

การศึกษาเพื่อสิทธิมนุษยชนของแรงงานข้ามชาติชาวพม่า:
ศึกษากรณีโรงเรียนเดียร์พม่า

นาย พีเชท เมน

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาการพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ

คณะรัฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2554

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)

เป็นแฟ้มข้อมูลของนิสิตเจ้าของวิทยานิพนธ์ที่ส่งผ่านทางบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

The abstract and full text of theses from the academic year 2011 in Chulalongkorn University Intellectual Repository(CUIR)

are the thesis authors' files submitted through the Graduate School.

EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF BURMESE MIGRANT
WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF DEAR BURMA SCHOOL

Mr. Pechet Men

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in International Development Studies
Faculty of Political Science
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2011
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

พีเชท เมน: การศึกษาเพื่อสิทธิมนุษยชนของแรงงานข้ามชาติชาวพม่า: ศึกษากรณีโรงเรียนเดียร์พม่า (EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF BURMESE MIGRANT WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF DEAR BURMA SCHOOL) อ. ที่ปรึกษา วิทยาลัยนานาชาติ: ดร. นฤมล ทับจุมพล, อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยาลัยนานาชาติร่วม: Michael Hayes, Ph.D., 108 หน้า.

งานวิจัยนี้มีเป้าหมายมุ่งเน้นไปยังสิทธิเพื่อการศึกษาของแรงงานพม่า โดยเฉพาะการศึกษานอกระบบ หรือการฝึกอาชีพ เป้าหมายของงานวิจัยจะบ่งชี้ไปยังสิทธิของแรงงานข้ามชาติที่การศึกษานอกระบบจะได้อะไร ระดับและปกป้องพวกเขา

กรณีศึกษาของงานวิจัยนี้เน้นที่โรงเรียนชาวพม่าชื่อ DEAR (Development of Education and Awareness of Refugees from Burma) การพัฒนาเพื่อการศึกษาและความตระหนักของผู้ลี้ภัยพม่า ซึ่งเป็นโครงการของคณะกรรมการเพื่อประชาธิปไตยของพม่าในประเทศไทย(กรพ.) โรงเรียน DEAR Burma จัดการเรียนการสอนแบบนอกระบบให้แรงงานต่างชาติ โดยเน้นการให้ความรู้ด้านภาษาอังกฤษ ภาษาไทย และความรู้พื้นฐานเกี่ยวกับสิทธิแรงงาน สิทธิแรงงานข้ามชาติ สิทธิสตรี สิทธิมนุษยชน รวมทั้งหลักสูตรคอมพิวเตอร์ สถาบัน DEAR Burma ก่อตั้งขึ้นในปี 2003 สำหรับวิธีการเก็บข้อมูลผู้วิจัยใช้วิธีการสัมภาษณ์ จัดสนทนากลุ่มและสังเกตการณ์แบบมีส่วนร่วม โดยมีผู้ให้ข้อมูลวิจัยจำนวน 39 คน และจัดสนทนากลุ่มสองครั้งกับนักเรียนอีก 13 คน

แรงงานพม่าเหล่านี้เข้ามาในประเทศไทยโดยยังสื่อสารเป็นภาษาพม่าหรือภาษาชาติพันธุ์ตน ซึ่งไม่สามารถเข้าใจได้สำหรับคนไทย จึงเกิดปัญหาอุปสรรคด้านภาษาหรือความไม่เข้าใจซึ่งอาจนำไปสู่ความขัดแย้งได้ นอกจากนี้แรงงานเหล่านี้ก็เสี่ยงต่อการถูกเอาเปรียบหรือทารุณกรรม โดยที่สิทธิของแรงงานเหล่านี้ก็ค่อนข้างจำกัด เพื่อแก้สถานการณ์เหล่านี้ แรงงานจึงหันหน้าเข้าสู่การศึกษาที่ทางโรงเรียน DEAR Burma โดยมีจุดประสงค์ทางการศึกษาเพื่อพัฒนาความรู้และความปลอดภัยของตนเอง สาเหตุที่ทำให้ผู้ให้ข้อมูลวิจัยเหล่านั้นมาโรงเรียน DEAR Burma เนื่องจากจะได้อ่านหนังสือต่อไปในที่ทำงาน เพื่อสื่อสาร การต่อรอง เข้าถึงความบันเทิง เข้าถึงข่าวสารข้อมูล และเพื่อมองหางานที่ดีกว่าเดิม

จากผลลัพธ์ทางการวิจัย การศึกษามีผลบวกต่อชีวิตแรงงานข้ามชาติ โดยผู้ให้ข้อมูลยอมรับว่าสิทธิในฐานะแรงงานข้ามชาติของตนดีขึ้นตามลำดับ แม้ว่าประเทศไทยจะไม่ได้ลงนามในอนุสัญญาด้านดังกล่าว อีกทั้งความเป็นอยู่ อีสุระในการเดินทาง เสรีภาพในการแสดงออก ความมั่นใจ และสิทธิการเข้าถึงข้อมูล ก็ล้วนได้รับการยกระดับขึ้น ยิ่งกว่านั้น อุปสรรคที่เคยมีกับตำรวจและการดูแลจากคนทั่วไป ซึ่งเคยเป็นเรื่องใหญ่ก็ลดน้อยลงไป ดังเช่นผู้ให้ข้อมูลบางคนสามารถต่อรองกับนายจ้างในการเก็บหนังสือเดินทางไว้กับตัวเอง หรือแสดงความคิดเห็นต่างๆ รวมทั้งพูดคุยกับตำรวจที่ขอตรวจค้นพวกเขา เมื่อแรงงานเหล่านี้เรียนรู้ถึงสิทธิของตน ก็เริ่มสามารถต่อรองและเผชิญหน้ากับความไม่เป็นธรรมได้ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่ง ยืนหยัดได้โดยตัวเองอย่างสมบูรณ์

สาขาวิชา การพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ
ปีการศึกษา 2554

ลายมือชื่อผู้คิด.....
ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยาลัยนานาชาติ.....
ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยาลัยนานาชาติร่วม.....

5381033724: MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
 KEY WORD: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION / MIGRANT WORKER RIGHTS /
 BURMA / THAILAND / DEAR BURMA SCHOOL

PECHET MEN: EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF BURMESE
 MIGRANT WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF DEAR BURMA SCHOOL.
 ADVISOR: NARUEMON THABCHUMPON, PH.D., CO-ADVISOR:
 MICHAEL HAYES, PH.D, 108 pp.

The aim of this research to examine the impact of education rights for Burmese migrant workers, especially non-formal education or vocational training. The objective of this paper is to identify the rights of migrant workers that non-formal education helps promote and protect.

The case study is DEAR (Development of Education and Awareness of Refugees from Burma) Burma School which is a project of Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB). DEAR Burma school provides non-formal education to migrant workers particularly language skill training, English and Thai, general knowledge on labor rights, migrant worker's rights, women rights, human rights, and computer skills. DEAR Burma has been established since 2003. There were 39 informants contacted for interview and two sessions of Focus Group Discussion are conducted with other 13 students.

Burmese migrant workers in Thailand speak Burmese and their ethnic language. As Thai people do not understand these languages there are problems and misunderstandings which could cause arguments or conflicts. Moreover, the migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. In particular, their rights as migrant workers are also restricted. In order to deal with these situations, they go back to school to receive education to improve their knowledge and security. The reasons why the participants came to DEAR Burma school so they can use their knowledge in their workplace, to communicate, to negotiate, to entertain, to access to information, and to look for a better job.

According to the findings, education has positive impacts to migrant workers' life. With regard to the informants, though Thailand does not sign this convention, their rights as migrant workers have been respectively improved. Their livelihood, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, self-esteem, and right to access to information has been promoted. Additionally, troubles with Thai police and humiliation by other people, which was of concern to them, have been less frequent. Some participants use their knowledge of language to negotiate with their boss to hold their own passport or to express their ideas, or to talk to police if they stop them. When migrant workers know more about their rights, they start to negotiate and challenge with unfairness, most importantly, to stand up themselves.

Field of study: International Development Studies
 Academic year 2011

Student's signature:.....
 Advisor's signature:.....
 Co-advisor's signature:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To begin with, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people who have been there for me and make this research paper possible. Without their support and encouragement, I would not successfully accomplish this research.

First of all, I would like to wholeheartedly thank both of my supervisors, Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon and Dr. Mike Hayes for their input and guidance. My great thanks also go to all lecturers for their tireless work in teaching me academic skills and knowledge for the whole year. Other thanks have to go to Associate Professor Dr. Vira Somboon, my chair person for the thesis committee and Dr. Laddawan Tantivitayapitak, member of examination committee for their valuable suggestions and constructive comments to my work. Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. John D. Ciorciari for his appreciated job in proofreading my paper.

I would like to thank TACDB organization and Mr. Myint Wai, DEAR Burma School director, who understandably allowed me to have a chance to do my research at the center. I would like to express my gratefulness to all DEAR Burma school students and volunteer teachers, particularly my informants, who passionately shared me their experience and life story. I can feel their spiritual strength and warmth welcome during our conversations.

I would like to express my thankfulness to my MAIDS family: classmates and staffs for their friendship, support, and motivation during my study in Thailand. Their beautiful smile and laughter are always there in my mind. We have been struggling together and helping each other both inside and outside our classrooms. I am grateful to Siam Cement Foundation and ASEAN Foundation for their generous funds to support my study at Chulalongkorn University.

Finally, I would like to pay my greatest respect and thankfulness to my beloved parents and brothers for their emotional and financial support throughout the courses of my studies. They were always there for me giving me warmth and cheering me up every time I faced obstacles with my study.

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT (THAI).....	iv
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Conceptual Framework.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Research Objectives.....	6
1.6 Research Methodology.....	6
1.6.1 Documentary Research.....	6
1.6.2 Field Study Research.....	7
1.6.3 Terminology Used.....	10
1.6.4 Language Used and the Use of Translator.....	11
1.6.5 Research Scope.....	11
1.6.6 Limitation of the Study.....	12
1.7 Significance of Research.....	13
1.8 Outline of the Study.....	13
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	15
2.1 Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand.....	15
2.2 Legal Context.....	16
2.2.1 Thai Policy Towards Burmese Migrant Workers.....	16
2.2.2 Thai Labor Protection Act.....	17
2.2.3 International Labor Standards.....	18

2.2.4 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.....	18
2.2.5 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.....	19
2.3 Rights of Migrant Workers.....	20
2.4 Education and Non-formal Education.....	21
2.4.1 Education.....	21
2.4.2 Non-formal Education.....	22
2.4.3 DEAR Burma School: Case Study Profile.....	23
CHAPTER III THE IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ON DAILY LIFE OF BURMESE MIGRANT WORKERS	33
3.1 Students' Conditions in Burma and Reasons Motivate Them to Move.....	33
3.2 Students' Conditions in Thailand: Before They Go to DEAR Burma School.....	37
3.2.1 Language Barrier.....	37
3.2.2 Freedom of Movement.....	38
3.2.3 Food.....	39
3.2.4 Trouble with Police.....	40
3.2.5 Humiliation from Thai People.....	41
3.2.6 Loneliness and Isolation.....	42
3.3 Utilities of Non-formal Education in Daily Life.....	43
3.3.1 Thai Language.....	44
3.3.2 English Language.....	48
3.3.3 Computer Skill.....	50
3.4 Summary.....	54
CHAPTER IV THE IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ON QUALITY OF LIFE OF BURMESE MIGRANT WORKERS.....	55
4.1 The impact of Non-formal Education on Burmese Migrant Workers' Rights.....	55
4.1.1 Livelihood.....	55
4.1.2 Freedom of Movement.....	56
4.1.3 Safety and Security.....	57
4.1.4 Self-esteem.....	58

4.1.5 Freedom of Expression.....	59
4.1.6 Access to Information.....	60
4.1.7 Future Prospect.....	61
4.2 Reduction of Violation and Abuse Migrant Workers Used to Face.....	62
4.3 Four Selected Stories From the Field.....	63
4.3.1 Struggling for Life.....	63
4.3.2 Life of Hope.....	66
4.3.3 Life is for Sharing.....	68
4.3.4 Life is Worth Trying.....	69
4.4 Summary.....	71
CHAPTER V DISCUSSION.....	73
5.1 Discussion.....	73
5.1.1 Migration Issue	73
5.1.2 Education: a Pathway to Gain Other Rights.....	74
5.1.3 Education: Empowerment and Development.....	75
5.1.4 Home: Relationship between School and Students.....	75
5.1.5 DEAR Burma School: Community and Identity.....	76
5.1.6 DEAR Burma School: Information Center.....	77
5.1.7 Mutual Benefit: the Students and Thai Society.....	78
5.1.8 DEAR Burma School Means to the Students.....	79
5.2 Education and Rights.....	80
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION.....	83
REFERENCES.....	85
APPENDICES.....	91
BIOGRAPHY.....	108

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1. The list of 39 informants.....	8
2. Number of Students Registered Over Last 5 Courses.....	28
3. Year of Arrival at Thailand.....	36
4. Informants Who Enrolled For Classes at DEAR Burma School.....	43
5. Utilities of Thai Language.....	47
6. Utilities of English Language.....	50
7. Utilities of Computer/Internet.....	53

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Conceptual Framework of the research.....	5
2. Class Curriculum.....	25
3. School's Organization Chart.....	27
4. Chart of Students Registered Over Last 5 Courses.....	29
5. Chart of Female and Male Students Registered Over Last 5 Courses.....	29

ABBREVIATIONS

ARCM	-	Asian Research Center for Migration
CMW	-	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CPPCR	-	Committee for Promotion and Protection of Child Rights, Burma
DEAR	-	Development of Education and Awareness of Refugees from Burma
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
HRDU	-	Human Rights Documentation Unit, Burma
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	-	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ID Card	-	Identification Card
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
IOM	-	International Organization for Migration
MAP	-	Migrant Assistance Programme
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organization
TACDB	-	Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma
TDRI	-	Thailand Development Research Institute
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN	-	United Nations
UNESCO-APEID	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VSO	-	Volunteer Service Overseas

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines education for Burmese migrant workers to not only understand what rights they get through education, but also how the act of education itself often significantly improves the protection and promotion of their rights. This is done by DEAR Burma school providing a place to meet other migrant workers, and how language lessons enable better work conditions and more safety in the street. This thesis also studies how Burmese migrant workers use their education to claim for more protection and promotion of their rights.

Since the boom of global economic, it has caused the movement of people throughout the world. The advancement of better communication and transportation systems has also made long distance traveling possible. Castles and Miller (2009) explain that these developments have significantly brought a new trend of international and transboundary migration; this movement is particularly from less developed or developing countries to more developed or high-income countries for the purpose of better wages.

During 1980s, Thailand began to industrialize its economy in order to become a tiger economy, which is far more developed than its neighboring countries. Owing to the economic growth, many Thai people could find better works, and left a shortage of unskilled labor in its labor market. Consequently, in early 1990s, the lack of labor force to fulfill the need of low and unskilled workers in the country have emerged the flow of workers from surrounding countries to enter Thailand to seek for employment opportunities and higher incomes. However, during that time, only nine provinces along Myanmar-Thai border were allowed to recruit and register as migrant workers. Yet, until 2001, due to the need of larger amount of migrant workers to fulfill the

labor shortage, the cabinet resolution has agreed to allow Thai employers to employ migrant workers in all industries and jobs approved by the Royal Thai Government (Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007).

In 2007, among the 36 million of labor forces in Thailand, five per cent or 1.8 million are migrant workers. The majority of those foreign workers are from Burma, Cambodia, and Lao PDR concentrated by location, industry, and occupation. Most of them have filled the low and unskilled jobs in Bangkok, Southern and Northwestern areas of Thailand in agriculture, fishery, construction, manufacturing, and other services sectors (Martin 2007). Yet, there are more undocumented workers than documented workers (Human Rights Watch 2010).

Burmese migrant workers enter Thailand looking for a job. Often, they are reported in a form of illegal or undocumented migrant workers. They face many problems. They speak Burmese language or their ethnic language of which Thai people do not understand. Thereby, it creates a problem of language barrier. With this language barrier, it is very difficult for them to communication with local Thai people, not mentioning to integrate into Thai society. Moreover, there are problems of accessing to information as well. Owing to language barrier, misunderstanding is always a case of which could lead to argument or conflict. With this context, they are viewed vulnerable to exploit and to abuse. In particular, their rights as migrant workers are also restricted (Huguet & Punpulg 2005; Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007; HRDU 2009; CPPCR (Burma) 2009; Human Rights Watch 2010). Therefore, it is important for them to have a chance to be educated especially in a language class that will be useful for them to communicate at their workplaces and in their host community so that it would empower them to be more confident and to be able to access to information of which is considered important for their well-beings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education is considered important for human being in term of human development as well as the improvement of quality of life (Naik 1980). Without education, people would end up living in a hard condition and poverty and, thus, education shall not be neglected in a person's life. Therefore, we, as human beings, are entitled the right to access to education as stated in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): "Everyone has the *Right to Education*... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups..." stated in Article 26 (2) of UDHR.

