to the border to China, is Chinese.⁸ The Yunnan Chinese community in Mandalay is estimated to comprise about 20% of the population of almost 1 million,

² Situation report on international migration in East and South-East Asia, 2008

³ Asian Migration Center, 2004; Susan Banki, 2006, Burmese refugees in Tokyo: Livelihoods in the urban environment

⁴ Ana Revenga, Pierre Yves-Fallavier, Jennica Larrison, Carmen de Paz Nieves, 2006, Labor migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

⁵ Interview surveys with labor recruitment agencies in Myanmar

⁶ Department of Statistics, 2006, Malaysia.

⁷ Central Statistical Organization, Myanmar

⁸ Source: www.georgetown.edu/sfs/program/asia/burmaconference.htm

raising concerns among some local people about the role and extent of Chinese immigration, much of it illegal.⁹

2.3.3 Lao PDR migration flows

Lao PDR is a major sending country to Thailand. It is estimated that about 7% of its population was migratory in 2006.¹⁰ It is also estimated that at least half of the migration between Lao PDR and Thailand is irregular. Temporary and seasonal cross-border migration is also common and it was estimated in 2000 that the number of seasonal migrants was around 100,000.¹¹ During the registration process in 2004 in Thailand, 179,887 Lao migrants were registered, of which 105,259 were granted work permits. In a second round of registration in 2006, 22,848 Lao migrants were registered and 21,653 received work permits. However, about 20,000 Lao migrants renewed their work permits in 2007 (Thai Ministry of Labour 2007). Most female Lao migrants are domestic workers. Most Lao workers in Thailand are concentrated in the construction and agricultural sectors (Phetsiriseng 2001). Lao PDR also receives skilled in-migrants, mostly from China, and Vietnam.

Surveys conducted in Lao PDR by the International Labor Organization (ILO) have recently revealed that there is a clear increase in cross-border movements. In some areas, these movements are becoming 'normal' for many households and villages, rather than the exception. Also, cross-border migration seems to have escalated dramatically since the mid-1990s. Lao data and field surveys undertaken by the ILO indicate that the scale of human movement is even greater than that estimated by the authorities in Thailand. In Champassak province, illegal migration to Thailand quadrupled over the four years from 1996 to 2000 (from 2,000 to 8,000 persons). Rigg (2000) cites two other studies indicating the currently high level of mobility from Lao PDR to Thailand: a survey in 2001 in eight villages in the provinces of Xayabouri and

⁹ Myat Thein, Labor conditions in Myanmar, 17 November 2003

¹⁰ Ministry of Labor, Social Welfare and ILO, 2006, Labor migration survey in Khammouane, Savannakhet and Champasack provinces.

¹¹ Ana Revenga, Pierre Yves-Fallavier, Jennica Larrison, Carmen de Paz Nieves, 2006, Labor migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Saravan, and a survey conducted in 2000 in 13 villages in seven districts of the border provinces of Khammouan, Savannakhet and Champassak (Phetsiriseng 2001). The first survey found that in Saravan between 12 and 20% of villagers had worked or were working in neighboring Thailand, with the figure in Xayabouri amounting to 10%. The second study showed similar levels of mobility with 3-12% of the population working in Thailand at the time of the survey. Significantly, there were more female than male migrants recorded in both studies. It has been suggested that in certain villages in some areas like in lowland portions of Savannakhet province—migration to Thailand has become so much a part of the operation of the village, both in social and economic terms, that it may be viewed as having become “institutionalized” within the village setting (Wille 2001: 26-7). Rigg discusses the progressive improvements made to Lao road infrastructure as a significant factor in facilitating migration.

Lao PDR is becoming increasingly integrated into the wider Greater Mekong Subregion and the dynamic human resource context that characterizes the region. It is tempting to view integration as creating a two-speed Lao PDR, in which the borderland provinces close to the Mekong River and Thailand are increasingly tied to the wider regional context, while the pace of change in more remote areas is slower.

2.4 Policy implications

It is evident based on empirical studies in Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand that migration is not the *exception*, but increasingly the *rule*. While there may be some exceptional cases in some countries that do not represent population and migration as the whole, this is the trend that is identified by the empirical evidence. That is to say that migration has been increasing along with the development of economic integration in the GMS. Hence, governments of sending and receiving countries in the GMS need to strengthen their cooperation to maximize the positive effects of migration and, at least, to minimize the negative impacts so as to respect the human rights of migrants, irrespective of their legal status.

From the perspective of sending countries, there is a need to better understand rural livelihood transitions and the role of migration and its remittance on poverty alleviation

and rural development. To this end, pro-active policies should be aimed to facilitate *legal* and safe migration. The evidence is that stringent controls serve to encourage *illegal* migration. Facilitating more accessible, transparent and affordable legal migration would provide a disincentive for illegal migration. This course of action, however, requires a great deal of cooperation and understanding with receiving countries. Sending countries often see migration as an issue of 'brain drain', whereby they fear losing valuable human resources by facilitating migration. This problem is more evident in the second stage of migration in which more skilled workers leave the country. However, in the third stage of migration, the segments of the population with greater knowledge, experience and exposure return to their country-of-origin to contribute to investment and economic development. Myanmar and Lao PDR are currently in the first stage of migration, in which the majority of out-migrants are unskilled workers seeking higher-paid jobs from which they can gain knowledge and experience, as well as students studying abroad. Hence, this type of migration should be viewed more as *future 'brain gains'*. While Thailand is considered to be in the third stage of migration, in which increased outflows of skilled workers and inflows of both skilled and unskilled workers is evident, most workers going abroad have much to gain from receiving countries, which will increase their capacity to contribute when they return to Thailand.

From the perspective of receiving countries, the majority of unskilled foreign migrants from less developed countries are employed in work that is not found favorable by locals. As such, migrants can be considered to be complimentary actors in the process of economic development. Further restrictions and policies that discourage migration and provide disincentives for migration can act to stimulate illegal migration. It is important for the governments of receiving countries to create a win-win situation for migrants to work legally and safely, thereby allowing them to contribute positively towards economic development. First and foremost, the emphasis should be on ensuring proper documentation. However, the documentation process is constrained by many factors. Hence, it is important that the documentation process should be as accessible and affordable as possible.

3. Objective

The objective of this study is to achieve a better understanding of the impacts of migration on the livelihood of people in rural areas in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The study analyses the socio-economic and environmental impacts of migration in order to craft appropriate policy recommendations. The aim of the research is to provide analysis to respective governments, relevant actors and stakeholders to foster development plans and policies that take into account the social implications and human security concerns of migration in the GMS.

The specific objectives of the project are to identify and better understand the following aspects:

- Role/impacts of migration (both positive and negative) in livelihood diversification among the rural poor
- Impacts of migration on sending countries: economic, social and environment impacts at the household and community level
- Role of gender within the household by examining any discrepant impacts based on gender
- Functions of relevant institutions (formal and informal)
- Entry points for pro-poor policy measures and interventions

4. Methodology

Since most research and surveys in the region focuses on the working conditions and livelihood of migrants in receiving countries, this study focuses on the economic, social and environmental impacts of migration on the migrants' left-behind households in sending countries. The study is based on various qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analyses are conducted from village surveys, interview surveys on local authorities, migrants, returned migrants and their family members and focus group discussions with selective households. Quantitative analyses are based on primary

data collection through questionnaire surveys on members of case and control households through step-by-step survey process as follows.

Firstly, literature reviews and policy analysis was conducted for the four GMS countries included in this study (Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand). This part of the research allowed for the identification of the legal framework and stakeholder institutions involved in migration. It also revealed the research and policy gaps related to migration issues in each of the countries included in this research.

