

INTERNAL MIGRANT CHILDREN AND THEIR ACCESS TO EDUCATION: A CASE
STUDY OF HLAING THAR YAR TOWNSHIP, YANGON, MYANMAR.

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้ต้องการศึกษาการเข้าถึงการศึกษาระดับปฐมภูมิของเด็กในครอบครัวผู้อพยพภายในเมียนมา โดยเน้นการศึกษาในเด็กที่ต้องติดตามครอบครัวที่ย้ายถิ่นฐานไปในที่ต่าง ๆ การศึกษารั้งนี้เป็นการวิเคราะห์ประเด็นปัญหาที่เด็กต้องเผชิญในการย้ายถิ่นฐานจากนอกเมืองเข้าสู่เขตเมือง อันเกิดจากกระบวนการเข้าถึงการศึกษาในระดับปฐมภูมิ โดยการศึกษาครั้งนี้ยังได้ทบทวนแผนยุทธศาสตร์การศึกษาระดับชาติของเมียนมา (ค.ศ. 2016 – 2021) เพื่อทำความเข้าใจวิธีการและกระบวนการทำงานของเจ้าหน้าที่รัฐในการจัดการกับปัญหาการเข้าถึงการศึกษาระดับปฐมภูมิของเด็กที่เป็นผู้อพยพ

วิทยานิพนธ์ชิ้นนี้ศึกษากลุ่มตัวอย่างในเขตหลายระยะในย่างกุ้ง เมียนมา ซึ่งเป็นพื้นที่ตั้งถิ่นฐานของกลุ่มผู้อพยพชาวเมียนมากลุ่มต่าง ๆ โดยใช้วิธีการศึกษาเชิงปริมาณและการสัมภาษณ์ การศึกษารั้งนี้สัมภาษณ์ครอบครัวผู้อพยพทั้งสิ้น 12 ครอบครัว โดยเลือกครอบครัวที่มีเด็กในวัยเรียนที่เพิ่งเป็นผู้พามาตั้งถิ่นฐานใหม่ในเขตนี้ นอกจากนี้ยังได้สัมภาษณ์บุคคลต่าง ๆ อีก 10 คน ประกอบด้วยพนักงานของรัฐบาลจากกรมการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน เจ้าหน้าที่รัฐระดับท้องถิ่น ครู และตัวแทนจากองค์กรไม่แสวงหาผลกำไร และองค์กรไม่แสวงหาผลกำไรระหว่างประเทศ

จากการศึกษาพบว่า แม้รัฐบาลจะมีนโยบายให้มีการศึกษาภาคบังคับโดยไม่มีค่าใช้จ่ายแก่ประชาชน แต่จำนวนของโรงเรียนที่มีอยู่ไม่สามารถรองรับความต้องการของเด็กได้ โดยถ้าหากนักเรียนลงทะเบียนเข้าเรียนกับโรงเรียน รัฐบาล จะ ช่วย อุ ด หนุน ค่า เล่า เรี ย น แ บ บ เรี ย น แ ล ะ เ ค รื่ อ ง แ บ บ นั ก เรี ย น ทว่าเด็กในครอบครัวผู้อพยพมักไม่มีเอกสารของทางการในการรับสิทธิต่าง ๆ ซึ่งรวมถึงสิทธิในการลงทะเบียนขอเป็นนักเรียนด้วย แม้โรงเรียนบางแห่งยินดีรับหนังสือรับรองที่ออกโดยรัฐบาลท้องถิ่นให้แก่เด็กในการเข้าเรียน แต่พ่อแม่ของเด็กส่วนใหญ่ก็มักเป็นผู้ที่ไม่มีเอกสารยืนยันตัวตนเช่นกัน ทำให้การออกหนังสือรับรองเพื่อให้เด็กได้เข้าเรียนทำได้ยากขึ้น รวมถึงหากเด็กต้องอพยพย้ายถิ่นบ่อยครั้ง เด็กก็จำเป็นต้องมีหนังสือรับรองการศึกษาจากแต่ละโรงเรียนที่เคยศึกษามาก่อน ซึ่งในส่วนนี้ยังคงเป็นปัญหาอยู่นอกจากนี้ การบังคับใช้กฎหมายเกี่ยวกับเอกสารราชการที่จำเป็นในการเข้าเรียนถูกตีความไปในหลายทางตามแต่ละท้องถิ่น ทำให้ไม่มีมาตรฐานเดียวกันในการกำหนดเกณฑ์เอกสารที่ให้เด็กใช้ลงทะเบียนเข้าเรียนได้

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Thazin Lin Thet Maw : INTERNAL MIGRANT CHILDREN AND THEIR ACCESS TO EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF HLAING THAR YAR TOWNSHIP, YANGON, MYANMAR.. Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Carl Middleton

This research explores the accessibility of primary education for children of migrant families within Myanmar, focusing on children who accompanied their families when they have to move to a new location. In doing so, this research analyzes the issues faced by rural-to-urban migrant children in the process of primary school enrollment. The study also reviews Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021) to understand the provisions and practices implemented by the government to address the challenges of migrant children's access to primary education.

The research was conducted in Hlaing Thar Yar Township in Yangon, Myanmar, which is an area characterized by settlements of migrant groups. Using qualitative methodology, a total of twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with migrant families in the study area, selected on the basis of being recent migrants with primary school-aged children. In addition, another ten key informant interviews were conducted with government officials from the Department of Basic Education, local administrators, teachers, and representatives of INGO/NGOs.

The main research findings are that while there is a state policy of free and compulsory education in Myanmar, the number of available schools does not fill the demand. For registered students, the government subsidizes school fees, textbooks, and a school uniform. However, many migrants do not possess the necessary documents to practice their legal rights, including school enrollment, in their new settlement. Some schools accept a recommendation from the local administration, but this is often not possible because parents do not possess their own identity papers. Also, for migrant children to continue their education in a new location, a school transfer certificate must be submitted, which is a major challenge. In addition, the enforcement of documentation requirements are interpreted and practiced in various ways, which has created confusion regarding the standard acceptable documents.

This paper concludes that the implementation of free and compulsory education at the primary level in Myanmar is failing to meet the needs of the migrant community. Other than economic barriers there are multiple administrative challenges that make it nearly impossible for children of migrant communities to access primary education.

Field of Study:	International Development Studies	Student's Signature
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
B.E.H.S	Basic Education High School
B.E.P.S	Basic Education Middle School
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAE	Department of Alternative Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DERPT	Department of Education Research, Planning and Training
DHE	Department of Higher Education
DOP	Department of Population
DTT	Department of Teacher Training
DTVET	Department of Technical and Vocational Education DTVET
GAD	General Administration Department
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KG	Kindergarten
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOLPI	Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
MORAC	Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFME	Non-Formal Middle Education
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Statement of Research Problem

Among other things, access to education is also fundamentally determined by the location, mobility and movement of families who are caretakers of children. Children who are located near schools and live with families who are not mobile would be having a better advantage of learning in schools. In Myanmar, there has been remarkable improvement overall in the quality of education and accessibility has improved for children because of increased budget allocation and availability of more schools which are also increasing in number in far-flung rural areas. However, children of internal migrants are facing challenges in accessing schools and tend to dropout more than other children from schools. The Myanmar government has been trying to address this through its education strategic plan but in practice children from migrant families continue to face challenges.

The quality of education has been improving as the government has put education sector reforms on top of its political agenda. The expenditure on education went higher up from 0.79% of GDP in 2011 to 2.17% of GDP in 2017 (UNESCO 2019) and in total 5100 schools were upgraded to higher levels (primary to post-primary, post-primary to middle, middle to higher) which included building of new school buildings (MOE 2018). In 2018, the enrolled number of students in primary, secondary and higher secondary schools was 1 million higher to its previous year (MOE 2018). The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) has the objective to “Improve primary education completion for every primary-aged child in school” and this is being implemented in practice by providing free primary education together with free text and exercise books including free set of uniform for school going children.

Nevertheless, it is reported that the parents still continue to pay some hidden costs such as for transportation as well as donations for school supplies which to many parents is unaffordable (UNESCO 2017). This is especially true for poorer parents including migrants in peri-urban area. Most of the people who migrated to Hlaing Thar Yar, which is the study area for this thesis and constitutes a peri-urban area of Yangon, are

from Ayeyarwady division. This region is one of the poorer regions in Myanmar and in 2008 was struck by the cyclone Nargis. In the aftermath of Nargis, the people from rural parts of Ayeyarwady has continued to migrate to other parts of Myanmar - namely to find jobs (Department of Population 2016).

Many of the cyclone affected people reported to have lost their properties, livelihood and documents such as national identity card and household registration certificate. Overall, the majority of the rural-urban migrant people are informal settlers and squatters and their living condition is poor and are living without documents necessary for accessing services legally (ILO 2015, Boutry 2017, Kyed). One of the critical issues for these migrating families is accessing education for their children and they are facing challenges because they cannot afford hidden costs in school expenses and many do not have documents that are required for enrollment in schools.

In Hlaing Thar Yar township, which is the area for this research, only 33% of primary-aged children were attending school in 2017 which is lower than the national rate (Department of Population 2017). A fifteen years old girl, “Myat”, who moved to Hlaing Thar Yar three years ago said “I was worried a lot about my future when I was told that I could not transfer to a school here and started working in a factory. I did not like my life as a factory worker” (UNESCO 2016).

The call for universal education and the right to education as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which encompasses all children irrespective of their race, caste, or economic status. Article 28 of the UNCRC gives emphasis to compulsory free primary education for all children of school going age. Also, Myanmar ratified the UNCRC but there are critical flaws in domestic policies that undermine and challenge children for accessing education. The definition of children in the Myanmar Child Law 1993 which defines age for children is inconsistent with the international protocols and there is no specific law to combat child labor. Among 12 million children in Myanmar, almost 1.2 million children between 5 and 17 are engaged in child labor (MOLPI 2016). Children tend to drop out from school when they enter the workforce (ILO 2015). A large portion of child labor are those from migrant families who have moved because of push factors, namely poverty, and cannot afford to send their children to school.

In Yangon, Hlaing Thar Yar is an area with high-prevalence of child labor and half of them are under 13 years old (give source). Tim Aye, a founder of Myanmar Mobile Education Project (MyME) said “children should be in schools, but the existing education system is inadequate to prepare them for the workforce.” (Channel News Asia 2018) .

Besides school enrollment, data shows that drop out continues to be problematic in Myanmar. The dropout rate of primary school children is 24.6% which is higher than the world figure of 19% in 2016 (UIS 2019). One of the reasons appears to be related to the fact that 20 percent of Myanmar’s population is migrating. It is critically urgent to understand the reasons and challenges for children who are dropouts from schools (Population, 2015). First, there is no clear arrangement for a child to leave one school and join another. Migrant families are not aware of the required documents when they move to another place. Often, the requirements of papers of the migrating family is not supported by local administration. Secondly, children from migrant families who get enrolled in schools tend to drop out from school because of financial obstacles, disability, and lack of interest in education(World Vision 2014).

My thesis will look into the issue of accessing education for children of migrant families in Myanmar. For the purpose of this study the phrase migrant children and children of/from migrating families are used interchangeable to mean the same study group which is the children who have migrated together with their parents from one place to another place within Myanmar.

My thesis will review Myanmar’s education policy to understand whether there is focus on migrant children. The need for research in this area is urgent. While the country data for Myanmar show marked improvement for accessibility to schools by children this maybe misleading to decision makers as there are still those who are being left behind. If so, such policies can be unsustainable because it may further widen the socioeconomic gaps. Also, if marginalized sections are lagging behind it will mean that to fulfil the rights of people will be far more challenging than perceived.

It is thus urgent to review policies in their scope of being inclusive at this juncture to ensure that the poorest sections are also benefiting. What is evident is that the success

in accessibility to schools is likely to be unsustainable as retention of students from particular sections of the population in schools is low. An important question to ask is whether the education policy to facilitate accessibility is failing and if so why is this happening. Also, the reason for dropping out maybe different for different groups, in this case migrant children, as compared to other population. Because rural-urban migration has been growing since 2010 in Yangon, and internal migration flow accounts for more than international migration in Myanmar (Htoo and Zu 2016), it is important to understand its impact on children and their access to education.

1.2 Objectives of Research

The objective of the research thesis is as follow:

- ❖ To investigate the challenges of migrant children and their families living in peri-urban areas of Myanmar in accessing primary education
- ❖ To assess how the government can support children from migrant families to access and/or continue their primary education

1.3. Research Question

Overall Question

Why are children from migrant families in peri-urban areas of Myanmar accessing/not accessing primary education?

Sub Question

- (1) What are the challenges that migrant families and their children face in accessing or continuing migrant children's primary education in Myanmar?
- (2) To what extent does Myanmar's education policy support children from migrant families to get access primary education?

1.4. Hypothesis

My research hypothesis is based on (i) children from migrant families in peri-urban area lack access to education which means their right to education is not being fulfilled; (ii) lack of registration system and education policy implementation are key issues for children from migrant families for access to education.

I expect to find that migrant children at the primary level of schooling are facing difficulties in accessing education as well as continue to drop out even if enrolled. Also, there are practical ways to address the issues of migrant families and their children in enrolling to school and accessing education. These practical responses will contribute to identification of gaps in inclusive education policy and open up opportunities to analyze further on how policy and their practice can be made to target marginalized groups such as those who are migrating within Myanmar.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The number of internal migrants globally is estimated to be more than three times the number of those moving internationally UNDESA (2016). There are many opportunities that arise when people with skills move and are ready to contribute in creating their livelihoods. This is because the reasons for people to migrate within countries seem to be for economic reasons in terms of diversifying their livelihoods, making new ways of generating income and thereby creating new business to contribute to the economy. Unlike international migration where there is vast work that has been done, internal migration is a relatively a lesser researched area. There is paucity of data and information in this specific area of study.

Following research work from general migrations and the established theories of “push and pull” factors for migration, this study can be used to understand the internal migration happening within countries. Families mostly are likely to migrate from rural areas because of the need to make income and when local livelihoods are inadequate. Usually, rural families are facing acute economic crisis such as poverty as local opportunities are not enough, landholding gets smaller and smaller for farming, and urban areas provide better options for making livelihood.

Economic factors are strong reasons and migrating families often do not consider social, cultural and gender aspects in their migrating strategies. Especially, families having economic objectives overlook the conditions that their children are exposed to and which are new social and cultural environments and above all because there is no support from the government it becomes a challenge in accessing services like schools. This thesis derives its theory from the general understanding of why migrations happen but delve specifically into social, cultural and policy gaps that have so far been overlooked for migrant children with respect to their access to schools.

The research questions have been answered, and the hypothesis tested using the overall UNCRC and Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) requirement of right to education to see whether the government of Myanmar through its policies is set to fulfilling the rights of migrant children at the primary level. First, the education policies of basic education of Myanmar have been analyzed by comparing with the international standards as they follow from UNCRC and UDHR. This will be a theoretical exercise from which the real ground situation will be analyzed using 4A Scheme (Tomasevski 2004, 2006).

The legal framework for the State's obligation on the Right to Education is discussed through what is called the 4A Scheme which was described by (Tomasevski 2004). These are: - (1) Availability; (2) Accessibility; (3) Acceptability; and (4) Adaptability. The use of Tomasevski's theoretical underpinning is a holistic approach that will help to analyze field level data at different levels and domains which are government; communities, families, parents as well as from the children themselves. The field level data collection will be based on questions that have been formulated using this framework for each category of the respondents and analyzed accordingly.

1.5.1 Availability

The domain of "availability" has analyzed Myanmar's education policies and practices on the basis of whether it affirms and complies by standards set by UDHR and UNCRC. Data were collected to see different aspects of costs and tradeoffs that a child of an internal migrant and the family face for availing education. Questions on whether the principle of free primary education is being met for primary aged school going child of an internal migrant have been analyzed. Also, the ability and intent of the government

mechanisms to implement policy procedures for children to be able to avail education is discussed.

1.5.2 Accessibility

The domain of “accessibility” has been used to collect data and analyze, and also for conceptual thinking in terms of whether the policy, intent and practice of the Myanmar government is nondiscriminatory to children of internal migrants. The obligation and practice of the government for removing harmful practices including those that are economic and administrative have been looked into including the mechanisms of Myanmar government to monitor, analyze and identify children of internal migrants for accessing education.

1.5.3 Acceptability

The government has duties and responsibilities of “acceptability” to ensure the quality of education meets the acceptable standard and aims of education in schools. A key factor which is availability of qualified trained teacher is dealt into with respect to migrant children. The curriculum and teaching methods have been analyzed and seen if these are acceptable, relevant and culturally appropriate to children of migrating parents with respect to the human rights perspectives.

1.5.4 Adaptability

The domain of “adaptability” has been used to understand whether the education system is designed and responds to different needs of different category of groups and give emphasis on migrant children. It has been analyzed with respect to special requirements of migrant children who may be facing ethnic barriers, economic hardship, and labor compulsions. Analysis has been looked into the specific characteristics of challenges that migrant groups are facing to understand the real issues that makes them not able to adapt to new environments, cultures and economies.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Research Location

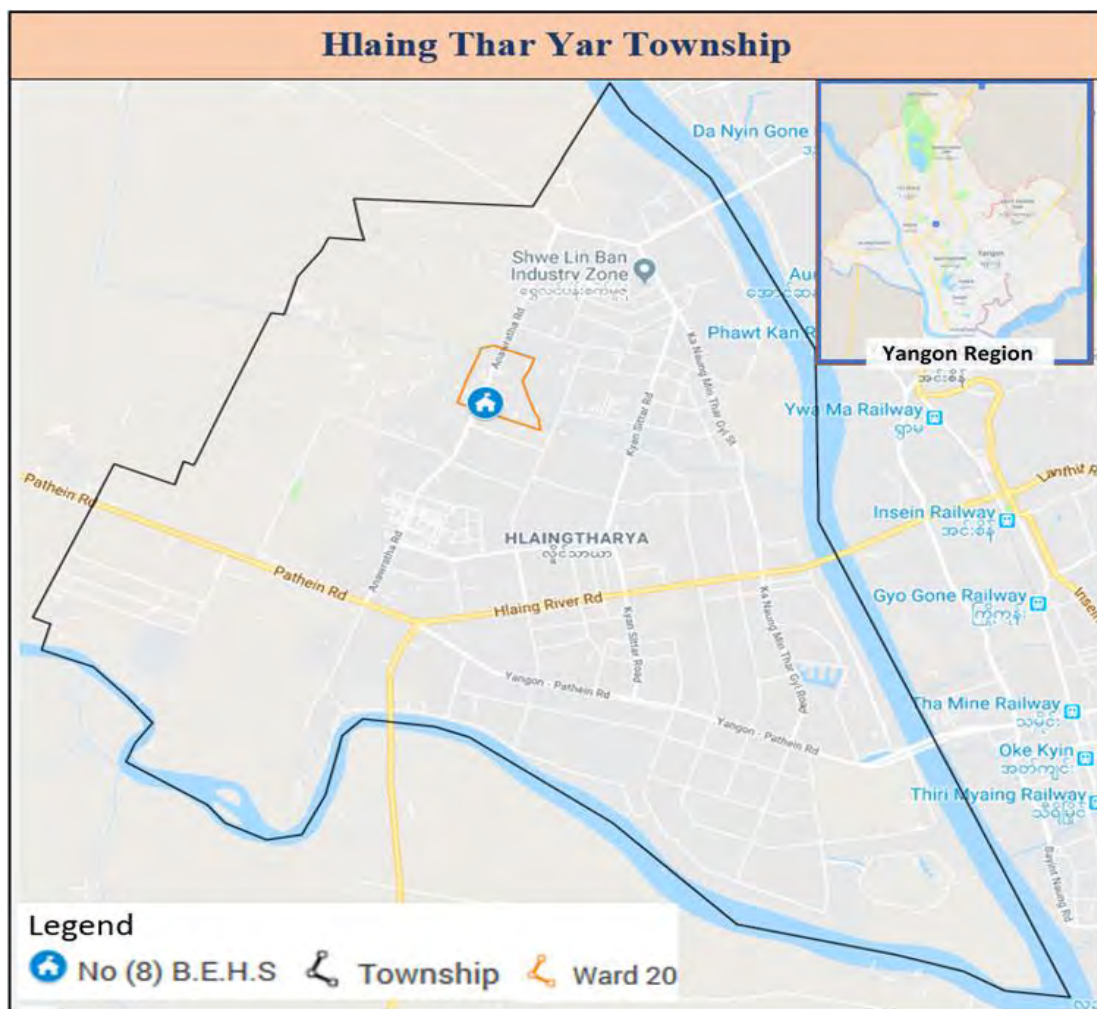
The research area was Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon Region of Myanmar. Hlaing Thar Yar is an industrial area that falls in one of the 19 industrial zones of Myanmar. Also, it is one of the biggest industrial areas and is located in the Northern Industrial

Zone of Yangon. It was established as an industrial area in 1995 and by 2013 had 644 industries (Ministry of Industry, 2013). This was following the fall of the socialist regime in 1988 and with the promulgation of the Private Industrial Enterprise Law (1990) when the country embarked for market economy and industrialization.

