

ABSTRACT

REAEARCH PAPER : Social Networks of Migrant Workers from Burma in
Thailand : A Case Study of a Migrant Community in
Samut Sakhon Province

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This study aims to explore the existence of social networks of migrant workers from Burma which facilitate the perpetuating influx of immigrants. The migratory patterns focused on their networks and their social networks in the host country are examined to find out the characteristics of social networks. A qualitative research method was employed. One of the migrant communities in Samut Sakhon province was selected as a research site. Sixteen people who residing in the said migrant community were interviewed.

The findings of this study revealed that no firm networks among migrant workers which facilitate the influx of them existed though they had relatives and others from the same village in the host country. Agents, rather than migrants' personal networks, play the major role in facilitating them to enter Thailand, both instrumentally and tangibly. But still there is a tendency that migrant workers' families or relatives rejoin them in the host society. The presence of family works as one stimulus for non-immigrants to decide to follow immigrants. The desire of migrant workers that they want to rejoin their family and the for-profit service of agents are combined and facilitate the perpetuation of international movements. Further, the coexistence of these two factors will raise other issues which derive from the nature of family, such as education for children, family planning, etc.

(2)

It is recommended that the authorities concerned reconsider the present immigration system and develop more appropriate ones according to the reality, i.e., who are involved and how they work in the migratory process of migrant workers. At the same time, it is time for the authorities concerned to consider some measures to be taken against the consequences of the presence of migrant workers in the country and to take some actions.