Secondly, pilot projects were conducted by project teams in each country in order to identify strategic study sites for surveys. Consideration was given to many factors, including migration routes, type of migrants, and socio-economic and environmental conditions. Study sites include a site close to a border area, a site on the way to a border area (although not close to it), and a site far from a border area.

In Myanmar, the following seven study sites were selected: Yonezingyi, Thandaing and YonzinLay in the dry zone (far from any border area), Mawlamyaing and Zinkyeik in Mon state (on the way to two border areas) and Tachilake and Muse (border areas with Thailand and China respectively).

In Lao PDR, three study sites were selected: Pakthapane, Thongkham, and Dontong villages.

In Thailand, three provinces in the Northeastern part of Thailand, the poorest region of the country, were selected: Udon Thani, Yasothorn and Khon Kaen provinces. These provinces are among the top five provinces in Thailand with the highest number of international out migration. The villages of each province with the highest number of registered migrant were selected to be surveyed.

Thirdly, the same questionnaire (except for some country specific questions) was developed for all countries in order to ensure comparability of survey results. The questionnaire covers the demographic status of each household member, status of household member migrants currently working away, views of each household member who has past migration experience, perception of each household member regarding

the economic and social impacts of migration, household spending patterns, and household socio-economic status.

Fourthly, questionnaire surveys, interview surveys and focus group discussions were conducted in each selected study site of each country simultaneously from July to September 2008. During the surveys, a stratified sampling method was used in selecting villages as strategic study sites. A random sampling method was used in selecting sample case groups (households with at least one migrant household member currently working away) and control groups (households without a migrant household member). Fifty to fifty ratios between numbers of households in the case and control groups (or lesser number of households in the case group) were maintained in order to strengthen the statistical results. If the number of households in the control group was insufficient in a selected study site, a village with an adequate number of households in the area or other areas with similar socio-economic status was selected to fill the gap. In this way, effective statistical comparisons between the status of households with migrants and without migrants.

5. Results and discussions

5.1 Migration flows and trends

Economic integration in the region is supported by regional agreements (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations - ASEAN) and regional institutions (the Asian Development Bank - ADB). Efforts to link the six countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) are stimulating trade and investment, which, in turn, is facilitating significant flows of goods and services across national borders at unprecedented rates and volumes. The GMS economic cooperation program includes the development of six "economic corridors" in order to enhance connectivity. The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) aims to boost intra-regional trade through a Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) by 2015. Alongside goods, services and investment, human mobility is also increasing in an attempt to negotiate a better livelihood in the new regional economic space. The flows of migrants are from poorer countries in the region to more developed countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. The existing channels

for migration, however, are mainly for the educated and professionals. As such, the official avenues available are insufficient to serve the massive unskilled labor movement in a region with high and rising inequality of income distribution.

In Thailand, the faster pace of economic development has led to a wide economic disparity with its neighbors: Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar. This disparity has induced migration flows from these countries into Thailand. The trend has clearly increased over the last two decades due to many push and pull factors. Pull factors include higher wages, ample employment opportunities, and better connection and access via newly developed infrastructure. The ample opportunities in Thailand come from a number of factors resulting in a labor deficit with strong economic growth of between 4 to 7% in the last few decades. Factors underlying the labor deficit in Thailand are linked with the elderly population in Thailand, which has risen from 1.21 million in 1960 to 4.02 in 1990 and is estimated to reach 10.78 million by 2020 (Sutthichai and Srichitra 1999). This trend is an inevitable result of a demographic transition associated with declining birth and death rates (less than 1%) leading to a higher aged dependency ratio and lower labor force in Thailand. With overall national economic success, most Thai youth have access to better education, and, consequently, can be selective about their employment. The availability of jobs in low-skill and low-pay sectors has created a window of opportunity for migrant workers from neighboring countries. Better infrastructure and communication are also facilitating factors for increasing migration. In addition, non-economic factors play an important role in inducing migration, such as personal ties and cultural affinities between countries in the region. Such is the case between Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. Similarly, social networks developed in receiving countries by earlier groups of migrants serve to facilitate increased migration as they reduce risks and socio-economic costs associated with migration of newcomers.

As for the push factors, the main reasons are lack of employment opportunities at home and migrants' aspirations to make a better life. The motivation to escape from a state of poverty and prolonged deprivation as result of social disruptions is particularly the case for the vast number of migrants from Myanmar. In the case of Lao PDR, the

combination of a shortage of domestic off-farm employment, aspirations among the youth to seek a modern life style and the opportunity to develop skills are among the main reasons for migration. For Thailand, the majority of migrants indicated that migration is the 'fast track' to pay back debts normally incurred from failed agriculture, and investment. For many in Thailand, domestic seasonal migration from rural to urban centers, preferably outside Thailand, offers employment to boost earnings to repay debts. They thus seek employment in countries in which wages are higher than in Thailand, outside the Mekong Region. Another strong factor to seek jobs abroad is to achieve social recognition as an "*achieved person*" who can gain a higher social status and acceptance for their "*worldliness*" from gaining exposure, experiences, and new skills compared with than those who are farm bound or migrate domestically.

A significant proportion of migrants from Myanmar have 'dependants' or family members with them, while Lao migrants in Thailand mainly migrate without family, and among those over 51% are female aged 20-35. Thai migrants in East Asia are mostly married men aged 34 to 40 years, who migrate solely for work without their family for on average 1 to 2 years. About 32% of Thai migrants have migrated abroad for work twice or more and 74% of them have been to more than one country.

In Laos, especially in areas in the central plain, migration is becoming 'normal' for many households and villages and cross-border migration has escalated since the mid-1990s. In Champassak province, illegal migration to Thailand quadrupled between 1996 and 2000. A similar situation was found in 2001 in the central Lao provinces of Xayabouri and Saravan, Khammouan and Savannakhet where 12 to 20% of the population in the 21 surveyed villages in these provinces had worked, or were working in neighboring Thailand. Significantly in some parts of Savannakhet—migration to Thailand has become so much a part of the operation of the village that it may be viewed as having become *institutionalized* within the village setting.

The trend of labor out-migration is upward and increasing in the last decade in the countries included in this study, with the exception of 2-3 years during the Asia economic crisis. At a macro level, out-migration is estimated to be 10% of the total

labor force of Laos (nearly 300,000), 15-20 % of Myanmar's total labor force (around 5 million) (Winston 2008), and nearly 200,000 persons from Thailand (6% of Thai labour force) . The nearly 20% of national active labor outflows from Myanmar deserve careful considerations for development planning of rural area, especially those provinces near Thai border and related cities where migration has become a norm. As for Lao PDR, the proportion of out-migration which nears 10 % of total national labour is significant, and this number represents over 15% of labour especially from the 5 central provinces, that are the country's main agricultural areas, and where out-migration is the greatest. There is an implication for future agricultural planning, and allocation of labour force. In addition, migrants are mostly young or in prime labour age of 20-35, and over 50% are female, and they tend to be more active members of the community. This phenomena and dynamism are vast, and thus worth studying and considering for rural development planning especially in relation with future farming enterprise of sending region. It is important to understand the positive implications at the micro level both in terms of the short- and long-term gains, such as increased new knowledge and skills, as well as cash remittance to serve immediate consumption need, and reduced adversities in poor rural farming communities.