Yangon has the highest in-migration rate and has 93 persons per 1,000 population as migrants (Department of Population 2016). Among 33 townships in Yangon, Hlaing Thar Yar had the highest total number of informal settlers in 2016 (Forbes 2016). Hlaing Thar Yar Township is one of the peri-urban areas of Yangon with nearly 0.7 million population residing in 20 wards and 9 village tracts and majority of them are workers migrated from other states and regions of Myanmar (Department of Population 2016). The attendance rate in schools is lower when compared to the Union and Yangon region (Department of Population 2016). More information of Hlaing Thars Yar township is presented in section 3.1.

Ward no. (20) is the focus area for research of this thesis. It is the fourth largest populated ward in the township with fire victims and internal migrants from various part of the country. The living conditions and services that is available is poor in this area. Burmese is the major ethnicity in this ward together with Kayin and Rakhine. The main livelihoods of the people in Ward 20 are casual labor, domestic worker, factory worker, street vendor, trishaw and motorbike driver. More detail of Ward 20 can be found in section 3.3.

Figure 1. Map of Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon, Myanmar



1.6.2 Secondary Literature Data

This thesis has used secondary data from academic papers, reports from UN and NGOs, government law and policies and reports on education sector to understand the system and accessibility of education in Myanmar. Perspectives from different parties like the UN, civil society organizations, and other third parties such as individual experts and journalists on education systems reforms, government policy implementation and current education situations have been collected through international and local news by doing a web-based research. The human rights treaties and UN general comments are reviewed and analyzed on the right to education and the government obligations on such rights. Secondary information on the internal migration pattern and the situation of migrant families are also gathered through census reports, academic articles, research papers from UN and INGOs and also news articles.

1.6.3 Methods and Tools for Collecting Primary Data

Qualitative research using primary data collection method has been used for field research. Data was collected by mainly using key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews have been conducted with representatives of civil society organizations that are working on issues related with children, representatives from non-government organizations that are working for children's education, government school teachers and local administration staffs from the study area, and government officials from the Ministry of Education. The required data, data collection tools, interviewees and data analysis tools to answer the research questions are listed in Table (1).

Table 1. Data Collection Matrix

Question	Data Needed	Interviewees	Research Tools	Data Analysis
<p><u>Sub-Question 1</u></p> <p>What are the challenges that migrant families and children face in continuing migrant children's primary education?</p>	<p>- Status of availability and accessibility to the government education system;</p> <p>- Challenges in school enrollment faced by children from migrant families and causes for</p>	<p>- Parents and caregivers of migrant children</p> <p>- Township Education staff from Department of Education</p> <p>- School teacher and principal</p>	<p>In-depth-Interview</p> <p>Key Informant Interview</p> <p>Secondary data on schools and teacher resources availability in Hlaing Thar Yar township</p>	<p>-Data analysis on the status of public education availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability by migrant children and their challenges in accessing</p>

	<p>these challenges;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of education received by migrant children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives of CSO working on issues related with education - Local Administrator 		<p>education by looking at different perspectives from in-depth interviews with migrants and key informants' interview with different stakeholders</p>
<p><u>Sub-Question 2</u></p> <p>To what extent does Myanmar's education policy support children from migrant families to get access to primary education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International conventions on education ratified by government of Myanmar and comparison and analysis with national level Myanmar policies and laws to understand status of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National level government official from Ministry of Education - Township level government official from Ministry of Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data review and analysis with reference to UN conventions, General Comments and current Myanmar policies on education and internal migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis on education Policy regarding primary education - Current implementation of government on right to education, the status of policy

	and impact on children from migrant families -	- Representatives of NGO/UN working on issues related with education	- Key informant Interview	implementation regarding basic education and how does it support the migrant children's access to education
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1.6.3.1 Data Collection Procedure

To select the area for this case study, the researcher initially visited two wards and one village to get the general information of internal migration in Hlaing Thar Yar Township. A thorough discussion was conducted with community members to understand the characteristics of the population living in the several Wards/Villages which is the lowest administrative unit in Myanmar. The researcher also conducted informal interviews with 5 community members from each of the two wards and a village after which a discussion was done with representatives of a local civil society organizations (CSO) who are working with children's issues in this Township. Based on these discussions and personal observation, Ward 20 was selected as the study area. Ward 20 has a large and heterogeneous migrant population which consists of more than one ethnic group and religion. Additionally, and importantly, children here are studying in both formal public and monastic schools including attending classes with Non-Formal Education programme.

Data collection period in the field was from April 21 to May 10, 2019 in Hlaing Thar Yar township and also interviews with government officials in Nay Pyi Taw which is the administrative capital of Myanmar. Twelve interviews were conducted with migrant families, 10 key-informant interviews were conducted with school principal, teachers, representatives from NGOs, UN, local administrators and government officials.

Interviews and discussions were conducted by the lead researcher and an assistant was hired to rapport and document the conversation. The researcher used Burmese language and did not have language barrier because the majority of internal migrant in Hlaing Thar Yar township can speak Burmese. All interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. Photographs were taken of the respondents to present the documentation of fieldwork with permission.

1.6.3.2 Sampling

Semi-structured questionnaire was pre-designed (See Appendix) for each category of respondents. Questions were common to all groups as well as those which were specific to each group. These questions have been open ended to allow the researcher to further probe respondents. A total of 12 interviews (see in Table 2) have been conducted with migrant families with children who are aged for primary school. The main discussions were on school enrollment and to further understand the issues for children in accessing education. The selection of migrant families was based on two criteria: (1) families who have primary school -aged child and (2) families who have migrated within the last 10 years. Furthermore, to represent the heterogeneity of the population of Hlaing Thar Yar, participants were selected from different income groups by identifying them as skilled labor (carpenters, factory workers), unskilled labor (domestics workers, seller), and different ethnicity and religion. Selection has been conducted by transect walks around the ward to select families who meet the two criteria. Support was taken from a community member who is actively participating in social work in collaboration with civil societies in the ward.

Table 2. List of In-depth interviews

Code	Gender	Ethnicity	Date of Interview	Remark
Migrant 1	Female	Burmese	21-Apr-19	
Migrant 2	Female	Burmese	21-Apr-19	Women-Headed Household
Migrant 3	Female	Burmese	21-Apr-19	
Migrant 4	Female	Burmese	21-Apr-19	
Migrant 5	Female	Rakhine	21-Apr-19	
Migrant 6	Female	Burmese	24-Apr-19	
Migrant 7	Female	Kayin	24-Apr-19	
Migrant 8	Female	Burmese	24-Apr-19	

Migrant 9	Male	Burmese	26-Apr-19	
Migrant 10	Female	Burmese	26-Apr-19	
Migrant 11	Female	Burmese	5-May-19	
Migrant 12	Female	Burmese	5-May-19	Women-Headed Household

The in-depth interviews with migrants were done predominantly with female respondents. Usually men from the households that were approached for interview had their men out of their homes for work. Also, one third of female respondents have babies who are at the age of being breast-fed. Although, fathers from two households were in their houses, they did not volunteer to be the main interviewee, though they participated with their responses on some of questions and sat nearby.

Table 3. List of Key-Informant Interviews

Code	Interviewer	Organization	Gender	Date of Interview
Gov 1	National level Staff	Department of Basic Education	Male	7-May-19
Gov 2	Township level Staff	Department of Basic Education	Male	26-Apr-19
Gov 3	Ward Administrator	General Administration Department	Male	30-Apr-19
Teacher 1	Primary level Teacher	No. (8) Basic Education High School, Hlaing Thar Yar	Female	24-Apr-19
Teacher 2	School Principal	No. (7) Basic Education Primary School, Hlaing Thar Yar	Female	26-Apr-19
Teacher 3	Monastic School Teacher	Sanda Ra Ma Monastic School	Female	10-May-19
Teacher 4	Non-Formal Primary Education Teacher	N/A	Female	24-Apr-19
Rep 1	Project Director	Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre	Male	27-Apr-19
Rep 2	Project Officer	Pan Taing Shin	Male	26-Apr-19
Rep 3	Education Specialist, UNICEF	Education Specialist	Female	13-May-19

The school principal, teachers, civil society organizations and non-government organizations who are working on children's issues, and other stakeholders like the

representatives of the relevant government agencies were selected purposively for key informant interview (see in Table 3).

The government officials who are working at decision making levels and as well as those who are supervising the primary education program at national level, including also township level administrative staff from Department of Basic Education (DBE) were selected for key informant interviews. The representatives of NGOs and UN who are working on basic primary education programs were selected for key informant interviews. The primary-level school teachers and school principal from Hlaing Thar Yar Township were selected for interviews to understand on student enrollment, implementation of primary education system at schools, and challenges being faced by students and teachers. A local administrator was interviewed on the situation of children in accessing education and the role of local administration towards supporting migrant children.

1.6.3.3 Data Analysis

Both key Informant Interviews and in-depth interviews have been conducted not merely to collect data but also to conduct a participatory analysis together with the respondents as the data emerged. A method of questioning that probed further into issues was used in order to facilitate analysis of the emerging data. These were documented, and summarized data translated to English language and then categorized to see commonalities of perceptions across all respondents. The processed data has been analyzed according to the conceptual framework and research questions. The researcher used these to further analyze and infer on the research hypothesis.

Interviews were collected both on paper and voice recorder. The observations in the field were kept in a notebook. The recordings have been done in Burmese language and data were coded based on the conceptual framework and research questions. After that, the relevant and prominent data were translated into English for analysis.

1.6.3.4 Research Limitations

The fieldwork was conducted in only one of the peri-urban areas of Yangon. The findings on access to education for migrant children will therefore be specific to this

area. The data collection period was in school off-season period and therefore access to school principals and teachers was limited. The researcher could not meet the school principal from the selected ward but interviewed principals from other schools. Also, physical observation of schools in operation and students in classes have not been covered by this research. Although interviews had been planned with two national level government officials from different departments, one interview was cancelled by the official and was replaced with another meeting with the Department of Basic Education. The availability of secondary data is inadequate because there is limited previous study on access to education for internal migrant children.

The availability of existing literature on internal migration, internal migrants in Myanmar is limited and especially access to education by internal migrant children in Myanmar is absent. However, there are quite a few studies on international migration and access to education some of which have been referred for this research.

1.7 Ethical Issue

This research has been conducted with principles to maintain all ethical considerations necessary for academic purpose and to avoid harm on the participants in the study. The name of the interviewees from the government have been kept confidential. The participation in interview has been voluntary, private and confidential. Participants have been informed of the research objectives and their consent taken for interviews. The use of voice recording, and photographs have been done with their permissions. The researcher informed all participants that they were free to exit the interview process if they felt uncomfortable. Data has been secured by back up and information collected has been kept in confidence and will not expose informants by using data for purposes other than this research.

1.8 Significance of Research

The issue of access to education for children from migrant families in Myanmar is overlooked and there is no academic research that has so far studied this in detail. Given the focus of the government for enhancing access to school for school aged children is one which can be said to be a generalized approach rather than also having mechanisms that target specific sections. Therefore, the significance of this research is that it will

shed light by bringing forth the issue of the need for including targeting approaches within the overall education policy of Myanmar. In doing so, the study first intends to fill up the knowledge gap that currently exists with respect to access for education for migrant children. Secondly, this research will help to understand the challenges of migrant families and their children in accessing education and will highlight a pertinent issue that relates to the right of children *visa vis* their fundamental right and obligation on the part of the state. It is hoped that this seminal study will lay the foundation by calling the interests of future academics, the government and the civil society in Myanmar, ASEAN and globally for an issue that has been so far overlooked.

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background of this research and gives an overview on why access to education for migrant children is an issue. It provides the research questions, objectives of research, conceptual framework and research methodology. Chapter 2 presents the literature review which provides the understanding and fills up the knowledge that is required for this thesis and deals with right to education, obligation of the government, common barriers to access education, education system in Myanmar, and the issue of internal migration in relation to children of migrants in Myanmar.

Chapter 3 answers the research sub-questions through the findings from field work. This chapter starts with the background of the study area and analyses the challenges in accessing or continuing primary education that are faced by migrant families and children based on the '4-A'scheme. Chapter 4 discuss the government policy on primary education and analyses the policy of the government with reference to the empirical findings from the fieldwork of this case study. Lastly, chapter 5 concludes to provide an overall summary of the findings and points out the key analyzed outcomes from this research.

2. CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

While the plight regarding the right to education for international migrant children across countries is being highlighted by UNESCO, IOM and human rights organizations by putting pressure on host countries, the issues regarding access to education for internal migrant children has so far received less attention. This is despite the fact that internal movements within the country has been increasing around the world. In Myanmar, 20% of population (Department of Population 2016) are internal migrants. Therefore, the right to education in the context of such a large migrant community should be a fundamental issue. Both the academics, government and civil society organizations have overlooked this issue so far. This thesis has the intention to bring forth this overlooked right of migrating children for accessing education and highlights it to justify their fundamental rights in Myanmar.

2.1 Right to Education

Education is a fundamental human right and has been adopted since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1981, United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 reaffirm right to education.

The general comment Number 13 of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) elaborates that “education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities”. Education is essential to attain other rights and benefits not only by individuals but also by societies. Other rights too emanate from it such as safeguard of children from exploitation and promotion of democracy and protection of our environment. So the broad aim of the rights to education can be related to the sense of human dignity and that everyone is

provided with the right to participate in society and promotion of understanding among different racial and religious groups. (UN Economic and Social Council 1999)

“Education as a key right and unlocks the enjoyment of other human rights”(Donders and Volodin 2007) . Education is interconnected with other principles and without education other rights such as civil, economic, political, social and cultural rights cannot be exercised. For example, it has intrinsic interconnectedness with non-discrimination, freedom of expression, right to information, freedom of thought, right to education for health and the rights of children with disabilities.

The specific right to education for children ensures in UNCRC. Its Article 29 deals with the aim of education for children and Article 28 lists down the state’s obligation to children’s right to education. Article 29 (1) mentions the aims of education as: - (1) to contribute to the holistic development of the child; (2) development of respect for human rights; (3) development of the child’s identity and affiliation; (4) development of socialization, participation and interaction with society; and (5) conservation and development of the environment. Education system must be child-centered, child-friendly, fulfil different needs of different child, promote culture and heritage, eliminate discrimination and ensure children to participate in the society by maximizing their abilities (UNCRC 2001).

Access to free and primary education is a fundamental human right and reaffirmed in ICESCR, UNCRC, and Rights of Disabilities. States should take lead in the implementation of policies and make education available and accessible and also budget and allocate resources by each country(Donders and Volodin 2007). Hodgson (1998) also argued that “Compulsory education is an important means by which the State protects children from their parents and economic exploitation” such as the elimination of child labor through a set of minimum employment age and provision of compulsory education till a certain age.

2.2 Government Obligation on Rights to education and Right-Based Approach

ICESCR in its General Comment (13) provides a guideline of three levels to the States for upholding its obligation on right to education.

- 1) **Respect:** to avoid interference and prevent the enjoyment of the right to education.
It means that states should respect the parents' choice on their children's school and respect their own religious and moral education in accordance with their own convictions.
- 2) **Protect:** to prevent from third parties interference on the enjoyment of the right to education. State party must protect children from third parties, including parents, schools and teachers, religions and clans through legislation.
- 3) **Fulfill:** to achieve the rights of individuals and communities on their enjoyment of the right to education through adoption of positive measures. It includes provision of free and compulsory primary education, adult education, vocational training, and good quality education for all.

The obligation of State is also reflected in UNCRC Article 28 which states for (a) provision of free and compulsory primary education to all; (b) development of available and accessible to different forms of secondary education, vocational education and introduction of free education and also provide financial resources if needed; (c) accessibility to higher education; (d) information and guidance to education and vocational availability and accessibility and (e) emphasize on regular school attendance and reduction of school dropout rates.

The legal framework for the State's obligation on the Right to Education through what is called the 4A Scheme; availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability was described by Tomasevski (2004). This rights-based approach is useful in identifying the barrier of migrant children in accessing primary education. The framework mentions that the government is a primary duty bearer to support the rights of the child.

It also includes a component to ensure the duties of the parents and teachers in this regard. The explanation of 4A Scheme by Tomasevski and UNESCO (2019) towards the right to education handbook is as follows:

Availability. Primary education must be free and compulsory for all school-aged children and there should be provisions to ensure this education is of good quality. It is necessary to affirm and comply by key treaties such as UDHR and UNCRC. On the other hand, there should be policy to permit private school establishments and allow paternal choice whether their children should attend public or private schools. However, the government must implement procedures and monitor that adequate school infrastructure and materials, professional teachers and financial support are available.

Accessibility. The education system guarantees equal enjoyment of right to education for all and should be non-discriminatory. The government or state needs to ensure to eliminate all kinds of discrimination related to gender, racial, minority, marginalized and vulnerable groups. Accessibility to education should include primary, secondary and tertiary levels as well as vocational education. Government's obligation is to provide free and compulsory education to primary level and progressively at all other levels of education. State's obligation is to remove harmful practices that affect children's education which may include economic and administrative barriers. Access needs to also be analyzed in terms of the physical accessibility and whether the school location is safe and the distance of school also reachable. In addition, accessibility is not enough to get children into school and therefore there needs to be provisions to prevent children from dropping out and keeping them back in school. States must monitor, analyze and identify children at risk of school drop-out and determine required measures and actions by taking the views and experience of students, teachers, parents and the local community.

