

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1. 1. Statement of the problem

International migration is a worldwide phenomenon which characterizes the present global, social and economic development. The flow of migration could be related to globalization since the latter increased transnational flow of capital, trade and technology transfer to other parts of the world. This global economic restructuring has not only advanced global development in many aspects but also produced some negative effects seen in terms of socio-economic disruption in many developing countries. Economic development gaps among countries have rapidly widened. The disparity in economic development has led a large number of people to migrate to developed countries where there are more employment prospects. Rapid flow of migration has given rise to a complex and multidimensional population movement in many parts of Asia. Over the past 20 to 25 years, the number of Asian who migrates abroad for work has increased dramatically.

Globalization also increases the demand in unskilled labor and service jobs in many developed countries. The demand for female labor which is cheaper and more manipulable than male labor has been rising. There are a great demand for female workers which is brought by the development of mass production and service industry, the number of female migrants increased considerably (Koinuma, 2002). A high percentage of female migrants is one of the characteristics of the labor migration in Asians i.e. the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

It should be noted that the international labor migration is fraught with danger, especially irregular migrants in destination countries. They have to overcome difficulties in the society where language and lifestyle are different from their countries of origin. They have to face many difficulties such as economic problems, discriminations, and lack of access to social services. If the destination country has

strict immigration policies, the situation of irregular migrants can become more vulnerable because irregular migrants are often afraid of deportation. Their illegal status is frequently forced them to work in a very poor employment condition. Moreover, the host country usually will not allow them to access to the social services if they are illegal workers.

Migrant women in particular are subjected to dangers that are not encountered by male migrants e.g. the social status of being a foreign woman in the destination country, violence in the work place etc. It has been argued by leading academic that population migration is a gender neutral process. However, job opportunities and prospect that are available to men and women in destination countries can differ immensely. Due to the lack of education and economic opportunities in the country of origin, most migrants find themselves only qualified for low social value jobs (Ochi, 2005). Migrant women tend to be employed in low-wage production or service jobs such as domestic workers, factory workers, and entertainers. They frequently end up in a low status employment vulnerable to exploitation, mental, physical, and sexual abuses. Employment opportunities can be further limited when a migrant has entered the destination country illegally.

During the course of migration, migrants have to adjust themselves into new society which they had never experienced before. They have problems with speaking language, access to social services, and interaction with natives. There are many cases reported that migrants are deceived by employers because they do not understand the language, and some are discriminated by the natives. Therefore, migrants have to overcome these difficulties with a lot of efforts. When people fail to integrate into the society, migrants tend to feel lonely and begin to have aspiration to go back home. If migrants are not permitted to stay in the destination country, they will face with an order to leave. The options available to them are overstaying, returning home voluntarily or forced return (IOM, 2005). Thus, return decision will be also determined depend on their experiences in the destination country.

Adjustment problems can also occur when migrants return from the

destination country to their countries of origin. A large number of returnees are disappointed by their migration experiences. In most cases, adjustment problem could be found among migrants from poor community since they do not have immediate employment prospects. This has created further destabilizing conditions. Inadequate jobs in the country of origin can also lead to reintegration problems as many returnees can face the same economic hardships that lead them to migrate in the first place. Furthermore, they come back to the country of origin often finding that the social environment has changed after their long absence. Returnees are also affected by cultural dynamics in the destination country which leads to a change in their own values (Arowolo, 2000). Therefore, many returnees tend to face many difficulties in reintegrating themselves into their countries of origin. Impact of migration can also be felt in terms of family bonding or community relations (Macaranas, 2004).

Therefore, the reintegration appears to be one of the aspects to be studied in tandem with the issue of migration. This is because migration study also regards the reintegration as one of the stage of migration (Arowolo, 2000). Most of migration researches focus on the situation in the destination countries. There is limited research on how migrants utilize their knowledge after they return. Studies on women from the Philippine have shown that reintegration can be difficult particularly for women migrants in vulnerable occupations because they have gained no values-added experience in the destination country (Ochi, 2005).