All the factors presented above suggest that it is more likely that the trend of labour migration, both legal and illegal, will continue upward, from the sending countries, i.e., from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR to their neighboring Thailand, and less in extent to other more developed countries. Labour migration to other further destinations such as East and Southeast countries are usually arranged via legal channel, and most arrangements are beyond the reach of poor migrants from these countries because the costs of transportation as well as processing costs are high. Migration to these countries often is a response to demand by "quota" set by receiving countries, served by formal training institutes recognized agent by respective governments. It is less likely that there will be a dramatic increase in international migration from GMS to these countries due to little policy attention and resources committed by government of sending side. Most prominent users of this channels by GMS migrants are Thais – where lower interest loan can be had from commercial banks, and facilitated by legal agents/ brokers who are well functioning. The trend of international migration from

Thailand has been increasing, though moderate, from 2001-2007. This can be explained by the availability of employment opportunities within Thailand for low and medium level skills labour. Thus domestic migration is viable for most labour from the poor rural northeast region. In some cases, working abroad is more attractive for higher earners in Thailand. Those migrants are ones more adventurous seeking better fortune, or with good network abroad, or those desperate from heavy debt seeking feasible way out from Thailand where wage earning is not a promising option. Hence, the unfavorable low-paid jobs in Thailand are thus filled with “foreign labour” migrated from its neighbors and Thai migrants mostly from Esan or the northeast region of Thailand migrate to more developed countries.

5.2 Remittances

As Huguest and Sureeporn point out, there is no systematic information concerning remittances sent or carried by migrants in Thailand to their home countries. In a rare effort to rigorously estimate the volume of remittances, the team of economists from Macquarie University, Australia, conducted an extensive survey of migrants from Myanmar in Thailand. In their 2008 report, the result are as follows: “Should our survey results be anywhere near representative of the million of Burmese/Myanmar in Thailand, then the aggregate annual flows of remittances to Burma/Myanmar would be in the order of around \$US300 million. Such flows are nearly five times Myanmar’s “official” remittance payments, more than twice the amount of foreign direct investment received and they would represent around 5 per cent of Burma/Myanmar’s GDP.” (Turnell YEAR: 11). Here again in additional to a macro-level statistical picture, a local-level case study guides us in catching a glimpse of the reality on the ground.

Myanmar migrant workers are employed in fishing, fish processing industries, farming, domestic work and construction that are the labour intensive or polluting sectors and shunned by most Thais. The average earnings of unskilled labour are between 120 and 150 THB/day, which is lower than legal minimum wage in Thailand. The salary ranges from 4,000 to 12,000 THB/month depending on the kind of work, and the legal status of the worker. However, this is much better than the earnings in Myanmar for unskilled

labour, if jobs can be found, with normal wages equivalent to only 50 THB/day. From the sending side, our household surveys found that many Myanmar migrants working either in Thailand or Malaysia could send home about Kyats 150,000~200,000 (i.e. approx US\$ 130~174) per person per month. The study also found that, in Mon state, the income of some families with two or more migrant family members working in Thailand can be as high as USD 300-600/month./family that is derived from informal remittances. This is because Mon state is located near the Thai border, and the costs of sending more than one family members to work in Thailand are correspondingly lower through informal (illegal) migration. This level of family income can make a great difference to the welfare of a family as normal household incomes in these areas in Myanmar are around US\$ 50~100 per month.

Lao migrant workers earn about US\$ 112 /month (THB 4,000), which is 17 % lower than the minimum wage in Thailand. The average savings of a Laotian migrant worker in Thailand are estimated to be US\$49/person/month and this sum is remitted to their families back home. This amount, though small, is considerable for households given that alternatively working on the farm in rural area will earn on average US\$159/person/year (US\$13/month/person). More importantly, the remittance flows directly into migrants' households and communities where financial assistance is needed. At the national level, the total remittances from Lao migrants in Thailand to their families in Lao PDR is estimated to be US\$ 154.6 million in 2005, the biggest of all foreign earnings for Lao PDR.

Rigg (2001) presents a following story and analysis from his detailed study of rural change in Laos

“Mrs Chandaeng of Ban Sawai of Sang Thong district was born and raised in Xieng Khouang province. Here she met and married her husband. They left the war-shattered province to settle in her husband's natal village and lived there until he died in 1988 when Mrs Chandaeng was 37 years old and her youngest daughter just two. A dispute with her husband's brother forced Mrs Chandaeng to move once again and she settled in Ban Sawai with her young family in 1991.

Unable to secure any land beyond her house plot she struggled to raise her six children. Her ability to survive as a landless, widowed mother of six was linked to the fact that four of her children managed to secure work in neighbouring Thailand. Together, at the time we interviewed the end of 2001, they were remitting around 1,000 to 2,000 baht a month (250,000 to 500,000 kip, US\$25 to US\$50). At that time her son was working as a labourer on a shrimp farm while her three daughters were employed as housekeepers in Bangkok. With these funds Mrs. Chandaeng was financing the construction of a new and impressive house. She may have explained her children's sojourns in Thailand in terms of "when you are poor, you have to go", but the outcome was a degree of economic prosperity, at least in village terms."

Remittances of Thai labourers working abroad are considerable, when compared with wage earnings at home. The major destinations of Thai labourers, based on frequency rank, are Taiwan, Korea, and countries in the Middle East. Thai migrants are employed in construction, services sector and farming. The average earning is THB 17,400/month or US\$ 517 (ranging from US\$ 180- 2,085 or THB 6,000-70,000/month). Most migrants covered in this study reported that they send money home on a regular basis, and over half of them send money every month. The amount sent home on average is THB 163,000, or US\$ 4,850/year (remittances sent home range from THB 30,000 to 2,000,000 or about US\$ 909 to 60,606)/ person/ year). While in Thailand, an average low skilled wage worker will earn about THB 6,000- 8,000/ month. The earnings abroad offer a substantial sum to pay back old and new debt, and also this can serve as seed money for new investment. For Thai migrants who take loans to finance migration, an average debt is THB 120,000. Migrants are able to pay back this debt in the first year of work abroad. About 26% of Thais who migrate for work normally go through agents.

5.3 Impact on the sending areas

The impact in question refers to the outcome of "out migration" both from the positive and negative sides. The positive impact refers to not only the immediate economic and social well being of the family as result of remittances, gifts and knowledge gained from

the undertaking, but also serves as a capital base for future advancement. The financial and human capital accrued is believed to ultimately increase resilience to adversity. The benefits to the community may be in the form of improvement of common properties, public facilities, economic revitalization of the community and better use of its immediate natural environmental resources.

The results of this study in Lao PDR show that families who have family members working abroad are in a much better position economically than those without migrants. This is apparent in all locations where studies were conducted. The opportunities to improve livelihoods include better housing condition as many families spend money for house repairs. It also includes better food, acquisition of new farm tools, household durables and access to means of transportation. At the community level, the impact is similar especially where labour migration has been a long tradition. This confirms the observation from the study of Rigg who observed this phenomena since the 1990s. This “well-established migration stream” which is not dependent on any intermediaries—permits families to earn THB 35,000 per season and the village's primary school was entirely funded and built by the villagers. There is no doubt that this could not have been done without the income generated by migrants working in Thailand. Our study found that “betterment” achieved by previous migrants has made it trendy for others in the villages, especially the young. This finding also confirms the study by Inthasone, which notes that young people returning home ‘looking better, dressing nicely, becoming popular among their friends’ induces others to seek work in Thailand (Inthasone Phetsiriseng 2001:34).