Yet, how about the adults who miss a chance to go to school when they were children or people whose age were supposed to go to school but they could not access to school facilities for some reasons; does it mean they have no more chance to access to education because they are now adult and are over the age of getting free basic education? If that is the case, as a result, they are under the title of illiterate. Therefore, in this context, the word education refers to non-formal education of which is viewed as a tool to empower human capacity. Also, Naik (1980) argued for non-formal education by relating education to development of an individual and in term of empowerment. According to Osuji, adult education (or non-formal education) serves a very important role that takes over from when the formal education system stops. It does not mean those adults who miss school during their young age could not pursue further education. However, they can enroll in non-formal education class, vocational training or literacy class provided by government or non-governmental organization. Furthermore, in ICESCR's, Thailand is a signatory state member, Article 6 (1) and (2) also clarify that:

1. "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain

his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.”

2. “The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.”

The aim of this paper is to look at the impact of access to education, and education on rights for Burmese migrant workers in order to examine how their rights are protected through adult non-formal education. The case study of this paper is focused on DEAR Burma School which is a project of Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB). DEAR refers to Development of Education and Awareness of Refugees from Burma. It is a migrant school providing non-formal education to migrant workers particularly language skill training, English, Thai and other general knowledge concerning labor rights, migrant worker’s rights, women rights, human rights as well as computer skill. This school been established since 2003.

In summary, the main concern of this paper is to answer the question of “To what extent does DEAR Burma School help protect and promote rights of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand?”

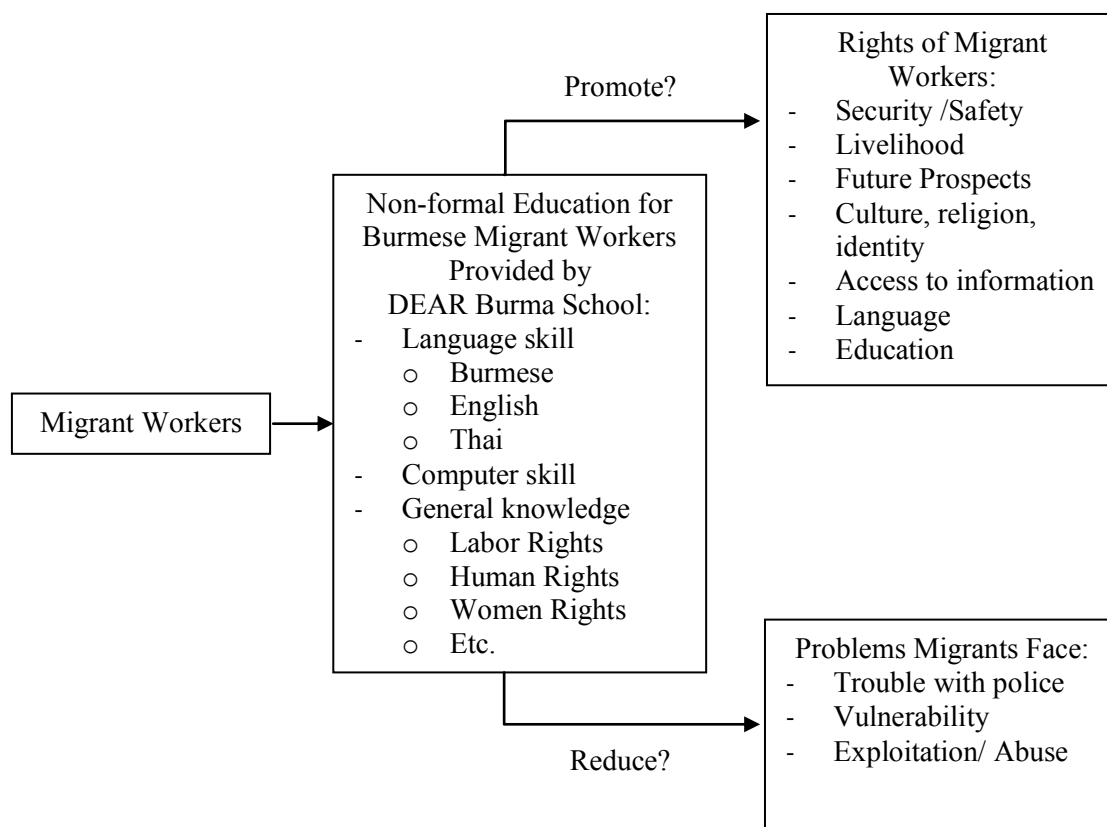
1.3 Conceptual Framework

Working in a foreign country is already difficult enough for migrant workers. Yet, facing language barrier is likely to create more obstacles for them to interact and to integrate into their host country’s society. Exploitation and abuse are very common in this context. However, being able to receive non-formal education in term of language literacy and, skill development would be helpful for those migrant workers

to tackle with the burdens that they would face during their course of working and staying in the second country. At the meantime, being aware of the rights they are entitled to while they are working in foreign country would help them to exercise their rights better. Furthermore, being able to read and write their employer's language, would enable them to read the contract they would sign with their employers, negotiate and challenge with unfairness. In addition, having more knowledge and skills would also benefit the workers to get promoted as well as to become more productive workers. Therefore, in this context, the concept of providing migrant workers to access to education whether to help promote their rights or not would be analyzed in the findings.

In this research paper, the relationship explored is between education and the rights of migrant workers, in particular, how does education improve their rights and whether non-formal education provided for migrant workers can help protect and promote migrant worker's rights or not?

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the research



1.4 Research Questions

The research objectives of this study are the followings:

- To what extent does DEAR Burma School help promote and protect rights of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand?
 - o How do Burmese migrant workers make use of knowledge gaining from DEAR Burma School?
 - o What is the impact of non-formal education?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are the followings:

- To examine whether DEAR Burma school helps promote and protect rights of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand
- To explore the impact of knowledge the Burmese migrant workers gain from DEAR Burma school to their life
- To identify the rights of migrant workers that non-formal education helps promote

1.6 Research Methodology

This research paper focuses on both primary and secondary data sources in order to address the research questions and objectives.

1.6.1 Documentary Research

Secondary data was collected from books, reports, journals, news articles, NGO's webpages, and other credible internet sources. All information reviewed was mostly related to migration issue in Thailand and in general. The following topics and areas were reviewed in this paper:

- Burmese migrant workers' working and living condition in Thailand in general

- Legal context concerning the laws and regulations, international labor standards, international covenants related to migration.
- Rights of migrant workers
- What are the scholars' views on education
- Education and empowerment
- Non-formal Education, adult education, and literacy
- DEAR Burma School: the case study of this paper

1.6.2 Field Study Research

This research paper was applied with qualitative research methodology. The reasons to choose qualitative interview were 1) To investigate the migrant workers' experiences of studying at DEAR Burma School, which is related to their life and work in Thailand. By doing so, the researcher aims to find if the knowledge they gain from DEAR Burma School is useful in their daily life by comparing their situation in the past before accessing this kind of non-formal education and the present situation. 2) To define what rights they would gain once they have involved in non-formal education, for instance, their security, their livelihood, their right to access information, and etc. 3) With this qualitative interview, it was to find out whether the Burmese migrant workers who enrolled in non-formal education have less problems with Thai police/ authorities and were able to negotiate with their boss or not.

The respondents of this research were divided into three particular groups as for 1) In-depth interview, 2) Semi-structural interview, and 3) Qualitative survey and Focus Group Discussion. Informal interview and observation were also used to collect other relevant information as well. The respondents of this research were contacted and they were informed about the purpose of this research in advanced. (*See Appendix A for Interview Questions*)

Concerning sample selection, the researcher chose Snow-Ball Sampling model to reach the target group starting from several informants, the researcher knew from school observation, to thirty or so informants. The interviews were conducted

voluntarily. None of the informants was forced to provide any information he or she unwilling to share. There were respectively 39 people (34 informants are DEAR students, 5 informants are school staff) contacted for interview and two sessions of Focus Group Discussion were conducted with other 13 students. All the informants in this paper are legal migrant workers. They hold both work permit and passport. (*See Appendix B for Field Research Schedule*)

Table 1: The list of 39 informants

Four former students for In-depth interview, place of interviews: Bangkok					
No	Interviewees' status	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Educational background
1.	Restaurant staff	F	27	Nepalese	Undergraduate from Burma, now pursuing Master Degree in Thailand
2.	Nurse	F	32	Karen	Nursing School from Burma
3.	Salesperson and Thai-Burmese Interpreter	M	32	Burman	High school
4.	Salesperson and School Librarian	M	30	Nepalese	High school

Five school staff for semi-structural interview				
No	Interviewees' status	Sex	Date of interview	Place of interview
1.	School director	M	June 2011	Bangkok
2.	English teacher coordinator	F	June 2011	Bangkok
3.	Teacher Trainer	F	June 2011	Email
4.	Thai Teacher	F	June 2011	Bangkok
5.	English Teacher	F	June 2011	Bangkok

30 current students for qualitative survey, 11 males, 19 females	
1. Informants' working status	
Cleaner	02
Company staff	02
Cook	01
Factory worker	02
Housemaid	07
Look after elderly	01
Mechanist	01
Nanny	05
Office staff	01
Restaurant staff	01
Salesperson	05
Shopkeeper	01
No job	01
2. Informants' ethnicity	
Arakanese	01
Burman	05
Indian	01
Kachin	02
Karen	07
Kayin	04
Mon	03
Nepalese	01
Pa-O	03
Shan	03
3. Informants' educational background	
Primary school (kindergarten - 4)	02
Secondary school (5-8)	10
High school (9-10)	10
Undergraduate degree	08

4. Informants' age	
15-20	02
21-25	15
26-30	10
31-35	02
36-40	01

After collecting all data through both primary and secondary data collection process, those data were categorized and analyzed according to the research objectives. The descriptive method was used to write the findings and analysis parts. The analysis of collected data was based on the conceptual framework and theories reviewed by the researcher.

This paper is based on both primary and secondary data collection. While the secondary data collection process started prior and after primary data collection, the primary data collection was conducted during June and July 2011.

1.6.3 Terminology Used

The term “Migrant Worker,” according to Article 2 of *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990, refers to “A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.”

Non-formal education “is a general term that is often associated with adult education programs, though it can actually refer to activities for younger people as well. Non-formal education refers to all educational programs that are outside of the formal education system. Such programs may be sponsored by government but they are often sponsored by local NGOs, international donor organizations, universities and research groups, or private institutions” (Roland 1997, p. 4).

1.6.4 Language Used and the Use of Translator

In this research paper the majority of informants are Burmese migrant workers who are living and working in Thailand. Therefore, most of the interviews were conducted in Burmese language, their own language, in order to give them a free space to talk about their feelings and perspectives. Therefore, in order to cope with language barrier between the researcher and informants, the assistance from a translator to facilitate the interviews between the researcher and informants was needed. The translator was contacted and briefed with research purposes before the field research was started. The translator was asked to review the interview questions before going to the field. By doing so, the researcher believed that it would give the translator a familiar environment of what was going on in the field and what was going to be asked. The translator was also introduced to the informants to build up friendlier environment and to make sure the interviews went well. Additionally, translation principal was also informed in advanced to translator to not interfere with any answer or information that the informants would convey during the interviews.

1.6.5 Research Scope

In this study paper, interviews were taken place only with Burmese migrant workers, who were and are DEAR Burma School students regardless of their occupations and the school staff. Surrounding community was not included in research. Furthermore, this research study was only contextualized the situation of DEAR Burma School and its students in term of exercising their rights as migrant workers. Meanwhile, the comparison study with other migrant schools was not concentrate in this paper.

There have been reports releasing that there are about 88 migrant schools that have been “unofficially” recognized by Thai Ministry of Education. The schools have been established mostly along the Thai-Burma border. There are approximately about 15,855 students who have enrolled in these schools by 2008 (Protor, Sane & Taffesse). The issue of right to education significantly for migrant children has been

broadly discussed among the non-governmental organizations as well as academic sphere. Many researches have been concerned about the issue. Since the migrant schools mostly operated along Thai-Burma border of Tak Province, which covers almost all of those schools, there have been studies emphatically conducted there. The other part of Thailand where studies are also conducted is Samut Sakorn Province. However, most of their studies and discussions only focused on the fight for the right of migrant children accessing to education which they are entitled to. Furthermore, the schools mostly provide basic education to migrant children, while migrant workers are not mostly taken noticed or because they are busy with earning a living. Thus, the followings are the reasons why DEAR Burma has been chosen for this study: 1) The topic of this study focuses on non-formal education provided to migrant workers rather than to migrant children. Therefore, with this context, DEAR Burma School is suitable for this study. 2) Additionally, DEAR Burma is located at the center of Bangkok, where the students can go to by various means of transportations starting from public bus to skytrain (many people in Bangkok call it so) conveniently. 3) Specifically, the school opens only on Sunday which is the time that most of the migrant workers are free from their works, and thus, they can have a better chance to go to School. 4) Regardless their ethnicity and religion, DEAR Burma also welcomes various migrant workers enrolling for the classes.

1.6.6 Limitation of the Study

1) The first issue that has encountered during interview is „language barrier“. The interviews were mostly conducted in Burmese language with the assistance of an interpreter. To this, the researcher believes that there would be some gaps in absorbing all information provided by the informants.

2) Additionally, the researcher found that the informants found it difficult to answer some open questions concerning their opinion and perspective towards the school.

3) Time limitation was also the problem for the interviews. The interview could not last long to allow the informants to talk freely about themselves.

4) Lastly, this paper is focused only on DEAR Burma School. Therefore, the findings of this paper cannot be generalized to other the situation of Burmese migrant workers.

1.7 Significance of Research

This research paper aims to contribute to the knowledge of how the concept of non-formal education can be used to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers and to help reduce some problems concerning migration issue of which is happening with migrants in receiving country such as Thailand. Hopefully, it would provide useful practical knowledge to benefit students, academics, non-governmental organizations as well as policy makers who concern about the issue of migration.

1.8 Outline of the Study

This paper comprises of six chapters. The first chapter is about the introduction, general overview of the issue and explanation of the purpose of this paper. There are eight sections included in this chapter: introduction, statement of the problem, conceptual framework, research questions, research objectives, research methodology, significance of research, ethical consideration, and outline of the study. The second chapter focuses on literature review looking through the life of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand, the legal context concerning Thai laws and regulations related to migrant workers, international covenants and labor standards, rights of migrant workers, education and non-formal education, and introduction to DEAR Burma school – the case study profile. The third chapter discusses the findings, purely the information gathered from the interviews with Burmese migrant workers particularly DEAR Burma students, with backup theories under the title of “The impact of non-formal education on daily life of Burmese migrant workers.” The fourth chapter furthers “The impact of non-formal education on quality of life of

Burmese migrant workers” showing how they make use of their education to exercise their rights as migrant workers in Thailand. The fifth chapter will be a discussion board exchanging ideas and perspectives of other people, for example, DEAR Burma school staff, activists, employers, scholars, towards the information purely provided by the informants or the students. The last chapter is the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the general picture of Burmese migrant workers' condition in Thailand, relevant to legal context – laws, regulation, international conventions and standards – supposed to protect migrant workers' rights, scholars' perspectives towards education, literacy and non-formal education, and introduction of DEAR Burma school.