Acceptability. The government has duties and responsibilities to assure the quality of education meets the acceptable standard and aims of education in both private or public schools. Several factors such as availability of qualified trained teacher, water and sanitation facilities, and elimination of violence in the learning environment are included in quality. The curriculum and teaching methods must be acceptable, relevant and culturally appropriate to students, and align with the human rights perspectives. In

addition, the recognition of indigenous and minority groups especially by prioritizing their languages according to human rights law must be carried out.

Adaptability. The education system should be meeting the different needs of children. It means that the adaptability of quality education should cater to the needs of disabled children, children from indigenous and minorities group, working children, migrant children, children in emergency and conflict affected areas. The education system needs to fit into the human rights and school standards in terms of curricula and facilities and adapt to the best interests of the child.

2.3 Barriers of access to education

In 2017, approximately 262 million children and youths were out-of-school and 64 million were primary age children (UIS 2019). Therefore, the barriers for children and youths to get access to education and the states' implementation on right to education was and is being questioned? The barriers for children to access education can be physical, technical, as a result of resources, and also because of economic and social matters.

The lack of government investment through financial resources is a major problem towards fulfilling the education needs of the citizen(Eva Jenkner 2004). Tomasevsi (2004) argues that for compulsory and free education needs to be fulfilled there is a critical requirement for funding from government resources but often these policies are not followed. Consequently, public education becomes inadequate, of low quality, and the cost of education falls on the family budget. She argues that education is “legally free but really for-fee”. There are many kinds of fees that are being charged in many countries. The school enrollment fees are removed in most countries but there are still many forms of donation, school uniforms, transportation and school meal charges. Poor parents are unable to afford and the financial obstacles keep their children out of education. The policies of the States are failing to ensure these other charges for accessing school.

One of the barriers is usage of language in learning(Tomaševski 2008). She argues that learning cannot occur when the children do not understand the language. When a school uses a different language from a children's mother tongue, the children face difficulty and more likely is prone to withdrawal from school.

Gender discrimination is an obstacle to girls' right to education. The restrictive school policies on girls, the sexist curricula which fail gender equality, the paternal negative attitudes on girls' participation in education, gender violence in schools, the safety issue of long distance to school and the helping of household chores are the key components for the girls to be left behind in education.

Many working children are not able to access schools and the state will need to think of alternative approaches (Tomaševski 2006). Family income and poverty push children to work for income and this does not allow them to continue their education. For young girls, balancing between domestic work and taking care of younger siblings makes education achievement difficult. The informal market demand on child labor and parents' difficulties regarding financial investment in children are other factors for children not to be able to access education. (UNICEF, 2015). Donders and Volodin (2007) pointed that compulsory education age varies among countries, according to the worldwide trend compulsory education should go beyond the primary level and should last till minimum age of employment. In Myanmar, the minimum working age is 14 years, but the compulsory education age is only till 9 years old. The child labor is a common problem and 9.3% of children who are aged between 5-17 years old are child labor in Myanmar.(MOLPI 2016).

The actual attendance of school and drop-out is influenced by lack of inadequate school services such as location between school and home, lack of water and sanitation facilities, lack of transportation to school, teaching methods and materials, usage of different language from mother-tongue and school timetable. In addition, other socio-economic and cultural aspects also affect accessibility and dropout (Donders and Volodin 2007). Inadequate family income and poor social status are reasons for parents' inability to help provide education to their children. But it is also true that there are

other factors such as lack of parents' interest on education, religion and cultural practices and traditional attitudes which give less value on education - particularly in the case of girls there are specific factors which become obstacles to access and continuity of schools. Therefore, the state obligation of only fulfilling quality compulsory and free education is not enough but it is also essential to ensure, supervise and enforce duties to different duty-bearers who are parents, teachers, employers and the community. According to the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) report, Myanmar has one of the highest dropout rates and only one in five youngsters finish high school.

2.4 Education in Myanmar

The government of Myanmar ratified UNCRC in 1991 and ratified ICESCR on October 2017. By ratifying those treaties, the government committed itself to ensure the right to education. The Constitution of Myanmar 2008 in its Article 28 C states to implement free and compulsory primary education in the country. Following this, Article 366 enacts that every citizen in accord with the educational policy laid down by the Union: (a) has the right to education; (b) shall be given basic education which the Union prescribes by law as compulsory.

Myanmar's education system has been ruined under military dictatorship. The military government realized that education is dangerous, when people are educated, they question the government and it becomes difficult to maintain their power (Frontier Myanmar 2018). As a democracy in transition, Myanmar began its education sector reform in 2011. The civilian government, National League for Democracy (NLD), recognizes that education plays an important role in pulling the country out of poverty, increasing individual and household income, economic development and lasting peace. Therefore, the government has put education at the top of its reform agenda. The government expenditure on education was 10.1% in 2017 from 5.4% in 2011 with respect to the total government expenditure (World Bank). The government spent 2.175 trillion (Kyats) in 2018-2019 fiscal year which was increased from 1.726 trillion (Kyats) from the previous budget year (MOE 2018).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is the main responsible ministry for education in Myanmar. The education structure can be seen in two parts - administrative and academic. The administrative structure, policies and education system development, the National Education Committee led by the union minister is leading at national and decision-making level. The basic education and higher education are under academic structure. MOE has formed eleven departments out of which the prominent departments are - Department of Basic Education (DBE), Department of Higher Education (DHE), Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DTVET), Department of Alternative Education (DAE) and Department of Teacher Training (DTT).

The new National Education Law was passed in 2014 and the amended Education Law was released in 2015. National Education Strategic Plan (NESP (2016-2021)) is the roadmap for education reform that was released in 2016. Bertrand Bainev (UNICEF Myanmar Representative) responded on new education plan and NESP as “a historic moment” for Myanmar’s education system (VOA 2017). The main responsibilities of MOE are to implement education activities according to the Myanmar Education Law (2014) and NESP (2016-2021). The goal of National Education Strategic Plan (NESP,2008) is

“Improved teaching and learning, vocational education and training, research and innovation leading to measurable improvements in student achievement in all schools and educational institutions.”

The main reform priorities are completion of expansion of early primary education for every primary-aged child, promote different nationalities’ language by including curriculum development, enhancement in teacher skills and teacher-student ratio, improve school equivalency programmes, provide technical and vocational education, implement effective education services and educational reforms and transparency and effective use of education funding.

The NESP includes more inclusive education like for example to implement special and equivalency programs for disabled children, children from poor families and remote areas, and also to teach in ethnic languages to ethnic children. Kim Jolliffe, a

political researcher, said the new plan is a move to “child-centered learning”(VOA 2017).

Before NESP, the “Education for All” National Plan of Action (2003-2015) was focused on access to good quality free and compulsory basic education, improve literacy rate, and expansion of early childhood care. The NESP inherited to continue education implementation of EFA but with more weight on inclusive education like access to education for disabled children and children from poor families and children living in remote areas.

Myanmar has been practicing “5:4:2” structure in education system which was five years of primary, 4 years of lower secondary and 2 years of upper secondary, till 2015. Starting from the 2016 academic year, the government introduced Kindergarten (KG) +12 years system (KG:5:4:3), and the curriculum and syllabus was changed to focus on 21st century skills, personal development skills and to lead to critical thinking. There was also allocating of more teachers, provision of teacher trainings and to align with new curriculum and for more active teaching methods and upgrading and constructing schools. Kyaw Wai Phy, a teacher, said the education condition is quite bad and changing the education system is a must need. “The education communities themselves want changes” but some resist change and want to stay with the current situation (Myanmar Times, 2017). The curriculum and syllabus will be changed stage by stage with the help of international and national experts. Dr Zaw Latt Tun, Deputy Director General from MOE said the curriculum required reform by changing the approach from “Parrot learning” to “Critical thinking” (Myanmar Times, 2018). But on the other hand, the parent of a student, Myint Myint Than, put her view on the new curriculum and new teaching in Grade 1 as “Although they say it’s much better, I don’t see any difference. The only distinctive point is where the curriculum is divided into small groups” (THANT 2018).

DBE’s duty of achieving NESP as regards with basic education are: 1) implementing pre-school and kindergarten education with Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement; 2) basic education reforms for the 21st century; and 3) to provide access, quality and inclusive basic education. For quality and inclusive education access NESP has set three strategies. First, to enable universal access to free basic education;

secondly, to support compulsory and inclusive education and lastly to improve school quality through a national school-based quality assurance system. The number of total students (Primary, Middle, High) in 2017-2018 academic year was 9,176,454 which had increased from 8,894,519 in 2016-2017 academic year(MOE 2018).

On the other hand, DAE is taking the responsibilities of life-long learning and literacy education programs for out-of- school children. In Myanmar, 12% of primary school age (between 5 and 9) children are out of school (DERPT, 2018). Currently, under alternative learning program, non-formal primary education (started in 2008-2009) and non-formal middle education (pilot project started in 2016-2017) is under the DAE with technical supervision from Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre. According to MOE data, non-formal education both primary and middle is being implemented in 81 townships(Maochun and Wen 2014).

However, education reforms have been criticized by experts and academia. Mael Rayanaud, an expert from the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation, pointed the new education plan required support through financial resources and professionals. He compared this with the education system reform in Indonesia. He pointed that Indonesia took 20 years to train the required educational professionals. He criticized NESP was failing to include many educators, ethnic minorities, faith-based organization and civil organizations in its decision making.

Another education expert of National Network for Education Reform, Thein Lwin, pointed issues related with ethnic minorities. He said the government provided teaching in ethnic languages in very small scale and many ethnic languages are not covered and also the resources as well as teachers to teach in ethnic languages is very limited. Also, children dropping out of school is a big issue in ethnic area. Lynne Heslop, an education director at the British Council commented on NESP by saying that “This plan is quite an incredible transformation, if it is implemented” (Myanmar Business Today, 2016). Madeline Luke, a student of Monash University from Australia who studied potential improvements to Myanmar’s education argued that “the goal was admirable, the process was unclear”. The entire system reforming in only five years is not realistic and the government did not reveal on their plan on how they will retrain all teachers (Luke 2018).

2.5 Internal Migration in Myanmar

According to Myanmar 2014 Census, the ratio of internal migrants in Myanmar is 20% (9 million) of its total population. Among them, 21.5% migrants moved within State/Regions and 49.9% have migrated between States/Region (Census, 2016). The main reasons for migration are to follow moving families which is 39.3% followed by employment which is 38%, marriage which is 10.2%, for education which 2.7% and lastly because of conflict 0.6% (Department of Population 2016). Also, one of the reasons of migration is because of natural disasters (Boutry 2017) and Ayeyawady is the highest outmigration area especially during the cyclone Nargis which displaced families (Department of Population 2016).

Even though a large number of people are migrating within the country, the literature and sources of data on internal migration in Myanmar is limited. Mishra (Mishra 2016) stated one of the factors is survival from agriculture has become difficult. All depending on agriculture whether the producer or wage labor earn limited income. Better economic situation in urban areas make social mobility of rural people to out-migrate for employment and also for getting better education. Uneven development and poverty across different areas of Myanmar cause people to move as labor from less developed to more developed regions. In Myanmar, 70% of population living in rural areas and more than 30% overall are in poverty (World Bank, 2017). To find work and better life people migrate to urban areas. High migration and unplanned urbanization lead to their own problems such as expansion of slum areas in cities (Htwe, Oo et al. 2017).

Yangon is the hub of business, industries which persuade more and more people to in-migrate to Yangon (Forbes 2016). Issue of landlessness in many rural areas also compel people to search for better opportunities in the city (Forbes 2019). The migrants to Yangon are likely to relocate permanently. Because of high living cost in city areas they resort to informal settlements in peri-urban slum areas and many live as squatters. These areas are usually characterized by poor infrastructure and services, lack of electricity and water sources and also prone to flooding in rainy season (Boutry 2017). On the other hand, these areas are at risk to fire in dry season because of wooden or bamboo

housing materials as well as their usage as cooking fuel. The living condition is usually very poor, and more than five family members are usually found living in small houses. They also suffer from health issues because of inadequate latrines, and lack of sanitation and proper garbage collection system (Forbes 2016).

The report of “Internal Migration in South East Asia” by UNESCO stated that internal migrants face social exclusion and discrimination as well as obstacles in accessing the public services of education, healthcare, water and sanitation. Kyed (2017) also states that the migrant community is usually exposed to unsafety because of their illegal status and often get blamed for criminal cases. They face difficulties in applying for formal employment and availing credit facilities from the government as they do not have formal documents and house registrations. These informal settlements are considered as being out of the purview of protection by the local authorities.

Migrants also face innumerable challenges of finding schools for their children often because of lack of proper documents and low income. Forbes (2016) states that migrants are usually resorting to money lenders and fall in debt and one of their coping strategies is not to invest in the education of their children. There is knowledge gap on the relationship between migration and access to education for migrant children in Myanmar and this research will attempt to fill up this gap through primary data collection from the case study area.

CHAPTER 3

Barriers and Challenges of Internal Migrant Children in Accessing Primary Education

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the main barriers and challenges for children of internal migrants and their families in accessing primary education. The structure of this chapter is as follows: first, a brief description of the background of Hlaing Thar Yar Township and internal migration in this township; secondly, description of the study area which is this Township's Ward (20); this is followed by identification of challenges in accessing education with a focus on children using Tomasevski's (2004, 2006) conceptual framework. The chapter is concluded by analyzing the implications of these challenges on access to education by migrant children.

The overall argument is that children from migrant communities are facing challenges in accessibility, availability, and acceptability of primary education, which is a result of administrative requirements for enrollment. Inadequate resources, such as the number of schools and teachers, further exacerbated these challenges, which in turn affects the quality of education.

The main issue of availability is related to the small number of schools in Hlaing Thar Yar Township compared to the demand, and the inadequate number of resources. In practice, schools are following some innovative management practices to try to meet the needs of the children attending these schools. However, the demand for schooling continues to surpass its supply. Regarding access to education, the key challenge is that there are various factors, including awareness of the importance of legal documents and inflexibility of requirements. Regarding acceptability of education, the issue is compounded by the fact that the lack of resources largely affects the quality of education and that migrant children are at high risk to drop out, even after enrollment.

3.2 Background of Hlaing Thar Yar Township

Hlaing Thar Yar township is in the western part of Yangon, about 15 miles away from the downtown area. It was founded on 13 July 1989 with the formation of 8 wards and 9 village tracts¹. Before the founding of the township, the fire victims from Mayangone Township were evacuated and settled in the present area of Hlaing Thar Yar Township in 1985 (General Administration Department 2017).

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported that fires became an effective way to clear squatters, as the old plots are rarely returned to fire victims (IDMC 2010). The original plots where victims' homes and properties were destroyed in the fire are typically taken over by the government who then restricts rebuilding in these areas. The earlier military regime created six townships in this area, with Hlaing Thar Yar as one, together with Dagon Seikkan, North Dagon, South Dagon, East Dagon, and Shwe Pyi Thar. Hlaing Thar Yar was used as an area to relocate squatters from the downtown area of Yangon in the late 1980s (Forbes 2019). The large number of fire victims and squatters were then forcefully moved to new places out of town, forced to resettle in semi-rural areas from 1985 to 1988 during General Ne Win's government. The moving of squatters out of the main areas of Yangon continued until 2006 when General Than Shwe ran the government (Democratic Voice of Burma 2005, Rhoads 2018). After 1988, the Squatter Clearance Scheme evicted squatters from vacant public land, government areas, and religious areas such as pagodas and monasteries. These were then used for extension of government offices and for infrastructure such as roads and markets (Democratic Voice of Burma 2005). Hlaing Thar Yar township was specifically used for the resettlement of fire victims and squatters from Yangon (General Administration Department 2017).

Currently, the area of Hlaing Thar Yar Township is 67.4 km² and is comprised of 20 wards, nine village tracts, and 18 villages. According to the 2014 census, there are 148,711 households and the total population is 687,867 with the gender ratio being 89

¹ Administrative divisions of Myanmar are divided up-to fifth-level. First-level: Union Territory, Region, State. Second-level: District. Third-level: Township, Fourth-level: Ward, Village Tract and the Fifth-level: Village.

males per 100 females. The population density is 10210.6 persons per square kilometer and the average household size is 4.5, which is slightly higher than the national average household size of 4.4 (Department of Population 2017). The 2014 census statistical data shows that the population in Hlaing Thar Yar is the highest of all townships in Yangon. The major ethnicity is Burmese, which makes up 93.5% of the township's population, followed by Kayin 1.5% and then Rakhine 1.3%. The population follows four main religions: Buddhism (95.5%), Christian (1.5%), Hindu (2%) and Muslim (1%) (GAD,2017). The ward authority mentioned that this data includes migrants up to the year 2014. In 2019 it is estimated that the population has increased based on data collection for the Yangon municipal election in early 2019 (Interview with Gov 2, 26 Apr 2019).

Overall, household conditions in the township are poor; 47% of the inhabitants are living in wooden structures, 22% in bamboo houses, 9.6% in apartments or condominiums, and 6.5% live in brick houses (Department of Population 2017). It was found that the families living in bamboo houses, wooden houses and apartments are mostly comprised of migrant groups (Interview with Rep 2, 26 Apr 2019 and Gov 3, 30Apr 2019).

Working in the manufacturing industry is popular for people in Hlaing Thar Yar Township. Only 13.7% of men are working in the manufacturing industry compared to half of the female population. On the other hand, 25.6% of men are working in the construction industry, followed by involvement in transportation activities such as motorbike and trishaw driver (16%), and trading and repairing automobiles (13.9%). Around 14% of women are involved in wholesale and retail trading, and 13.6% work in accommodation and food service sectors. Those who are employed in public administration, including civil service, is a very low percentage with only 1.8% of males and 0.9% females (Department of Population 2017).

Hlaing Thar Yar township was designated as an industrial zone in 1996 and has become one of the largest industrial areas in Yangon. Since it has become an expansion of Yangon's city area and due to its industrial zone status, it is no surprise that the population here has grown rapidly. The newly arriving migrants have also increased in

this township specifically as a result of Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Since 2012, most of the affected people from Ayeyarwady region and poor rural migrants have resettled here (Kyed 2017). For example, one interviewee told me:

“After Cyclone Nargis, I lost my property including house. We have one acre of land but income from agriculture was not enough for supporting the family and we fell in debt. So, we decided to move to Yangon to find jobs” (Interview with Migrant 1, 21 Apr 2019)

Many of the communities who arrived in the first few waves of migration are well settled in the township and even have formal documents, including legal land tenure with household registration, and access to services like electricity and water. However, while some newcomer migrants live amongst the host communities, most are living in informal settlements.

3.2.1 Internal Migration in Hlaing Thar Yar Township

As a designated industrial zone, Hlaing Thar Yar Township has attracted labor workers. There has especially been increased demand in the township’s manufacturing industry. Hlaing Thar Yar has a number of pull factors, including the availability of work and the possibility to settle informally. However, from the interviews it was found that push factors are more important. These push factors themselves can be categorized into two broad categories. First, the decreasing amount of productive work that is available for local people in their home towns, and secondly, the effects of natural disasters and ongoing conflict.