For some parts of Lao PDR, especially the central region and areas near the border, labour migration to Thailand has become a strong trend and it has begun to influence the availability of labour for farming. A combination of lack of job opportunities at home, the growing unattractiveness of farm work to the young, and the availability of employment in Thailand has created a context where young people travel across the border in increasing numbers. Migration effects can be very extensive at the local level. This finding is confirmed by a study conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which found that in Ban Nonehin in Champassak's Phonethong district 18% of

the village population was working illegally in Thailand in 2000. In some cases, whole families were traveling to Songkhla to work on the rubber plantations. Remittances were then being used to employ labor to plant the rice fields at home while they were absent working in Thai rubber plantations.

In the case of Myanmar, remittance are used for families' immediate consumption. That is to say for food, household durables, medicines and improve housing. In villages where migration is prominent, it is clearly evident that families with members working abroad have better living quarters with better roofs, walls and amenities. These improvements have inspired other families to also make the journey abroad. Remittances also benefit the whole sending community by improving village common facilities that otherwise would have to wait for possible other sources of funding, such as from the government. Contributions and donations to community, cultural, religious and social capital development has been very significant in Mon state, Karen state and Taninthari division, the major migration sending areas to Thailand.

The negative impact of migration on the sending area is shortage of labour as in Mon state for work in paddy and rubber plantations. This labour shortage is replaced by internal migration from other parts of the country to the Mon state where the wage is higher than their place of origin inside Myanmar.

Through qualitative and quantitative findings, it is evident in every country that migration generally has both positive and negative effects on families and sending communities. As a general statement, however, the benefits outweigh the negative effects, at least at the local level for families and communities.

On the positive side, remittances bring in extra non-farm earnings and disposable income to families and communities. This is important for most rural areas given the few employment opportunities outside farming. The flow of remittances are a direct injection of cash into the local economy, providing seeds money for new investments in, for example, elementary occupations facilitating production and exchanges of goods and services in the communities. In most study cases, villages with high out-migration

contribute significantly to improving community social services and public facilities, such as temple maintenance, school repairs, roads and village meeting halls.

Other positive results come from non-financial gains that are considered to be “capital” for future investments. These benefits are in the form of innovations that come with exposure to new knowledge, which are put into practice when migrants return to their communities. These include new farming techniques, production skills for small enterprises and new occupations at home, such as machine repair and food processing. One of the most important aspects of social capital acquired is the “international network” that the community has established in the host community over time. The established network serves as capital for future migrants from the community by reducing fees for migration and the risks in the host country, thereby increasing income, savings and remittances. As many previous studies have found, this study found that out-migration is “maturing over time” in one location as the “network capital” is strengthened and affordable channels for migration opened up. The network also serves as “international link” between the sending community and the host community. This link serves as a window of opportunity for future economic and social exchanges, such to facilitate trade, and small and medium sized informal businesses. This is an important capital as it creates a new *economic space* for the poor through regional integration, while the conventional formal trade agreements tend to benefit big investors, and traders.

The immediate negative effects on the family of origin relate to indebtedness from financing migration and, in some cases, the inability to pay back this debt. As noted above, existing legal channels are expensive for migrants. While on the one hand migrating through legal channels guarantees better jobs, these paths for migration are not easily accessible for most rural poor. Informal, illegal migration channel via informal brokers is affordable by most, but the social costs in terms of risk are great. These costs include arrest, deportation, and abuse or vulnerability to exploitation. For example, those migrants from Myanmar who chose to migrate to Malaysia via legal channels pay very high fees, which are often equivalent to several years of saving at home. But the majority of those who have entered through informal channels to Thailand have to risk

their lives on the journey, and face constant threats of arrest, deportation and abuse in the receiving community.

There has been little evidence to illustrate that there are clear plans and policies put in place by the governments of sending countries to make migration more gainful and less risky. It is further evident that major obstacles for potential migrants are the prohibitive existing policies and procedures on migration. High costs and lengthy and complicated processes are the biggest challenge to gainful migration. To make cross border migration an affordable option for diversifying livelihoods for the rural poor, national plans and policies in receiving countries in the region must address these challenges in a coordinated manner. Similarly, to optimize the positive impacts from remittances and knowledge gains, there is a need for proactive policies to foster an atmosphere that is conducive for new investment and utilization of new skills in the home communities. Remittances in isolation cannot be expected to deliver multiple and far reaching impacts for the future development of communities without a supportive atmosphere to capitalize on the money that is sent home.

5.3.1 Impact on socio-economic status of migrants' families and communities

Migrants from Myanmar working in Thailand and Malaysia are found to send remittances back home on the average of around US\$ 150~200 per month/worker. A family in Mon State may receive around US\$ 300 /month from 2-3 family members working in Thailand at the same time. This is possible because of the lower cost of migration to Thailand, as compared to Malaysia. Thus, most households in Mon state can send more than one family member abroad. Remittances of this scale can have a very positive economic effect on livelihoods, as the average monthly income of rural households in these areas is around US\$50~100. The loss of family labour for agriculture due to migration is compensated by hired labour from other local areas to work on paddy and rubber plantations. Higher family income can easily afford them to hire wage laborers with "above-the-average wages". Thus, international migration is triggering internal migration from other parts of the country to the Mon State.

Better housing and living quarters: The housing status assessment was made by weighting such factors as the condition of roofs, walls, and toilets in each household. Then, the means of scores of the housing status of households in case and control groups (households with and without migrants) are statistically compared and a binary logistic regression model is developed to confirm this effect.

In the case of Myanmar, in all study villages (except in Yonzinlay) the mean scores of the housing status of case households are higher than those of control households. Remittances are often spent to improve the immediate living and surrounding community, such as safe and better homes, replacing roofs with more durable materials, such as corrugated tin, tile flooring and walls, or general repairs to living quarters. More durable and safe shelter provides a sense of security, one of the most basic needs after food for immediate consumption.

However, the majority of families in Yonzinlay, Thandaing and Yonzingyi villages in central Myanmar have not been able to enjoy the benefits of remittances compared with those families living near the Thai border. No immediate improvement has been observed. Migrants from this area chose to go to Malaysia by flights through the international airport in Yangon, which is arranged legally via employment agents. The costs for this method of migration are very high, resulting in heavy indebtedness for the migrants. It takes nearly two years of working in Malaysia to pay back the entire loan. Most sources of loans are from private money lenders with the rate of interest as high as 120% per year. Migration in central Myanmar started quite recently and most migrant families have not fully paid back loans. As a result, it appears that families are even worse off and family members of the migrants are left with the constant burden of paying back the loans. The evidence is different in the other villages where migrants have been working away for longer periods of time and are thus able to slowly pay off their debts. This condition has to be overcome before any benefits of migration can be realized. In the case of villages in Mon state, families of migrants who stay behind have less debt burden because the financial cost to migrate is much less, either through legal or illegal channels. Hence, it is found that the differences in mean scores of case and control households in Mon villages are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

In the study villages in Lao PDR, it is evident that housing quarters in these areas have been visibly improved; houses have been repaired, strengthened, or rebuilt in the past five years. This is evident in Pakthaphane and Thongkham areas, where there are many households with migrants currently working in Thailand. This finding coincides with migration patterns that are mature and becoming the norm. However, in the case of Donthong, where there are just a few households with migrants, the changes are not very significant. It is noted that the mean score of housing status of households in the case group is two times higher than that of households in the control group. In terms of location, the mean score of households in the case group is also two times higher. A binary logistic regression model confirms that migration has a positive effect on housing conditions.