2.1 Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand

According to Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU), there are approximately 50,000 Burmese leaving their home country in order to be employed elsewhere every year. They have been reported to live under the poverty line and their basic needs, particularly access to proper education were insecure. Under such condition, many of the Burmese fled their country to the neighboring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, India, or Singapore, where they see the economic development opportunity as a pulling factor for their survival (HRDU 2009). However, most of them are likely to enter Thailand because the countries are very close and accessible through many possible ways whether official or unofficial border crossing (Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007). In some cases, the Burmese migrants are smuggled or trafficked into Thailand. Besides, they travel through the preparation of brokers, relatives who are already settled in Thailand, or they come by their own. In Thailand, hundreds of Burmese workers work under harsh condition, and are vulnerable to exploitation by their employers and/or Thai authorities. Their working condition is classified as 3D: Dirty, Dangerous, and Difficult – the kinds of jobs most Thai people do not want to work – and, at the same time, they are compensated with little wage lower than the minimum wage set by Thai Labor Protection Act (1998). Their rights as being migrant workers or as non-citizen of Thailand, on one hand, are restricted in Thai society despite the fact that Thailand has

ratified the International Convention in Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). They could not access to those rights, for instance, right education, right to association, healthcare, right to freedom of movement and other titles of rights. Even if they could access, it is extremely limited. In this sense, they themselves are afraid and less confident to exercise their rights as they are fully aware that they are illegal or unregistered migrant workers, who are entitled to deportation back to their home country (Huguet & Punpung 2005; Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007; HRDU 2009; CPPCR (Burma) 2009). Moreover, many are unable to communicate well with local people, and that hinders them from effectively practice their rights within Thai society. It is a matter of their illiteracy in Thai language. Over the time, killing, torture, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, sexual harassment, extortion by Thai authorities would normally be heard throughout the country, significantly in where crowded with migrant workers (Human Rights Watch 2010).

2.2 Legal Context

2.2.1 Thai Policy Towards Burmese Migrant Workers

Holistically, Thai policy towards migrant workers is relatively considered “to regulate migrant workers rather than to protect them” (Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007) and, at the same time, the implementation of protection of their rights is reportedly poor, (Huguet & Punpung 2005; HRDU 2009; CPPCR (Burma) 2009). Often, implementation of the policy is translated into other direction of action. Concerning migrant labor rights, in reality, they are not entitled to those rights by their employers and Thai authorities. In most of the cases, negotiations with their boss are impossible for them (Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007; Human Rights Watch 2010; MAP 2010).

Since there is a lack of proper monitoring mechanism to the implementation of Thai policy towards migrant workers, it leaves many problems related to migration. Repeatedly, they are unsolved, although Thailand has been dealing with these

migration issues for almost 20 years up to now. Concerning these existing issues, it implies that Thailand shows less willing and attention to tackle the problems. For Thailand, it has turned its stand and interest on the private sectors' side. Moreover, Thailand views migrant workers as threat to its national security (Human Rights Watch 2010) who should not receive equal rights as Thai citizens. Consequently, their freedom of movement has been blocked and other rights have been excluded. This makes them vulnerable to exploit and to abuse by their employers and police officers, especially for illegal migrant workers. From these points of view, could it be the issue of accessing to information or the matter of illiteracy that share another failure to policy implementation?

2.2.2 Thai Labor Protection Act

In this paper, Thai Labor Protection Act sounds fair to cover even non-Thai workers working in Thai territory. Moreover, the rule and regulation seem to be one-for-all principle regardless workers' status—no matter legal or illegal workers. In the Act, all workers are entitled to minimum wage, limited hours of work to 8 hours per day, rest day, overtime pay, friendly and safety working environment, minimum age of work, women at work place, no sexual harassment against employees, equal before law, and others (Labour Protection Act 1998). Yet, there are very few restrictions that migrant workers or non-Thai workers could not exercise under Thai labor law, for instance the right to create or lead a labor union. So, almost all significant basic rights are mentioned in the Act (Muntarbhorn 2005).

Still, in practice, the implementation is interpreted in different kinds of actions. Migrant workers in Thailand are mostly found exploited and abused by employers. Their basic rights are prohibited (Muntarbhorn 2005; Human Rights Watch 2010). Receiving minimum wage is usually not a case for migrant workers (Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007; HRDU 2009; MAP 2010). Frequently, the court cases concerning exploitation of any migrant worker are reported time consuming and slow process (Muntarbhorn 2005).

2.2.3 International Labor Standards

“We are not short of standards; but we are often short of enforcement” (Muntarbhorn 2005, p. 30). Does it mean that Thailand is aware of itself that its labor law is very consistent to most International Labor Standards, yet implementation is still shortage? Then, the question of “Why does not the Royal Government of Thailand enforce its implementation on the ground, and instead prolong the problems to be unsolved?” has to be asked. Sadly, the response to argue with this question, is simply that Thai government fears “of opening a floodgate to migrant workers as well as national security and public health concerns” (Muntarbhorn 2005, p. 26). It may be true in some reasons, but, at some certain points of views, particularly with economic reason, migrant workers also help Thailand generate some economic benefits by filling up the need of workforces.

With regard to International Labor Standards, Thailand has ratified most of the Conventions, yet, only those related to its Labor Protection Act. Does it imply that Thailand still wants to limit migrant workers’ rights in a form of easy “monitoring”? while leaving other Conventions concerning the issues of migrant workers unsigned. Those conventions that Thailand fails to sign are notably related to migrant workers’ rights, for instance, the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) 1949 (No. 97); Vocational Training (Adults) Recommendation (No. 86); the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143), and other conventions. For this reason, there is a question to be concerned, if Thailand is willing to address the present issues of migration or not?

2.2.4 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

On 5 September 1999, Thailand has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Article 13(1) of the ICESCR states that “The State Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education... [The] education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human

rights and fundamental freedoms... [The] education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups...”

Moreover, according to the General Comment No. 20 paragraph 30 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on non-discrimination (2009) pinpoints that ~~the~~ ground of nationality should not bar access to Covenant rights... The Covenant rights apply to everyone including non-nationals, such as refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, migrant workers and victims of international trafficking, regardless of legal status and documentation.” Therefore, under the international law, Thailand has the obligation to guarantee the equality and possibility of exercising rights no matter migrant workers.

2.2.5 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

On 29 October 1996, Thailand has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). With this respect, without any discrimination, Thailand has the obligation ~~to~~ respect and to ensure to all individuals with its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Article 2(1) of ICCPR). Moreover, according to Article 19(2) articulates that ~~everyone~~ shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.” With this regard, either Thai citizen or migrant workers, as long as they are living inside Thai territory, they are entitled to access to any information beneficial to them.

In summary, under the context of migrant workers, in order to exercise their rights under the protection of international conventions, for instance, ICESCR, ICCPR, and domestic law of Labor Protection Act, Burmese migrant workers have to be literate in Thai language otherwise they are at great disadvantage of deprivation of

their rights. When Burmese migrant workers do not understand Thai language, this could lead to misunderstanding and creates obstacle in communication between migrant workers and host country. Therefore, in order to “promote understanding, tolerance and friendship” between migrant workers and host country, migrant workers should go to school to receive education, particularly, language skill training. In this sense, education would help to fill in the gap of misunderstanding and help Burmese migrant workers to gain more protection and promotion of their rights.

2.3 Rights of Migrant Workers

“The international convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and member of their families” was adopted by General Assembly on 18 December 1990, and entered into force on 1 July 2003. There have been almost 60 countries signed the Convention. Yet, Thailand is not a signatory state of the Convention (Huguet & Punpung 2005); though, Thailand is a relatively important receiving country of mostly low and unskilled migrant workers from neighboring countries. However, despite the fact that Thailand is not a signatory state, Thailand still has an obligation to protect and to respect the rights of migrant workers in its territory because Thailand is a member state and/or a signatory state to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), ICESCR, ICCPR, and the ILO’s conventions, and in principle, without discrimination, every person has to be protected. In extension to that, Thailand should provide the space for migrant workers to exercise their rights as long as they do not violate Thai laws.

With regard to the access to non-formal education for migrant workers, Thailand may not be obliged to provide them education, however, Thailand should make it easy for non-governmental organizations to establish any kinds of education for migrant workers, because education could help reduce problem of misunderstanding between migrant workers and Thai people and create friendly relationship in Thai society.

2.4 Education and Non-formal Education

2.4.1 Education

Nyerere (1979) who advocates education for self-reliance sees “education as development,” while Kofi Annan views education as “a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development,” (UNICEF 1999); while Sen and Ogata (2003, pp. 113-124) view education and knowledge as a tool to help “enable groups to identify common problems and act in solidarity with others.” In contrary, they argue that if people are uneducated, their ability to understand and exercise their rights can be “very limited.” With support to that, being able to access to information and skills allow people “to learn how to address concerns that directly affect their security.”

Additionally, Sen (2004) believes that education helps people to achieve freedom, especially, the freedom of expression to comment one’s own “aspirations and choices.” Education, with Sen’s perspective, is attached with freedom: a goal through which leads human beings to development.

2.4.2 Non-formal education

Naik (1980) argued for non-formal education by relating education to the development of an individual and in term of empowerment. Apart from Naik (1980), Singh (1980) also appeared to agree with Naik (1980) by raising a question of “should the adults, especially those in the 15-35 age group who have the greatest contribution to increase the productivity of the country (but they failed to get to school once they were in school age), continue to stumble into life and work without the benefit of enhanced [practical] skills and greater productive capacity?” In case of India, since many attempts had been made and pressures had been put to Indian government, finally on 2 October 1978, the National Adult Education Program was introduced to Indian society and that responded to what Singh (1980, pp. 49-50) raised earlier. Additionally, Singh (1980) concentrated on the poor people in the society, particularly

in less developed country, who were vulnerable and were often excluded from public service facilities, should be able to access to education.

Nowadays, non-formal education is not only about skill training, but also about literacy—language skill—and, literacy today is no longer as simply as being able to read and write one's name, but it links to empowerment and, as Professor Chiba spoke in UNESCO-JICA International Symposium on Non-formal Education to Promote EFA (Education For All) and Lifelong Learning that ~~the~~ mastery of literacy skills facilitates improvement in the quality of life and active social participation. It means the enhancement of human consciousness and social responsibility,” (Mitra 2007). Furthermore, Sen (2004) sees literacy helps widen one's scope of vision, and with regard to women, it helps them to be better aware of family matters for instance, fertility and childbirth. In accordance to that, Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary General of the United Nations, who won the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize, also shows his stand on the important of literacy or non-formation education by stressing in his Message on Occasion of the International Literacy Day – 8 September that (1997):

~~L~~iteracy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.”

2.4.3 DEAR Burma School: Case Study Profile

2.4.3.1 School Background

Being aware of the problems and harsh living conditions of Burmese migrant workers who have faced those problems in Thailand and the importance of education for human development, a project called DEAR Burma was then drawn to creation by TACDB¹ organization.

DEAR Burma project was established since February 2003 with an aim to provide the Burmese migrant workers, regardless their ethnicity and religion, the language skill training necessary for their daily communication; for instance literacy of Thai and English language. Moreover, in order to serve the demand of students and to enable them to catch up with the rapid growth of globalization era, DEAR Burma has created another course of basic computer to particularly fulfill the students' needs. Nonetheless, these skills are not practical enough for Burmese migrant workers to exercise their rights as foreign workers in Thailand. DEAR Burma has occasionally set up small seminars, workshops, or trainings on various topics namely human rights, labor law, social issues, women rights, and others important areas to promote better understanding of surrounding issues of Burmese migrant workers.

The activities mentioned above of DEAR Burma project are aimed to equip Burmese migrant workers with basic language skills so that they are able read and write their host country's language, and most importantly, the knowledge of their rights as migrant workers so that they can fully take advantage from their rights (DEAR Project Description; DEAR's annual reports 2007, 2008 & 2009).

¹ TACDB was initiated in May 1989, based in Bangkok, Thailand, by Thai and other regional rights focused organizations, NGOs, and student's organizations. TACDB aims to strengthen Burmese organizations in Thailand involving in action campaigning for democracy in Burma, while giving support and assistance to protect Burmese people whose rights are violated in Thailand. Moreover, the organization helps advocate foreign policies to Thai government that are favorable to development and promotion of democracy in Burma, and to launch campaign to disseminate information and news to Thai society so that Thai people will learn and understand human rights problems in Burma, and support democratization process in Burma (<http://www.tacdb-burmese.org/>).

2.4.3.2 Class Curriculum

DEAR classes are set to be available on Sunday to make it possible for the Burmese migrant workers to attend, for those who are free from their work. DEAR Burma school shares the same compound with Sammajivasilpa Primary School². DEAR Burma school facilitates students with various classes in language skill training starting from beginner level to advanced level in Thai and English language. Each class comprises of three months with two hours per session. For new students who want to enroll for a class, they have to take a placement test before entering any class (see *Figure 2 for Class Curriculum*).

There are Burmese teachers teaching lower level of Thai, English, and computer class while Thai and foreign volunteer teachers help teach students in higher level of Thai and English class. Students have a chance to interact with foreign teachers in higher level of English class to gain more experiences from foreigners as well as to improve their speaking and listening skills.

Thai class curriculum has been improved with the assistance from a Master Degree student of Srinakarin Wirot University, who did her research at DEAR Burma School, by providing feedback and suggestion towards the restructuring of the course syllabus. So it would be justified with students' understanding and knowledge (DEAR 2009). While a teaching trainer, who is French, came to help update and provided feedback to teachers who teach English on how to improve their teaching skill so as to be more effective in their teaching (DEAR 2010a).

² Sammajivasilpa School was funded by Sammajivasilpa Moolnidhi Foundation. The Foundation was found and legally registered its name and actions on 29 March 1949 with the aim to promote spiritual, cultural and educational aspects of the renaissance in Thailand. The Foundation bears in mind the "right to livelihood" by which means "right to education" that considered important for human beings (<http://www.sammajivasil.net/index1.htm>).

Figure 2: Class Curriculum

Class	Level	Schedule
English	1,2,3,4,5	2 hours per session
Thai	1,2,3,4,5	2 hours per session
Computer	Basic computer, MS Word, MS Excel, Internet-Email	2 hours per session
Buddhist class	Initiated by DEAR Burma students who are Buddhists	120 to 150 minutes
Human Rights Labour Rights Women Rights Safety at Workplace	Seminar/ Workshop style	Occasionally

2.4.3.3 School Facilities

Library

In November 2005, a group of DEAR Burma students initially formed their own committee and proposed a request to Sammajivasilpa Primary School for a space in the school to set up a library for other students to have a chance to access to other sources of knowledge besides their classes. The library is run by volunteer students. The students can borrow the books to read at home and return them back within one or two weeks. The initiators began collecting books by themselves in Burmese, English, and Thai available from many places. Some are from donation of other people. The library only operates on Sunday. The books in the library cover general knowledge for example history, politic, and others.

Music Class

DEAR Burma school has provided a classroom for the students to set up a music class. There is a self-funded music team created by the students. The team has hired a music instructor to help them learn how to play musical instruments. Every

Sunday, the class starts from fourteen o'clock and thirty minutes in the afternoon to seventeen o'clock in the evening. The team has constantly joined and composed several Burmese songs for all events and ceremonies held at DEAR Burma.

Buddhist Class

As usual, DEAR Burma students initiate their own activity to benefit one another. A Buddhist class initiated by them has since established with the support of a monk who is a scholar of Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University. He becomes an instructor. Every Sunday, the class starts from the class starts from fourteen o'clock and thirty minutes in the afternoon to seventeen o'clock in the evening.

2.4.3.4 School Activities

DEAR Burma does not only provide the students with language skill training beneficial to their daily life, but also, constantly and occasionally, provides the students other general knowledge important for their rights. Often, DEAR invites guest speakers from various non-governmental organizations or other institutions to equip the students with other kinds of knowledge on various topics such as human rights, labor rights, women rights, safety at workplace, or other issues that migrant workers should be aware of. *(See Appendix C for Brief Activities the School Has Done)*

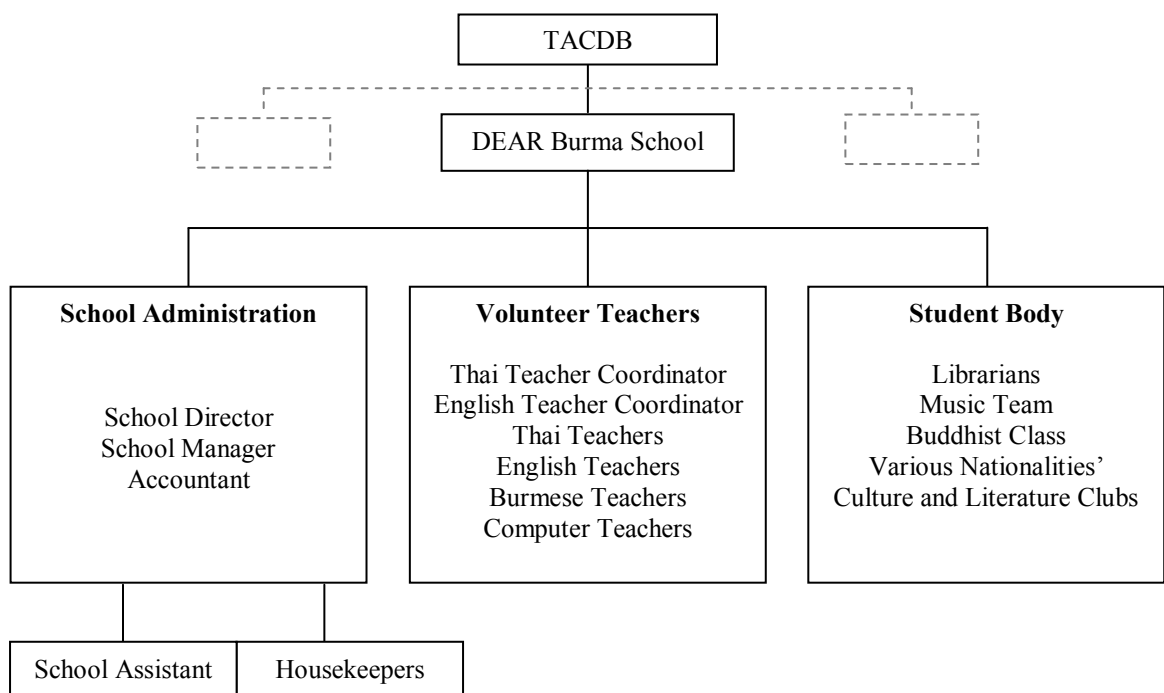
2.4.3.5 School Staff

Though DEAR Burma is a project of TACDB, in itself, DEAR is like an independent organization comprising of three important bodies: 1) School administration, 2) Volunteer teachers, and 3) Student body to help running the school to achieve its set goal, which is to provide language skill training and general knowledge to empower Burmese migrant workers in Thailand.