The reintegration of migrants into the community of origin could be also studied in the case of Thailand. A large number of Thai nationals work abroad. There are also many Thai women working abroad and many of them are involved in the entertainment business. One of the main destination countries for Thai women to work in the entertainment industry is Japan. This is because a high demand on entertainment industry in Japan and large economic gap between Japan and Thailand. The higher incomes lure many Thai women migrate to Japan. These women are often recruited to work abroad by transnational trafficking network. Therefore, many of them enter Japan with fake passport or overstay. Due to their illegal status and the nature of entertainment work, they often suffer from severe working condition and

exploitation such as low wage or violence at work place. These severe living conditions leave physical and psychological impacts on women. Since the nature of sex work is precarious, women usually return to the country of origin no matter the migration objectives were met or not. After their return, these women face reintegration problems. Lack of skills and limited socio-economic support prevent them from seeking other employment options and leaves them only migration or entertainment work as working alternatives. According to Yosida (2004), some female returnees faced discrimination from their previous village community, some have mental problems and some face social stigma due to their returning with a child that they have with Japanese partners. The problems can be further increased if the returning woman did not bring any socio-economic benefits to her family or community.

In this research, Chiang Rai province is the site of the study because the province is well known for supplying women to massage parlors, go-go bars around the country. Women in Chiang Rai province normally have little formal education, poor awareness of sexually transmitted disease and also being lured to a higher income jobs i.e. work in entertainment industry. The cultural attitude that daughter has obligation to take care of their parents also promote them to work outside of the village and offer in a entertainment industry since it can bring higher income. This traditional family and cultural values have put the pressure on many women to provide support for their families. As such, migration appears to be an appealing economic option and social phenomenon for young Thai women in this area (Wawer et al., 1996).

Considering the fact that a large number of women in the Northern part of Thailand have been motivated to work abroad in entertainment industry, it could be assumed that they also face some problems upon their return. However, there is not sufficient research on the situation of these returnees over the sustainability of their livelihood and the impact of migration upon their return. The reintegration process of returnees in Chiang Rai province is an interesting area for research on migration in Thailand. Therefore, this study will focus on how Thai female returnees reintegrate



into the community of origin and how their experiences in Japan affect their reintegration process.

## **1. 2. Literature Review**

### **1. 2. 1. Migration and gender**

The phenomenon of migration between countries occurs all over the world. In this social phenomenon, female migrant workers moving to higher income countries have become one of characteristics of labor migration. Under this trend, women are brought into an economic society and became more elastic in the labor market. Rai indicated the reason why women were brought into the labor market related to the relationship with the role of nation states (Rai, 2005). Firstly, because nations tend to retreat from welfare, it has become more difficult to raise many children. The governments tend to reduce subsidies to support child-raising. Because of the withdrawal of provision of welfare, women are increasingly being mobilized into work. Male income is no longer secure, instead of that, female are becoming more mobilized and become elastic as a labor force. However, this increasing female labor force might cause the breakdown of women's health and reproductive capacity. Rai (2005) also indicated that there is the paradox of home and work place. Although the home is supposed to be a relaxing and refreshing place, current women have to work both at home and the work place. As such, now women have triple roles, household work, work in the market or workplace, and community organizing (Okin, 2003, p2). They work longer hours but are paid less. Thus, it can be argued that women can work and gain more responsibilities, and yet it is making women more vulnerable. Elson point out that women's labor is being expanded to adapt to the cuts in public social spending and the expansion of women's work outside the home (as cited in Rai, 2005, p245).

Young (2004) also points out and this feminized labor trend is making new inequalities for women (p125). The way the business of states attracting inside corporate investment is similar to a dating scenario that:

Symbolize and normalize the increasing mobility of female labor – ‘girls’ must ‘go out’ and pretty themselves up or rather make themselves highly available and exploitable in order for their states to catch a ‘real man’( [major investor]. Alternatively, if the states in which they reside are unable to attract foreign investor ‘boy friends’, ‘girls’ must ‘go out’ of their states to catch a wage. Of course, this puerile dating is not designed for reproduction – that is, the enhancement of human and planetary life- but rather for a kind of ‘love’em and leave ‘em’ production, trade, and finance that enriches only a few at the expense of far to many and too much.