In the case of Myanmar, the mean score for the socio-economic status of households in the case group, in Yonzinlay, is lower than that of households in the control group. This indicates the negative economic effects of migration due to heavy debt burdens incurred from financing migration to Malaysia. However, the mean scores of households in the case group in Thandaing and Mon state are higher than those of households in the control group. This implies that when the cost for migration is low, the economic return per migration is greater. The low cost of migration allows migrants to send more members, thus remittances are higher, and greater benefits can be achieved from the allocation of family labour use. Lower costs are due to the closer proximity of Thailand in comparison with Malaysia, and the benefits of networks established in Thailand that enable costly arrangements made by agents to be bypassed. This is more applicable for Mon State where migration to Thailand has a longer history.

The average remittance by migrants workers is around US\$ 150~200/month/migrant. The majority of families in Mon State with more than one member working in Thailand may receive remittances of around US\$ 300~600/month, which is a large sum of money when compared with the low wages and scarcity of jobs in Myanmar. The average rural household income in that region is US\$50~100 per month, and thus remittances can make a big difference. Remittances can help to solve problems created by shortages of labour in the community due to out-migration. Shortages of agricultural labour on paddy

and rubber plantations can be offset by hired labour from other regions of Myanmar. The wages in Mon state are above the average compared to other parts of Myanmar, thus triggering internal migration from other parts of the country.

The impacts at the community level are similar. Interview surveys and focus group discussions in study areas in Myanmar also reveal that the gain from migration goes beyond the household level to the village and community level. Remittances contribute to village public goods, such as improvement of village roads, construction of bridges, village meeting halls, and increased donations to local temples. This direct contribution to the community is significant especially in remote areas where development effort by central government has yet to reach the area. This “reenergizing” effect of remittances is evident in the increased participation of families in cultural activities, increased business activities, such as transportation, increased savings and investment in informal sectors at the community level.

In Lao PDR, the study found that some of the positive impacts include better food, improved housing, investment in farms and applications of new “know-how” such as new farming techniques and modernization of farm production and technologies. Remittances, exposure to new knowledge, and network building together result in better access to transportation, information and communication, all of which serve to contribute economic and social capital for future development. The study in Lao PDR notes that the wealth accrued from remittances are evident in increased use of mechanization, such as hand tractors and rice machines during the past five years. It also notes that productivity is higher in new farms due to this modernization.

The mean score of socioeconomic status of households with migrants is more than double that of households without migrant. However, a binary logistic regression model reveals that labor migration is not the only factor with a positive effect on the socioeconomic status of households. There are other factors that accompany an open economy, such as more agricultural business, trade, and transportation services in the sending area.

The study of migrant sending communities in Thailand shows a wide range of positive economic impacts on migrants' families. The relationship between migration and better use of family resources and the economic situation is found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. Furthermore, remittances enhance households' capacity to investment in assets, such as vehicles, small business farmland and housing.

It is further found in Thailand that households in the case group (i.e. families with a migrant currently working abroad) improve their livelihood as shown by their capacity to afford better food, clothing and household commodities. More than 80% of households spend part of their income on doctors fees and medicine, with 72.7% going towards children's education.

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with community leaders in Thailand revealed the positive effect of migration on the community. Remittances contribute to the community in the form of traditional Buddhist "*thod pha paa*" for the construction or repair of common facilities such as pagodas, village meeting halls, and donations to temples. Some community activities are funded by donations from returned migrants. For example, in Nong Rua district of Khon Kaen the returned migrants collected funds to support the anti-drug project. These locally funded social activities may not have been possible without external income.

5.3.2 Remittances provide capital for new investment and further income generation

In Myanmar, generally, households in the case group are found to have more sources of income than in the control group. Their base income is derived from farming, supplemented by income from remittances by family members abroad. Farm income provides for basic food, while new cash income, normally larger, supplements basic consumption and new means to investment. Some households invest in small groceries and village businesses. Many families with remittance sources invest by lending money to others, given a lack of other investment opportunities in the region. Most borrowers use loans to finance migration as it is seen as the most promising option to provide higher returns per investment given the options available. It is found that although the

main occupation of most households in the case group is agriculture, major sources of income come from remittances from their migrant family members.

Similar findings can be seen in the case of Lao PDR. Remittances give case families one more source of income and thus allow livelihoods to be diversified away from farming. This diversification reduces risk and builds up needed resilience to adversity that is remiss in subsistence rain-fed farming. Furthermore, new income makes possible better use of land resources and provides funding to acquire new modern farm tools, and equipment. Modernization and increased productivity have created diverse livelihood options in many villages. Livelihood options become diverse (being involved in various small businesses such as small-scale trade, food processing, rice mills, battery charging services, bicycle repair service, convenience store business) due to increased disposable income contributed by remittances. In short, in addition to filling the gap of basic consumption needs, remittance income can increase farm production and yields and stimulate other income generating business activities, which together contribute to the improvement of future family and community capital.

5.3.3 Social effects

Although migration tends to have positive economic effects on the majority of migrants' households, families of migrants tend to be more exposed to various social effects, such as isolation from those left behind, and an increased work burden on members who are back home.

These social impacts could be regarded as common effects on families with migrants due to the absence of their migrant family members. However, social impacts on families in Myanmar tend to be more intensified due to the fact that frequent communication is not possible and there is a little chance for family get-togethers during holidays. Absence of frequent communications is the result of poor telecommunication infrastructure in Myanmar and the high costs associated with it. Furthermore, migrants cannot return home to get-together with their families on important days or during work leaves in the host countries. This is due to the complicated process for returning, as many migrants have no official status and are afraid that they may be arrested during

the trip or might not be able to return to work. Other reasons include transportation costs, poor land transport connections and the high cost of brokers to facilitate the trip. In sum, most Myanmar migrants are struggling to repay debt at high rates of interest and cannot afford to return home even once a year for family re-union during their holidays.

Primary destinations of Myanmar migrants include Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Middle East, Korea, Japan, Australia, UK and USA. Out of the various destinations, primary destinations of the majority of Myanmar migrants, especially low-skilled workers are Thailand and Malaysia. Most migrants going to Thailand normally take illegal/informal channels, which costs around US\$ 200~400 per person, whereas most of those going to Malaysia take legal/formal channels, which costs around US\$ 1000~1500 per person.

In the Myanmar case, most families who sent their family members to Malaysia via formal channels, at a very expensive cost, are heavily indebted. Those who are left behind have to bear heavy workloads on the farm and heavy financial burdens to money lenders. Thus, migration is a “joint” enterprise as a decision to seek employment abroad is a “family” decision to share the burden. The higher the fee for migration, the higher is the cost to the family back home. The hope is that the benefits returned will outweigh the emotional and financial burden at the end. The fee paid to go to Malaysia to find work via broker is equal to several years of family savings, and this willingness to undertake such risks indicates a dire situation in the sending community. As illustrated in central state of Myanmar, where most migrants go to Malaysia, the families of migrants at home seem to be worse off financially, and in greater emotional distress. It will take 1-2 years to pay off loans, before any benefits materialize. Most families depend solely on the migrant’s income to repay debts, and most family resources are devoted to this undertaking.

Comparatively, migration to Thailand costs less to migrants and their families. Those who migrate to Thailand go via informal, illegal channels as Myanmar is in closer to Thailand, and land transport is possible. The price is affordable by most, and financial

burdens at home are less burdensome. This is not to imply that there is no social cost or risk, and indeed there are many headlines on newspapers reporting of misfortunes by many attempting migrants from Myanmar; of miserable trips they must endure, injury, and loss of lives during the trip via dangerous smuggling. However, in terms of financial costs paid to brokers, it is still less costly than migrating to Malaysia. For those who make it to Thailand, the remittances sent home are significant and families back home can live much better than those without migrants. They are also better off even when compared to those who go via legal channels to Malaysia. It is worthwhile to note that in Mon state, migration has become a norm, and networking in the sending country has been well established. Due to the low costs associated with illegal, informal channels, most families do not need to borrow money and can send more than one family member to Thailand. Absence of debt and increased remittances from more than one family member is shown to increase their economic and social well being.