The first type of push factor is primarily economic, and migration is one of the main coping strategies. Owing to the inconsistent agricultural productivity coupled with low market prices and growing number of family members, many young persons were found to have moved out to seek better livelihoods. Growing families also result in less per capita landholding, which makes rural life dependent on agriculture not very attractive to younger generations. It is important to note that there is a fair, though small, scale of mechanization from imported machinery, which to some extent has displaced local seasonal labor and contributed to the trend of internal migration. A female

respondent who used to be farmer in the Ayeyarwaddy region cited the reason for migration as:

“We did not have land in our original place. My elder son, daughter and I worked as agricultural labor and my husband worked as casual labor in the village. But agricultural work has become difficult to get because of more and more use of machinery which has also brought down the wage rate for working in fields. We decided to move here to find jobs and also my son and daughter can find work for themselves.” (Interview with Migrant 10 on 26 Apr 2019)

The second type of push factor can be labeled as environmental. Ayeyarwaddy is one of the poorest regions situated in the delta zone (IOM, 2016). As a result of its weak economy, it is an area from where people are migrating to other states and regions in Myanmar. However, after the devastation wrought by Cyclone Nargis in 2008, it was estimated that 350,463 people moved out from Ayeyarwaddy to Yangon (Department of Population 2016). Many of these are of Burmese ethnicity and have found refuge in Hlaing Thar Yar Township. Following Cyclone Nargis, people continued to move out of Ayeyarwaddy due to environmental reasons, such as soil erosion and unpredictable weather conditions, which have had a negative impact on agriculture. Due to their personal ties and existing social networks, the migrants from Ayeyarwaddy have started living in Hlaing Thar Yar Township (Interviews with Migrant 2 & Migrant 5 on 21 Apr 2019).

In Hlaing Thar Yar Township, the majority of recent migrants are Burmese persons who have migrated from delta areas, followed by Rakhine persons from Rakhine state. However, it was found that quite a lot of Rakhine migrants who used to live in this area have gone back to their home villages starting at the end of 2018. Most migrants in Hlaing Thar Yar Township reported that they migrated with their families so that both the husband and the wife could make income (Interviews with Migrant 1 & Migrant 4 on 21 Apr 2019, Gov4 on 30 Apr 2019 and Migrant 12 on 5 May 2019).

3.3 Overview of Ward Number (20)

Ward 20 is the fourth largest populated ward in Hlaing Thar Yar Township with 8,486 households and a total population of 38,728 (Department of Population 2017). The population in Ward 20 is a mix of people who were Yangon fire victims, government-forced rehabilitation groups from 30 years ago, and rural migrants from various part of the country, especially from Ayeyarwaddy and Rakhine regions.

3.3.1 Housing Condition and Household Amenities

The management of shelter for migrant people is perhaps the first and most important task. In the field site the arrangements for shelter were primarily made in four different ways, each of which also reflects the socioeconomic conditions of migrant families. Each of these arrangements also reflects the housing conditions, which in most cases identify families who are recent migrants. The following four types of housing arrangements were found in the field site of Ward 20:

- i) Hostels: There are hostels available in the area of study. The hostels on an average cost anywhere between 50,000 to 100,000 kyats (US 33 to 66) per month depending on the type and condition of the room and availability of private bathroom and/or kitchen.



Photo 1. Hostel in Hlaing Thar Yar Township (Photo credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 21 Apr 2019)

- ii) Rental Rooms: There are rooms that can be rented for a cost of 30,000 to 50,000 kyats per month (US 20 to 33) and vary as per the availability of piped water, electricity, and room conditions. These rented rooms are usually around 250 sq. ft. and many such rooms are built in long houses with a common compound. House owners also live here together with many tenants.



Photo 2. Long house with shared rooms (Photo credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 24 Apr 2019)

- iii) Rented Land for Shelters: Migrants also build houses with bamboo and wood on land which is rented for 5,000 to 10,000 kyats per month (US3 to 6). It was found that most of this land was confiscated by the government from private ownership, but the previous owners continue to manage and make money from such lands.



Photo 3. A migrant family from Ayeyarwady Region living in a shelter on rented land

(Photo Credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 24 Apr 2019)

- iv) Shelters Built on Government Land: Migrants have also taken the advantage of empty lands that belong to the government by constructing shelters on this land.



Photo 4. Informal settlement on government land

(Photo credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 26 Apr 2019)

Some of the shelters that are built on rented land are legal, but most shelters on rented land and those on government land are illegal. Hence, these are mostly found behind existing buildings that are legal and permanent. The shelters are mostly wooden or bamboo shanties, as shown in photo 3.4. These types of shelters and shanties accommodate the highest number of migrants, especially those who are poorer or have arrived in recent years.

Like many wards in Yangon, Ward 20 of Hlaing Thar Yar has an acute shortage of water. Those who are living in hostels, rented rooms, and the local residents, many of whom were earlier migrants and have since settled formally, have access to water. However, those who are living in shelters and shanties depend on water purchased from vendors. Drinking water can be purchased for 200 to 300 kyats (US\$0.1 to 0.2) depending on the season.

The conditions of sanitation and hygiene for many migrants who live in shelters and shanties is very poor. For domestic water supply, most of the formal settlements use piped water from the government or privately-owned tube wells, but informal settlements do not have access to these. Therefore, they carry water from public tube wells or boreholes, and some rely on pond or lake water in addition to purchasing water. People who live in hostels and rent rooms share toilets. Almost all informal settlements lack decent toilets, though nearly every household has built its own pit toilet. Pit toilets are structures made out of wood or bamboo and the roof and walls are covered with tarpaulin.

The migrants who settle illegally do not have access to electricity. They instead use charcoal and firewood for cooking. For light sources inside their rooms they use candles or LED lights powered by a battery which is supplied by private vendors and cost 100 kyats (US\$0.07) a night for a single bulb. Some household have purchased electricity from private generators which cost 100 kyats per night for lighting and 200 kyats (US\$0.14) per night for using a television.

3.3.2 Economic Opportunities for Migrants

Many migrants do not have legal documents such as national identity cards (IDs) or household registration, which makes it difficult to acquire jobs in the formal sector. Employment in Myanmar's formal sector, which provides better salary and job security, requires applicants to produce national identity cards. Often, migrants escaping from environmental shocks, like Cyclone Nargis, and many others who cannot produce ID cards, rely on informal work. Also, because informal work is easier to find, most migrants accept the conditions of these jobs.

Men work mostly in the construction industry as carpenters and bricklayers, and also as trishaw and motorbike drivers. Most migrants do not hold necessary education qualifications or other skilled workers training certifications, and as a result it is difficult to get hired in the formal sector. Both women and men migrants have low educational statuses and therefore their income sources are unstable. Men reported that it is becoming more difficult to find jobs in the construction sector and during such times they rely on the women's income.

Throughout the fieldwork, respondents from migrant groups reported that job opportunities for women have improved compared to men. Women, especially those younger than 35 years old, are finding work in factories, mostly garment factories, in Hlaing Thar Yar. However, women also work as food vendors, housemaids, and other informal positions. While 90% of the work in garment factories is occupied by women, work for men in factories is limited apart from carrying packages of garments. Additionally, the construction sector, which can provide many job opportunities for men, is severely affected by the rainy season (Boutry 2017).

3.4 Availability of Education

For a majority of migrant communities in Hlaing Thar Yar township, the possibility to access education for their children is either through the government, monastic, or private schools. The section below provides background information on the availability of educational institutions in the field site.

3.4.1 Government School

Table 4 below provides information on the number of schools by type in the Hlaing Thar Yar township.

Table 4. Availability of government schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township

Type of School	Number of School
High School	8
Middle School	22
Post-Primary School	3
Primary	25
Total	58

Source: Township Education Office

As per the Township Education Office, there are a total of 58 schools provided by the government within Hlaing Thar Yar township. The different levels offered include primary, post primary, middle, and high school. The level of schooling with highest number of schools is the primary level, followed by 22 middle level schools. Out of the 22 middle level schools, three of these are branches of existing middle level schools and 18 of these have been upgraded to full-fledged government middle schools. There are eight high schools and three post primary schools.

Table 5. Primary Students in Government Schools in Hlaing Thar Yar Township (Academic Year 2016-2017 and 2018-2019)

Primary Student in Government Schools					
Academic Year	Boy (in number)	Girl (in number)	Boy (in %)	Girl (in %)	Total (in number)
2016-2017	24,645	24,475	50.2%	49.8%	49,120
2017-2018					-
2018-2019	24,385	23,271	51.2%	48.8%	47,656

Source: Township Education Office

Table 5 provides the number of students disaggregated by gender enrolled in primary schools in the Hlaing Thar Yar township. There were total of 49,120 primary students and 47,656 primary students that attended school in the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 academic years, respectively, out of which 51% are boys and 49% are girls for both academic years.

Table 6. Number of teachers in government schools (Academic Year 2018-2019)

Level	Number of Teacher
Primary Level	670
Middle	997
High	331
Total	1,998

Source: Township Education Office

There is a total of 1,998 teachers for all school levels in the government schools. The distribution of teachers across each level is given above in Table 6. The highest number of teachers is in the primary level which has 670 teachers, followed by the middle level with 997 teachers and then high school which has 331 teachers.

On average there are 34 teachers per school overall. In the primary and post primary school there are 24 teachers per school. Similarly, in the middle level there are 45 teachers per school. In the high secondary level there are 41 teachers per school.

3.4.1.1 School in Ward 20

The No. (8) Basic Education High School (No.8 B.E.H.S) located in Ward 20 was upgraded from a middle school to a high school around two years ago. Children who live in Ward 20, both permanent residents and migrants, join this school. The school enrolled approximately 7,000 students in the academic year 2018-2019 and around 3,200 were primary students (Interview Teacher 1, 24 Apr 2019). Apart from the government schools, children also join monastic schools that are near Ward 20.



Photo 5. No. (8) Basic Education High School, Hlaing Thar Yar Township

(Photo credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 5 May 2019)

3.4.2 Monastic School

Monastic schools are administered by monks and directly governed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture (MORAC). There are three types of monastic schools, which are (i) teaching the literature of Buddha; (2) combining the teachings of the Buddha with basic literacy from formal education; and (3) providing the same basic education as is done by the government education system. Out of these three types, this thesis will focus only on the last category, which is the one that most children join.

In Hlaing Thar Yar township there is a total of 16 monastic schools that are recognized by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and provide basic education up to the middle level, which is Grade 8. Monastic schools teach the same curriculum as is taught by government public schools and students are allowed to continue in or be transferred to government schools. Monastic school students can be transferred to government schools in two ways: (i) after finishing their primary-level schooling in a monastic school and passing the state-level exam of Grade 4; and (ii) after finishing Grade 8. In

most cases, the students continue their studies in the monastic schools up to the middle-level and then transfer to government public schools.

Table 7. Number of primary students in monastics schools (Academic Year 2016 to 2019)

Primary Students in Monastic Schools					
Academic Year	Boy (in Number)	Girl (in number)	Boy (in %)	Girl (in %)	Total
2016-2017	3,511	3,291	51.6%	48.4%	6,802
2017-2018	3,454	3,255	51.5%	48.5%	6,709
2018-2019	3,712	3,553	51.1%	48.9%	7,265

Source: Township Education Office

Table 7 provides the number of students in monastic schools disaggregated by gender for the academic years 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. The number of students enrolled during the 2018-2019 academic year increased by more than five hundred from the previous year. The gender ratio in monastic schools is 48.9% girls and 51.1% boys, which is more or less the same as the ratio for government schools in the academic year of 2018-2019. Additionally, in the 2018-2019 academic year there was a total of 239 teachers for primary and post-primary (Grade 8) levels in all monastic schools. The data on teacher-student ratio in the monastic schools was not available as the township did not collect this data separately, but the average ratio at Sandar Ra Ma Monastic School is 1: 50 for the last academic year (2018-2019).

The salary for teachers of monastic schools is provided by MORAC and their salaries are well below those of public-school teachers. MOE supports monastic schools by (i) providing teacher trainings which are given together with public school teachers; (ii) providing materials (text books, six exercise books, and a uniform) in the same quota as the government schools; and (iii) providing school improvement grants twice per year as is the same as the government schools.



Photo 6. Sandar Ra Ma Monastic School

(Photo credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 10 May 2019)

3.4.3 Private Schools

As of the 2018-2019 academic year, there are a total of 23 private schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township.

Table 8. Primary students in private schools (Academic Year 2016 to 2019)

Primary Student in Private School						
Academic Year	Boy (in number)	Girl (in number)	Boy (in %)	Girl (in %)	Total	Remark
2016-2017	637	545	53.9%	46.1%	1,182	13 schools
2017-2018	1059	933	53.2%	46.8%	1,992	21 schools
2018-2019	1406	1276	52.4%	47.6%	2,682	23 schools

Source: Township Education Office

The number of primary students in private schools is provided in Table 8 for three academic years. Within the past three years, the number of students in private schools has increased by more than 50% and the number of private schools has also gone up.

The cost of private schools varies depending on the facilities and fame of the school. Generally, the cost starts from 25,000 kyats (US 16) to 50,000 kyats (US 33) per month for tuition fees (Interviews with communities on 21 Apr 2019). Information regarding private schools is not included in this thesis because private schools have a higher cost, rendering them unaffordable for most migrant communities.

3.4.4 Challenges in Availability of Schools

The number of public schools for all levels in Hlaing Thar Yar does not meet the needs of school going children in this township. The infrastructure capacity, including both the number of schools and the availability of classrooms, to accommodate potential students is inadequate. The number of students in Hlaing Thar Yar is also increasing every year due to incoming migration. This is despite the fact that almost all schools, apart from those for the primary level, have been changed to a two-shift schooling schedule with two batches of students studying at two different times per day as a result of the insufficient number of classrooms and schools. The Deputy Township Education Officer explained:

“The number of schools is very low relative to the number of students living in Hlaing Thar Yar Township. Sometimes, schools refuse to enroll the students because of inadequate space. Schools have to request children to go to other schools for admission.” (Interview with Gov 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

The ratio between the number of schools and the number of students has impacted the enrollment of new students, has had consequences on school-aged children, particularly those from migrant groups, and has effected the quality of education. This issue is detailed further in Section 3.5 (Accessibility of Education) and Section 3.6 (Acceptability of Education).

3.5 Accessibility of Education

Accessibility to education is analyzed in respect to three broad areas, each one of which is identified as a critical challenge within the specific field site. These include economic, administrative, and physical challenges. Even though the government has

announced a policy of free and compulsory education, which intends to reduce economic obstacles for poorer groups in general, there are pre-requisite conditions for accessing these opportunities. Administrative requirements, mainly documentation such as birth certificates and household registration grant cards, are mandatory for enrollment in schools. Without these documents, a child cannot enroll in school, which is a recurring challenge for children from migrant communities. For migrants with the required documents, additional costs of attending school present an additional financial burden on families, including the cost of transportation and meals.

3.5.1 Economic Accessibility

The government of Myanmar, in its Education For All policy, has introduced free and compulsory primary education for all primary school-aged children in the country. Schools from Hlaing Thar Yar township, including No. (8) B.E.H.S, started operating free and compulsory primary education in the 2011-2012 academic year. The school enrollment fees and parent-teacher association fees are eliminated, and all the required text books, six exercise books, and a school uniform set are provided to each student free of cost. All the interviewed families whose children joined public schools confirmed that their children had received these provisions and also that no charges were demanded during enrollment in schools. However, they were charged for drinking water and cleaning classrooms. These charges were mostly demanded once per month or once every two months and cost anywhere between 100 to 500 kyats (US 0.07 to 0.34). Sometimes, voluntary contributions for social and religious events or ceremonies for honoring teachers were collected. The interviewed migrants did not complain of these donations or small charges as a burden as these collections were not mandatory as compared to those from previous years.

“When I had money, I contributed and sometimes I did not” (Interview with Migrant 4 on 21 Apr 2019)

Many migrant families do not feel that sending their primary-age children to school is a heavy economic difficulty. However, the poorer families amongst the migrant

community still find it difficult to overcome this economic hardship. For example, one family from Hlaing Thar Yar confided:

“In the coming academic year, we will be facing a lot of economic difficulty because I need to enroll two children - one in grade 5 and another in the kindergarten. Although there are no costs for school fees, and textbooks as well as for uniform. This is however not adequate. I need to buy stationaries, umbrella, raincoat, two more uniforms and more exercise books. I’ll try my best to enroll the younger child on time.” (Interview with Migrant 3 on 21 Apr 2019)

Another woman-headed household who migrated from Bogale (Ayeyarwaddy) in 2015 shared her economic difficulties:

“I have three primary-aged children. When school season starts, I take loan with high interest to buy school uniforms and necessary stationaries as what is provided by the government is not enough. Sometimes, when I cannot provide food in the lunch box or money for snack, I do not send my children to school” (Interview with Migrant 12 on 5 May 2019)

As demonstrated in the quotations, enrollment and other fees that have been subsidized by the government are not the only costs required for a child to attend school. Often, children have to take transportation to get to school and there are additional costs of snacks and meals.

3.5.1.1 Stipend

There are two types of stipends, which are those: (i) provided by MOE, and (ii) provided by the World Bank in coordination with MOE. The government school students (excluding monastic school students) from KG to Grade 12 are eligible for the first type of stipend and the second type is provided to students between Grades 5 and 12. Therefore, primary-level students receive 5,000 kyats (US\$ 3.5), lower secondary level students receive 8,000 kyats (US\$ 5.5), and upper secondary level receive 10,000 kyats (US\$ 6.8) per month.

The objective of the stipend is to enhance enrollment and to reduce the drop-out rate. Basically, the stipend allocation process includes three steps. First, the national-level MOE selects eligible townships by prioritizing those with high drop-out rates. After this, the Township Education Office selects the schools based on an already existing township quota for student stipends and typically chooses those with lower quotas. Finally, these schools select the student recipients based on economic criteria (Interview with Gov 2 on 26 Apr 2019). At the school level, the eligibility selection process identifies students from poorer families and then a selection committee is formed. As a set criteria is used for selecting eligible students, some examples of these criterion are orphan children, children from irregular income households, children from single parent households, and those who are poor. The committee also consults with the parents of children who fit these criteria in order to make their final decision. When selecting the student recipients there is a standard criteria, but this is flexible in order to accommodate the context of each school.

Some schools receive both types of stipends, but most schools receive only the World Bank's stipend as the MOE's stipend covers just a small number of students in Hliang Thar Yar. A student is eligible for only one type of stipend and both stipends provide the same amount of money. There are only around 100 students who receive a stipend from the MOE out of more than 40,000 students in the whole township (Interview with Gov 2 on 26 Apr 2019).

No. (8) B.E.H.S school was not selected for MOE's stipend and none of the interviewees from the primary-aged group of students in Ward no. (20) had received any of the stipends. The parents are unaware of the selection criteria and process of receiving a stipend, complaining during the interview that the students who have good relationships with their teachers and the parents who understand how to fill out the application forms are the ones with real access to the stipends. Parents who are illiterate or very poor are often left out from the stipend, which defeats the stipend programme's purpose of providing resources to families with economic challenges (Interviews with Migrant 3 and Migrant 4 on 22 Apr 2019, Migrant 6 on 24 Apr 2019).