The school administration body is comprised of school director, school manager, and school accountant to oversee the administrative issue of the school. The volunteer teacher body includes Thai teacher coordinator, English teacher coordinator,

Thai teachers, English teachers, Burmese teachers and computer teachers to facilitate each class. There are around 30 volunteer teachers (Burmese, Thai, and foreigners) who help to teach Burmese students in various classes of Burmese, English, Thai and computer. The other body is student body. This body embraces librarians, music team, Buddhist class, various Nationalities' Culture and Literature Clubs operating to benefiting the students as a whole.

Figure 3: School's Organization Chart, Source: DEAR Burma School



2.4.3.6 Students

DEAR Burma project has been operated to provide language skill training specifically for migrant workers working in Thailand. Without discrimination, DEAR Burma school accepts any migrant worker interested in its courses. Since the project started in 2003 until 2009, there were approximately 4,036 students registered, and as estimation, there are approximately 200 new students register every term (Win 2009).

DEAR students come from all walks of lives with diverse educational background starting from primary education to university education. They comprise of many ethnic minority groups from Burma such as Burmese, Chin, Indian, Karen,

Kachin, Mon, Nepalese, Pa-O, Shan, and others. Regardless nationality, there are also a small number of Thai, Laotian, and Cambodian students enrolling for the class to absorb knowledge from the school. Most of the students are in the age of 20 to 30 years old. They are potential workforce for Thailand's economy. They come from various sectors of industries in Thailand. Some are working as domestic helpers, factory workers, salespersons, restaurant workers, while some work in company as office staff, and very few are unemployed. Some of the students live and work far from Bangkok or provinces nearby Bangkok, and they have to spend hours to travel to school every Sunday.

Table 2: Numbers of students registered over last 5 courses

No	Course	# students	Female	Male	Duration
1	25	686	438	241	22 May – 7 Aug 2011
2	24	655	426	229	23 Jan – 10 Apr 2011
3	23	699	460	239	05 Sep – 28 Nov 2010
4	22 ³	934	522	385	24 Jan – 15 Feb 2010 06 Jun – 01 Aug 2010
5	21	991	517	435	13 Sep – 13 Dec 2009

Source: DEAR Burma School Reports: 2009, 2010a, and 1st quarter of 2011

Table 2 illustrates the numbers of the students who have registered for the classes at DEAR Burma school over the last five courses. The numbers of the students have been decreased over the last three courses due to the fact that DEAR Burma school has to rearrange its schedule to avoid overcrowded of the students at the school.

³ The school was closed down due to the deterioration of political situation in Bangkok, and reopened on 6 June 2010.

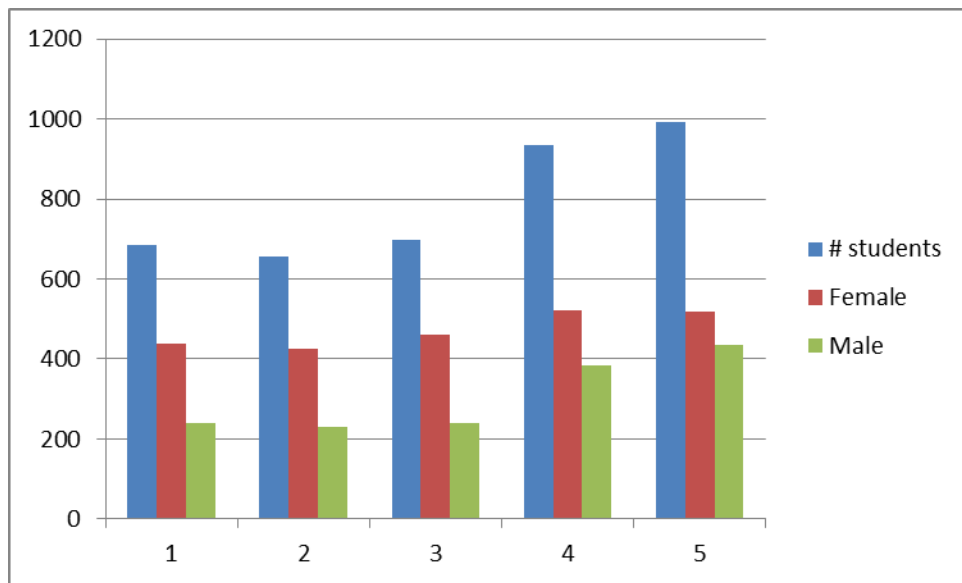
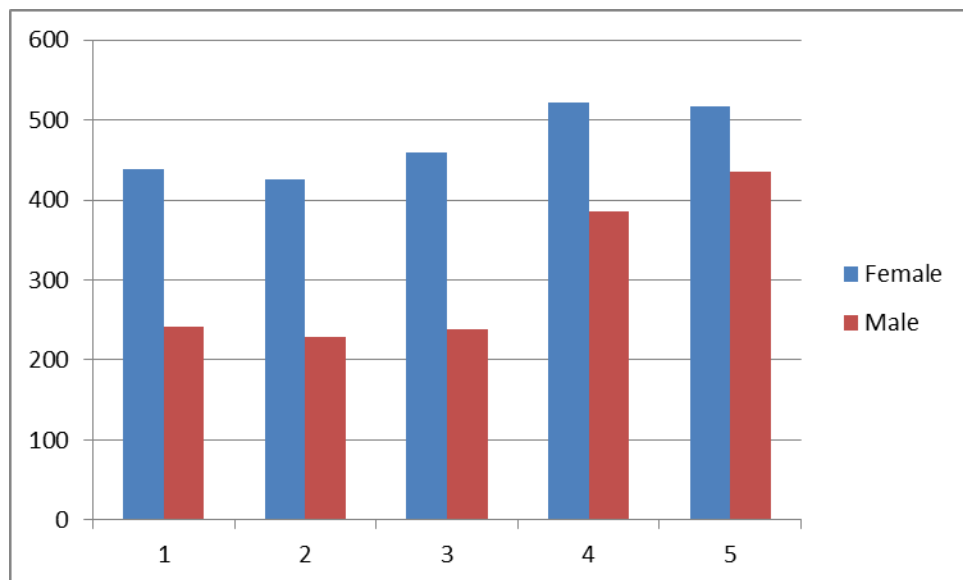
Figure 4: Chart of students registered over last 5 courses**Figure 5: Chart of female and male students registered over last 5 courses**

Figure 4 and 5 show the number of female and male students who have enrolled in DEAR Burma school during the last five courses. The charts show that the proportion of female students shares almost twice larger than male students. It appears that, according to the school director, female students seem more eager to learn and concern about their knowledge than male students. Moreover, female students seem smarter and more responsible than male students. On the other hand, it seems easier

for female students to get a job than male students, since most of the factory owners and host families prefer to recruit female staff as housemaid than male staff.

2.4.3.7 Accessibility to the school

According to DEAR Burma school's regulation, only legal migrant workers are allowed to register for the class. This restricts illegal migrant workers to access to DEAR Burma school. However, this restriction does not mean any discrimination against illegal migrant workers in Thailand. With regard to the *Immigration Act, B.E. 2522*, foreigners who enter Thailand without valid passport or legal document are subjected to arrest and deport back home. Therefore, if the school accepts illegal migrant workers to study, according to the school director, on one hand, the school is afraid of increasing more possibilities for illegal migrant workers to be arrested or to be stopped by the police when they go out. On the other hand, the school worries if the Thai government would interpret that the school supports illegal migrant workers in Thailand. To avoid increasing more risks for illegal migrant workers and to avoid any misinterpretation, the school has decided not to register illegal migrant workers for the class. But, the school, or TACDB, does not ignore them. The school would advocate illegal migrant workers to process or apply for legal status to work in Thailand legally. If the migrant workers hold valid work permit or passport, they can access to the school without any discrimination.

2.4.3.8 Challenges

According to the School Director, Mr. Myint Wai, DEAR Burma school can be considered as a self-sustain project that the students have to contribute some of their savings every time they register for the new course to support the running of the school, though the school has received financial support from other sources such as Brackett Foundation, The Hussman Foundation, and Foundation for People from Burma. Yet, the support from those foundations only covers the school's administrative costs. Some time, the school faces financial shortage and, thanks to

some of the school staff and volunteer teachers who help share some of their savings to upkeep the progress of the school.

Another challenge that the school encounters is to deal with the students who come from different part of Burma with diverse ethnicities, culture, and practice. Frequently, misunderstanding between the students is an issue that the school has to tackle. To solve this situation, every new term, the school director usually goes to class by class explaining to the students, particularly new students, to love each other like brothers and sisters, since they come from the same country and struggle for survival here in Thailand.

Lacking of volunteer teachers to sustain the classes causes another problem for the school. Usually, the volunteer teachers, significantly English native speakers, could not stay long to help teach the students. They have to work to survive their life. However, thank to them who devote their time during their stay in Thailand to help educate Burmese migrant workers.

Mostly, Burmese migrant workers come to Thailand illegally. Most of them do not hold legal documents either passport or work permit. With their illegal status, they are subjected to arrest and to deport back home. In 2008, there was a case that Thai police waiting outside the school and stopping the students to check whether they held valid document that allows them to work in Thailand or not. There were some cases that some of the students were arrested, since they did not have any document that could be proved to the police that they were legal migrant workers. This incident made some students fear of going to school. To settle this issue, TACDB sent a letter to inform the Phayathai police station explaining about the issue. After receiving the letter from TACDB, the head of the Phayathai police station came to visit the director of the Thai school and discussed the issue. Since then, there are no more cases of the police trying to stop the students outside the school (DEAR 2009).

2.5 Summary

According to legal context concerning migrant workers in Thailand, it does not seem to work for the fair benefit of migrant workers. The paperwork sounds very nice; yet, the implementation of the laws and regulations is still questionable even Thailand has faced and gained a lot of experiences in dealing with the issues of migrant workers for almost two decades. With almost unchanged situation of migrant workers: exploitation and abuse from most NGOs' reports. "Is there any other way for migrant workers to tackle with their situation when Thailand is still ignoring their rights? Is education a solution to this question?"

DEAR Burma, a non-formal education program, has been established since 2003 by TACDB to help train Burmese migrant workers, regardless of their ethnicities and background. The school provides them with language skill training so as to enable them to be literate in either Thai or English language. Furthermore, the school occasionally provides the students some other general knowledge of human rights, labor rights, women rights, safety at workplace through seminars, workshops, or training aiming to benefit and empower the students.

For how far the school has helped Burmese migrant workers, the next chapter will further on details and discussions on the proposed idea of non-formal education that supposedly believe to help ease the condition of migrant workers. However, to what extent non-formal education helps promote and protect migrant workers' rights will be found out with the case study of DEAR Burma school.

CHAPTER 3

THE IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ON DAILY LIFE OF BURMESE MIGRANT WORKERS

This chapter articulates the information gathered from the field concerning the informants' motivation to leave their home country for Thailand, their living condition at the very beginning in Thailand and problems they have faced, and the utilities of language and knowledge that the informants gain from DEAR Burma school. The reason to look at the motivation of their movement is to find out the root causes that encourage them to come to Thailand. While the living condition of their first stays in Thailand will be utilized to identify the impacts of knowledge and skill that they have gained from DEAR Burma school in their daily life. This chapter aims to address one of the research questions of "How do Burmese migrant workers make use of knowledge gaining from DEAR Burma School?"

3.1 Students' Conditions in Burma and Reasons Motivate Them to Move

From the interviews conducted with Burmese migrant workers enrolling in the classes at DEAR Burma school, it shows that their conditions, though they lived in different part of Burma as diverse ethnicities, are likely the same. They live in poverty and their educational backgrounds are in between primary to high school educational level. Also, there are only a few workers graduate from undergraduate schools. They claimed that it was very hard to find a job in their home country and usually the payment was not very good.

The first and foremost reason that motivates them to emigrate is to look for job opportunities in neighboring countries or for purely economic reason. Since their families in home country have constantly faced financial problem, it is hard to earn an adequate and standardized livelihood. So they decide to make a fortune somewhere else hoping for a better living condition. Most of the informants reported that they

were living under poverty, and was very difficult to find a job in their home village. With the economic reason that they once informed, it applies to what scholars have once invented the concerning toward the movement of people earlier known as *neo-classical model*. According to Ravenstein (as cited in Castles & Miller 2009, p. 21), *neo-classical model* explains that to seek for a better economic opportunity is the driving force of people movement. Looking for a better income in other places, of where higher income is expected, seems to be an obvious factor to push people, who face economic constraint in their place of origin, to move.

Taylor (1987) and Stark (1991) (as cited in Castles & Miller 2009, p. 24) stated that *the new economics of labor migration* emerged in 1980s is another context in which people emigrate. The decisions to migrate are due to individual conditions and family or community conditions. Not able to earn higher wages is one main reason to migrate, but the family's influence is another cause. Some of the informants agree with this cause.

“I finished my first year at the university [in Burma], but I could not pursue my studies since my family faced financial problem and, I could not find a job in my village, so I decide to work in Thailand in order to earn money and send it back home to support my family.”
(Female, Nanny, Karen)

This informant reported the reason that encouraged her to travel to Thailand as a family matter. She is now working as a nanny in a foreign family in Bangkok. She arrived at Thailand in 2005. On 23rd of July 2011, she went back to her home country to renew her passport with accordance to the new regulation issued by the Thai government concerning the National Verification Process. When the National Verification Process has announced to the public particularly migrant workers, DEAR Burma school or TACDB has delivered around 5,000 copied to all the students at DEAR Burma school and other Burmese migrant workers to be aware of.

Stahl's (1993, as cited in Castles & Miller 2009, p. 29) theory of *social network* or "beaten paths" explains that new migrants move because of their family members, friends or communities who have already worked and settled in the second country. This network helps the new migrant workers to easily travel through the arrangement or preparation by their relatives. With recent situation of migration, most of the informants report that their relatives and family members have arranged everything for their arrivals, including making a contact with job agency.

"My mother lives and works in Thailand. She called me to come and work in Thailand, so I decided to come to Thailand after I failed my high school exams for the third times." (Male, Salesperson, Mon)

This informant works as a salesperson selling car's accessories in Bangkok, and as he described, the family organized his migration to Thailand.

It is undeniable that one factor or a theory cannot fully explain the clear picture of Burmese Immigrant's movement. It is discovered that some of the informants move in order to explore new life experiences besides economic reason.

"I come to Thailand because I want to experience something new in my life, and I also want to find a job there." (Male, Salesperson, Karen)

This informant once told about his motivation to come to Thailand as taking an adventure of experiencing something new in his life. His first journey to Thailand was in 2005 when he decided to walk from his hometown to Thailand. He is now working as a salesperson in a grocery store in Samut Prakan Province while he studies English and Thai language at DEAR Burma School during Sunday.

However, there are very few informants who have responded that the purpose of their arrival here in Thailand is to pursue higher education.