The increased family income from remittances helps build the social resilience in the sending family and community in Myanmar. Migration can have diverse economic, social and demographic consequences by changing the economic and social structure of communities and affecting the natural resource base. Hence, it is important to maximize the positive effects of migration and mitigate the negative consequences.

Through the use of remittances, migration has impacts on resource use in the country of origin. The use of remittance income in productive ways, such as investment in agricultural intensification and physical and social capital as well as education can enhance social stability and economic well-being.

Statistical models reveal that most families with a member working abroad buy physical assets, and invest more than those without family members abroad. However, due to the lack of adequate investment opportunities, family of migrants are involved in informal financial markets providing informal loans to other households for migration at high interest rates. Hence, the use of remittance income could have both positive and negative consequences on sustainable resource use in Myanmar. Increased investment and business opportunities in productive sectors could maximize the positive

effect of remittance income in the country of origin. The concern noted in our literature review that new income from remittances can result in an unsustainable use of community resources, or create inequity in access to land resource via land accumulation in the hands of a few have not been confirmed by this study. The information available does not permit conclusions to be drawn at this stage. Further study is needed in this area.

The findings in Lao PDR also reveal that migration has a range of positive impacts on households and local communities. Migration to Thailand has positive impacts on modernization of agricultural production, application of new farm techniques, technologies and skill transformation, livelihood, food security, improved housing status, access to transportation, information and communication, education, and health. It is further evident in villages with higher number of out-migrants that more families now own hand tractors, rice machines and have higher rice production compared to the past five years. This is evidence of increased productivity in the agricultural sector due to the modernization. Results of village surveys in Lao PDR reveal that the contribution of remittance income towards improvements in livelihoods is significant.

Although positive effects of migration are evident, a range of negative consequences also exist in Lao PDR. One significant point often attributed to labour migration is increased HIV/AIDS and STD infection in the areas where cross-border migration is significant. There are about 838 cases of such diseases in Savannakhet, 496 cases in Vientiane, 117 cases in Khamouane, 156 cases in Champasak and 84 cases in Saravane, where cross-border labor movement is highly evident. However, it is not conclusive that this is caused by returned migrants. Other exchanges across the border have also taken place as the land has improved in the last decade, and especially linked via the east west economic corridor, which has improved border trade, investment, and land transportation of goods.

Other negative impacts come from the illegal status of migrants in the host country. This opens the way for unfair treatment, and a number of migrants are vulnerable to abuses by their employers. Due to many drawbacks in existing legal channels of

migration for Lao people, the role of trafficking in persons has become more significant. This may lead to many negative social impacts on migrants and their families.

In the case of Thailand, the study found that migration not bring only source of income but a sense of pride of “being worldly and experience”. The majority of families think that migration caused an increased burden on families, which are to a certain extent compensated by the benefits of remittances and social status. However, 86% of migrant families, strongly believe that social recognition was due to the migration history within the households. In most villages, migration experience is taken as an important indicator for personal achievement. In all three provinces, it was found that community leaders were at one time labor migrants in a Middle Eastern country. Their overseas working experience and knowledge are well respected by villagers. They serve as advisors to their neighbors regarding how to get jobs overseas, how to live in foreign land and are in a better position to help neighbors financially.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This research highlights the importance of migration in the context of rapidly rising economic integration in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Firstly, it is evident from the literature review that there are enormous knowledge gaps in the current state our understanding of the converging forces at play in the Mekong region. To the extent that statistics are available to buttress arguments concerning migration, they tend to be not only unreliable, but also misleading. Our understanding about domestic and cross-border migration in mainland Southeast Asia is extremely limited. Rural research in this region, as Rigg aptly suggests “lags behind reality and merely describes, rather than anticipates, that is already a well-established reality in the countryside” (Rigg, 2001). It is essential, therefore, that research on sustainable livelihoods acknowledge the complexities underlying migration processes and pay close attention to the local context in which it is occurring.

Secondly, rural development goals and strategies require significant restructuring in order to better reflect the changing nature of the emerging reality in the GMS. The question is how to facilitate mobility in a way that will enhance the opportunities for

sustainable livelihoods for the poor. Rural livelihoods in GMS countries, as in many other parts of the developing world, are not static and, increasingly, neither exclusively rural, nor depend solely on agriculture. Rural livelihoods are diversifying in reaction to the forces of regionalization and globalization. As a direct result, poverty reduction strategies and plans, which have invariably emphasized agricultural improvement, fail to capture the changing dynamic of increasing regional economic integration. In many parts of the Mekong, the profile of rural livelihoods has shifted to comprise income both from farming and non-farming activities in nearly equal amounts. In many instances, non-farm income plays an even bigger role in lifting rural households out of poverty. As regional economic integration increases, it provides new economic space for cross-border trade, investment and exchanges of natural resources, goods and products. Moreover, the rural poor, as key actors in the Mekong, are negotiating their way into this emerging livelihood space to secure their share of development. Rural-urban migration and cross-border labor migration are seen as part of this negotiation. The diversification of rural livelihoods into this new space provides new sources of income, as well as livelihood security and resilience to adversity accompanying the transition to greater regional integration. This diversification strategy will serve to alter patterns of natural resource use and access.

Social resilience is the ability of a community to withstand external shocks and stresses without significant upheaval. It is comprised of structures of livelihoods, access to resources, and social institutions. Significant upheaval may occur when communities are less resilient—because their resource base is fragile or inaccessible, their livelihood structures may become insecure, or their community institutions may become more rigid—or when external changes are rapid. In the absence of viable livelihood options, this potentially leads to the disintegration of social capital, and erosion of natural resources.

Chronic stress may force needed renovation in a community. Natural resource allocation and changing use have, by their nature, sets of winners and losers. The capacity of a community to adapt and respond to change—its capacity to mobilize new

resources and access new opportunities—is influenced strongly by its location within the broader socio and geopolitical context in a country or region.

A real challenge, among many, for Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, is also that the non-farm economy is so weakly developed in comparison to China, Vietnam and, Thailand. It is because of this fact that it is important to carefully research cross-border mobility and the building of trans-boundary livelihoods. As yet, however, governments in the region seem to be opposed to greater mobility; this has much to do with the general attitude on trafficking. It is important to seriously examine the conceptual framework of trafficking, while keeping in mind that mobility might offer a viable way of escaping poverty for households and individuals struggling in marginal areas.

Sustainable livelihood scholars like Ellis urge rethinking and suggests that agriculture not automatically be presumed to be the primary livelihood activity in rural areas today. While “agriculture” is preferred in the public funding of services to rural productive activity, it would be worth considering “providing an enabling environment” for start-up non-farm activities, removing barriers to mobility, or reducing licensing requirements for small businesses. These incentives serve as a potential means to expand the opportunities of the rural poor

Mainland Southeast Asia is in a state of transition, with accompanying challenges and opportunities. Transition can increase inequality. It is highly likely that rural spaces will become more differentiated in terms of human activity and the distribution of resources. Researchers on rural issues today need “an engagement with a much wider conceptualization of what could comprise rural development” (Rigg Laos 2001:188-189). It is especially important to pay attention to multiple livelihood transitions. This review has shown that migration plays an important role in diversifying livelihood in the region of economic transition currently underway.