(as cited in Young, 2004,  
p123-124)

As such, many women start to participate in the labor market, and many of women from developing countries migrate overseas for economic reasons. Women migrants are faced with high risks of exploitation.

In the case of South East Asia, women go to the Middle East to become domestic workers, or Europe and Japan to marry local people. In Cambodia, since women occupy a lower socio-economic status compared to men, those who migrated can only find unskilled employment as factory workers, domestic workers, shop assistants (Chen, 2006). Although it is said that migration can facilitate the empowerment for women in terms of providing chance to see new places, make new friends, learn new things, there is also disempowerment of women. For example, because many of them have only low level of education and are from developing countries, women only obtain low social value jobs. Women are often trafficked into exploited work such as prostitution or domestic work. It involves violations of basic human rights and constitutes violence against its vulnerable victims. This exploitative situation in the destination country prevents women to be empowered by the employment abroad.

There is an accelerated demand for women in the labor market. According to the report of Legal Support for Children and Women in Cambodia (LSCW, 2005),

because of increasing demands from the labor market, many women and girls with low education and skills see migration as an opportunity to make money, and they are often subject to violence. Women who are working in entertainment industry, in particular, often face the danger of violence. They frequently get into arguments with customers about condom use which can result in the customers using violence and rape them. Although some clients refuse to use a condom, women have no choice as they require money to pay off the debt and daily costs. As such, women and girls encounter threats from customers and often fall into vulnerable situation.

The feminized labor trends also expand inequality between men and women. Ishii (2005) reported on the inequalities between women in Taiwan regarding inequality of marriage. In Taiwan, since the economy of Taiwan grow rapidly, more and more women start to participate in social activities and the number of high status women increased, and accordingly the status of males descended and those who were left behind had difficulty finding bride. As a result, brokers who recruited low status women from developing countries such as Vietnam to be provided as wives emerged, and they preferred to recruit women from agricultural villages rather than high status women such as local Chinese. Similar case also happens in Japan. There is a serious shortage of brides in the farming villages in Japan. Since the status of women in the villages is low, women with high education are no longer interested in marrying males in the farming village. Therefore, they start to accept the brides from Southeast Asian countries who are regarded as obedient by Japanese society. In short, while women who have higher status are getting stronger positions and more participation in the society, women of low status are still struggling from the risks of trafficking. Ishii named this phenomenon as “human merchandising” which means that women are forced to migrate as merchandise with demand of men (Ishii, 2005, p402).

As such, although the women started to participate in the labor market and migrate, women from low socio-economic country have often ended up in the low-status and low wage production, and are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

### 1. 2. 2. Thai female migrants in Japan

Legally, Japan does not permit entrance of unskilled workers. It has chosen to adopt a strict immigration control to manage foreign worker by deporting anyone found working illegally in Japan and fining Japanese employer who hire unskilled foreign workers. Therefore, many illegal workers in Japan could not receive social assistance from the government. They are treated unfairly by their employers because of their illegal status. As a result, a number of complex socio-economic problems have appeared among migrant at the individual level and also affect Japanese society at large.

Illegal migrant who stay in Japan tend to face poor living condition, since they do not have access to social services. In terms of health care, according to Komai (2001), illegal migrants in Japan have difficulties accessing to health care service. The survey noted that 56 medical institutions which were surveyed said that 744 of the 1,396 foreign patients they had treated had no public health insurance, and that 34 had failed to pay medical bills. This is because the government has not admitted the enrolment of National Health Insurance for undocumented foreign workers. Those people staying in Japan illegally must pay the full cost of treatment for illness or injuries themselves. Therefore, many illegal migrants hesitate to access to hospitals even though they are involved in the accident or fall to the disease. There is also a report concerning the living condition for female migrants. It shows that infant mortality of Thais and Filipinos is very high contrary to Japanese and other nationals. This means that these women's access to medical institutions is quite limited, therefore children of Thai or Filipino mothers in Japan would be brought up under very poor conditions. Moreover, the stillbirth rate of these women marks almost double than that of Japanese. As such, illegal migrant workers in Japan face difficulties finding social protection.