“What motivates me to come to Thailand is to pursue my higher education. In Burma, I completed undergraduate degree in English. But, my grade was not good enough that I could continue master degree there. So I decided to come to Thailand for such opportunity, at the same time, I also can earn more money to support my study.” (Female, Restaurant staff, Nepalese)

This informant is now a Master Degree student studying at a university in Thailand during the weekend while working as a restaurant staff to support her study during the weekday. She made her way to Thailand in 2005, shortly after her graduation of undergraduate degree.

Table 3: Year of Arrival at Thailand

Year of arrival	Year(s) of living until 2011	Number of informant(s)
1996	15	1
1997	14	1
1998	13	1
2000	11	1
2001	10	4
2002	9	1
2004	7	4
2005	6	5
2006	5	2
2007	4	6
2008	3	2
2009	2	4
2010	8 months	1
2011	6 months	1
Total		34

According to Table 3, it shows the year the informants have arrived in Thailand. Among them, there are almost ten people who have been working and

living in Thailand for more than ten years, while the others have been living less than ten years or less than one year in Thailand. However, they took various means to arrive at Thailand whether by brokers, relatives or by themselves, and they have served in different kinds of employments in Thailand.

3.2 Students' Conditions in Thailand: Before They Go to DEAR Burma School

With regard to their arrival, most of the informants came to Thailand with the arrangement by paid carriers. Very few of them came by themselves. However, some reported of having walk from their home village to Thailand and had spent many days before reaching their destination. Most of them had no idea about Thailand, besides believing that it is a place where you could make money and earn a better living.

“Before I came to Thailand, I did not know about this country. I just heard from my friends in the village who were already there saying that I can earn more money here.” (Male, Packaging staff, Mon)

This informant made his way to Thailand in 2007, and worked in Nonthaburi province. He is now working as a packaging staff at a private company in Bangkok. He finished 8th grade in Burma. He has a brother working in Thailand.

Since most of the informants had very little knowledge about Thailand before their arrival, it seemed as a very big challenge for them to predict what would happen. The following obstacles are found common among the informants.

3.2.1 Language Barrier

The first challenge that most of the informants agreed upon is language barrier. Firstly, they did not speak Thai language. Sometimes, it caused misunderstanding in communication, not only with their bosses, but also with their co-workers and Thai communities. To deal with language barrier, most of them reported that they used

body language to communicate with Thai people. By not being able to speak the host country's language, some of the informants expressed being looked down by their co-workers and Thai people. As a result, some decided to change their job or move to a new place to avoid such depression.

“When I first arrived at Thailand in 2004, I spent one month to looking for a job. I found my first job as housemaid in a Thai family. But my boss did not like me, for I did not speak Thai language. I worked there for ten days, then I quitted the job, yet, the boss paid me no wage.”
(Female, Housemaid, Mon)

This informant expressed her experience as she first arrived at Thailand in 2004 with a broker. Language barrier caused her to lose her first job. She hardly found one after one month searching. Now, she is working as a housemaid with another family. However, she can speak more Thai and is learning to read and to write Thai language at DEAR Burma school. She has enrolled for Thai language class since 2009. She learnt about the school from her cousin's husband.

As can be seen in the above quote, language literacy is important for securing the employment. In order to be employed in a second country where the language is different, whether low or unskilled jobs, people have to understand and be able to communicate in their host country's language otherwise it is unlikely for them to possibly be recruited.

3.2.2 Freedom of Movement

In addition to language barrier, freedom of movement was also another challenge for migrant workers. Since they were illiterate in Thai language, they faced problems with their traveling. They could not freely travel to anywhere as they wanted because they did not know how to read bus' directions or street signs. Some have reported of being cheated by taxi driver when they were unable to speak or speak unclear Thai language. In addition, fearing of getting trouble with the police,

this is another reason that has been blocking their movement. As a result, the places where they could travel to were very limited.

“When I first arrived at Thailand, I did not dare to go anywhere. I was afraid of getting lost and made myself trouble with the police. I just stayed at my host family’s home, and went out nowhere. In case I wanted to go out, I would ask my sister to accompany with me.”
(Female, Housemaid, Shan)

This informant comes from Shan State, Burma. He came to Thailand in 2006 with a paid carrier. She finished 10th grade in her home village when she first came to Thailand. She has a mother and a sister living and working in Thailand. Her mother was the one who encouraged her to study Thai language at DEAR Burma school.

It seems pretty clear that, according to the informants, language barrier causes another challenge in their traveling. Once people cannot communicate or understand each other in term of spoken language, it is very hard for them to go to wherever they want to go to, smoothly.

3.2.3 Food

Language barrier does not the only matter that affects migrant worker’s traveling, but also other activities of their daily life. Some informants explained that they are having difficulty buying food in the market or ordering food in the restaurant. They could not bargain the price or order food they like.

“I have a very difficult time in ordering food every time I go out to eat. I know only three dishes in Thai language. Therefore, since I have arrived here, I have only these three kinds of foods. When I saw something I wanted to eat, I could not order. It was very annoying.”
(Male, Factory worker, Shan)

This informant finished high school from Burma when he decided to come to Thailand in 2009. He registered for classes at DEAR Burma school in early 2011.

With accordance to the informants, some of them share the same concern of having a difficult time in ordering food when they cannot speak Thai language. It seems like a torture when a person has the same kind of food every day. However, it does not mean that people restrict them, the informants, from accessing to food markets. Yet, language barrier creates this burden.

3.2.4 Trouble with Police

Having trouble with Thai police seems to be the worst experience that most respondents expressed. When they accidentally ran into police, they had to pay a bribe for their release, or they were threatened to deport back to home country. The amount of money they used to pay was between hundreds to thousands Baht. In few cases, the bribe was an informant's necklace because she did not have enough money to pay what the police had asked for.

“In 2009, when I was walking along the street with three of my relatives, we were stopped by a police asking us to pay him money or threatened to send to the police station. We did not do anything wrong or maybe our appearances were different from other people [Thai people], I thought, that was why he stopped us. We all did not have money so it cost my necklace in exchange for our release.” (Female, Elderly care taker, Burman)

This informant lives in a big family in Burma. She has seven siblings whom her parents have to take care of. In order to support her family, she decided to come to Thailand in 2001 after some of her older brothers and sisters have settled there. She used to work as a helper at a flower shop in the market for almost three years, and then becomes a care taker of the elderly in a Thai family.

The case of having trouble with police seems very common in Thailand. Having to pay a bribe for release is not a new story for migrant workers working in Thailand. Many reports of NGOs, for instance, ILO, IOM, Human Rights Watch, MAP Foundation, have also raised this concern to be addressed and taken for action. According to Human Rights Watch (2010, p. 90): “the language barrier, especially for migrants from Burma and Cambodia who lack spoken proficiency in Thai, makes it easier for government officials and private Thai individuals to identify and target migrants.” Again with Human Rights Watch’s report (2010) on the abuse of migrant workers in Thailand, human rights violations “inflicted on migrants by police and local officials are exacerbated by the pervasive climate of impunity in Thailand. Migrants suffer silently and rarely complain because they fear retribution, are not proficient enough in the Thai language to protest, or lack faith in Thai institutions that too often turn a blind eye to their plight.”

3.2.5 Humiliation from Thai People

Since they could not speak Thai language upon their arrival, most of them have reported being humiliated by their Thai workmates, and being paid less than the other Thai workers. Under such depression, some recalled having problems with their workmates. Yet, to cope with this situation, some explained that being patient is the way.

“When I first came here [Thailand], my salary was very low, lower than my Thai workmates, and some time, I was humiliated by them. But what I could do was to be patient, or to quit the job.” (Male, Factory worker, Burman)

Having crossed border to Thailand in 2008 with his friends, this informant first served as a restaurant staff, and then moved to a food factory. His Thai workmates at the restaurant used to laugh at him for his broken Thai language. This intimidation made him unhappy. Then, in 2010, after learning about DEAR Burma school from his

friend, he decided to go there to study Thai language to be literate and to avoid the same humiliating experience from recurring.

There were also other cases that the informants had been humiliated by their Thai co-workers. According to the informants, every person has his or her own dignity and self-esteem no matter what kind of position he or she possesses. Being intimidated or insulted seems to be a case that could lead to arguments if people have no more patience.

3.2.6 Loneliness and Isolation

The first impression after their arrival in Thailand was being lonely, isolated and disconnected. This case often happens to those who work as a housemaid than who works at the factory or restaurant. They felt isolated and lonely because they found that they were strangers living in the host family – not only because they were unknown to them, but also because they spoke different language, ate different food, and shared different nationality.

“My first job when I arrived at Thailand was housemaid. I was very afraid and felt very lonely at that time, for my host family often said something bad to me, though I could not understand much of their words. I could tell by their action towards me. Soon, I decided to quit the job since I could not bear with it any longer.” (Female, Restaurant staff, Nepalese)

After changing many jobs since her arrival at Thailand in 2005, this informant is now working as a restaurant staff. She is a former student of DEAR Burma school. She went to study English, Thai language, and computer skill there in 2007.

With the above information gathered from the interviews concerning migrant workers' living and working conditions in Thailand, it will be used to compare with

their present situation in order to analyze and answer whether non-formal education helps promote and protect their rights as migrant workers in Thailand or not.

3.3 Utilities of Non-formal Education in Daily Life

Some of the Burmese migrant workers, referred to the informants of this research, were former students and some are current students of DEAR Burma school. Yet, all of them bear in their mind of going to DEAR Burma school with a hope to better their living and working conditions in Thailand. They may choose to study different subjects of computer, English or Thai; however, their choices are based on the individual's benefit and serve their own needs in their daily life, whether within workplace or outside workplace. Additionally, they go to school every Sunday absorbing knowledge that the school has provided for them. Some students go to school in order to prepare themselves for a future plan – a plan for better change in their life.

Table 4: Informants who enrolled for classes at DEAR Burma School

Class	# of informants (total 34 students)
English	34
Thai	27
Computer	7

Table 4 shows the numbers of the informants that have enrolled for classes at DEAR Burma School. All of the informants, thirty-four students, have enrolled for English class, while twenty-seven informants have enrolled for Thai class, and only seven people have enrolled for computer class. One of those who do not enroll for Thai class once told that she came to Thailand since she was young with her parents. She went to Thai school for six years. She can read and write Thai language. That is the reason why she does not take Thai language class at DEAR Burma school. However, the others expressed of no interest of taking Thai language class because they already knew how to speak Thai language though they cannot read or write. Yet, the others said that Thai language is difficult to learn, and they finally drop out of the

class. For the reason that most people do not take computer class is that they do not use such skill in their workplace and they see no use of it if they take the course at the moment when they could not afford a computer set.

3.3.1 Thai Language

According to the interviews, the informants use Thai language in their workplace to talk to their boss, to communicate with other Thai people, to travel, to read books, magazine or newspaper, and to negotiate.

Workplace

Being able to use Thai language to communicate within the migrant workers' workplaces is their first and foremost aim to come to DEAR Burma School. Most of them claim the importance of understanding Thai language would help them to communicate with not only their boss, but also with their Thai workmate.

“I come here to study Thai language, first it helps me to communicate with my host family. Thai language helps me to understand more about them.” (Female, Housemaid, Kayin)

“I learn Thai language at DEAR Burma school in order to communicate with my boss and customers. I have to be able to read Thai language so I can read the order bill and pack customers' orders accordingly.” (Male, Salesperson, Karen)

Thai language is very important for informants to communicate in their workplace. In case of housemaids working in Thai family, they have to talk host family members in Thai language in order to understand each other. In case of salesperson or restaurant staff, they need to talk to their Thai customers as well as communicate with their workmates.

Communication

Besides speaking Thai within their workplace, some report of using Thai language to communicate with other Thai people at the market – to bargain the price, at the restaurant, as well as with their neighbors. “I use Thai language not only to communicate in my workplace, but also to talk to other Thai people, and to order food for my meals,” said an Indian who was born in Burma and came to Thailand in 2010. While this seems unimportant, it can have a significant impact on people working on extremely low incomes in terms of improving their economic livelihood.

Traveling

With most of the informants’ answers, they responded that they learn Thai language in order to be able to use public transportation, and especially to school. Some recalled getting lost because of not knowing how to read the street signs and bus direction.

“When I first could not speak Thai language, I had difficult time going somewhere by my own. But now, I could read the street signs and bus directions. I can take bus alone going to school every Sunday without companion and to somewhere else. I no longer get lost as I used to years ago.” (Female, Cook, Kachin)

This informant made her way to Thailand in 2004. She has her auntie who came to work in Thailand since 2001. Her auntie was the one who prepared for her arrival in Thailand. She reported her first experience of going out, which had to be with her auntie since she did not know Thai language. She found it was very distract to go somewhere with other people’s companion as a guide or a translator.

Reading

Often, most of the informants spare their free time on reading. Some do reading for fun by reading magazines that are available at their boss' house, or comic books they buy, and some read newspaper to update new information. "Besides communicating with my boss, I spend my free time on reading books. I am happy when I can read Thai language, because I like reading Thai comic books very much," said a house cleaner. She is Kachin people from Burma. She came to Thailand since 2005.

People spend their free time on various activities, particularly on what they like. This informant prefers reading Thai comic books as a way to entertain herself. She feels happy to be able to read Thai language so that she can have some time to enjoy her life in Thailand though she needs to work a bit harder to earn a living. Some people would think that reading a comic book during free time seems simple or a waste of time, some people would think, than reading newspaper or books. However, for migrant workers, particularly for her, it is a very meaningful and enjoyable moment that she possesses after a full day of hard work.

Negotiation

The informants also use Thai language to negotiate ideas and perceptions. On one hand, they talk and communicate with their bosses in Thai language; on the other hand, they, the informants, negotiate with their bosses to agree upon their request, for example, asking permission to go to school every Sunday, or other proposals.

"I use my Thai language to ask my boss to allow me to hold my original passport. At first, he did not approve with it. Later on, he did agree, after I tried to explain him that holding my own passport is for the sake of both of us. If I go out, I will not have problem with the police. So it will save some of your money from bailing me out."
(Male, Salesperson, Arakanese)

This informant is a current student of DEAR Burma school who shared his successful story of using Thai language to negotiate with his boss. He now works as a salesperson in a shop in Bangkok. He came to Thailand in 2007. He has been arrested by Thai police twice since he arrived at Thailand. The first arrest was in 2008. At that time, he did not speak Thai language very well, so he faced difficult time to explain the reason to the police. The second arrest was outside Bangkok in 2009. With his work permit, he was not supposed to travel outside designated area, or he would be stopped by the police. With these lessons learnt, in order to travel somewhere in Thailand legally, he has to hold a valid passport. Therefore, in order to travel freely without being afraid of being arrested or targeted by Thai police, he started to talk to his boss in Thai language learnt from DEAR Burma school to discuss his concern.

Table 5: Utilities of Thai language

Category	# of respondents (total 34)
1. Traveling/ Using transportation	31
2. Communicate with other TH people	31
3. Freedom of movement	31
4. In workplace	28
5. Read street sign	28
6. Read newspaper/magazine	12
7. Read books during free time	12

Table 5 shows the utilities of Thai language that the informants apply in their daily life. Thirty-one students out of thirty-four express of using Thai language to travel or to use public transportation, and to communicate with other people. The other three students failed to comment on this point, because two of them show no interest of learning Thai language while the other one just arrived in Thailand for almost six months - she barely speaks Thai. There are only twelve students spending their free time on readings in Thai language. For those who do not spend time on reading, it is because of tiredness after work or no interest.

3.3.2 English language

The informants study English and utilize English language in various purposes. According to their answers, some use English in their workplace because they work with foreign boss. Some use English language to read books, magazine or newspaper,. And some use English language to look for better paid job.

Workplace

All of the informants, former and current students, were and are studying English at the School. For those who work as housemaids at foreign families, or as nanny at international schools, they use English every day to communicate with their host families or with foreign students at the schools. Some informants work in foreign restaurants, they need to use both English and Thai language to communicate with their customers. “I come here [DEAR Burma School] to study English, because I have to use it every day with my boss and with the kids at the school,” said a nanny from Karen State of Burma. This informant arrived at Thailand in 2007 with some of her friends from the village. Her arrival was arranged by her sister who already settled in Thailand. When she first arrived, she worked as a helper at a sewing shop in Bangkok. After that, she has learnt to speak English and then decided to move to an International School to work as a nanny so that she could earn more money comparing to her work at sewing shop.