3.5.2 Administrative Accessibility

3.5.2.1 Enrollment Criteria of Public Schools

New students (KG and Grade 1) require a birth certificate for enrollment which takes place at the end of May every year. If parents cannot provide the child's birth certificate, they can produce a vaccination record or recommendation letter from a local authority confirming the age of the child. A child needs to be at least four years and nine months old and no older than five years old to enroll in kindergarten, and six years old for grade one. Two out of six migrant families who have students in government schools answered that they were able to enroll their children in school using the recommendation letter from a local authority. The representative of the Township Education Office said,

“We cooperate with the Township Health Department to get birth certificate for children who do not have” (Interview with Gov 2 on 26 Apr 2019).

However, none of the migrant families interviewed had received birth certificate services through the schools.

According to the post-primary school principal, in 2018 her school applied for birth certificates on behalf of parents and 22 students received them (Interview Teacher 2, 26 Apr 2019). However, this process is only possible for those who can submit legal documentation such as a national ID and household (temporary or permanent) registration certificate. Many migrants lack such documentation, especially those who faced natural disasters such as Cyclone Nargis. Also, because migrants are moving from one place to another, they often lose belongings in the transition. Some who were interviewed also pointed out that before being asked to produce these documents, they didn't realize their importance.

Additionally, many migrant children were born at home with a traditional birth attendant. While some migrant parents were aware that they could be issued a birth certificate from government hospitals at a reasonable cost, there were also some who are not aware due to poor education or simply not being familiar with such requirements. It was found that many illiterate parents and recent migrants rely on

brokers to acquire birth certificates, a service which costs around 30,000 kyats (US \$20), which for many is difficult to afford. However, there are cases where the requirement of documentation is relaxed and an alternative document, such as letter from a local authority, is accepted, but this is not a standard practice. A 44-year old father of out-of-school children shared his experience when he enrolled his daughter in school two years ago:

“When I enquired with the school for enrollment, the headmistress said you can enroll with local authority’s recommendation letter if you do not have a birth certificate. When a new headmistress took charge of the school she did not accept the recommendation letter but informed me that I should submit my daughter’s birth certificate.” (Interview with Migrant 9 on 26 Apr 2019)

For transfer students, a transfer certificate (TC) is required. But if a TC cannot be submitted at the time of enrollment, schools will accept those students temporarily and require parents to submit the original TC at a later date (Teacher 1 on 24 Apr 2019 and Gov 2 & Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019). The Township Education Office stated that sometimes the schools can coordinate between themselves and in such cases the TC does not have to be submitted by the parents. However, such coordination is entirely dependent upon the school principals. One mother explained that her and her son faced difficulty in providing the TC when they recently reached Ward 20:

“When we migrated from Bogale township (Ayeyarwaddy), we did not understand that we are required to take TC for my son to enroll in school here. When I went to enroll my son, the teacher said you have to go back and get TC from the previous school. We went back to Bogale and got the TC but when we came back the teacher said they are full and couldn’t accept any more students that year. My son has been waiting a year to continue his education.” (Interview with Migrant 10 on 26 Apr 2019)

The above interview demonstrates that rural parents are often not aware of the necessity of a TC, however the submission of such required documents is the responsibility of the parents and there is no proper system for transferring documents between schools.

Some migrants do not go back to their original schools to receive the TC as they cannot afford the costs of transportation. Furthermore, some parents are not interested to have their children continue their studies and instead prefer their children to work instead of going to school (Interview with Teacher 4 on 24 Apr 2019). A non-formal primary education teacher stated these are common issues she has encountered with her non-formal education students and out-of-school children. The Township Education Office explained that they arrange placement tests at the township office and at local schools for children who cannot provide their TC. However, these placement test are held mostly for children who are migrating from neighboring countries, such as Thailand. Such an arrangement for internal migrant children is not provided.

Apart from birth certificates and the TC, new students also need to provide household registration to fulfill the catchment area policy. Catchment area refers to the geographical coverage of each school and specifies which students can enroll in which school. This policy was strictly implemented in the Yangon region and was initiated in 2018. The main objective of the implementation of this policy in Yangon is to balance out the number of students per school, preventing students from selecting the school that they prefer. Also, the policy is meant to discourage the use of bribes in exchange for admission to schools. As a result of the implementation of the catchment area policy, schools in Hlaing Tar Yar cannot accept students from outside of their catchment areas.

“Catchment area policy is difficult for migrant families especially who have moved within the last six months. For such groups it is very difficult to get a recommendation letter from the authority. I am hearing parents are complaining about schools who are being denied enrollment and most of these cases must be for children who are out of the catchment area. Because of this we have more people inquiring with the monastic school for enrollment” (Interview with Teacher 3 on 10 May 2019)

This is an additional barrier for migrants without proper documentation as they cannot prove the eligibility of their residence in the catchment of a particular school.

3.5.2.2 Enrollment Criteria of Monastic Schools

The enrollment criteria of monastic schools do not differ much from the government schools. Monastic schools also require birth certificates or age confirmation letters and household (temporary or permanent) registration. While in the past have been more lenient in accepting students without birth certificates, now monastic schools are required to send student lists to both MORAC and MOE so some documentation is required. However, as monastic schools do not have a catchment area policy, all students are allowed to enroll, regardless of where their home is located in relation to the school.

3.5.2.3 Priority for Students with Formal Documents

Both government schools and monastic schools typically accept the age specified in the confirmation letter and do not always demand a birth certificate or even a household registration grant card. However, the categories of applicants who cannot produce birth certificates and have a recommendation letter from a local authority instead are not treated equally with those who do have birth certificates. It is a universal practice that the first priority for admission is granted to those who come with birth certificates and household registration documents. So, it is only after these students are enrolled that the school will consider enrolling those without the formal documents. The school teacher explained this admissions practice:

“We give priority to new students who have birth certificates. First, we accept those who have birth certificate and then we accept those who came with recommendation letter” (Interview with Teacher 1 on 24 Apr 2019)

As many migrant families are unable to produce birth certificates and residential documents, their children fall into the second priority grouping for enrollment. While it may not be the intention of school administrations, this practice of prioritization can be accused of being biased against those without documents, or even against those belonging to poorer groups, such as migrants. Poor economic conditions and the low literacy rates of migrant parents means that they likely are not aware of these requirements and formalities. It is evident, then, that even with an alternative

confirmation document, a child from a migrant community is not guaranteed enrollment in a school.

3.5.3 Physical Accessibility

For children living in the studied area, there seems to be no physical barrier to attend school. Unlike villages where topography and distance are major physical deterrents, the situation in the studied area is that most children can walk to school everyday.

Students will often walk to school in groups and, on average, it takes around 15-40 minutes to reach their schools from their homes. During the rainy season, some areas of Hlaing Thar Yar township become flooded. However, the migrant children and their parents do not see this as a major problem. All of the interviewed families reported that younger children typically go to school together with their friends or with elders from the neighborhood. Parents trust that the way to and from school, for both boys and girls, is safe.

3.5.4 Issues of Equity and Discrimination

Migrant families do not believe that they are discriminated against in their settlements, by permanent legal residents, or in schools. A Rakhine ethnic migrant described her feelings on equity and non-discrimination:

“My Rakhine relatives and I have not experienced discrimination during enrollment of our children in school. I submitted the birth certificate and recommendation letter from the ward administrator both of which were accepted. I’ve never heard that my son also has faced discrimination in class because of our ethnicity.” (Interview with Migrant 5 on 21 Apr 2019)

Although the majority of the host population and migrant population are Burmese in the studied area, other ethnic groups seem live in harmony with the majority, and access to education is never biased in terms of ethnicity.

Buddhism is the predominant religion in Myanmar, and it is no different in the field site. Other religious groups, including Islam, Hindu, and Christian, also live in the area

peacefully together with the Buddhists. Schools start by offering a prayer to Buddha, but there is no prayer for the followers of other religions. However, the interviewed migrants do not view this practice as discriminatory. A Muslim boy from grade 3 reported that “when my Buddhist friends are praying I am sitting and sometimes teachers urge us to concentrate on our own god.” Also, the mother of this boy said,

“I do not think my son has problems in studying at schools together with student from other religions”. (Interview with Migrant 11 on 10 May 2019)

Gender equity regarding access to education is important in Myanmar where 51.8% of the population is female. There are no obvious discriminatory practices in regards to the access to education as the required documentation is the same for both males and females. Through the findings of this case study, the families’ perceptions regarding gender equity in the access to education are not obvious. A total of 10 out of 12 respondents answered that females and males have equal opportunities to access education, however two respondents did not have any opinion. Also, 50% of the respondents said they would not discriminate by gender regarding who to support in education and would support whoever, whether son or daughter, performs better. While 17% of parents answered that they prefer their son to be educated because he has to take responsibility for the family, another 8% of parents preferred their daughter to receive an education as men can survive by doing work such as manual labor. The remaining respondents said that they prefer whoever is elder to work and will support the younger siblings to continue their education.

3.6 Acceptability of Education

3.6.1 Quality of Educational Services in Study Area

3.6.1.1 Teacher-Student Ratio

For the 2018-2019 academic year, the teacher-student ratio in Hlaing Thar Yar Township is 1:52 for primary levels while the national figure for Myanmar is 1:31 (MOE, 2019). These figures are accurate for all types of schools, whether government, monastic, or private. Table 9 below provides the teacher-student ratios at government schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township for the last four years.

Table 9. Teacher-Student ratio in government schools at the township level (2015 to 2019)

Teacher-Student ratio				
Academic Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Teacher-Student ratio	1:64	1:53	1:52	1:52

Source: Township Education Office

Table 9 above shows that starting in 2015, the teacher-student ratio within the studied area has been much lower than Myanmar's national ratio. Also, in the last four years the ratio did not improve by a large margin. From 2015 to 2019, the ratio decreased from 1:64 to 1:52. These figures clearly demonstrate the inability of the government to provide quality education, while on the other hand they have been focusing on the policy to increase enrollment, especially through the provision of free and compulsory education. This ratio also shows the imbalance between the demand for education and the supply of educational services in the studied area. The Township Education Office elaborated on the large class size:

“The school classrooms sizes are quite big, teachers have to struggle with a large number of students. Pupil- teacher ratio is at least 1:60/70 and some schools are 1:80/90 and maximum number of students is 120. School principals and teachers are not able to avoid accepting the students in many cases.”
(Interview with Gov 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

Teachers are facing difficult situations in their classrooms. In the last academic year (2018-2019), at No. (8) B.E.H.S there were 22 primary-level teachers, 65 lower-secondary teachers, and 25 upper-secondary teachers. The number of primary-level teachers was not enough for the 3,200 primary-level students and therefore lower-secondary teachers filled the demand by moving to teach at the primary level. The issue of large class sizes seems to be a common challenge for schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township.

“In my class which is grade 1, the total number of students is over 100. My voice is not able to cover the whole class because of which I use a microphone

that I have bought with my own money. My daughter is also a teacher in another primary school and, her class also has more or less the same number of students. However, she cannot use a microphone because the partitions between classrooms in her school are not of bricks, so it can interfere with another class. Therefore, she has more difficult to communicate in the class and this impacts her teaching.” (Interview with Teacher 1 on 24 Apr 2019)

The high number of students means that teaching is becoming more difficult. As a result, there are clear indications of how quality is being affected. For example, it is almost impossible to provide individual attention to such a large number of students; teachers have to focus more of their time on managing large classrooms than on teaching; communicating lessons is a big challenge if not all students can hear the teacher or read the visual presentations.

Although the decreasing quality of education affects all students, migrant children are more vulnerable as they tend to be poorer and cannot afford private tuition. Also, migrant children do not typically receive parental guidance on their daily learning exercises. A mother who settled informally in Hlaing Thar Yar expressed her son’s issue with the teaching in the classroom:

“I cannot provide tuition to my son. We are already using money from our daily family food ration for his school expenses. My son says he does not see well what is written on the blackboard and cannot complete copying lessons from the blackboard before the teacher moves to another lesson. The teacher asks children who are taking tuition with her to sit in the front seat. On the other hand, I am incapable of providing guidance to my son” (Interview with Migrant 3 on 21 Apr 2019)

The issue of teacher-student ratio and lack of parental guidance affects children’s educational performance. This usually leads to low motivation and a lack of interest in education ultimately causing students to drop-out from schools.

3.7 Adaptability of Education

Adaptability of education is an approach focused on meeting the unique needs of marginalized children, such as children with disabilities, children from minority groups, migrant children, children in rural areas, and working children. This section focuses on whether the adaptability approach implemented by the schools meets the requirements of migrant children.

The education system in Myanmar states that the standard requirements for enrollment are a birth certificate and a household registration grant card. However, this requirement does not reflect the challenges that migrant children face in practice. As schools follow the requirement of these documents strictly, many migrant children cannot access education. In this regard, it can be said that the inflexibility of the policy does not accommodate the situation of migrant children.

Schools were found to be accepting of disabled children without any proactive efforts. However, the issue of accommodating migrant children is not at all considered although it is common in all schools. Unfortunately, the need for adaptations has not yet been highlighted as a critical issue that requires attention from decision makers at all levels, including the school administration. Children from migrant families are considered to have a similar status and situation as other students and therefore no special adaptive policies to encourage access to education for these children are practiced or even discussed. The findings of this study demonstrate that although the legal framework and policies allow internal migrant children to access free and compulsory education, the education system is unlikely to meet the actual needs of migrant children, limiting their access to education in practice.

With reference to the 4A scheme, one can say that the issues of availability, accessibility, and acceptability are a more critical and practical challenge faced by internal migrant children compared to that of adaptability. This is because according to this research, internal migrant groups are not facing ethnic barriers, do not have difficulty adapting to new environments and cultures, and are not suffering discrimination from local residents or teachers in terms of their migration status. Apart

from this, adaptability also relates to how labor compulsions affect children's education, but in the case of primary school students, such compulsions are not a significant challenge, even in the case of migrant children.

3.8 Contextual Implication of Education on Migrant Children

3.8.1 Perception of Teachers on Migrant Children and Their Families

The observations of teachers on migrant children's Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is that it is similar to that of other children, including those who are permanent local residents. However, the characteristics and behaviors from permanent local resident children can differ from that of children from families who are squatters, migrants, and informal residents.

Teachers point out that children from families who are squatters are more difficult to manage and less likely to be accustomed to the discipline of school. Furthermore, parental participation in their children's education and school activities is rather low in this demographic. Migrant parents do not communicate as much with school teachers as non-migrants, which indicates less interest by the former.

“When teachers visit the homes of students who were absent for 5 days or a week, they are not welcomed by the parents who argue back. In some cases, the teachers are assaulted verbally drunk parents. Most of them are migrant parents. Teachers do not experience these cases with local parents.” (Interview with Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

The migrant children who join monastic schools also suffer the same difficulties, however there are some exceptions as a monastic school teacher stated that she is seeing some improvement in migrant parents' behavior and interest in education through their parent meetings, and that awareness about the value and importance of education for their children has increased (Interview with Teacher 3 on 10 May 2019). This points out that education for children should also include programmes for their parents so that there is more parental interest and guidance, leading to better educational performance

and increased continuation of schooling. The monastic school teacher shared her perception of migrant parents:

“Drinking and gambling among migrant communities are very common. The families’ economic conditions are not stable and secure. Their interest on education for children is also low. This is a well recognized fact and we organize parenting awareness and meetings that is led by a monk who is also the head of school. These meetings take place four times per year to promote and I can say that there has progress in parents of migrant children” (Interview with Teacher 3 on 10 May 2019)

This study reveals that parents from migrant groups are more responsive to teachers from monastic schools. The reason may be that Myanmar has spiritual cultural practices based in Buddhism and therefore monks are held in high esteem by all levels of society.

3.8.2 Parental Guidance in the Education of Migrant Children

Another factor that affects the quality of education is the encouragement children receive from parents. The education level of migrant parents is generally very low, and some cannot even read or write their names. The lack of parental guidance has a negative impact on migrant childrens’ educational performance, leading to a lack of motivation and disinterest in education, ultimately resulting in high drop-out rates. The Myanmar Report on Out-of-school Children Initiative stated that the among the various reasons that children enrolled in school but did not continue, 27.6% was due to a lack of interest or poor grades (DERPT 2018). A female factory worker who is living in a shelter on rented land stated:

“I’m busy making daily income and do not know anything on teaching methods, curriculum and do not understand what my son is learning. I can only remind him to complete his homework instead of housework and playing. If he performs well in school and we do not have any big economic difficulties, his education can continue.” (Interview with Migrant 10 on 26 Apr 2019)

The findings of the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (2012), which was led by the MOE, stated that the parents' level of education is positively associated with children who have completed primary schooling. The education level of migrant families is generally low and the highest education level among the interviewees is lower-secondary.

“Migrant parents usually do not care much about their children’s education. Majority of these parents are illiterate and do not visit the schools. They rarely come in to talk with the teachers about their children’s education improvement even when teachers invite them.” (Interview with Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

Many migrant parents do not think their children can attain a higher level of education and are quite content if their children can read and write (Interviews with Migrant 4 on 21 Apr 2019 and Migrant 9 on 26 Apr 2019).

3.8.3 Preference for Monastic Schools Among Migrant Groups

The enrollment requirements for a monastic school are the same as the government schools. However, it was found that migrant families prefer monastic schools for their children.

Take the example of ‘Sandar Ra Ma’ Monastic School where there are 269 boys and 252 girls with 22 teachers in last academic year (2018-2019) (Source: Student Record Book of Sandar Ra Ma). This school holds one class for one grade and each class has 40-50 students. Two teachers are appointed to each room for the primary-level. According to the findings from ‘Sandar Ra Ma’, education is 60% curriculum and 40% extra-curricular activities, including life skills, music, physical education, handicrafts, and art. Corporal punishment is banned at this school and teachers are banned from charging private tuition. This monastic school also provides stationary every month to each student (Interview with Teacher 3 on 10 May 2019).

A mother of a monastic school student shared the reason why she chose a monastic school:

“The monastic school provides required stationaries, raincoat, umbrella and also provides free tuition. Therefore, I do not have much extra cost apart from lunch box. I think teaching is almost perfect and students can learn crafts also.”
(Interview with Migrant 1 on 21 Apr 2019)

Many prefer monastic schools also because of their smaller class size and manageable number of students, which seems to have a positive impact on children’s education.



Photo 7. Monastic Student Activities: Music Performance and Cleaning in a Village
(Photo credit: Thazin Lin Thet Maw, 10 May 2019)

3.8.4 High Mobility of Migrant Children and Risks to Drop-Out of School

In 2018, the drop-out rates in Hlaing Thar Yar were 17.59% in primary-level, 12.85% in lower-secondary and 10.3% in upper-secondary (Source: Township Education Office). The primary level drop-out rate is the highest compared to the other levels and is much higher than the national drop-out rate for primary school, which was 10.6% in the 2014-2015 academic year (DERPT 2018).

The majority of drop-out students are from migrant families. Lacking a permanent living place and depending on insecure jobs forces these families to live highly mobile

lives. Also, many migrant families often fall into debt and cannot afford to continue paying their rent, which compels them to move from one place to another (Interview with Gov 3 on 30 Apr 2019). Temporary jobs and inadequate income coupled with an increased demand to meet the family's needs leads to their mobility. Their movements are often within the same ward, or could also be to different wards in the same area, other townships, or back to their original homes. In this process the children also move along with the parents and this is often at the expense of their education (Interview with Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019).