The working conditions for Thai women especially those who used a "broker" were assumed to be very poor. The research of Ruenkaew (2002) pointed out that the typology of Thai women in Japan can be separated into three types: brides,



labors and entertainers. Under the bride category, it means that women enter Japan as a fiancée of a Japanese man with the purpose of getting married with him. His research found that all the Thai female migrants in the study were married or living as a defacto couple waiting for marriage (p63). As for the laborers, they also had to engage in a bad working condition. However, among these three groups, the most vulnerable group is entertainers. According to his research, they were under the control of their owners, owed large amount of debts, and they could not escape from their control until they returned all debts. These women who are sent to the snack bar or other shops which provide sexual services are placed under strong control of the boss and face with poor working condition such as no day off and no wages. These women are often abused by customers or the boss. Under this poor working condition, many Thai women have tried to escape from their working place.

There are also problems of cultural differences. Many women whether enter as bride or entertainer who later found Japanese partner often face cultural difference. Some women are not able to adjust their roles in Japan facing with misunderstanding, and lead to friction between the relationships (Miyajima, 2003, p63). The relationship between parents in law is also the problem for Thai female spouse. According to Ruenkaew (2002), Thai female spouse tends not to be accepted by their parents in law, because of the stigmatization of Thai women as prostitute in Japan. Moreover, Japanese society is not open to people from other culture. Some argue that it was not easy to understand the Japanese mentality and to deal with the Japanese. As such, it could be said that many Thai female migrant in Japan suffer from the problems related to their living condition and also cultural difficulties.

### **1. 2. 3. Return and reintegration of migrants**

An aspect of international labor migration that has not been studied extensively is the return migration and reintegration of migrant workers (Perry, 2003). Arowolo (2000) also points out that because return migration and reintegration are neglected areas in migration research. Therefore, a viable framework for addressing the complex issue of reintegration has not developed yet.

It is considered that their return process will be affected by migrant's experience in Japan and it will also affect the reintegration process. The return procedure can be broadly divided into two categories, voluntary return and forced return. The IOM's definition of 'voluntary return' is that "Return based on the voluntary decision of the individual." The concept of voluntary return requires more than an absence of coercive factors. A voluntary decision is not only defined by the absence of any physical, psychological, or material coercion but also implies that the decision is based on adequate, available, accurate, and objective information. On the other hand, "forced return" is meant by "Return that is not undertaken by the individual voluntarily (IOM, 2005)."

The voluntary return is considered to be the most recommended way of return as the voluntary return will facilitate their sustainable return. The definition of sustainable return by IOM was presented as "achieved when returnees are able to integrate in the community of return, without immediate inducement to leave again (ibid)". Several studies have attempted to link reintegration in the home country with the sustainability. The measure of sustainability of return would be whether those who do return consequently re-migrate or not.

There are some literatures which link the voluntary return with the sustainable return. The case of Sri Lanka shows that returnees who came back voluntarily still aspire to re-migrate even though they already have employment. This is because the large wage difference between home and foreign employment seems to be the major determinant of the desire to re-migrate (Athukorala, 1990). The case of the Philippines also shows that the lack of job opportunity and low salary in the country of origin motivate returnees to re-migrate to higher income countries. It also indicates that reintegration assistance could help their sustainable return (Perry, 2003). These researches assert that the sustainability of return is difficult for economic migrants. As such, even though they came back voluntarily, it does not mean that returnees are satisfied with the situation after their return.

However, if the reintegration is managed properly, it can reduce vulnerability and create sustainable livelihood because returnees are able to use skills acquired during their stay abroad. Moreover, if returnees can secure their own economic stability, it also leads to the decrease in the possibility of re-migration (IOM, 2005). However, a number of returnees do not stay in the country of origin because an unsustainable living condition at home and returnees continue to keep options of migration.

Literatures about reintegration indicate the difficulty of returnees in securing job in the country of origin. IOM research of South Caucasus found that successful reintegration into the country of origin was not likely among returnees, "In terms of employment opportunities in their home countries, most respondents were worse off than before departure (2002, p12)." This showed how difficult it was to reintegrate after their return to home country.