Reading

Having asked how often they use English language, some of the informants reply that besides talking with their boss at their workplace, they also practice their English language by reading books, magazines, or newspapers available at their workplaces. “I like reading. Every time I am free from work, I always spend time on reading, especially politics related books,” said a Pa-O who comes from Shan State of Burma. This informant arrived at Thailand in 2007 and now works as a mechanic at Nakorn Pathom Province, Thailand. He received his undergraduate degree from

Taunggyi University majoring in Economic. In his rented room, he has several English books to read to improve his English knowledge and vocabularies. He has, for instance, English Synonym and Antonym, English-Thai Dictionary, English books borrowed from the school library or magazines borrowed from his boss. He is a hardworking person, according to his teacher and his friends.

Negotiation

Besides using English language as a mean to communicate within the workplace, some students report that they also use their English knowledge to negotiate with their boss.

“I work at an Italian restaurant. I use English language to communicate with our foreign customers and my boss. Moreover, I also use my English to negotiate with my boss to ask him to allow me to go to school during the weekend for my master degree studies. He accepted my request, and I appreciate it very much.” (Female, Restaurant staff, Nepalese)

The informants utilize their language skill in various ways to achieve their goal. This former student of DEAR Burma school shared her experience of using language in her daily life to negotiate her concern with her boss. Her proposal was approved when she could explain it clearly. As a result of negotiation, she can go to school during the weekend pursuing her higher education, and in exchange, she has to work extra hours during the weekday, with her consent.

Looking for Better Job

Some of informants do not use English language at their workplace, but they say that they believe it would help them in the future to look for a better job after they master in speaking English.

“I do not use much English nowadays, for I work as a nanny in a Thai-Chinese family. I use only Thai language to communicate in the house. But, in the future, when my English is getting better, I will look for another job where I can use English language.” (Female, Nanny, Kayin)

This informant is a new student who just enrolled for the class at DEAR Burma school in early 2011 shared her purpose of taking English language class.

While some of them practice English language almost every day at their workplace by talking to their foreign customers and their boss. Others exercise their English at their university discussing in the class, doing homework, reading books, and surfing the internet. They found it happy and proud to be able speaking English.

Table 6: Utilities of English language

Category	# of respondents (total 34)
1. Looking for better job	34
2. In workplace	10
3. Read newspaper/magazine	10
4. Read books during free time	10

With Table 6, the Utilities of English Language, all the informants believe that English language can help them find a better paid job. They can earn more money to support a better living condition. However, most of the informants reveal their feeling of looking for a job that they can use English language to get a better payment job on one hand, and feeling proud of themselves on the other hand. Yet, only ten of them are now using English language in their workplace.

3.3.3 Computer skill

There are twenty computer sets accessible for the students at DEAR Burma school. All the computer sets are connected with internet access. The students can learn to use modern technology to access not only information in or about Thailand, but also information around the world and about their home country. There is one computer instructor and one assistant to help training the students. Those students

who want to enroll for computer class are required at least elementary level of English language, otherwise they are not allowed to register. The reason supporting this requirement is that the language used in the computer system is English language, and if the students have little knowledge about English language, it is very hard for the instructor to instruct them.

The common answers received from interviews on how the informants use their computer skill are to use at their workplace, to communicate with family and friends through email and other social networks, to read information and news online, and to entertain.

Workplace

Not all of the informants enroll for the Computer class. Some show no interest of taking this course, for they do not need to apply this skill in their workplace. Yet, some already gained the basic knowledge of how to use a computer. However, for those who take computer course, they share different perspectives. For instance, some claimed that they are using computer skill to help their boss typing the documents, producing balance sheet at every end of the month, replying their customers' emails, requests or questions and others. "I work as a salesperson at an electronic shop. Often, I have to answer my customers' emails to place their orders or requests on time," said a DEAR Burma student who first came to live in Mae Sot, Thailand when she was nine years old and then, moved to Bangkok in 2007. She is Pa-O people from Burma. She stated that her salary has been increased when she can use both computer and English language. It is pretty clear that, when people can do more works, they are supposed to receive better payment with accordance to their performance.

Communication

With the advancement of information technology, people feel more convenient to communicate with one another via Internet connection. With such advancement, the world is closer, though people live far away from each other. The informants

express happiness when they can contact their relatives, loved ones, or friends through Email, Facebook, or chatting. With these means of communications, they can share their memory, happiness, photos, information, events, or even updated situation of their living conditions in Thailand.

“I am happy because now I can communicate with my friends via internet. Moreover, I can also chat with my loved one in Burma through [online] messenger.” (Female, Housemaid, Karen)

This informant expresses her feeling of being able to contact her friends and loved one through computer. She arrived at Thailand in 2000. She came to Thailand after her mom, who also lives in Thailand, works as a housemaid. She said, with the advancement of modern technology, it keeps her and her relatives and friends close together, though they live far away from one another. This advancement keeps long distance short. It keeps her and her boyfriend who lives in Burma stay close. They chat with each other via online messenger service, and it seems to her that it is just like they are talking face to face. She always shares him with her living condition in Thailand. By sharing information to someone she loves, it helps her feels relief.

Reading

With computer skill, some of the informants share their experience of searching information online, looking for scholarship opportunity, reading news online, and listening to radio online to update themselves with general knowledge of what is happening around the world.

“When I did not know much English language and could not use computer, I always listened to the radio. But now, I can use computer, so I can read online news and even listen to online radio. I am very happy with this improvement.” (Male, Salesperson, Burman)

This informant is a former student of DEAR Burma school. He gained computer skill from there. He works as a salesperson in Bangkok. He arrived at Thailand around 1998 in hope of making more money.

Entertainment

Entertainment is a part of people's enjoyment. People may seek various means or activities to entertain themselves. "In my free time after work, I usually turn on my computer and listen to my favorite music as a way of relaxation," said a factory worker, who is Shan people from Burma. This informant came to Thailand in 2008. He came to Thailand in search of new life experiences. His work is to sew clothes at a garment factory. He is fond of music. To him, music is a form of entertainment. When there is some free time, he would turn on his computer to listen to his favorite songs and to enjoy his time. Other students have also reported of using computer to watch video clips on Youtube or other online sources.

Table 7: Utilities of computer/internet

Category	# of respondents (total 34)
1. Share information/photos by email	11
2. Chat with friends	11
3. Read online news	10
4. Listen to music	10
5. Facebook	08
6. Office work	03

Table 7 presents how the informants utilize their computer skill in their daily life. There are only eleven people who can use computer or own a computer. They use computers in different purposes whether to contact their friends, relatives, or their loved ones, to access to the online information, or listen to music as a form of entertainment. Yet, there are only few informants, three of them, use computer in their workplace.

3.4 Summary

In conclusion, the reasons that Burmese migrant workers decided to come to Thailand depend on various purposes, for example, economic opportunity, family matters, life adventure, and further higher education. Their living conditions in Thailand were not really good at first. They have faced many problems in Thailand, for instance, language barrier, freedom of movement, food, troubles with police, humiliation from Thai people, loneliness and isolation. To tackle these problems, they start to go back to school. They go to DEAR Burma school to study English, Thai and computer. They enroll in the class at DEAR Burma school with various purposes, for example, to benefit their individual interests and needs. With the knowledge they have gained, they utilize it in different ways to support their daily life. They use it at their workplaces to communicate and negotiate with other people, to read newspaper, magazine, or books. Some have entertained themselves by doing what they like in their free time, for instance, using computer to play music, to chat with their friends, or to watch videos. From this point of view, under extreme condition, they use their knowledge or education to gain their basic needs in order to survive in Thailand.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF BURMESE MIGRANT WORKERS

This chapter addresses the impact of non-formal education on the quality of life of Burmese migrant workers by answering one of the research questions of “What is the impact of non-formal education?” By looking at the impact of non-formal education on Burmese migrant workers’ rights, what kinds of rights that they can exercise, whether the problems they used to face reduced or not, the relationship between the school and students, and four selected stories of DEAR Burma students are also included.

4.1 Impact of Non-formal Education on Burmese Migrant Workers’ Rights

4.1.1 Livelihood

To begin with, UDHR, Article 25 (1) articulates that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.” In order to get away from unemployment and to secure adequate livelihood, education is very important to help a person to get a job or to be employed. Sen (2003), a person who cannot read or understand the instructions or follow the requirements is at great disadvantage in getting a job: “education is a general-purpose resource that expands basic human capacity which can bring a variety of different types of rewards.” Additionally, in the theory of career mobility, Sicherman and Galor (1990) suggest that the returns to school can be viewed in two purposes. One is to get higher wage and the other one is to move to a higher level of occupation—a better paid job or position. Becker (1975) also raises that education or training can improve workers’

productivity by equipping them with useful knowledge and skills and, in the future, raising their income.

–Now I can read and write Thai language. Besides, my work as a salesperson in the shop, I also work as Thai-Burmese interpreter for Burmese people who visit Thailand. With my Thai knowledge I can earn extra money to support my living.” (Male, Salesperson, Burman)

With the knowledge the informants gain from DEAR Burma school, their livelihood has been better off. Even though some of them say that their salary is not increased when they know more Thai or English. However, they feel happier because it secures their job. Also, it helps them to look for a new job with better salary. Most of the informants have changed their jobs from one to another in a hope to find the better payment job when they have more education, specifically, to improve their livelihood – better living condition.

4.1.2 Freedom of Movement

People should be treated equally and fairly. They should not be locked up in a place. Moreover, they should be allowed to move around as they wish. Freedom of movement is one of human being’s fundamental rights as presented in UDHR, Article 13 (1): –everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence with the borders of each State.”

As reported by the informants, freedom of movement was one of the problems that most of them used to face during their first stay and work in Thailand. Language barrier was already a matter when they first arrived at Thailand. Having their passport or work permit kept by their boss was another matter that obstructed their traveling. Without legal document or language illiteracy, the students could not go anywhere, or they were afraid to go anywhere, for they were subjected to be arrested by police.

–When I could not speak and read Thai language, I did not dare to travel or go out of my host family. But now, I can read Thai and I can take the bus to DEAR Burma school by my own. I am very happy.”
(Female, Housemaid, Shan)

After going back to school to gain more knowledge and language skill, their freedom of movement has been improved when comparing to the first period they arrived at Thailand. According to the informants, all of them, thirty-four people, agree upon that being able to read and write a language of their host country mean they are able to travel and to communicate. What they found difficulty in traveling – neither could they use public transportation, nor read the street signs – is not a problem anymore. Nowadays, they can go farther, even alone, with public transportation or other means of transportation. If they get lost, they are not afraid. Some of them said they can ask direction from other Thai people by using Thai language, or if the police ask to check their valid legal documents, they can show and communicate with one another. They are now happy with the possibility to travel anywhere they want in Thailand. Additionally, though they are allowed by their employers to only travel to school, it is a big change for them. And to them, it is a better start of their movement when comparing their previous condition of being locked up in a place and could not go anywhere.

4.1.3 Safety and Security

With regard to Sen (2003), illiteracy is in itself ~~in~~“insecurity” that if someone cannot read or write or even count is an enormous deprivation. Obviously, with the informants who once were illiterate, they had very difficult time expressing their reasons to the police if they got caught; and most of the times, they reported of paying bribe to the police. So they would not be arrested or deported back to home country. Nowadays, they feel safer and more secure, most of them reported. And thirty-four of them have agreed on that since the troubles they used to face with Thai police have constantly decreased. They explained that they could communicate well with the police in Thai language if there is a misunderstanding between them.

–Now, I stop being afraid of getting trouble with Thai police, for one hand I am a legal migrant worker, on the other hand I can speak Thai language. If I am stopped by the police, in case of misunderstanding, I can explain or ask the reason why. However, after I came to study at the school, I no longer experience any trouble with Thai police. I feel more safe and happy.” (Female, Nurse, Kayin)

This informant gets her nursing license from Burma in 2004. She is a former student of DEAR Burma School. She went to the school to study Thai, English and computer in 2008. She is now working as a nurse in Thailand. She said, not only education helps reduce problem she has long been afraid of with police, but also if other students have any trouble with police, they can contact the school or other students for help.

Visibly, people feel more secure when they are language literate. They feel secure when they can speak common language that other people speak. They feel secure when they can communicate well with other people without misunderstanding. They feel secure when they no longer feel as a stranger in the society they live in. These are what the informants claim about their security and safety after going back to school to learn a language which their host country uses.

4.1.4 Self-esteem

Improving one’s self-esteem, empowerment, creativity and critical reflection are the benefits of literacy (UNESCO 2006). With regard to literacy, Archer (2003) believes that –even if people can use it only at a basic level, without being intimidated, is of huge significance in itself.”

–After I came here [DEAR Burma School] to study, I could feel that my Thai workmates respect me more than ever before. I am happy with that.” (Male, Company staff, Shan)

This informant came to Thailand in 2009 after his family facing serious financial problem and could hardly support the living of the whole family. He added that, the school does not only provide him education, indirectly, he also gains more respect from other workmates when they learn that he is now going back to school absorbing knowledge.

According to the informants, they feel more confident when they are literate in Thai language. They could communicate with one another better than before in Thai language either within their workplace or outside their workplace. They feel more confident even when they travel alone, not only to school, but also to somewhere else. Moreover, after going back to school, the students express of being more open-minded, though not all of them are sure, about this improvement; at least ten of them come to this agreement.

4.1.5 Freedom of Expression

Sen (2004) believes education could help people to achieve freedom, particularly freedom of expression that people can share their feelings, needs and wants, and even their ideas to one another.

When the students, the informants, become literate in language, they said, they could better express their insight feeling towards their boss or other people. They can negotiate with their boss discussing about their needs and wants from the job. And yes, most of them are now allowed to hold their own passport or original work permit so as to avoid being arrested when they go out and accidentally run into the police without legal documents. Some people can even challenge for a chance to pursue higher education at the university. This is the case of a former student of DEAR Burma school who is now studying master degree in Thailand while she is working at an Italian restaurant during the weekday to support her degree. She is Nepalese who came to Thailand in 2005 after finished her undergraduate degree from Burma.

4.1.6 Access to Information

Walter (1990) did a research on how the adult literacy can affect the life of low literate adults in rural Thailand. With Walter's findings, Walter agrees and confirms that literacy is a useful tool in negotiation in modern Thai society. Walter's informants, women who can read and write, have more accessibility to information and resources than women with low literacy. Walter (1990) finds that literacy is very important for Thai people, though they live in rural area of Thailand. They need education – being able to read and write – so that they can access to information and resources as well as communication to ease their living condition.

Likely, in the context of migrant worker, in order to promote their rights, particularly right to access to information, the first and foremost thing that is needed to be done is to promote their language literacy. It is very important for migrant workers who could not read or write their host country's language to learn the language of the host country. This is in order to perceive important information about their host country, significantly, laws and regulations. By doing so, they can avoid violating of host country's laws and regulations.

In addition, Former Law Professor Lengthaisong (2009, p. 18) wrote in his book entitled "Thai Laws for Foreigners" indicates the importance of knowing Thai laws and regulations concerning foreign citizen so that they, as foreigners, can avoid any problem which, he thinks, may cost them money, and sometimes, even their lives. So to speak, in order to understand and access to this information, foreigners have to be literate either in Thai or English language. When they are literate, they can access to those sources – laws and regulations. Consequently, it is important to teach those foreigners the language, particularly, migrant workers who will spend years working and living in Thailand. In contrary, if those foreigners, here to say specifically migrant workers, are illiterate, they would easily commit a mistake, or more seriously a crime, without being aware if their actions violate Thai laws or regulations.

After having been studying at DEAR Burma for several terms, the students are being literate in Thai and English language. Some can read and write Thai and English well, and that their right in accessing information has been reported better. With the language skill they have earned, they can read newspaper, magazine, books, watch television, and, more than that, they can access to online information through Internet connection. From these sources of information, they learn about new job vacancy, general knowledge about the society they live in, as well as Thai labor laws and others. With the information they learn, they can protect themselves, improve their life, and even plan for their future.

Furthermore, if migrant workers are literate and know Thai laws and regulations – be aware of what they are allowed and not allowed to do in Thailand – it will help them not only to avoid future problems, but also to reduce criminal cases committed by migrant workers of which Blaug (1992) believes in education that individual people invest on would benefit its society in crime reduction (cited in Descy & Tessaring 2005).

4.1.7 Future Prospect

Blaug (1992) specifies that the contemporary definition of human capital theory, and the education that individuals invest on, should include both monetary and non-monetary benefits, “people spend on themselves in diverse ways, not only for the sake of present enjoyment, but also for the sake of future pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns” (cited in Descy & Tessaring 2005).