When school season starts, the number of enrolled students is usually very high. Many students are missing by the middle of the school season, and even more so a couple of months before the end of the season (Interview with Teacher 1 on 24 Apr 2019). Among those missing students, some do return before the end of the school season. The schools will accept students back who maintained at least a 75% attendance rate throughout the academic year (Interview with Teacher 1 on 24 Apr 2019).

Some students re-enroll in another school, or the same school, the following year. In such cases, students need to start again in the same grade level from which they dropped out. This affects their motivation and interest in learning when they know that their age is older than other classmates, or when their friends are progressing to higher grades. The Myanmar Report on Out-of-school Children Initiative stated that among the reasons for children not to attend school, 18.6% was due to disinterest or poor grades, which is the second highest reason after the financial barrier (DERPT, 2018).

“I took my daughter (Grade 3) out of school last year when we moved from another ward. I've already planned and prepared the required documents to enroll her in the coming year, but she said she does not want to join. She feels ashamed when her friends have reached to a higher level.” (Interview with Migrant 1 on 21 Apr 2019)

Among the drop-out students, some 10-20% are said not to receive the school transfer certificate and these are usually children from families facing distress linked with their livelihoods, including those from migrant groups (Interview with Teacher 1 on 24 Apr

2019). Those students may face difficulties when they attempt to enroll in other schools, or they may have high potential to discontinue their education altogether.

3.8.5 Non-Formal Education for Migrant Children

In Hlaing Thar Yar township, there are basically two types of Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes: (i) NFE Equivalency Programme, and (ii) NFE Basic Literacy Programme. With the NFE Equivalency Programme, students can transfer to formal education schools, but not with the NFE Basic Literacy Programme. The NFE Equivalency Programme is implemented by the Department of Alternative Education (DAE) under the Ministry of Education while the NFE Basic Literacy Programmes are run by INGOs and NGOs.

The NFE Equivalency Programme provides non-formal primary (NFPE) and non-formal middle (NFME) education. NFPE was started in 2012 by an NGO, the Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC), and handed over to DAE in 2016. The NFME pilot programme was started in 2017. In the last academic year, there were six camps running six NFPE and two NFME programmes in six different places in the studied area. NFE camps are hosted at public schools and DAE provides teaching materials and teachers while UNICEF and other donors provide raincoats, school bags, and stationary. The teachers' training and technical supervision are provided by MLRC. In addition to national and regional supervision, the township monitors are assigned to oversee the quality of teaching.

Any child between the ages of 10 and 14 years old who have never attended, or have dropped-out before finishing primary-level education can join the NFPE programme. There are no documents required for enrollment such as a birth certificate or house registration grant card. NFPE has two levels: Level 1 which is equivalent to grade 3, and Level 2 which is equivalent to grade 5 of formal education. The NFPE takes two years to complete the primary level of education, whereas formal education takes five years. Each level takes one year and students need to attend 2.5 hours each day, 204 school days in total, and must achieve a 75% school attendance rate in order to pass (Interview with Rep 1 on 27 Apr 2019). The curriculum is skill-based, and teaching is

focused on the preference of the majority of students. A student who has never attended the school will start from Level 1, and those who have attended formal schooling can take a placement test and join at a suitable level. Therefore, the Non-Formal Education programmes have more flexible arrangements for students.

Table 10. Total number of enrolled students in Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE)

No. of Enrollment Student in Non-formal Primary Education						
YEAR	Level 1			Level 2		
	Boy	Girl	Total	Boy	Girl	Total
2016-2017	-	-	-	59	57	116
2017-2018	55	41	96	34	24	58
2018-2019	44	36	80	31	34	65

Source: Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC)

The NFPE programme provides an alternative way for children, such as those from migrant families to continue their education. A 14-year-old boy who migrated from Ayeyarwady said “I can sell drinking water bottles at the bus station in the morning and can join the class in the evening. I want to continue my education while helping my family make income.”

The NFE programmes are designed to suit the characteristics of drop-out students who are often from poor families, broken homes, squatters, working children, and migrant groups. An NFPE teacher stated that “teachers cannot be strict and demand discipline like in formal schools and we need to understand children’s feelings and their background. Being flexible and keeping an open relation among teachers and students is a critical approach in this programme” (Teacher 4, 24 Apr 2019).

An 11-year-old Kayin girl who had moved from Myawaddy and joined the NFPE Level 1 because she could not produce her transfer certificate in a formal school and is above the average age for this level said:

“I like NFPE programme because teachers explain lessons very thoroughly and I can participate well in the class. I prefer NFPE then formal because I

understand the lessons well here and there are not many students in our class which is 15 students. When I joined a formal school in Kayin, there were many students and I was afraid to ask questions in the class when I did not understand.” (Interview with Migrant 7 on 24 Apr 2019)

3.9 Summary

Hlaing Thar Yar is a difficult area for both residents and migrants in regard to living conditions, access to social services, and the education system. Migrant families and their children face relatively more difficult challenges than the permanent residents of this area. The key challenge for migrant families is producing legal documents that are required for school enrollment, which is a primary factor in access to education. This issue is made more difficult because of the inadequate number of schools and high demand of the school-aged population, compelling local school administrations to give less priority to children from migrant groups. Although a high student-teacher ratio affects all students, the internal migrant children are likely less able to cope with this issue. Students who come from families with parents, or other family members, who are educated and involved are more likely to receive guidance in their subjects and have the opportunity to overcome the situation in which they face difficulty with a certain task. However, in the case of children from migrant families, often the family members themselves are not educated and do not have the capacity to provide guidance. The high student-teacher ratio affects the overall quality of education, as teachers are not able to provide proper attention to students, which has a more pronounced impact on migrant children as the classroom is often the only opportunity for them to learn. This is a critical reason for migrant children to fall behind in class, which can result in a lack of motivation, and when coupled with the environment of their parents’ mobility and job insecurity, these children eventually drop out of school.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Myanmar's Basic Education Policy

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the sub-research question *To what extent does Myanmar's education policy support children from migrant families to access primary education?* by analysing the Education Policy of Myanmar with a focus on Basic Education. In doing so, this chapter particularly examines how the National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021) and its implementation are relevant to the needs of migrant families in addressing the issues their children face in accessing primary education.

The policy draws on international standards and best practices. Some of the issues related to financial difficulties are well addressed by the policy; however, financial challenges still remain as there are additional costs not covered by the policy's provisions. In addition, the policy fails to eliminate administrative barriers faced by children from migrant families.

This chapter is structured as follows: first, it explores how national policies and laws enforce the government's responsibility for the right to education; secondly it analyses the government's expenditures on education; and the third section presents a detailed discussion on basic education reform under the National Strategic Education Plan to identify the challenges of accessing education faced by children from migrant families.

4.2 Education Policy and Legal Framework

Myanmar's education system has lagged behind that of both the international community and the ASEAN region. Historically, the education sector in Myanmar has been neglected and suffers from underfunding, and outdated curriculum and teaching methods. The government's investment in education was 0.5% of the gross national income, while the military budget was 7.8% in the 1990s (Tomasevski 2006). Although

primary education is legally guaranteed to be free, certain charges continue to be levied in public schools (Tomasevski 2006).

After the political transition of 2011, the government has been emphasizing reform for the education sector. To do so, the government has set up a long-term plan to be implemented from 2011/2012 to 2030/2031, called the Basic Education Sector National Education Promotion 20-Year Long-term Plan. Some key features of this plan are the implementation of free and compulsory primary education, allocation of student stipends, and provision of grants to schools (MOE 2015, Soe, Mya Swe et al. 2017). This long-term plan is phased into four separate five-years plans.

From 2012 to 2014, the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) was conducted by the MOE with support from various development partners (both international and national non-government organizations) to identify gaps and challenges, and to develop policy (MOE 2015). As a result, The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016-2021, a policy framework for education system reform, was finalized and released.

The new education policy is derived from 1) the Constitution of Myanmar 2008, Article 28, which specifies the implementation of free and compulsory primary education, and Article 366, which states that every citizen has the right to education and shall be provided basic education, prescribed by the Union as compulsory; and 2) Myanmar National Education Law (2014) and National Education Amendment Law (2015) (MOE 2015, 2016). This chapter focuses particularly on the NESP in which the government states its obligation to fulfill the right to education in Myanmar.

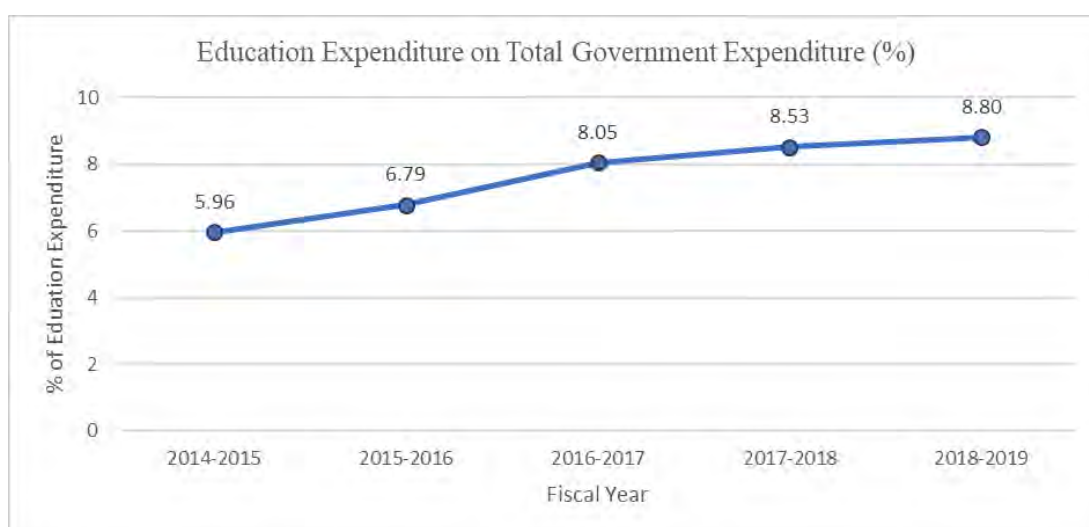
The policy covers: Early childhood care and development (ECCD), Basic Education, Alternative Education, Higher Education, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training. To achieve the goals of NESP by the end of 2021, the plan includes nine transformation shifts. These are: 1) Preschool and kindergarten education, 2) Basic education- access, quality, and inclusion, 3) Basic education curriculum, 4) Student assessment and examinations, 5) Teacher education and management, 6) Alternative education, 7) Technical and vocational education and training, 8) Higher education, and 9) Management capacity development and quality assurance. This thesis will

specifically explore one transformational shift, basic education- access, quality, and inclusion, which is the area of focus as related to primary education. A detailed discussion is presented in section (4.4).

4.3 Government Expenditure on Education

Promulgation of the Myanmar National Education Law (2014) followed by its amendment was a progressive step, but it can only be made operational if the government allocates adequate financial resources. The allocation of funds must then be followed by proper planning, programming, and implementation, which requires appropriate capacity in governmental agencies and can be analyzed through expenditure figures. Making note of the fact that there is a difference between allocated resources and spent resources; the table below provides information on education expenditures since the finalization of the Myanmar National Education Law from 2014 to 2019. Resource expenditure figures provide a more accurate analysis of the government's action toward this policy, as resources may be allocated but not spent. In this case it is likely the planned objectives will not be met.

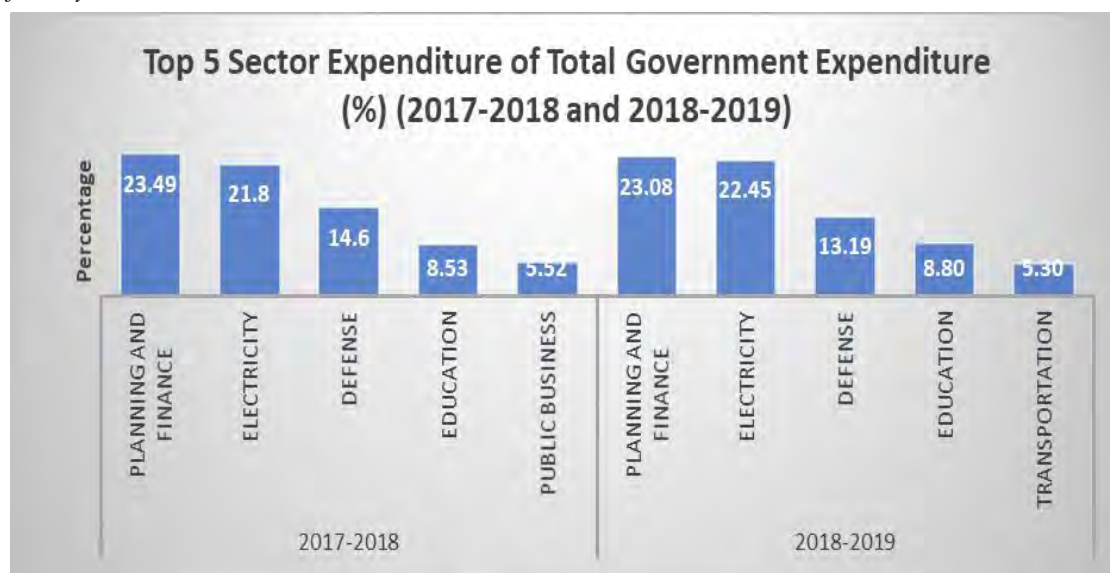
Graph 1. Percentage of Education Expenditure out of Total Government Expenditures (Fiscal Year: 2015 to 2019)



Source: Ministry of Planning and Finance, Citizen Budget Report on Government Expenditure (2015 to 2019)

Graph 1 above shows that the expenditure of the Myanmar government on education has increased from 2014 to 2019. During these years the increments ranged from 5.96 in 2014-2015 to 8.80 in 2018-2019. While the percentage of expenditure has increased over the years, it can still be said that the education sector is not a top priority. Graph 2 below provides comparative analysis of the education expenditure with four other critical expenditure areas for Myanmar. The figures from 2018-2019 show that the priority expenditures of the government continue to be in planning and finance and subsidies for electricity and defense.

Graph 2. Percentage of Top 5 Sector Expenditures out of Total Government Expenditure for fiscal years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019



Source: Ministry of Planning and Finance, Citizen Budget Report on Government Expenditure (2017 to 2019)

4.4 Basic Education- Access, Quality, and Inclusion

Under this transformational shift, the MOE states that “All children can access, progress through and successfully complete quality basic education” by 2021. To achieve this transformational shift, there is a three-pronged strategy, followed by four outcomes. Table 4.1 below provides the overview of this transformational shift.

Table 11. High-level results framework of Basic education -access, quality and inclusion

Transformational Shift: All children can access, progress through and successfully complete quality basic education			
Strategies	<i>Strategy 1: Enable universal access to free basic education</i>	<i>Strategy 2: Support compulsory and inclusive education</i>	<i>Strategy 3: Improve school quality through a national school-based quality assurance system</i>
End Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All children, boys and girls, access primary, middle and high schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students complete primary, middle and high school level ○ Drop-out students are supported to re-enroll and stay in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant improvements experienced by students in their school and classroom learning environment
Outcome Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Percentage of primary school-aged students with access to a primary school ○ Percentage of middle school-aged students with access to a middle and high school ○ Percentage of high school-aged students with access to a high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primary-level completion rate ○ Primary-Middle-school transition rate ○ Middle-level completion rate ○ Middle-high school transition rate ○ High-level completion rate ○ Percentage of students in primary, middle and high schools who dropped out in a particular year, then re-enroll and remain enrolled after 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Percentage of primary, middle and high schools showing marked improvements in achieving minimum National School Quality Standards

Source: National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021)

4.4.1 Strategy1: Enable Universal Access to Free Basic Education

The NESP strategy 1 focuses on *Expansion of existing schools, upgrading of schools and construction of new schools based on school census and mapping of baseline*. On the basis of the baseline study and school census, the National School Infrastructure Investment Plan (NSIP) was developed with components for WASH, DRR, gender-sensitivity and accessibility for children with disabilities.

In this regard it is important to mention the school allocation policy of the Myanmar government. This policy provides the guideline for constructing schools with respect to the needs of certain areas. It is based on physical accessibility and the number of eligible students, and has defined the school catchment area as one school per two square miles in hilly areas and one school per three square miles in lowland areas (Interview with Gov1 on 7 May 2019). Below, in Table 11, the data on the number of schools and the population of each of the four townships in Yangon is provided for the year 2014. Hlaing Thar Yar has the highest density of students per school, which is 3,218 students for each of its 58 schools across all levels. The table shows the number of schools compared with student-aged population in all four townships.

Table 12. Total number of schools, school-aged* population, and average number of school-aged children per school in each township

Township	Area (Km ²)	High School	Middle School	Primary School	Total School	Population (5-19 Aged) *	Average number of school-aged children per school	Remark
Hlaing	13.7	5	6	27	38	35,774	941	Urban Township
Kamaryut	6.2	6	2	11	19	17,651	929	Urban Township
Hlaing Thar Yar	67.4	6	15	37	58	186,619	3218	Peri-Urban & Industrial Township
Shwe Pyi Thar	39.4	4	8	44	56	93,728	1674	Peri-Urban & Industrial Township

Source: MIMU-Myanmar Information Management Unit and Population Census 2014

*School-aged is between the ages of 5 and 18 years old according to KG+12 system, but data is not available for each specific age group.

The data in the above table provides information on the number of eligible children who are of school-going age and the existing number of schools in Hlaing Thar Yar. It shows that the number of schools is very low in order to accommodate all of the children in the peri-urban and industrial township. The policy of upgrading schools is nevertheless in operation. Schools can apply for upgrades through the MOE, who also has its own targets for upgrading (Interview with Gov2 on 26 Apr 2019). For the academic year of 2019-2020, a total of 11 middle schools were approved to be upgraded to high schools in Hlaing Thar Yar (MOE 2019).