In terms of governmental support, there is not many countries that establish governmental organization for reintegration. However, in the Philippines, "National reintegration center for overseas Filipino workers" was launched in March, 2007<sup>1</sup>. This center aims to assist returnees by providing services three aspects: personal, community and economic. The survey of Filipino migrant women points that it is difficult to adjust themselves to a conventional family unit. The relationship between a wife and husband also changes: women no longer rely on men financially. Macaranas (2004) also states that the reintegration of migrant workers brings difficulties. For instance, "unemployment could be their fate for months or years, and if at all, they suffer adjustment problems of lower pay, deskilling, or even loss of self-esteem"(p9). He asserts that particularly for the women migrants in vulnerable occupations, they have no values-added experience, and such menial work experience could only result in the deterioration of their performance level.

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<sup>1</sup> National integration center for overseas Filipino workers available at website: <http://www.nrco.dole.gov.ph/>

However, Chantavanich (2001, p261) described the difference from the research of Macaranas with regard to women's empowerment. Her research concludes that in destination countries, women are economically empowered by the migration experience because they are able to earn higher income than the country of origin and they can send remittances home. Meanwhile, women are socially vulnerable to exploitation, violence and sexual harassment. However, after they go back home, they become economically vulnerable again because of a lack of income. On the other hand, they are socially empowered due to their higher social status and self-confidence, which they have developed in the destination country. As such, whether female labor migrants are vulnerable or empowered by the migration experience still has room for argument.

In Thailand, the needs to support the reintegration of the returnees have not been paid attention yet. There are some literatures regarding Thai migrants who came back from Japan. The study of Caouette & Saito (1999) stated that women who had returned to the country faced with many problems such as a lack of job opportunities. Their lack of skill and absence of any support prevent them from seeking other options for their lives apart from migration and entertainment work. According to Yosida (2004), some female returnees faced discrimination from their previous village communities. Some have mental problems and some face social stigma due to their returning with a child that they have partnered with a Japanese man. Moreover, if returnees could not find a source of income, the choices available for them are to migrate to other places again especially women who went to Japan when they were still teenager, but their working skill was limited to entertainment work.

Angsuthanasombat (2001) points out three problems which confront returnees: Income decrease but expenses were still high such as children school fee, old debts were not paid off, health problem caused by working abroad. Her study also showed that their reintegration have both positive side and negative side. Returning workers received greater acceptance from their families, relatives and society because their living standards had improved and some gained self confident. On the negative side, some received less income that they had hoped for. Although their family

expenses increased, some face a level of culture shock upon return. They also stated that there were no jobs in the villages or areas near the villages. The views of people in the community also affect their feeling. Caouette & Saito (1999) stated that some Thai women who engaged in entertainment work in Japan revealed that villagers did not see it as a shame anymore since women have earned good money from entertainment work. However, some were stigmatized since they did not bring money even they engaged in the entertainment work. As such, many women face difficulty reintegrating to their original society.

#### **1. 2. 4. Concepts**

In order to understand the reintegration process of Thai female returnees, following concepts are applied to explain the process.

##### **(1) Social Integration**

The above literatures reviewing show that the level of integration into the destination country affects the reintegration process of the returning migrants. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the concept of integration into the destination country.

Migration to a country or a city changes the size and the composition of the country or society that receives the migrants. Immigrants will not be always welcomed by the destination country. They will encounter barriers to integration, such as prejudice and discrimination. For such barriers to be overcome, the destination society needs to engage in the process of integration.

There are four basic forms of social integration: structural integration, cultural integration, interactive and identification integration. Structural integration means of the attainment of rights and the access to position and status in the core institutions of the destination society, such as the economy and labor market, education and qualification systems, the housing system, welfare state institutions and



full political citizenship. Cultural integration refers to an individual's cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal change. Interactive integration means the acceptance and inclusion of immigrants in the primary relationships and social networks of the destination society. Identification integration means that the feeling of belonging to the society of the destination country (Bosswick & Heckmann, 2006). As such, integration takes place in a specific local context. Social integration can be defined as:

“the inclusion and acceptance of immigrants into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society. Integration is an interactive process between immigrants and the host society. For the immigrants, integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society (ibid,p11).”