The informants who are DEAR Burma students bear their individual hope and dream, though, their life condition is somehow difficult in Thailand. Yet, with hope and dream of better future motivates them to struggle and fight for their rights as migrant workers by learning and working hard to empower themselves to be ready for the next arena. All of them believe that with the knowledge they receive will serve as a bridge bringing them to somewhere better in the near future.

→ come here [DEAR Burma school] to learn Thai and English language not only to ease my living in Thailand, but I also want to empower myself – my knowledge. I want to continue higher education. I want to go back home [in Burma] one day, and if I could I want to serve my country as a politician.” (Male, Mechanic, Pa-O)

Most of the informants share common hope of going back to Burma, their home country, to settle and to reunite with their family members. Some plan to run their own business out of their savings of many years of hard work in Thailand. Some want to be a teacher in their home village to help educate the next generations and some aim to become a nurse to help take care sick people in their village. At the meantime, they also share their willingness to further their stay in Thailand if the situation in Burma does not change in a way that could make their life possible there.

4.2 Reduction of Violation and Abuse Migrant Workers Used to Face

According to Sen (2003), →when people are illiterate, their ability to understand and invoke their legal rights can be very limited. This can be a severe handicap for those whose rights are violated by others, and it tends to be a persistent problem for people at the bottom of the ladder whose rights are often effectively alienated because of their inability to read and see what they are entitled to demand and how.” This is proved to be true with the situation of migrant workers in Thailand. Often, their rights have been violated and abused by their boss and other parties (Huguet & Punpung 2005; Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007; HRDU 2008; CPPCR (Burma) 2009; Human Rights Watch 2010).

Referring to Walter’s research in 1990 on how the adult literacy can affect the life of low literate adults in rural Thailand, the informants in Walther’s study believe that if they are illiterate, they are subjected to be cheated. Since literacy is very important for Thai people in their daily life, it seems pretty clear that it is very important to migrant workers who live and work in Thailand to be literate in Thai language.

–Now, I know my rights as migrant workers and human rights in general. We are equal, me and Thai people, and I am not afraid to challenge with any unfairness happens to me any longer. However, my Thai workmates and I, now, become friend, and we help each other.”
(Female, Restaurant staff, Nepalese)

With the information received from most informants, thirty-four of them claim, the problems that they used to face before have been reduced. The problem with police or misunderstanding in their workplace is no longer a matter to them. They hold their valid passport and working permit. They can communicate in Thai language, and have knowledge about laws and regulations that occasionally provided by the school – they are now more aware of their rights and can protect themselves more than ever before. In case they have problems with the police or their employers, they know what to do, first is to negotiate with them using their own knowledge, and second is to seek for assistance from the school or their friends if they cannot handle it by themselves.

4.3 Selected Stories from the Field

The following part presents four stories of DEAR Burma students who came to Thailand in different period of time. They have been struggling with hardship in Thailand to make their ends meet, and trying hard to accomplish what they once aimed before leaving their home country. They bear individually unique story and experience worth to share to other people, particularly migrant workers.

4.3.1 Struggling for Life

–I am ready to fight – to fight for any unfairness and to fight for my future,” said a strong Nepalese lady who comes from northern part of Burma. She determined to live independently since the first time she decided to venture to Thailand.

In 2005, she finished her undergraduate degree from Burma. Unfortunately, she could not further master degree there since she could not make a good grade to advance her study. Bearing in mind of wanting to prove to her family that she could live independently, willing to earn more money, and aiming to pursue higher education, finally, she decided to seek a fortune in Thailand – a place where, before her arrival, she had very little knowledge about, yet a place she can earn more money.

Soon after graduation, she packed her belongings and made her first journey far away from home. She traveled to Thailand with one of her relatives. It was a long journey that she had spent almost 20 days heading to her destination – where her hope is lying – and yet, everything is unpredictable, for she is a new comer and a stranger at the same time in Thailand, the new land.

After her arrival, she found a job as a housemaid in an Indian family in Bangkok. She was happy to be recruited, and it was her first job ever in Thailand. However, life is not always happy as it is supposed to be. There, she could not work any longer since she was looked down and treated disrespectfully. After five days of work, she quitted the job and moved to Pathaya to work with her cousin.

In Pathaya, she worked as nanny and housemaid at the same time. She worked there for more than a year, and then she decided to move again because the workload was unbearable. When she asked to leave the job, her boss did not agree, and did not give her back the ID card. Because of this, she could not travel to other places in Thailand easily. He did not pay her the last two months salaries as well.

Coming back to Bangkok, she worked in another Indian family, a single mother and two daughters. There, she had to sleep on the floor, no bed, in a respectively small room. Bangkok was unknown to her, and she was very scared to go out. She recalled her experience, with her red eyes, every other day she would hear big words from her host family, and most of the time she felt very lonely. She decided to quit the job after working there for one month, and then, she was employed in a travel agency later on.

For the first six months at the travel agency, she worked as a cleaner and completed other tasks as order. For she can speak English, she was promoted to work as customer service provider proving general information to the customers. It was in 2007 that she found DEAR Burma school from a friend. From there, she learnt Thai, English, and basic computer skill. Her salary was also increased when she could work more productive than before. She was eager to learn. She asked her boss to allow her to go to school every Sunday for three hours. After that, she came back to the company to work so that she could receive overtime pay. She did not want to stop even it was holiday. Sadly, due to the disagreement among company shareholders, the company was closed and, she had to leave her job. For those who are hardworking people, opportunity is always there for them. She found another job, later, in an Italian restaurant and there, she works until now.

Now she is literate in Thai language. She can communicate with other people both inside and outside her work place easily. She feels free to travel anywhere without worrying of getting lost or being cheated by the taxi as she can read the street signs and bus directions. Her English language is also much better now. She uses English language every day in her workplace to communicate with her boss and foreign customers. With her English ability, she can explain her own reason to her boss. She asked him to allow her free time to pursue master degree at a university during the weekend, which is her goal once she has set before coming to Thailand. Her proposal was permitted, and her boss agreed to give her tuition fee in advance. From her good work, her salary has been increased accordingly. Now, she is pursuing her master degree in Communication Arts. “I feel not enough. I want to know more about the world. I want to study more,” she said wholeheartedly.

Concerning her feeling towards DEAR Burma school, she once recalled her first impression of going there, “when I first arrived at DEAR Burma school, my first impression was only a word of ‘wow!’ I could not believe that, in this strange world, there is such a place that I can call home – I feel warm and secure when I go there.” She said she no longer felt lonely or isolated as she used to be at the very beginning of her life in Thailand. There, she makes more friends, Burmese friends, who share

similar culture, language, and food, even they are different ethnic people, yet, and overall, they come from the same nation and bear the same purpose of coming to Thailand. There, she feels a sense of belonging and community. Though, she finished her class at DEAR Burma school, occasionally, she still goes back visiting teachers, school director, and seeing new students.

Her life has been dramatically changed – a better change – that she feels more confident and happy to continue her life in Thailand seeking for her dream, the dream of pursuing higher education; and now, she makes it happens. Hopefully, she will graduate soon next year, 2012, and her life, she hopes, will be better off after her graduation.

She is proud of herself. She is proud that she does not make her family disappointed when she decided to make a fortune in Thailand. She is proud that from her bare hands of her first arrival, she, now, could earn a living to support her study at the university and will be soon-to-be scholar, a graduate student, a degree totally gained from her own hard working. She is now quietly leading herself to a full and independent life.

In the future, she expresses of going back home in Burma, wishfully. With her degree, she hopes she can help other people in her country to move forwards – one day – a decent life like other nations.

4.3.2 Life of Hope

“I want to continue higher education so that one day my dream will come true. I want to help change the situation in my home country. I want to help my own people in Burma to be better off,” said hopefully a Pa-O gentleman from Shan state, Burma.

He moves to Thailand because he wants to look for a better job, to gain more knowledge and to experience something new in his life. He took his first adventure to

Thailand in 2007, two years after he finished his Bachelor degree from Taunggyi University, Burma.

His first job in Thailand, according to the arrangement of an agent he contacted before his arrival, was at Mahachai, Samut Sakhon province. He could not bear the work any longer because of low payment. Thus, after one month, he decided to quit the job. He then moved to Nakorn Pathom province to look for a new job. Since then, he works in a car garage and has earned a new skill as mechanic to support his life.

His living condition was not a problem for him, though he could not speak Thai language at first place. He has never been caught by the police, for he rarely went out. Soon after he has settled into the new job, he started to learn how to speak Thai language from his workmates and practiced his basic conversation skill with other Thai people he interacted with.

In 2010, from a friend, he learnt about DEAR Burma school, and then he went there to enroll for Thai and English class. Happily, he is going to school every Sunday, though he has to spend hours to travel to the school. Going to school, on one hand, he can learn Thai language to improve his reading and writing skill; on the other hand, he can meet more Burmese people and makes more friends.

He lives in a rented room paid by his boss nearby his workplace. He usually walks to work every morning. He shares the room with other Burmese friends who are working together with him at the same garage. There are only two people in one room, and there are only two rooms that are rented by Burmese. His neighbors are Thai people who work as construction workers nearby. He rarely communicates with his Thai neighborhoods since they all are pretty busy with their individuals' life. They go to work early in the morning and come back home tiredly in the evening. Even on Sunday, he does not stay at home and relax. He still goes to school to receive more education. "He is a hard working person," said his Thai language teacher with positive impression.

He always keeps himself busy by reading books to enrich his knowledge, not only at school but also at his room. He is a member of the school library. He often borrows books from the library back home to read. He smilingly said that “every time I free from work, I would take my book to read. I love reading, especially politic. I want to be a politician one day.”

4.3.3 Life is for Sharing

“I can read and write Thai language now. I’m very happy with that. More than that, I voluntarily help teach other people in a Buddhist monastery Thai language, to share them my knowledge,” said intelligently a bright Burman lady who left her hometown, Bago, behind and sought a fortune in Thailand.

Having finished 8th grade in Burma, what she could do is very limited. Moreover, job availabilities were not enough to fulfill the demand of local people. Thus, she decided to come to Thailand looking for employment opportunity since her older sister is already there working.

In 2001, without high school diploma, she started to scatter around Thailand looking for survival in a place where language and living condition are a lot more different from her home country. She cannot speak Thai language at first place. Being a migrant worker is not an easy life and it is worsen when they do not speak the language of host country. If there is not the case of misunderstanding in communication, then, there is another case of discrimination. Most of the times, she had to bear with those unavoidable conditions – humiliation and abuse – and from them she learnt how to live in tough condition adjusting her feelings and emotions to be ready to confront with it.

After crossing border to Mae Sot province of Thailand, she made another journey to Bangkok through the jungle by walking along with other Burmese approximately 40 to 45 people. There, in Bangkok, she got her first job as a salesperson selling flowers at the market. After working there for almost three years,

she quitted the job, for low salary and sometimes misunderstanding between her and her boss, and other people. Afterwards, she found another job as a care taker of the elderly in a Thai family.

Concerning her experience of living and working in Thailand, having trouble with police was the worst one and traumatized her feeling ever since. In 2009, when she was walking down the street with three of her relatives, they were stopped by a police asking them to pay him money or threatened to send them to the police station. “We did not do anything wrong or maybe our appearances were different from other people [Thai people], I thought, that was why he stopped us. We all did not have money so it cost my necklace in exchange for our release. I did not want to further the argument, then we left,” she once recalled her experience with the police.

In 2007, she went to study at DEAR Burma school to learn how to read and write Thai language, her speaking is already good for it has been already six years that she has been living in Thailand. She, now, already completed her level 5 of Thai language class. With her Thai language knowledge, not only does she serve herself in daily life communication, but also does she share it to other people. She is now a volunteer teacher who helps to teach Thai language to other people at a Buddhist monastery so that they can communication well with other Thai people and to avoid misunderstanding of language barrier.

Besides Thai language she also learns English language from the school. She is still improving her English language. Enthusiastically, she expresses of looking for a better job in the near future once she masters in English language. However, she would like to go back home to Burma to set up her own business and to live her decent life over there.

4.3.4 Life is Worth Trying

“I come to Thailand because I want to experience something new in my life,” said bravely an almost-grown-up Karen man from Dawei Town, Burma. His parents

actually did not want him to come to Thailand, unless he finished his high school first. Yet, since he was curious about new life in Thailand, he insisted on his voyage of discovery.

In 2005, he just finished his 8th grade. He wanted very much to take an adventure of his life in Thailand to experience something new ever. He was innocent, and yet, learnt nothing about Thailand. However, he had his parents living in Thailand for almost a decade to be his relatives once he arrived. He started to walk to Thailand. It is a very long journey. Luckily, he was not alone, he had his friends from the same village accompanied him along the way. They once crossed border through the Three Pagodas Pass, a very popular gateway for border crossing for Burmese people to Thailand, in Kanchanaburi province. It was where he found his first job as quarryman. After working there for one year, in 2006, he got his work permit.

He recalled of the moment when he was unable to speak Thai language. It was very difficult for him to communicate with other people. He was afraid of going out as he had to avoid the police, most of the time, for he did not want to cause any trouble with them. He explained the reasons of quitting the job after three years working there that is was because of tiredness and low payment.

In 2008, he moved to work in Samut Prakan Province with his brother as a salesperson in a grocery store. Homesickness is a common thing for migrant workers. In 2009, he traveled back home to visit his relatives. Unfortunately, on the way back to Thailand, he was arrested by Thai police in Kanchaburi province and was deported back to Burma. The police explained that, though he had work permit, but he was not supposed to travel outside the designated area as stated in the work permit. That was why he was arrested. Then, after a few months of being sent back home, he came back to Thailand again.

In 2010, he went to study English and Thai language at DEAR Burma school. He knew about the school from his friend. For him, the school is like a meeting place where he has a chance to meet other people, not only Burmese, but also other

foreigners as well as Thai people who voluntarily teach Thai language over there. He is happy to go to school. He now can read and write Thai language better than before. He uses Thai language every day in his workplace to communicate with customers, to read the order bill, and to travel anywhere he wants. Though his salary is not increased despite he knows more Thai language, still, it helps him to have a better communication with other Thai people in his everyday life. He is happy with his condition now.

He stays with his brother in a rented room nearby his working place. He starts working from nine o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening. At the place where he is staying, there are a lot of Cambodian migrant workers living and working. Yet, there are not many Burmese around his place. So, he makes friends with Cambodian migrant workers, and they communicate to one another in Thai language. He likes music, and he plays guitar. When he is free, he would join his friends to play songs together.

Again, he is innocent and young. He has not thought about any specific future plan yet. Now, he is in his early twenties and still improving his English language. He said –“hopefully, the knowledge I will earn will help me to improve my life in the future.”

4.4 Summary

In summary, education has significant role in promoting rights of Burmese migrant workers. Though they cannot fully exercise all rights, to some extent, the quality of their life has been improved. After the informants know Thai and English language and be able to use computer skill, their livelihood has been better off. They can earn more money or move to other place where high income is expected. Nowadays, they understand Thai language they can travel alone without being afraid of getting lost. Their security and safety is not a threat in their daily life, in term of communication, since misunderstanding caused by language barrier was not a matter. When they have more education, they feel more confident, not only in communication,

but also in negotiation. They gain more respect from other people, when they become educated person. Without language barrier, they can freely express their feeling and idea with one another. In contrary, if they do not speak a language that other people speak, obviously, it is a disadvantage in communication and information sharing. Being able to read and write a language means that they are ready to receive information by reading books, magazines, newspapers, and other sources of information. Being able to access to information, for instance, job announcement, helps them to compete with other people and to prepare their future plan with accordance to the development of the world.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Migration Issue

Thailand has received migrant workers to fill in labor gap since 1992 (Chantavanich, Vungsiriphisal & Laodumronchai 2007). There has been almost 20 years that Thailand has dealt with the issue of migrant workers, still, the migrant workers' condition has been reported exploitative and abusive (Human Rights Watch 2010). Although Thailand has several legal contexts – laws and regulations, international conventions, and some conventions of ILO's international labor standard – to support the work and life of migrant workers in Thailand, those laws and conventions seem to only appear on the paper, while implementation to place laws and regulations on the ground has been ignored. Legal context that supposedly protecting migrant workers from exploitation and abuse appears to have less enforcement power to direct relevant institutions to oblige their duty.