Cross-border migration can be a feasible option for diversifying livelihood for rural families and communities. It can contribute to securing sustainable livelihoods and building resilience to cope with adversity, which is an important base to allow rural households to emerge from poverty. There is an undeniable fact that the association

between migration and the socio-economic status of the families of migrants in the country-of-origin has been significantly positive. Remittances from migrants help their families to cope with unexpected economic shocks. Remittances contribute towards community development (e.g., construction of village roads), increase social capital (occupational skills, knowledge and innovation gained from exposure abroad), cultural and religious development (e.g., construction and renovation of church, temples and pagodas), and educational development (e.g., maintenance of orphanages and monastic educational centers). In Thailand, some returned migrants even collected funds to support anti-drug projects. Hence, migration can be an important alternative option to support rural agriculturally-based livelihoods, and contribute to rural development towards poverty alleviation as a whole. .

While migration brings about positive effects on migrants' households and communities, it also has some negative impacts. Some migrants' families are exposed to heavy debt burdens due to the high cost of migration. As a result, a large portion of remittances sent home by migrants are used to pay back the migration debt at a high rate of interest. In addition, some households consider that they are exposed to more responsibilities and family burdens due to the absence of family members working abroad. In some cases, migration can weaken social structures and communities as rural communities are left with dependent members of migrant households. Migrants often have to cope with working in depressed situations, which leads them to break the work contracts with labor agencies. Despite the existence of all these negative effects of migration, the studies undertaken for this research found that many rural families assess the positive impacts of migration to outweigh the negative effects.

Effective policies regarding migration need to be coordinated at the national and regional levels in order to tackle effectively the issues raised. Policies need to be feasible, pragmatic and affordable with a view to reap the benefits of migration, whilst mitigating the negative effects and respecting the human rights of labor migrants.

On the sending side, policymakers should act to facilitate migration through legal and affordable channels. The first priority should be the enforcement of the Memorandum of

Understandings (MoUs) between Thailand and its neighboring countries. The disincentives embedded in these MoUs should be amended to achieve efficient enforcement and to permit legal documents to illegal workers to be issued in recipient countries. It is necessary to ensure accessibility and affordability for migrants. The second priority should be to reduce the costs of migration, including formal, informal and hidden costs. One way to do so is to provide migration loans through formal financial institutions at a reasonable interest rate. Then, measures should be taken to further reduce hidden costs (e.g., by abolishing the family remittance policy in the case of Myanmar). The third priority should be to foster a favorable business and investment environment in which migrants and their families can investment in various productive ways. Investment and effort should be made by local and national government to mobilize the use of returned migrants' skilled labor and new knowledge for community development and entrepreneurship at local level. The fourth priority could usefully be a "proactive approach" by sending governments to provide short training courses to prepare returning migrants for as productive a life as possible.

On the receiving side, it is vital that countries recognize the role of foreign workers and the contribution of migrants to the national economy. There also a dire need to work towards regional mutual interdependence in which migration is addressed as a collective concern. The first priority should be to find pragmatic ways to protect the human rights of existing migrant workers in recipient countries. The appropriate clauses in the MoUs should also be amended to ensure that human rights are enforced. The enforcement of MoUs should include proper documentation of migrant workers in host countries. Again, it is important to ensure better accessibility and affordability for migrant workers. There is a strong argument to leave supply and demand of migrant workers to the "invisible hand" of the labor market, with less intervention in some cases. Restrictions often result in outcomes that are not beneficial for migrants, their families, the country-of-origin, or recipient countries.

Regional integration has triggered fundamental economic and social changes that have an impact on livelihood space and income distribution. If the process of change is well managed, these trends may, in turn, open new paths forward for human development in

the Greater Mekong Subregion. It is time to identify win-win strategies that enable both countries-of-origin and recipient countries to work together to constructively craft proactive policies towards migration. One way forward is for policymakers in the GMS to negotiate coordinated regional strategies to help migrant workers attain a better quality of life, where they can be brought up to the value chain and turn into human capital to permit labor to flow as freely as goods, services and capital.

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Appendices

Economic and Social Impact of Migration (Questionnaire No: Q/)

Questionnaire form

2008 Sumernet Migration Research Project Survey

Village		Village Code	
Province		P Code	
HH No.		HH Type.	
Surveyor		Date	

Purpose of the Questionnaire Survey

Thank you for your cooperation. The purpose of this survey is to analyze the economic, social and environmental impact of migration on their families and on the community where they are from.

Confidentiality of the information: This questionnaire will collect socio-economic data of sampled households and their perception on the migration. All the collected information will be confidentially treated and analyzed at the aggregated level. The security of personal information is guaranteed and will not be used for other purposes.

Economic and Social Impact of Migration (Questionnaire No: Q/)

I. Basic Information on Individual HH Members and Migrants

A. Basic Information on all HH Members											B. Information on Absent HH Members who has Migrated										
No.	Gender	Age	Relationship with the oldest person	Religion	Ethnicity	Marital status	Education	Literacy in National language	Main livelihood activity	Income	Type of Migration	What year did he/she migrate?	Migrate to which country?	Method of migration	How was the transportation used	How much did it cost?	How was it funded?	How much did the family borrow?	Interest rate (Max/Min)	Approximate amount of remittance sent home per year	Frequency of remittance
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21
1																					
2																					
3																					
4																					
5																					
6																					
7																					

Q1. Gender

- 1 = Male
- 2 = Female

Q3. Relationship

- 1 = Oldest person
- 2 = Wife
- 3 = Son
- 4 = Daughter
- 5 = Nephew
- 6 = Niece
- 7 = Grandson
- 8 = Granddaughter
- 9 = Relative
- 10 = Other

Q4. Religion

- 1 = Buddhist
- 2 = Christian (Baptist)
- 3 = Christian (Catholic)
- 4 = Christian (Adventist)
- 5 = Christian (Other)
- 6 = Islamic
- 7 = Animism
- 8 = Other

Q5. Ethnicity

- 1 = Burmese
- 2 = Shan
- 3 = Kachin
- 4 = Chin
- 5 = Rakhine
- 6 = Mon
- 7 = Karen
- 8 = Kayah
- 9 = Other ethnic
- 10 = Chinese
- 11 = Indian
- 12 = Other alien

Q6. Marital status

- 1 = single
- 2 = Married
- 3 = Divorced
- 4 = Separated
- 5 = Widow

Q7. Education

- 0 = None
- 1 = Informal
- 2 = Kindergarten
- 3 = Primary
- 4 = Middle
- 5 = High
- 6 = Technical school
- 7 = Diploma
- 8 = Undergraduate
- 9 = Graduate

Q8. Literacy in national language

- 1 = Cannot read & write
- 2 = Only understand (limited)
- 3 = Only understand (well)
- 4 = Can read & write (limited)
- 5 = Can read & write (well)

Q9. Main livelihood activities (before migration)

- 1 = None
- 2 = Working on family's own farm
- 3 = Working on someone else's farm as a wage labor
- 4 = Non-agricultural wage labor
- 5 = Regular employment (note: such as government, company, etc)
- 6 = Other odd-jobs
- 7 = Other

Q10. Income

- 1 = No income
- 2 = regular
- 3 = non-regular but predictable
- 4 = non-regular and unpredictable

Q11. Type of Migration

- 0 = Non-migrant
- 1 = Cross-border trading
- 2 = Seasonal (domestic)
- 3 = Seasonal (cross-border)
- 4 = Long-term (>1yr) (domestic)
- 5 = Long-term (>1yr) (cross-border)

Q13. Migrated country

- 1 = USA
- 2 = UK
- 3 = Other EU
- 4 = Japan
- 5 = Middle East
- 6 = Singapore
- 7 = Malaysia
- 8 = Thailand
- 9 = Taiwan
- 10 = Korea
- 11 = Israel
- 12 = UAE
- 13 = Other

Q14. Method of migration

- 1 = Through informal local broker
- 2 = Through friends/relatives
- 3 = Through registered labor agent

Q15. How did you travel?