According to the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union (2004), employment is a key part of the integration process and can be an important way for immigrants to make a social and economic contribution to their host society. The recognition of qualifications acquired in another country can help the integration process and allow for a smoother transition from origin to destination country. Basic knowledge of the host country's language, history, and institutions are indispensable for migrant integration. Moreover, frequent social interaction between immigrants and member state citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration.

As such, process of integration into the destination country will leave some impacts on migrant's physical and psychological aspect. Therefore, in line with the three basic principles for integration, employment, language and interaction with natives will be used to examine the integration of Thai female returnees in this study.

## (2) Return

Although the focus of this study is reintegration, it is necessary to look at their returning process in order to assess their success or failure of migration experience. By looking at their returning process, it becomes possible to explain under what condition returnees can reintegrate into the home country.

Return migration is a relatively new area of academic study. This is because return migration tends to be a private, individual, or family affair. According to Standing (1984), migration can be separated as seven stages:

1. Migration not ever considered
2. Migration consideration but rejected (for definite future, or temporarily, on a contingency basis)
3. Migration intended/ planned, but timing and/ or destination uncertain
4. Migration in process
5. Migration completed
6. Migration made, and repeated
7. Migration made, returned to area of origin or place of previous residence (as cited in Arowolo, 2000, p61).

The last of the seven stages best defines return migration because it has a great impact on the country of origin, transit, and destination. There are impacts on national immigration systems. Return assistance requires legal frameworks and great cooperation between sending and receiving countries in order to make the reintegration process as successful as possible. The most ideal way of return is through voluntary action that is based on the decision of the individual and does not include coercive factors. Assisting voluntary return of irregular migrants can help to reduce the risk of trafficking providing the political and legal policies are in place for reintegration.

The return migration could be explained by some theoretical concepts. One of this is Neoclassical approach to international migration which bases on the notion of wage differentials between receiving and sending countries, and the return migration seems to be viewed as the outcome of a failed migration experience which did not bring the expected benefits. On the other hand, when it comes to New Economic of Labor Migration approach, return is part of the migration project and it occurs once the migrant's objectives are met in destination countries (Cassarino, 2004). These concepts will further be elaborated when analyzing return process in analysis chapter.

### **(3) Reintegration**

As stated in the statement of the problem that reintegration is the focus of this study, this section will deal with the concept of reintegration.

Reintegration is part of migration cycle. Reintegration of returnees is a process of integrating migrants back from their destination country to their country of origin (Arowolo, 2000). Reintegration refers to "a re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a migrant into the society of his/her country of origin (IOM, 2004)." This reintegration process is between those who have returned and those who remained at home during their absence. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process, primary taking place in communities at the local level.

It is said that migrants have difficulty reintegrating into their home countries because of joblessness and social maladjustment depending on the experience in the destination country. There are two aspects in the reintegration debate: the economic reintegration and the social reintegration. This research will look at these two aspects to examine how social and economic factors facilitate their successful reintegration in Chiang Rai province.

With regard to economic reintegration, employment opportunities are one of the most important aspects to successful reintegration as they provide means of

livelihood for them to sustain their life. If they can not secure employment, they have to make a choice of re-migration. In many cases, there are not sufficient employment opportunities available at home when return to their community. Furthermore, migrants will often reluctant to engage in farming or previous low skilled jobs since many of them realized that these jobs could not generate the same amount of money which they gained in the destination country. In cases where returnees can only find unskilled jobs, migrants who have learned skills in destination countries have to face deskilling and low self esteem (Macaranas, 2004, p9).

Job opportunity is important for returnees when they returned to the country of origin. If there is sufficient job opportunity, returnees can make a living without re-migrating. Moreover, if the returnees gain human capital in the destination country, it might be possible to secure better or productive job than before their departure. Therefore, how employment opportunity support their economic reintegration and the use of knowledge acquired in the destination country will be factors to analyze the reintegration process of the returnees in this study.

The social aspect of reintegration can be also a crucial factor in the reintegration process. Adjustment back to life in the migrant's home community often requires changes in life style and living conditions. The reception by family and friends who stayed behind and the personal disposition of the returnee can be essential element for social reintegration. It is often argued that returnees experience difficulties such as family disruption due to the long time absence from their family. Family acceptance is the first step when reintegrating into their home society.