When the identity of a school is upgraded from Middle School to High School, often the capacity of teachers to teach at a higher level is lacking (Interviews with Gov2 and Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019). One of the key prerequisites for upgrading is the allocation of skilled teachers to teach in the higher-level classes. In Hlaing Thar Yar most schools interviewed that had been upgraded reported that the number of teachers in each school was not adequate and that they operate based on existing capacity (Interviews with Gov2 and Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019, Gov3 on 30 Apr 2019). Often, teachers from middle levels are sent to the upgraded higher-level classes to teach (Interview with Gov2 on 26 Apr 2019). The school principal stated that:

“Teachers are overloaded and exhausted because they do not have rest time. They have to teach in another class as soon as they finish a class. The large number of students is a challenge for teachers and as a school principal; I had reported and submitted the need for more teachers with the township department. The addition of teachers after my request has not been enough and we still continue with a shortage of teachers.” (Interview with Teacher 1 on 26 Apr 2019)

Schools can request for teachers in December of each year, but the decision takes a long time and is not finalized until May of the next year. Staff recruitment for schools does not happen year-round and only takes place once per year, which is also when teacher transfers are decided. These administrative and management issues result in the delay of staff allocation, but the real problem is that with school upgrades, the supply of teachers does not efficiently match school's demands. The national level authorities of

the Education Department point out that the management of resources, including teachers, is the primary responsibility of the township level offices and school principals (Interview with Gov1 on 7 May 2019). In this system, school principals are required to submit requests for teachers in their schools through the township, which is then reported to the national level. The teacher requests are filled quickly, so there is a need for the township to plan ahead and estimate the needs in order to make timely requests at the national level. To cope with this crisis, the central management has introduced a “teacher rotation system” and provides authority to the township education offices (Interview with Gov1 on 7 May 2019). The teacher rotation system enables teachers from schools that have an oversupply of teachers to transfer to schools in need within the same township. The township-level education office explained the implementation of this system as follows:

“There is a teacher rotating system within townships depending on demand for teachers and this is within the authority of township department. But there is a high demand for the teachers at every school in Hlaing Thar Yar and even this rotating system is not able to cope with the demand. As a result, all of the schools in Hlaing Thar Yar have reported shortage of teachers in their schools.” (Interview with Gov 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

As explained, the teacher rotation system does not solve the issue of an inadequate number of teachers in Hlaing Thar Yar township. In Hlaing Thar Yar there are some cases in which one teacher is responsible for more than 100 students in the primary level (see in section 3.6.1.1). The school principal added that:

“My school was upgraded from primary to post-primary and changed to two-shifts school because of the large number of students. In this model of two-shifts, the teaching time is 40 minutes per class. The decrease in class time is a challenge as it is difficult to give adequate attention to each student as well as completed the course in time (Interview with Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

This shows that inadequate infrastructure and number of teachers is a burden on both teachers and school management, and negatively impacts the quality of education.

There is a clear need for more primary schools in this area which should go hand in hand with the upgrading of schools to higher levels.

4.4.1.1 Free and Compulsory Basic Education

There are provisions of incentives of governmental education policy, such as making education free without having to pay any fee, uniforms for all children, and also school meal programmes for all students. Eligible students who are identified as unable to meet other expenses are supported with a stipend.

This strategy is extremely critical for meeting the transformational shift, which requires all children in Myanmar to have access to schools. There is no doubt that this is a very progressive move towards helping poorer children access education. However, the current provisions are still inadequate for many children from the extremely poor groups. This is especially true for the migrant communities of Hlaing Thar Yar, as they mentioned that several other costs are incurred through school attendance that are not yet covered by the present provisions (details mentioned in section 3.5.1). For example, one single uniform is not enough so parents have to buy an extra one. Some students will need to take transportation and bring additional food. If poorer families have more than one child going to school, this is also a financial burden.

However, it can be understood that the objective of the free provisions from the government is not to meet the overall cost of a student attending school but is rather meant to support meeting their expenses with the rest covered by the parents as an investment in the children's future and also as a moral responsibility. This requires some level of awareness and commitment from the parents, though, and the parents in most migrant communities in Hlaing Thar Yar are illiterate so they simply believe that if their children are able to read and write, that should be enough. They hardly aspire for their children to continue to achieve higher levels of education and do not have the confidence that it is possible. This lack of confidence and awareness among parents is a major hindrance to the investment in education.

4.4.2 Strategy 2: Support Compulsory and Inclusive Education

The emphasis of Strategy 2 is “supporting compulsory and inclusive education”. This strategy focuses on supporting children from poor families to enroll in school and avoid dropping out. It also intends to promote access for children with disabilities, including children who will require special education.

The compulsory primary education pilot project started in 2018 in four townships of Yangon. The Strategy outlined that it will include school meals, remedial teaching, and stipends, but it does not cover transportation arrangements. However, the pilot project does not cover school meals or remedial teaching. The national level staff explained in regard to the pilot project:

“The pilot project does not include special arrangement such as school meals and transportation arrangement. But provide cash to families for those children who provide details of the family income. The official result from pilot programme is yet to be finalized. The development partners (UN/INGO) are keen to support to strengthen the compulsory pilot education but this is still at discussion stage among government and development partners” (Interview with Gov 1 on 7 May 2019)

The objectives and components of Strategy 2 are satisfactory when it comes to school meals and remedial teaching, which can address the challenges faced by migrant families and their children (see in section 3.5.1 and 3.6.1.1). Studies on school meal programmes in developing countries demonstrate that school enrollment and attendance rates increased and the school drop-out rate decreased when such programmes are properly implemented (Jomaa, McDonnell et al. 2011). Also, the remedial education programme has positively impacted children’s academic performance (Munene, Peter et al. 2017).

Although Strategy 2 is in line with international best practices and standards, which support children in accessing education and preventing drop-outs, currently Myanmar’s capacity and resources are inadequate and the implementation of this Strategy appears unrealistic as is seen by the early stages of the pilot project.

4.4.2.1 Stipend

Under the policy of free education, the government also provides stipends for eligible students. Primary-level students receive 5,000 kyats (US\$ 3.5), lower secondary level students receive 8,000 kyats (US\$ 5.5) and upper secondary level students receive 10,000 kyats (US\$ 6.8) per month. In the 2017-2018 academic year, 22,678 students, including students with disabilities, were provided stipends (MOE 2019). Typically the stipends are provided to poor and orphan children, or those with single parents, and focus on students from grades five and above as they have a higher risk of dropping out (more details in section 3.5.1.1). For a student to receive the stipend, he/she must be referred by the school to the township authorities and receive a recommendation from the Ward authority.

The first criterion is that a student has to be enrolled. This means that only children who have already secured a place in a school can access the government stipend. This policy, then, is not helpful for poorer students who are not enrolled due to financial difficulty or lack of encouragement from their family. Rather, the policy primarily supports children to help them avoid dropping out due to financial reasons. However, many students drop out because of issues related to class failure or lack of proper guidance by their parents, which has little to do with financial conditions.

The two main issues for migrant groups in Hlaing Thar Yar are that there is little encouragement from parents to enroll their children in school, and the administrative barriers in the form of required documents. Students are required to produce their transfer certificates and identity cards. Often migrant communities, because of their lack of awareness or low educational priority, were found to be unable to produce these documents. Without these prerequisites a student is unable to enroll, rendering the government provisions of free education and stipends inaccessible. It is important to understand that such policies are not adequate to achieve universal education as there are reasons other than economic which force children from migrant groups and similar communities to remain out of school (see in section 3.5.2).

4.4.3 Strategy 3: Improve School Quality Through a National School-Based Quality Assurance System

Strategy 3 is focused on improving school quality and classroom environment by implementing the School Quality Improvement Programme, which includes the School Quality Standards Assurance Framework (SQSAF), developed by DBE, and the School Improvement Plan (SIP), developed by the school heads. It mentions that the SIP will address the issues related to the quality of school and classroom infrastructure through the provision of school quality grants. The aim is for basic education schools to meet the quality standards set for national schools. In the case of Hlaing Thar Yar, this could mean expanding the classrooms and filling the required facilities. However, the representative of the township Education Office and school principal did not seem to know about this policy provision and replied that they have never heard about SIP (Interview with Gov 2 and Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019).

This Strategy mentions that the education system is moving toward decentralization and that school heads will play a vital role in making improvements in the fields of (i) improving teacher quality; (ii) goal-setting, assessment and accountability; (iii) strategic resource management; and (iv) collaboration with external partners. However, during the fieldwork for this research it was revealed that school heads are not aware of this Strategy. A school principal shared her difficulties regarding school grant management by stating:

“School grants are allocated as per the number of students in a school and also specify spending for each section. Small variations are accepted but the policy is not flexible if the school head wants to spend more in a section than originally planned. This inflexibility is a challenge for completing tasks effectively.”
(Interview with Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019)

At present, decision-making has been decentralized to the township level in areas such as teacher rotation system, stipend, and grant provision to schools. However, the decentralized decision-making does not mention anything about administrative flexibility, especially in regard to enrollment requirements.

Regarding school leadership and school quality management, the Strategy puts school leaders/principals in an important role, also mentioning collaboration with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The parent representative from the PTA is to be provided training in order to be involved in school decision-making. This ensures good governance and can foster better relationships between schools and parents. A school principal said that parents who are interested in education and school matters can freely participate in the PTA and that the PTA's representatives and management committee are selected by the parents. In the case of migrant groups, however, the parents of migrant children are often not only uneducated and poorer, both in economic and social status, but also lack interest in school activities (see section 3.8.1 and 3.8.2). Although the principle mentions that every parent can join the PTA, through the findings of interviews with migrants, most parents from migrant communities are not involved because they hesitate to participate due to their status and the lack of initiatives to participate (Interview with Migrant 8 and 9 on 24 Apr 2019, Migrant 12 on 5 May 2019, Teacher 2 on 26 Apr 2019).

4.4.4 Education Management Information System (EMIS)

In an effort to achieve this Strategy, the EMIS was implemented in 2017 and is designed to collect, store, and manage data on every school in Myanmar, including the number of students, teachers, school coverage, water & sanitation facilities, teaching materials, etc. The purpose of the system is to make evidence-based decisions on education management, at both local and national levels, and also to support decisions made in education policy.

With an efficient EMIS system there is a possibility that if records are kept for all students, current issues for many migrating students, such as transfer certificates, could be easily resolved. If there is a system to digitally transfer information between all schools, this will support efficient enrollment of students and can decrease the number of out-of-school children. Also, the number of teachers, availability of teaching materials, and other school quality indicators can be monitored to make management of resources at the school level more efficient and effective.

However, as per the township officials, the EMIS is not yet an efficient system. The challenges in establishing such a system are also related to resources, both financial and human. Skilled IT staff, computers, and Internet systems require significant financial resources, and because of this the system is not yet operating effectively. Even the stipend system is supposed to be managed online, but there are several problems and difficulties causing the EMIS itself to become a challenge. What should be noted is that successful implementation of the EMIS system faces many difficulties and may take a substantial amount of resources, particularly in rural areas.

4.5 Analysis of Challenges to Free and Compulsory Basic Education and the Case of Migrant Children in Hlaing Thar Yar

4.5.1 Requirements for Enrollment

What is evident is that the operation of Strategy 1 gives emphasis to children who can enroll or are already enrolled. The issue that is directly relevant migrant groups is that even if they want their children to enroll, there are additional challenges for migrants that are not shared with other children. In particular, the requirements for enrollment are specifically important and the inability of a child to fulfill these requirements will mean that the child cannot enroll. In other words, without fulfilling certain criteria, a school-aged child is ineligible for enrollment. In this regard, and in reference to children from migrant communities, the documents required for enrollment for all eligible children are a hindrance to accessibility. Without enrollment, a child cannot access all of the incentives provided by the government's education policy.

Often the migrants who have moved have done so because they are trying to escape poverty or sometimes move in response natural calamities. It was found that often these groups who are exposed to vulnerability have travelled without any documents, either because of their ignorance or because they have lost their belongings, including documents, in the process of their transition. This is common among migrant groups in Hlaing Thar Yar and because of this problem they are unable to enroll their children in schools (see section 3.5.2.1). The result, then, is that the free and compulsory education policy fails to include this group.

Despite the fact that the documents requirement for enrollment are stated as a national level standard, in practice, some schools have started accepting alternative documents to address the challenges of migrant students. However, this practice is not universal and depends on the school heads, which is also the case in Hlaing Thar Yar (see section 3.5.2.1). Furthermore, the school's operations largely rely on paperwork, leading to weak coordination among schools as a result of ineffective communication. Also, the original locations that migrants move from are often rural areas with limited communication capacity. Therefore, the issuing and handling of school transfer certificates is primarily the responsibility of the parents. In summary, the main issues are lack of proper systems in schools, unclear guidance from the central administrative level, and inability of the school heads to take action following written guidelines.

4.5.2 Lack of Awareness Among Migrant Parents

The lack of proper documents is also due to the general ignorance that persists among migrating groups, especially those who are very poor or illiterate. Among migrant families living in Hlaing Thar Yar, illiteracy and poverty are common characteristics. The general lack of awareness among this group has resulted in their ignorance regarding their children's education. While many do not prioritize their children's education, there are also those who only aspire for their children to learn to read and write in order to fulfill the necessary practical requirements for everyday life. Higher studies are considered almost unattainable.

Even among parents who have managed to enroll their children in schools, the complete policy provisions that are made available to students from poorer groups is generally unknown. Parents began to learn of the subsidized school fees and distribution of uniforms once their children were enrolled in schools, and now this has become common knowledge. However, when asked about the stipend system, none of the parents interviewed seemed to know it existed. Teachers also admitted that this is not common knowledge among many parents.

The NESP states that an "Advocacy and Communication Programme" is included in one of the strategies from the list of "Basic Education Reforms". This includes "Basic education reforms awareness communication campaign", which is focused on raising

awareness among stakeholders, including head teachers, teachers and parents, on the new education reforms. This is also to be followed by “Monitoring reform implementation challenges and stakeholder perceptions” to understand how the stakeholders think the reforms are performing and how effectively they respond to the challenges. It is important for both parents and teachers to be updated on the new education system and reforms; however for migrant parents this understanding is a challenge because their immediate survival needs are prioritized and they generally maintain a low level of awareness, leading to a lack of interest in understanding matters related to government policies.

The government’s policy has failed to identify that parents’ awareness of education policies and education system strategies, including enrollment requirements, can be a major obstacle, especially for poorer groups including migrant communities.

4.5.3 Availability of Schools

The high demand for schools and the low number of existing schools also means that the student-to-teacher ratio is very high. One of the primary teachers interviewed said that she had over 100 students in her class (Interview with Teacher 1 on 24 Apr 2019). Also, his daughter, who is a teacher in the primary section, had the same number of students in her class. In Hlaing Thar Yar, schools are characterized by a large number of students and low number of teachers.

On the one hand there is the implementation of free and compulsory education, which puts pressure on schools to take more students, but on the other hand there is very limited space for students and the schools have become overcrowded (more detail in section 3.4 and 3.6). This severely affects the quality of education. In response, to manage such numbers schools are using the catchment area rule to disperse students and enroll them only in the schools that are in their catchment, which also deters students from selectively choosing a preferred school. However, in Hlaing Thar Yar, because of the high demand for more schools and the number of school-aged children, the catchment area rule is not sufficient to limit the number of students per school.

The population of children in Hlaing Thar Yar has grown over the years as a result of an increasing number of migrants from the rural areas. As mentioned earlier, Hlaing

Thar Yar is a designated industrial zone and hosts many manufacturing units. This has resulted in an increased number of people migrating here for work. The fact that this area does not have a sufficient number of schools is a result of policy oversight. It is well known that industrial zones attract migrant workers because of the employment opportunities they generate. However, if the influx of migrants is not supplemented with adequate social services, like schools, the result is a situation similar to that of Hlaing Thar Yar.

4.5.4 Stipend for Monastic and Primary Schools

The policy that supports basic education in Myanmar is not consistent across all schools. In this regard, the case of Monastic schools in Myanmar is of critical importance. Monastic schools provide a valuable service as they enroll children from the poorest groups and also accept students who have dropped out or for some reason discontinued their education in government schools. While the government still subsidizes the school fees, textbooks, and one uniform for the students, there is no provision of stipends for those enrolled in Monastic schools. Although this arrangement does not have any severely negative impacts, it demonstrates that governmental policy is subjective and influences many poorer groups, such as migrants, to send their children to Monastic schools.

Most primary school students do not actually receive the stipends offered by the government as the MOE stipend only covers only small portion of students. The reason for this is that stipend is typically provided to higher-level classes, i.e. above fifth grade, as drop-outs are more common starting around this age. As objective of the stipend is to avoid drop-outs, the age requirement is logical considering that most children of a younger age are not typically involved in other activities, such as labor, that may force them to drop out of school.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented an analysis on Basic Education related to access, quality and inclusion under the education policy, namely the National Education Strategic Plan

(2016- 2021). It highlights the on-the-ground reality of policy implementation and discusses its implications on migrant children's access to education. The answer to the sub-research question is that while the policy includes some good strategies and components that are relevant to the needs of migrant children who come from poorer groups, it still lacks adequate support for migrant children. This is because the education policy is not inclusive in specifically addressing the administrative barriers, and the current implementation of the strategies does not fulfill the needs of many migrant children. The policy fails to address that the issue of migrant children's access to education is also a result of the massive lack of awareness among migrant parents and lack of engagement regarding their children's education. Despite the policy being based on international standards and best practices for addressing the challenges of migrant children, the current implementation is weak and lacks adequate resources to meet the ongoing challenges.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendation

The market economy in Myanmar is by moving toward industrialization, but this is far from being realized as the country continues to be dominated by the agricultural sector. The continuation of inward-looking isolationist policies have brought in minimal foreign investment. Additionally, the previous regime allocated the country's limited resources disproportionately to military expenditures and the economic neglect of agriculture continues to drive rural communities in search of better livelihoods. This policy failure has deepened poverty, leading 20% of Myanmar's population to turn to migration for survival.

The case of Hlaing Thar Yar provides a prime example of the results of Myanmar's efforts to move toward the market economy. On one hand, Hlaing Thar Yar promises progress and employment, but on the other hand it has failed those for whom development matters the most. As one of the biggest industrial areas in Myanmar, Hlaing Thar Yar has lured the most marginalized groups from rural areas. Families continue to move to Hlaing Thar Yar, yet there has been no plan to properly facilitate their settlement and everything is done on an *ad hoc* basis.

5.1 Analysis

5.1.1 Availability of Schools

Hlaing Thar Yar has the highest number of informal settlers in Myanmar amounting to a population of nearly 0.7 million. The total number of school-aged children in Hlaing Thar Yar was 186,619 in 2014, while the total number of schools is just 58 at all levels, generating an unmanageable average student intake of 3,218 students per school. This is the highest ratio of school-aged children to available schools among all of Yangon's townships, and possibly throughout all of Myanmar.

Policies, such as industrial zoning, have given rise to new factories and concentrations of people looking for work, but the complimentary policies to provide social services,

such as schools for migrant children, have been grossly overlooked. There is an emphasis on developing skilled workers through education to facilitate the industrialization of Myanmar. However, noting the need for schools in industrial areas like Hlaing Thar Yar, it is revealed that there is an urgent need for more schools and more teachers. The existing capacity of schools in Hlaing Thar Yar is far from being adequate and the expanding population in this region has not been considered in the existing policies.

5.1.2 Accessibility to Education

Enrollment in schools for migrant children is especially cumbersome. Due to the inadequacy of schools, as in Hlaing Thar Yar, migrant children cannot simply enroll in schools so the policy provision of free education is less meaningful for them.

The requirement of certain documents, such as national ID cards, birth certificates, residential certificates, and transfer certificates, often render migrant child ineligible to enroll in school. The reasons why a migrant child is often not able to produce the required documents required are related to awareness and the circumstances through which these documents may have been lost. Additionally, the responsibility of school transfer, which should be taken up by the school, is not systematized and instead falls on the parents or students themselves.

5.1.3 Acceptability of Education

At the moment, the case of Hlaing Thar Yar is that there are too many students in too few schools. During the fieldwork it was observed that one particular school was operating with around 7,200 students, which is unmanageable for any high school.