- 1 = By land through borders
- 2 = By plane
- 3 = By boat (sea)

Q17. How was it funded

- 1 = land mortgage with private lender/bank
- 2 = loan from the banks under governmental supported projects
- 3 = to deduct from wage (slave contract)
- 4 = By family's own money
- 5 = By family's & relatives' money
- 6 = By family's money and informal loan
- 7 = By family's as well as relatives' money & informal loan
- 8 = Entirely by informal loan

Q21. Frequency of remittance

- 0 = No send
- 1 = Send when family asks
- 2 = Send monthly
- 3 = Send regularly (but not monthly)
- 4 = Send occasionally

I. Basic Information on HH Members and Migrants (Cont'd)

C. Reason why not migrated				D. Member with Past Migration Experience (Present at Time of Interview)														
No.	Ever thought about going to work abroad?	If "No" to Q21, why?	If "Yes" to Q21, why?	Type of migration?	How many times did you migrate?	How many countries?	Country went last time	Type of work last time (by sector)	Average monthly wage last trip	Year of first migration	Last migration (Year) From / To	Specific name of province or city you went last time to work	Was the last entry documented?	Legal status in last migration	1st time Migration was arranged by	How did you fund it? (last time)	How many times per year did you send money home (average)	Approximate amount of remittance sent home per year
	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36	Q37	Q38	Q39
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		

Q22. Have you ever thought about going to work abroad?

- 0 = No
1 = Yes

Q23. If "No" to Q22, why?

- 1 = Expensive
2 = Risky
3 = Family responsibility
4 = underage
5 = Other

Q24. If "Yes" to Q22, why?

- 1 = To earn more income
2 = To get more experience
3 = Overall exposure / trendy
4 = To follow other migrated friends/relatives
5 = Other

Q25. Type of migration

- 1 = Seasonal (domestic)
2 = Season (cross-border)
3 = Long-term (>1yr) (domestic)
4 = Long-term (>1yr) (cross-border)

Q28. Destination Country (last migration)

- 1 = USA
2 = UK
3 = Other EU
4 = Japan
5 = Middle East
6 = Singapore
7 = Malaysia
8 = Thailand
9 = Taiwan
10 = Korea
11 = Israel
12 = UAE
13 = Other
14 = More than one country

Q29. Sector (last migration)

- 1 = Fishing boats
2 = Fishery processing
3 = Agriculture
4 = Rice mill
5 = Brick factory
6 = Ice factory

7 = Transport (incl. porters)

8 = Construction

9 = Mining

10 = Domestic help

11 = Other

Q34. Was the entry documented? (last trip)

0 = No Travel document

1 = Border pass

2 = Passport/Visa

Q35. Legal status in last migration (last trip)

0 = None

1 = As tourist

2 = Student pass

3 = Work permit

4 = Other

Q36. Your first time migration was arranged by

1 = Through informal local broker

2 = Through friends/relatives

3 = Through registered labor agent

4 = by themselves

Q 37. How was it funded? (last trip)

1 = land mortgage with capitalists/banks
2 = loan from the banks under governmental supported projects
3 = to deduct from wage (slave contract)

4 = By family's own money

5 = By family's & relatives' money

6 = By family's money and informal loan

7 = By family's as well as relatives' money & informal loan

8 = Entirely by informal loan

Q40. View on the cost of migration (last trip)

1 = Very high

2 = High

3 = Normal

4 = Low

5 = Very low

Q41. View on effect of migration on the family

- 1 = Very Happy
2 = Happy
3 = So so
4 = Unhappy
5 = Very unhappy

Q42. Future plan for migration

- 0 = No plan for migration
1 = There is a future plan for migration

Q43 to Q51

- 0 = No
1 = Yes
2 = Not sure

Economic and Social Impact of Migration (Questionnaire No: Q/)

II. Economic/Social Impact of Migration family and individual HH members

E. HH Member's View on Migration as a Whole				F. Perceived Impact in Family (by HH Members)								
No.	View on the cost of migration	Individual's view on effect of migration on the family	Future plan for migration	Increased family conflicts and disagreements in the past 2 years	More Burden/roles to remaining members in the past 2 years	More respectability in community in the past year	Feeling deserted/loneliness in the past 2 year	Hindrance to education in the past 2 years	Health problem in family in the past 2 years (for families with returned migrants)	More/ Better food in the past 2 years	Improve/ better use of different family resources in the past 2 years	Financially better (wealthier) in the past 2 years
	Q40	Q41	Q42	Q43	Q44	Q45	Q46	Q47	Q48	Q49	Q50	Q51
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
G. Economic Impact of Migration Remittances												
52. How do you spend your remittance income?	Spend to Invest in assets						Land		Yes		No	
							House		Yes		No	
							Vehicle		Yes		No	
							Saving		Yes		No	
	Spend to improve livelihood						Doctor fees & medicine		Yes		No	
							Repair/expand house		Yes		No	
							Buy food		Yes		No	
							Buy clothes and consumer products		Yes		No	
							Buy household commodities		Yes		No	
							More entertainment/travel		Yes		No	
							Children education		Yes		No	
	Pay back loan							Yes		No		
	How much debt (linked to migration) the family current bears											
53. Rank 3 spending that took most of family's money in past 2 yrs						(1)	(2)	(3)				

III. Socio Economic Status of Sampled Household
(Tick Off As Appropriate –can be done by Observation)

3.1 Housing condition

Q54. Roof		Q55. Wall		Q56. Toilet	
Leave/Nipa/Thatch		No Wall		No Toilet	
Bamboo		Leave/Nipa/Thatch		Open Pit/No Hygienic Latrine	
CGI		Bamboo		Fly Proof Latrine	
Other		Wood			
		Brick			
		Other			

3.2 Access to Public Services and Ownership of Commodities

Q57. Electricity		Q58. Own Transport		Q59. Other Facilities	
No electricity		No own transport		Fan	
Electricity		Bicycle		Radio	
		Motorbike		TV	
				Player (VHS/VCD/DVD)	

3.3 Safe Water Supply

Water Source	Q60. Availability (Multiple Choice)			Q61. Accessibility (tick off only one)		
	Summer	Rainy	Winter	Easy to collect	Not so easy to collect	Difficult to collect
Pond						
Dug Well						
Shallow Tube Well						
Deep Tube Well						
Rain Water Collection Tank						
Pipe Water						
River/Stream/Lake/Spring						
Other						

3.4 Livestock Holding (Head) and Aquaculture (Acre) (Q62)

	Cattle		Pig		Milk Cow		Buffalo
	Duck		Goat		Chicken		Goat
	Fish pond (acre)				Shrimp pond (acre)		

3.5 Land Holding

Plot No	Land size (Acre/Hectare/Rai)	Current use of land	Remark
Q63	Q64	Q65	Q66

Q65 : 1 = Residential, 2 = Residential plus subsistence farming, 3 = Grow paddy, 4 = Grow other crops, 5 = More than one above