The relationship among the people in the community is also an important factor when the returnees are trying to achieve social reintegration. This is because returnees have to adjust themselves into the traditional society again. If the returnees fail to accept their new living conditions, they tend to face with identity crisis and this often leads to personality disorders or trauma (Arowolo, 2000, p70).

As such, social environment is also important factor for returnees. Thus, the

study attempts to understand how social factors such as family/ community relations and individual feeling have affected reintegration process, as well as economic aspect.

### **1. 3. Objectives**

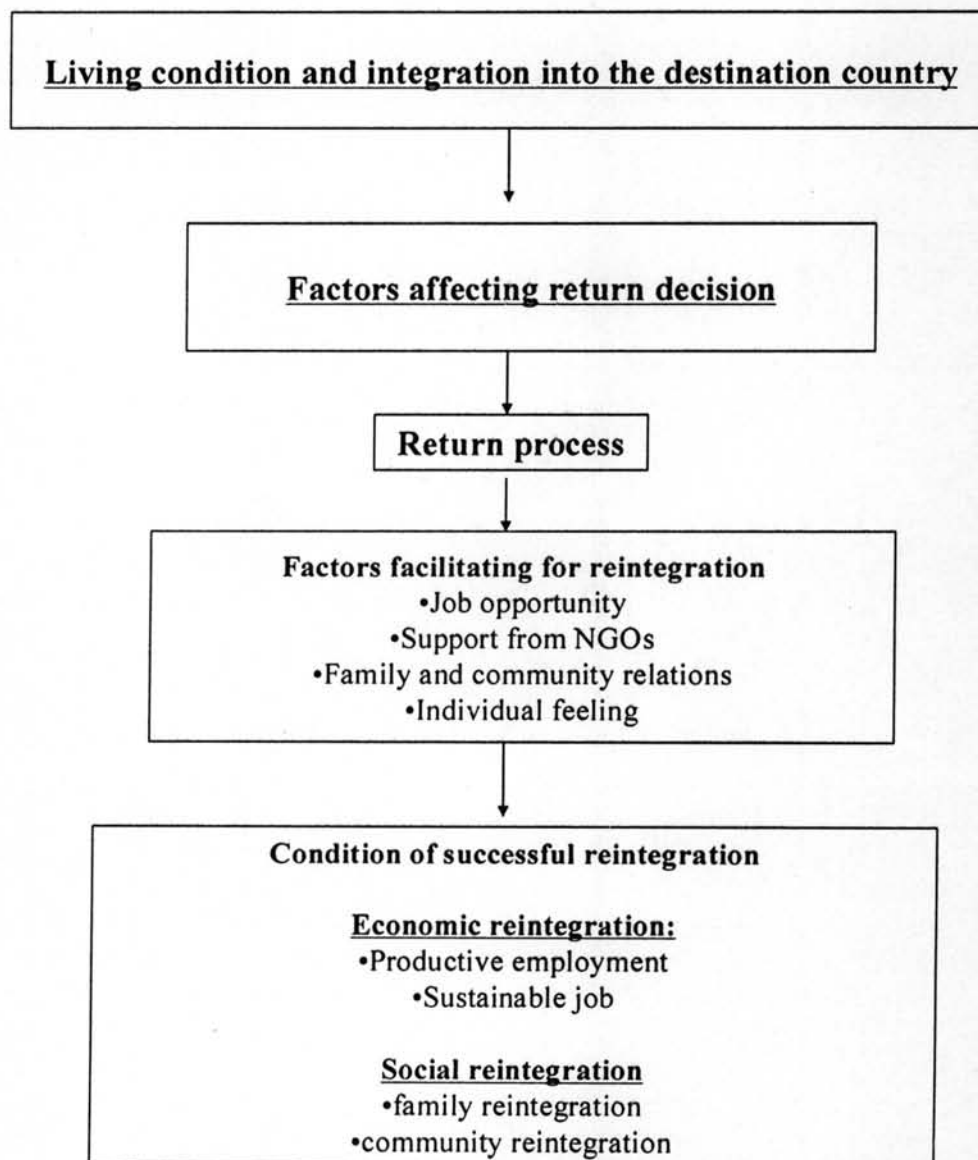
The research objectives of this study are:

1. To examine living conditions and the integration of Thai female migrants in Japan.
2. To understand the return process of Thai female returnees.
3. To analyze how the socioeconomic factors facilitate and hinder the reintegration of Thai female returnees into Thai society.