The large student-teacher ratio, inadequate number of resources, and lack of teaching materials present an issue for quality education at schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township. Existing schools at the primary level have reported that many of them are managing 100 students per teacher and when learning materials must be shared it is very difficult to reach every child. The reformed curriculum and teaching methods have shifted focus from a teacher-centered to a child-centered approach, which requires an adequate

number of teachers and resources. The opinion of teachers who were interviewed about the new curriculum explained that this teaching style could only be effective with adequate resources. In Hlaing Thar Yar, schools should be provided two teachers per class at the primary level if more emphasis is to be given to the quality of education.

5.1.4 Adaptability of Education

The approach to education has to be flexible and responsive so that it can adapt to the different needs of society. The current education policy and legal framework technically includes migrant children's access to education and the free and compulsory education policy focuses on primary-aged children's access to school. However, in practice migrant children still cannot simply access education.

The question is whether the central administration provides authority to schools at the local level and how these schools manage their resources and are accountable to migrant children for their enrollment. Although some school heads are capable in management and take the initiative to adapt responsively to the specific needs of migrant children, it still depends on the individual's desire to do so, rather than being enforced by regulation. Unfortunately, specific regulations and accommodations to guarantee migrant children's access to education are overall absent.

5.1.5 Parental Interest in Education

It is very common within migrant communities for parents and caretakers themselves to not have high levels of education, if at all. This group is among the poorest economically and therefore internal migration is a survival strategy. It is typically only the poorest groups without the financial capital necessary for external migration that are moving from their original areas of living to another place within the country. Parents within these groups are focused on making ends meet and face many challenges, so education is often not prioritized. The poor economic conditions, lifestyle of coping with daily vulnerability, lack of formal education, need for children to help with domestic chores, and lack of awareness together result in low prioritization of education.

5.1.6 Non-Formal Education Equivalency Programme

Non-Formal Education equivalency programmes (NFE) have been successful in Hlaing Thar Yar. The design of the programme is particularly suited to children from migrant groups, poor families, and squatters. Students are not required to submit any documentation and the approach takes into consideration the mindset of children with such backgrounds. Students who have participated in this programme and their families were interviewed and expressed that they were satisfied with the programme and that it seems to be a very viable alternative for out-of-school students to continue their education.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Challenges of Migrant Families and their Children in Accessing or Continuing Primary Education

Both migrant and non-migrant children are entitled to free and compulsory education in accordance with the education policy, but the requirements for enrollment present major challenges for migrant children, which are not commonly experienced by other children. The enrollment requirements are specifically important, as this is the very first step in accessing a child's right to education. When migrant families are not able to meet the requirements, which in this context means unable to provide the necessary documentation, this results in children being unable to enroll in school. In other words, without fulfilling certain criteria, a school-aged child is ineligible for enrollment.

The requirement of documents, including a birth certificate and household registration, has proven to be difficult for many migrant families as many reported that they lost these legal documents in natural disasters or when in transition from one place to another. Also, they are often not aware of the importance of these required documents. Even though, the requirement of documentation is sometimes relaxed and some schools may accept an alternative document, this is not a standard practice for all schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township. Although migrant children may attain enrollment, they are also at a high risk for dropping out due of their parents' economic status or the quality of education that they are receiving.

Migrant children's interest in education and motivation to learn has been affected, as most migrant parents are busy struggling for daily income. Additionally, job insecurity, poverty, and living conditions promote a high level of mobility amongst migrant families, which can negatively impact migrant children's education.

5.2.2 Education Policy, Children from Migrant Families and Access to Primary Education

The National Education Strategic Plan has stated under basic education in its transformational shift that "All children can access, progress through and successfully complete quality basic education by 2021". Basic Education policy emphasizes free and compulsory primary education, which was introduced in the 2012-2013 academic year. The government abolished school enrollment fees, parent-teacher association fees, and provides the required textbooks, six exercise books, and one school uniform. However, the policy does not address the administrative barriers that pose a challenge for migrant student enrollment. Without school enrollment, a child is not able to access the incentives provided under the policy of free education.

To enable universal access to free education, the expansion of schools is one of the main components. Although the government has proudly highlighted that across the country schools are being upgraded and new schools are being constructed, the number of schools within each township is still not proportional to the population of school-aged children, which is especially the case in industrial townships. Industrial zones attract migrants because of the employment opportunities. However, these migrants are not supported with social services like schools. Therefore, the inadequate number of schools is a result of policy oversight.

While the government provides some support to ease parent's financial burden for their children's education, there are still other costs that are not subsidized such as meals, transportation, and tuition. Currently, the government is providing stipends to students, with a particular focus on poorer students. However, this stipend is not typically provided to primary school children and is also unavailable to students in Monastic

schools or non-formal education programs, who are actually even poorer than those attending government schools.

Myanmar has a high rate of drop-out and in order to address this issue, education policy includes the strategy of compulsory and inclusive education. The pilot projects of compulsory education are ongoing, and this is a welcome step. Scaling up compulsory and inclusive education would mean easing the plight of migrant children. However, the current pilot project does not actually address the issue of migrant children.

The policy also overlooks the role of parents in their children's education. Migrant children face more challenges in accessing education when their parents are unaware and ignorant. There needs to be a systematic program for raising awareness among parents of marginalized children, including those from migrant groups.

5.3 Recommendation

5.3.1 Recommendation for Availability of Education

5.3.1.1 School and Classroom Expansion

The expansion of schools by both building new schools and new classrooms is urgent. The shortage of schools in Hlaing Thar Yar has made it evident that government planning for education is still limited. The local and national level General Administration Departments (GAD) under the Ministry of the Office of the Union Government ideally would have estimated and prepared in anticipation of the population growth in migrant destination areas. Based on the results, the Department of Basic Education under the MOE should then expand schools and build new classrooms according to the demands and needs of the population. More funding should be allocated to support the construction of new schools and classrooms, meaning that the government's expenditure on the education sector must be increased, rather than investing in other non-productive sectors such as the military and defense spending. The government needs to revise its strategic thinking to focus on investments in development, which requires a more democratic process that represents the aspirations of its citizens.

5.3.1.2 Services for Migrant Families

There is no policy that considers the practical situations of migrant families and no specific programs within the current strategies to specifically target vulnerable groups. Support systems for migrating families need to be included in the industrial zone planning policy. Such a policy would then need to ensure social services are provided for the entire family, especially with respect to children and their education. The implementation of such a policy needs to be coordinated in cooperation between respective Ministries, such as the Ministry of Education, Township-level Administration, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, together with private companies for school construction. Such planning will need to be holistic in character and include protection measures, health services, and education for migrating children.

5.3.2 Recommendation for Accessibility of Education

5.3.2.1 Release the Administrative Barrier

The application of national standardized enrollment criteria should not be rigid. Instead, required documents for school enrollment should be flexible in order to accommodate the situation of migrant families. Although some schools are accepting age recommendation letters instead of birth certificates, this flexibility is dependent upon an individual's decision. Having a birth certificate guarantees the fundamental rights of a child to receive nationality, and enables access to social services such as health and education. While the Child Law (1993) states that “parents or guardian shall register the birth of the child in accordance with law”, the government must remove the obstacles to do so and provide more effective services for the registration of children and simultaneously work to raise parents' awareness of this issue. As adaptation is required by individual schools to meet the demands of the population it serves, the decentralized decision-making authority should be vested more on school heads in order to ensure the required documentation does not hinder migrant children from enrolling.

5.3.2.2 Expansion of Stipends for Poor Students

Education stipends for children from poor families need to be expanded. Equitable implementation of the education policy would ensure that stipends are also provided to students in primary levels, Monastic schools, and non-formal education programs. Recommendation regarding the provision of stipends is not only focused on its financial coverage, but also of vital importance are ensuring that the information of such provisions reaches all students and parents, and that students are selected in a transparent manner.

5.3.2.3 Raising Awareness for Migrant Parents

To meet the goal of universal education, it is critical to understand the mindset and level of awareness of the parents and caretakers. “If parents are a positive influence in their children’s everyday lives, and most importantly in their everyday education, the future will be more beautiful and more successful”(Ceka and Murati 2016). An effective method of addressing such issue could be the implementation of massive awareness-raising campaigns that are strategized to target migrant groups, both parents and children, through which they can be informed of the necessity of education, the policy and strategy of the government, enrollment requirements of schools, and also the importance of a birth certificate to guarantee the basic rights of a child. Awareness raising activities should be conducted at village/ward level in collaboration with school heads, teachers, and local administrators for which support can be provided by INGOs and NGOs working in the area of education. This activity requires guidance and support from the Ministry level and support from external donors may be requested by the Ministry for resources that are required to facilitate higher awareness.

5.3.2.4 Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Currently, planning and decision-making at the Ministry and Departmental levels is not based on evidence or critical information. The EMIS is a positive step to address this issue, but it is still under-developed. The government should prioritize its establishment with provision of technological and human capacity. The EMIS is should be operationalized for all districts and networked to the national level. Further, the inter-

school systems should also be networked. Updated and accessible information would support better planning, as well as facilitate the transfer of students as required documents could easily be shared online.

5.3.3 Recommendation for Acceptability of Education

5.3.3.1 Response to Teacher Shortage

While there is a provision in the National Strategy for Education to increase the number of teachers in the country, the practical scenario, with reference to Hlaing Thar Yar, is that this is failing. There are many instances in which one teacher is managing 100 students and almost all schools are complaining of the lack of teachers. This is an urgent requirement that can be addressed by the development of programs to produce skilled teachers through training and to better allocate teachers based on the needs of each school to meet the national student-teacher ratio.

5.3.4 Recommendation for Adaptability of Education

5.3.4.1 Scale up of Non-Formal Program

Non-formal education programs are a viable alternative in addressing the current needs of out-of-school children. In the absence of education infrastructure and resources, including teachers, the non-formal education sector has been providing an important service. However, the scale of non-formal education in Myanmar is very small. The coverage needs to be scaled up so that more children who are left out, or have dropped out, are given the opportunity to continue their education. NFE should be included in the overall education system and better aligned with formal schools to facilitate a smoother transfer process for students. A smooth transition from non-formal to formal education would require coordination between the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Alternative Education, which must be facilitated at the policy level.

5.4 Theorizing Access to Education for Migrant Children

The 4A framework developed by Tomaševski (2004, 2006) is a human rights based approach for realizing children's rights to education. The framework however, is written mainly from the perspective of state obligations, which are the recognition,

respect, and fulfillment of individual rights to education. The rights and obligations model awards all children the right to demand free education and it is the duty of the state to follow through with this obligation.

In the case of a country like Myanmar, this rights-based framework for accessing education, which is a precondition for accessing all other rights, is of especially critical importance. By providing a no compromise compulsion to governments, this framework, through international conventions, challenges governmental policy at different levels. This is a notable step of progress when considering the development of humankind and understanding their place as rights holders for key policy aspects, such as education.

Theoretical frameworks can provide the basis for generating a positive direction, but the intent and will of the state needs to be assessed through further development of programs and action plans, for which states should be held accountable. Practical application of theories requires their translation into concrete programs and action plans with adequate resources. However, the theoretical framework does not detail *how* this is to be done, which asserts that theory lacks the practical realization of the rights it promotes.

The idea of rights and obligations, which serve as the basic premise for the 4A framework, fails to include the important role that parents and caregivers play in their children's education. The emphasis on holding the state accountable is welcome, but there is also a need for parents and caregivers to take more responsibility. The rights of children are typically discussed as an obligation of the government, diluting the necessary obligation of the caregiver within the level of the home and the family. As seen in migrant communities, the reason many children are out of school is often a result of the lack of parental engagement. Parental involvement in their children's education improves a child's attitude, academic achievement, behavior, social skills, and adaption to school, and such support should remain as the student continues through each level of school. Parents are a child's first educators and they can influence their children's education in many ways, such as by choosing the appropriate school. Parents should prepare their children for school, supervise and provide guidance for homework, and actively encourage children's learning. The 4A framework would thus need to be

extended to more precisely include parents as also obligatory to the guarantee of children's rights.

A child's success is further supported by a strong relationship between parents and teachers. "Parental involvement in children's education creates school – family partnerships" (Mafa and Makuba 2013). To better facilitate this relationship, the school could play a more active role in involving parents both in their children's education and in school programs. When teachers and parents work together, issues such as children's behavior and academic outcomes are addressed more effectively (Mafa and Makuba 2013). Cooperation and sharing information between parents and schools creates a more well-rounded understanding of a child's challenges with social and emotional issues, both at the home and at school. Therefore, the relationship between parents and teachers is important and should be included in the 4A framework.

While the 4A framework rightly calls on the state to uphold the rights of children to education, the experience from this research shows that states may be fulfilling these rights only as an act of tokenism. The findings from Hlaing Thar Yar show that the upgrading of schools, which is a programmatic response to the policy of universal education, seems to have been done without the commitment of adequate funds. Schools are given the order to upgrade, but the lack of support in terms of space and resources remains. The government reports the number of schools that were upgraded, but in reality this is only tokenism, as the upgrades do not meet quality standards. Any framework on education will need to identify quality as a key outcome, and should be emphasized throughout each and every component of the 4A framework.

5.5 Contribution of Thesis to the Knowledge Gap

As presented in the literature review, there is no academic research that specifically addresses the issue of accessing education by internal migrant children in Myanmar. Both the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasize international and local migration in relation to labour

migration and remittances from migration, but these topics do not address the issues faced by children of migrant families.

This thesis focuses on one of the most vulnerable groups, children, whose vulnerability increases in several ways when they have to migrate with their parents. Furthermore, the right to education is a fundamental right of the child and this thesis presents that migrant children face more challenges in realizing this right. This thesis shows the administrative barrier, namely the lack of legal documents, as the main challenge for migrant groups, which is an issue not addressed in detail by any academic research so far. This thesis, therefore, fills the gap by presenting an under-researched issue in order to pave the way for future research through provision of seminal data, information, and analysis.

5.6 Why this Thesis is Important in Development Studies

Migration is a primary coping strategy to escape poverty. Through migration, poorer groups search for better livelihoods by seeking income to sustain their lives. As a result, migration has become a key development issue, especially in recent years. Also, migration contributes to a country's economic development by bringing together labor and business. This economic significance has led to an increase in rural-urban migration in developing countries because of their growing industries and designation of economic zones that attract required labor. However, it must be acknowledged that children are also included in the migrant group and therefore their issues and needs should also be taken into account. In fact, the needs of children are even more important as children cannot speak up for their own safety, rights, or benefits, and because they will create the future of the country.

Access to education is vital for children, as it is education that prepares a child for socialization, participation in society, and overall development. If migrant children cannot access education in the destination area, they often become vulnerable to harmful environments such as child labor. As Nelson Mandela said, "Children of today are the leaders of tomorrow and education is a very important weapon to prepare children for their future roles as leaders of the community" (1990). The loss of a child's future also means the loss of a country's future, as it is only capable people who will

contribute to the country's development. Therefore, it is important for the government to acknowledge the intersection of migration and education in order to effectively fulfill migrant children's right to education. This problem requires urgent attention by all countries with high internal migration rates, and it is typically developing countries such as Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos that are likely facing this issue.

5.7 Recommendation for Future Studies

5.7.1 Migrant Children in Middle Level Education

This thesis focuses only on primary-level children who are between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. The industrial area is full of child labor with young migrants working in teashops, carrying heavy loads, selling snacks on the streets, and collecting items from the trash. Therefore, it would be valuable to study middle-level aged children (between the ages of 10 and 16 years old) from migrant communities to identify the similarities and differences in the challenges they face as compared to those of primary-level children.

“What are the barriers and challenges of migrant children in accessing middle-level education?”

5.7.2 Parents Awareness

This study has pointed out that one of the reasons children from migrant communities are not able to access education is also due to their parents' level of awareness. However, the scope and time of this study was too limited to delve more into this important issue. There is a need to more deeply understand why and what causes the parents of this group to be so ignorant and unaware. One of the reasons cited is that the parents themselves are illiterate; however, this does not fully address the question and there is limited overall understanding of this critical issue. Therefore, further investigation is required to help develop programs to increase their awareness.

“How does migrant parents' awareness about education impact children's education?”

5.7.3 Research to Review Relevant Policies of all Sectors with Emphasis on Migrant Children

Children's education is not only affected by the outcomes of policy in the educational sector, but also by policies in other sectors. For example, it is important for the industrial policy of a state to include social service provisions, especially in its export- and industrial zoning strategies. The need for such provisions in other policies is also apparent and would significantly impact the education of children, especially those who are poor, including those from migrant families. There is a need to review all relevant policies with respect to the plight of migrant children and their access to education.

“How do the policies of industrial development strategies support or not support the education of migrant children?”

5.7.4 Supportive Mechanisms for Internal Migrant Groups

At this time there is no research on internal migrant groups with reference to the types of supportive mechanisms they will require when moving from one place to another. The movement of internal migrants is informal and often *ad hoc*. As a result, they face severe difficulties that have many social costs and can impact the country's economy. One such social cost is accessing education for their children. Therefore, more research on how supportive mechanisms for internal migrants can be institutionalized is urgent.

“How can supportive mechanisms for internal migrants be institutionalized with regard to children's education?”

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Appendix

Sample Interview Questionnaires for Migrant Parents/Caretakers

Name: _____ Age (if possible)
 Number of family members..... Primary-age children (Boy)..... (Girl)

 What kind of work you do for
 income.....
 Where did you migrate from When.....

 Why did you migrate

Availability

- Did your children get access to public school in the last year?

If no, (ask following question in a box)

Did your children join monastic school?
 If yes,
 Why and what are the differences between public school and monastic school?
 Which one (monastic or public school) do you prefer and why?

Did your children join non-formal school?
 If yes,
 Why and What are the differences between non-forma and formal school?
 Which one (non-formal or public school) do you prefer and why?

- If children do not join any other type of school: why and what are the reasons?

Ask following question if children join public or monastic school

- In which school (within Hlaing Thar Yar Township or other townships) did you enroll your children?
- What is the teacher-student ratio in the school?

Accessibility

- How much did enrolling your child cost? What other costs did you pay apart from enrollment and how much did it cost for a year?

- What kind of documents were required when you enrolled?
- How did you get the required documents for school enrollment?
- Did you have all these documents? If not, what did you do about the documents you could not produce?
- What kind of materials (textbooks, uniforms, etc.) did you receive from the school?
- Have you had to pay other indirect cost for primary education? (textbooks, teaching materials, uniforms, exam fees, coaching classes, compulsory parental contributions)
- Did any of your children drop out from school? If yes, when and why? If not, do you have plan to take away your children from school before finishing primary level? If yes, why?
- What kind of difficulties regarding documentation do you face for getting your children enrolled in school? (this question should be shifted up to the documentation section)
- How did (or) will you overcome these challenges and difficulties?
What kind of economic difficulties do you face for your children's education?

Acceptability

- What do you think about teaching methods and curriculum at school? (appropriate culturally, ethnic, religion)
- Do you think that school is favorable and focusses on particular religion?
- Do you think that school is free from any form of violence, including gender-based violence?
If not, how?

Adaptability

- How does the government provide education for disabled children from migrant families?
- How should the government support working children from migrant families with respect to education?

Further Support

- How did or does the local administrator and school authorities help migrant squatting families and children to get access to education?
- What kind of support do you expect from the government to get your children access primary education?

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