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KEY WORD : THAI WORKER IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES / CONSUMER CULTURE / VILLAGERS / EARNINGS

PRAMAHA CHATBOWON PHONGSAPHANG : A STUDY OF CONSUMER CULTURE WITHIN A FOREIGN MIGRANT WORKERS' VILLAGE : A CASE STUDY OF BANNONGFAEK COMMUNITY, BANTAW SUBDISTRICT, BANTHAEN DISTRICT, CHAIYAPHUM PROVINCE. THESIS ADVISOR : SOLOT SIRISAI, M.A., RUENGDET PANKHUENKHAT, PH.D., IAM THONGDEE, M.A., 164 P. ISBN 974-04-2150-4

The purpose of this research is to study the condition of migrant worker families. The following variables are important : the reason for migration, the process of paper work, obstruction in sourcing financial resources, the income, expense, debt, consumption behaviour, tradition, beliefs, trends of working in foreign country, and the effects on families with regard to the economy, society, and culture.

This research is a qualitative experiment by using observation method and interview method, and completed within a 9 month time frame.

The result of the study found that before migration by workers, their families had had bad economic background, poor quality of life, and low education. The reason for migration was the lack of financial means. The obstruction to migrating for work to foreign countries was financial insufficiency. Therefore, workers needed to borrow money from banks or financial backers in their village to do so. After workers earned income from work, their families had a better financial condition. Villagers had an increased amount of income, expense, debt, and consumption behaviour. Until now, the tradition, the belief, and the trend of working in foreign countries still exist in villages. The villagers believed that their quality of life will improve, if they migrate to work in foreign countries. The economic effect on families was the loss of labor for the family for a period of time. This caused decreasing amount of family income. The social effect, caused a dramatic change in the financial situation, which changed the relationship between villagers from dependance for employment, otherwise termed the replacement of traditional relationships by business relationship. In terms of culture, villagers were in favor of using expensive things and prodigally spent money. However, the overall financial condition of the village was at a good level. The villagers knew how to invest on real production. They were able to afford expensive things and to own a lot of consumer goods. Nevertheless, they still had no leader who could advise about commercial production.

The suggestions for this village is that the villagers should not be misled by higher income and should not spend too extravagantly. They should establish a saving system. In the meantime, they should increase the educational investment for their children in order to develop their knowledge. In the future, their children will be able to compete in the labor market and gain higher wages. Furthermore, they should cooperate in planning for a stable future for their village to be able to rely on themselves on the basis of commensurate economy in which the government gives the support.