#### 1. 4. Conceptual framework

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of reintegration process



### **Living condition and integration into the destination country**

In order to explore the reintegration of Thai female returnees, the living condition of Thai female returnees and their integration into Japanese society has to be understood. Reintegration process will be affected by the experiences in the destination country because the migration experience leaves some impacts on migrants physically and psychologically and would also cause some effects to their life in some extent.

Examining living condition in the destination country will assist us to understand the challenges of integration and whether they were vulnerable or they were benefit from living experience abroad. In addition, their integration into Japanese society also will be analyzed in order to understand their returning process. It is necessary to know what they have gained or lose from their migration experience in order to assess whether their migration was successful or failure. By analyzing this, it becomes possible to know how integration affects their return decision.

### **Factors affecting return decision**

The study of reintegration could not be separated from the returning process. It is necessary to look at their returning process in order to analyze reintegration process. There are two approaches to examine the return migration. Neoclassical approach regards the return migration as a failure of migration experience. New Economic and Labor Migration approach advocates that migrants return when they achieve their migration objectives. These two approaches will be used to analyze their return process in this study.

### **Facilitating factor for reintegration**

Reintegration will be affected not only by the migration experience in the destination country, but also some socio economic factors in the country of origin.

Since the productive and sustainable jobs are considered to lead women's sustainable reintegration, job opportunity is therefore regarded as one of the most important factor for the smooth reintegration of the returnees (Chantavanich, 2001 & Arowolo, 2000). The support from NGOs will be also considered as one of the facilitating factor for reintegration, as various kinds of assistance provided by NGOs also contribute to the successful reintegration (Macaranas, 2004). In additions, community and family reintegration will also be looked at in this research as a significant factor for reintegration. Family and community acceptance without any disruption or stigmatization would lead to their sustainable social situation (Caouette & Saito, 1999). Individual feeling will also be focused, because the mental adjustment is important for successful social reintegration since migrants tend to lose self esteem because there is no job opportunity or deskilling (Macaranas, 2004). As such, this research will examine how these factors have influent their reintegration process.

### **The condition for successful reintegration**

The condition for successful reintegration is divided in two aspects, economic and social reintegration. Economic reintegration refers to a migrant into the economic system of his/her country of origin (IOM, 2004). Economic reintegration is one of the most important aspects to successful reintegration. This is because the ability to earn income and be productive members of their families plays a significant role in restoring self esteem as well as overall physical and psychological well being. Since most of illegal migrants migrate abroad because of economic reason and lack of education, securing productive and sustainable job is difficult task for them even after their return. Therefore, securing a productive and sustainable job will be analyzed in this research as a condition of successful reintegration.

Social reintegration is also considered as an important aspect for successful reintegration of returnees. Social reintegration means that "re-incorporation of migrant into the social structures of his/her country of origin (IOM, 2004)." Social intervention with the aim of integrating into former society, family and community play an important role for facilitating the social reintegration. In migration studies, it

is often stated that after long absence, some have problems with members of the community such as family disruption and stigmatization. Family and community people's rejection also lead the loss of confidence and feeling of displacement. Therefore, family and community reintegration will be also regarded as a condition for successful reintegration.

### **1. 5. Research questions**

1. What is the living condition of Thai female migrants and how do they integrate into Japanese society?
2. What is the returning process for Thai female migrants?
3. How do the facilitating factors support and hinder their reintegration into Thai society?

### **1. 6. Hypothesis**

1. Thai female migrants with children in Japan are disadvantaged because of service jobs, poor working condition and illegal status.
2. The decision of return for Thai female migrants with children is determined by poor living condition in Japan, governmental support, achieving their migration objectives, prospects of employment, presence of family and the legal status.
3. The reintegration for Thai female migrants with children is determined by job opportunities, support from NGOs, family and community relations, and individual feeling.