The reason that migrant workers are a threat to Thai national security is a matter that NGOs, international organizations, civil societies or other relevant parties working for the fair benefit of migrant workers have to challenge with Thai government. In fact, according to Martin (2007), migrant workers immigrate to Thailand with the main purpose of better livelihood rather than to get themselves into troubles with crime. According to reports from media, migrant workers who involve in criminal activities are likely at a very low percentage (Martin 2007). Instead, migrant workers have constantly been contributing to the growth of Thai economy since their presence in Thailand. Due to their economic contribution, according to Vasuprasat (2010), Thai government should empower migrant workers with legal knowledge and facilitate their access to justice system as a mean to protect them from any form of exploitation or abuse. To Martin (2007), labor migration is a process to

be managed, not a problem to be solved.” The fact that Thailand has to deal with the entry and employment of migrant workers reflects Thailand’s economic success. Therefore, for another decade, as predicted, Thai economy is likely to continue employing migrant workers and, if there is no proper management mechanism, the problems related to migrant workers would be there to continuously exist.

5.1.2 Education: a Pathway to Gain Other Rights

In order to deal with Thai language illiteracy that migrant workers have faced, the first and foremost work need to be done is to equip them with Thai language training. For Masaquiza (2003), illiteracy is not only a problem of individual isolation in general, but also of societal isolation as a whole. Illiteracy is another face of poverty, marginalization and social injustice. The informants, Burmese migrant workers, reported of loneliness, lack of communication, or misunderstanding, once they could not speak their host country’s language. Moreover, they were paid lower wage than the other workers even though they worked in the same position or the same amount of work, and were subjected to exploitation and taken for granted.

When people are marginalized and cannot fully exercise their rights as a human being, and when the law entitled to protect them does not work, people have to find their own way to survive, though they are living under extreme condition. Therefore, in order to tackle with the problems that migrant workers have long borne, they—the informants—start to go back to school to absorb knowledge provided by DEAR Burma School. They learn to be literate in Thai and English language, and learn how to use computer. They claim better communication when they know Thai language as well as their living condition. Some of them have started, and some also plan, to move to another job with better working condition and salary. Likewise, Roland (1997) mentions that literacy is considered as a ladder to higher-level jobs and a gateway to empowerment. In this sense, they use their knowledge to exercise their own rights whether to access to employment, communication, information, and to integrate into the society they live in.

5.1.3 Education: Empowerment and Development

To Archer (2003), in order for powerless people to deal with the powerful, “literacy” is a part of a larger equation. To deal with the power of government officials, people need also to be confident to face with the officials who may speak a different language, as well as with landowners, employers or contractors. A teacher trainer, who comes from France, voluntarily helps train English teachers at DEAR Burma school on how to improve their teaching skill, and once stated that “promoting education (Thai and English language, and computer skill) is to invest in students’ personal development and capacity building.” With education, it will enable DEAR Burma students to tackle the problem they have faced in Thailand by themselves, for example, to deal with Thai police or with their bosses.

The students go to DEAR Burma school not only to study languages and computer, but also to participate in other academic activities, for instance, workshop or seminar on human rights, workers’ rights, labor law in order to upgrade their knowledge and capacity. In the sense of empowerment, the students use their knowledge in different ways to gain a measure of equality when the laws of the host country do not stand for the fair benefit for them, or when the laws just only appear in the paper. They use their education to bargain their rights and fairness by negotiating with their boss or Thai police.

5.1.4 Home: Relationship between School and Students

School influences the academic and social development of the students (Stewart 2008), and they, the school and students, have strong attachment bond with one another: commitment, involvement, and academic achievement (Freiberg 1999).

With the case study of DEAR Burma school, the school is not just a place that Burmese migrant workers could access to education – non-formal education – but also a place where they, the informants, find many activities they can involve. To them, DEAR Burma school means a lot, more than just a school. The students go to DEAR

Burma school because they see the school as a non-formal education institute which provides them with language skill training that is, to them, important and useful. They also see the school as a home, they are very happy when they can go back to school. Some of them state that school is just like their family. They love each other like a big family as they have those people to call as brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, cousins and friends. Every time they meet each other, they share their experiences or feelings, good and bad, just as if they were family members. Moreover, the feeling of being lonely and isolated is also faded away with the warm welcome smile of their family members.

In this context, DEAR Burma school no longer is a school, but also a place where the Burmese migrant workers can spill out their worries and feelings of working and living conditions in Thailand. The feeling of loneliness and isolation as they used to face when they first arrived at Thailand has been reduced when they go to DEAR Burma school. They feel happy to go to school even they are former students. The school plays an important role as an emotional support center, and provides them warmth as a place called home.

5.1.5 DEAR Burma School: Community and Identity

When people are equally treated with respect, they become more willing to engage in shared activities and this may help produce a sense of belonging (Tyler & Blader 2003). Additionally, with Andersen, Downey and Tyler (2005), relationship formation in itself may be a mechanism by which social identity is formed.

At DEAR Burma school, the students live together as a community. They study together, interact with one another in their own language, share ideas and feelings towards their peers, and even share food together. They start to build relationship and, at the same time, create their own community – sharing culture and language – and that promotes their identity as Burmese people, though they are now living and working in a foreign country. Moreover, if someone has problem whether with police or with their bosses their friends would help them. But, if their friends

could not help in case of serious violation or abuse their friends would report to the school to seek for further assistance, for instance, legal assistance. Most of the informants feel safe and secure when they go to school because there is always someone for them to count on in case of having trouble.

5.1.6 DEAR Burma School: Information Center

DEAR Burma school, besides working as an educational institution, also acts as an information center. DEAR Burma has been shared to its students various information starting from job opportunity to legal knowledge. The students go to school to absorb knowledge, at the meantime, and occasionally, they receive general knowledge of labor rights, human rights, women rights, safety at workplace, and other essential information provided by invited guest speakers from various institutions and non-governmental organizations. The students serve as information holders. They exchange with their friends any information that they know, job opportunity, for example. Some of the informants expressed saying they are acquired job opportunity because of their friends.

During the DEAR Burma Library Anniversary in June 2011, a Burmese activist who joined the ceremony at the school as a guest speaker shared that the school is a meeting point for the Burmese migrant workers, and also a hang-out place. The school helps create a network among them where they can share information, experience and even job opportunities to one another. He furthered that many migrant workers are not allowed to get holidays or to go out to the city, but going to school, they have the “legitimate reason” to go out and hang out with friends that betters their freedom of movement. Additionally, he said that the school also functions as their community, a shared identity of Burmese people, and constantly provides them with the information important for their stay in Thailand such as renewal of work permits, passport, and other legal knowledge.

5.1.7 Mutual Benefit: the Students and Thai society

Hewstone and Brown (1986) agree that when people start to contact one another, it helps reduce tension between them. At the same time, it creates friendly and collaborative relation. When the students understand Thai language, speak the language that Thai people speak, they start to communicate and interact with other Thai people, to understand and to share each other's feeling. This helps create better understanding atmosphere within their workplace and reduce possibilities of misunderstand. In response to that, according to the survey conducted by DEAR Burma school with students' employers from various sectors of employments, most of employers have observed that their employees who study at DEAR Burma School are more polite, well-mannered, better in communication in Thai language, and more generous. On the other hand, they have encountered that the students' relationship with their workmates has been improved. With the survey, the employers also express their support towards the school's operation, and suggest the school to provide the students more general knowledge about Thai culture and custom so that they can live and work happily together in Thailand as their "second home" (DEAR 2010b). In contrary, it is very hard if they could not understand each other – they speak different language – this would make contact impossible between them – Burmese migrant workers and Thai people.

The students go to DEAR Burma school not only to learn Thai or English language or computer skill, but also to learn Thai culture and to learn how to behave in Thai society so that other people would respect them when they morally behave in public. A volunteer Thai language teacher, who is Thai citizen and is a university student, once, stated that "the students are now adjusting themselves to Thai environment, they start to behave in a well-manner way comparing to the first time they came to school. However, it does not mean that they are not good persons at first place. Since they come from different country bearing different culture and custom, some time, it can create misunderstanding between them and Thai people, if they behave in a certain way that Thai people are not familiar with. It is good for them to come to school and study Thai language."

It can be explained that the impact of education not only concentrates on Burmese migrant workers who go to school, but also shares Thai society an indirect impact. When the students are educated, they can work more effectively, and help to generate more profit to Thai economy. This other benefit of education is to help reduce misunderstanding in communication between migrant workers and Thai people. Additionally, the school helps the migrant workers to easily integrate into Thai society. This is the mutual benefit that education contributes to both migrant workers and Thai society.

5.1.8 DEAR Burma School Means to the Students

DEAR Burma school seems very important not only to better migrant workers' life in Thailand, but also to help migrant workers to gain more promotion and protection of their rights. As the students claimed that the school seems like their home and like a part of their life; without the school, maybe it is very hard for them to stand up alone; without emotional support from their friends, maybe it is very hard for them to confront any violation; without opportunity that the school has provided them with education, maybe they still endure the same abuse and are cheated for advantages.

Concerning financial shortage that DEAR Burma school some time faces and limited grant that the school receives from generous donors to support its administrative expenses, the work that the school can contribute is very limited and is very hard to sustain its activity in the future. Education is very important for people's life and their development. Therefore, in order to be able for the school to enlarge its activities, here to say to serve more migrant workers and to contribute more to Thai society, and for the long-term purpose, financial support is another concern to make sure the sustainability and quality of education that the school can provide to the students are maintained.

However, this paper cannot be generalized to every situation of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand the same, since it was conducted with limited timeframe

and only one case study focused. Nonetheless, the researcher, as well as the informants, believes that education can help protect them from exploitation and abuse that most of migrant workers used to face in Thailand. With the education they have gained will help to empower them to be more confident, not only with communication, but also to negotiate and challenge for any unfairness. Not so many informants report of salary increased when they are more educated, yet, they satisfy with the situation they are now – happy and more freedom than they used to be. The fear of having trouble with police they used to bear when they go somewhere is now not a matter to them.

5.2 Education and Rights

Education is meant to be a pathway for realizing other rights. Education helps Burmese migrant workers to be able to exercise their rights and builds a bridge to the enjoyment of their better life.

With education – English, Thai, and Computer – that the students, here to specifically say the informants, gain from DEAR Burma School, they can use those skills, in various purposes in their daily life, for example, to benefit their individual needs, to communicate in workplace and with other people in their community, to entertain, to negotiate, to access to information, or to look for better job. These are the impacts of education on their daily life as most of the informants have claimed.

When the students, the informants, are literate in Thai and English, and are able to use computer. They start to apply these skills to gain a better quality of their life and lawfully exercise their rights as migrant workers in Thailand. With the impact of non-formal of education, according to the informants, their quality of life and their rights have been constantly promoted and protected. Those improvements are their livelihood, right to freedom of movement, safety and security, self-esteem, right to freedom of expression, right to access to information, and future prospects.

While they can exercise their rights, the violation and abuse and trouble with police have also been reduced because they can use their knowledge of language to communicate, to understand, and to speak with other Thai people. Moreover, they are aware of their rights. They know what they can and cannot do in Thailand under the laws of Thailand. When the problems they used to face are reduced, consequently, they will gain fair treatment in their workplace and friendlier working environment in term of relationship with their workmates.

To what extent DEAR Burma school helps Burmese migrant workers to access to the education and to exercise their rights, the answer is that the school cannot provide all Burmese migrant workers across Thailand with an opportunity to access to education because the school only accepts legal migrant workers to register for the class and since DEAR Burma school is located in Bangkok, only migrant workers living and working inside Bangkok and some provinces nearby Bangkok, for instance, Samut Prakan, Nakorn Pathum, or Nonthaburi province, can access to DEAR Burma school. Though, the school cannot help all migrant workers living across Thailand, so far, since the establishment of the school in 2003 until 2009, the school has helped more than 4,000 legal migrant workers to access to non-formal education.

Going back to Sen (2003), illiteracy is in itself “insecurity” that if someone cannot read or write or even count is an enormous deprivation. In this case, if Burmese migrant workers could not access to education, even Thai language, their living condition in Thailand would face little progress. The problems or the threats they used to face, for instance, miscommunication, having troubles with police, being abused by their employers, being humiliated by their workmates, being looked down, being isolated and inaccessible to information, will remain the same.

Masaquiza (2003) states that illiteracy is not only a problem of individual isolation in general, but also of societal isolation as a whole, if the problems of Burmese migrant workers still exist, Thailand has to work harder to settle the problems. Additionally, it can be said, if there is no DEAR Burma school, according

to the employers' perspectives, there would be no productive migrant workers helping Thailand produce productive works or outputs. Misunderstanding among their staff will stay the same for them, the employers, to tackle.

When Thailand still ignores them, education should be considered the only gateway for migrant workers to self-exercise their rights lawfully. Therefore, in order to help more Burmese migrant workers throughout Thailand, more schools should be established in places where most of migrant workers live and work.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Working in foreign country is already hard enough because people have to adjust themselves to the new culture and environment, plus language diversity makes their living condition worse. It is extremely hard to imagine that a migrant worker speak different language working in a place resulting no misunderstanding in communication. In this context, language literacy, particularly the language of the host country, is respectively important for migrant workers. With language literacy and education, to some certain extent, if not much, help to empower the migrant workers to be able to adapt themselves to the new environment more easily. It eases their everyday communication within and outside their workplace. Once they know the language and are educated, they are more aware about their rights, and be able to claim for it by using the language to explain, challenge, and negotiate with their boss and other people in the community. When migrant workers speak the same language of their host country, they can have a chance to interact more with their host community, at the same time, learn more about the host community's culture, and custom so that they can act accordingly. This helps to establish understanding and friendlier relationship between them and their host community.

According to the findings, most of the informants came to Thailand years ago. They had little knowledge about the country, while some know nothing. They came, most of them, with paid carrier bearing in mind and various purposes whether to generate more income or to experience something new for their life. Their life, according to the interviews, after settling down in Thailand, if not much, was a nightmare to them. They faced language barrier bothering them in communication within and outside their workplace. They could not go anywhere freely as they were afraid of getting lost or having trouble with police. Moreover, because of illiteracy in Thai language, they could not well communicate with other people. They were looked down by other people. With many burdens they endured, it showed bad effect upon their feeling. Loneliness and isolation were mixed with their living situation.

In order to deal with these situations, they begin to pave the way out by going back to school receiving education particularly provided by DEAR Burma school. They decide to come to DEAR Burma school enrolling in any specific class with various purposes of benefiting their individual interests and needs, respectively. They hope going to school can better their situation of living and working in Thailand. Furthermore, the knowledge they are going to master, it would help them to plan for their future and/or to seek for better job.

In conclusion, education has positive impacts on migrant workers' life – daily life, quality of life, and their rights as migrant workers. To the informants, their rights as migrant workers, though Thailand does not sign this convention, have been respectively improved and promoted. Their livelihood, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, self-esteem, safety and security, and right to access to information, if not much, have been identified promoted. Additionally, troubles with Thai police and humiliation from other people, used to be the matters to them, have been less expected to happen. While they know more about their rights, they start to negotiate and challenge with unfairness, most importantly, to stand up for themselves.

REFERENCES

- Andersen, S.M., Downey, G. & Tyler, T 2005, "Becoming Engaged in Community: Personal Relationships foster Social Identity", in Downey, G., Dweck, C., Ecdesc, J. & Chatman, C. (ed.), *Social, Identity, Coping, and Life Tasks*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York.
- Archer, D 2003, "Literacy as Freedom: challenging assumptions and changing practice", in UNESCO, *Literacy as Freedom: A UNESCO Round-table*, UNESCO, France, pp. 32-46.
- Becker, G.S 1975, *Human Capital: a theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*, 2nd edn, National Bureau of Economic Research, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Castle, S & Miller JM 2009, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 4th edn, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Chantavanich, S, Vungsiriphisal, P, & Laodumrongchai, S 2007, *Thailand Policies towards Migrant Workers from Myanmar*, Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM), Bangkok.
- Chiba, A 2004, "Non-formal Education: Unfulfilled Tasks and Challenges for the Future", Key Note Presentation for UNESCO-JICA International Symposium on Non-formal Education to Promote EFA and Lifelong Learning, Tokyo, Japan, 13-14 October 2004, viewed 21 March 2011, <http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/066/EFA_Lifelong.pdf>.
- Committee for Promotion and Protection of Child Rights (Burma) 2009, *Feeling Small in Another Person's Country: the situation of Burmese migrant children in Mae Sot Thailand*, The Child Protection Research Project of the Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Child Rights (Burma), Thailand, viewed 6 May 2011, <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/Feeling_Small.pdf>.
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2009, "General Comment No. 20: Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights (art. 2, para. 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and

- Cultural Rights)”, viewed 13 May 2011,
 <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/comments.htm>>.
- DEAR Burma 2007, *Annual Report*, DEAR Burma, Bangkok.
- DEAR Burma 2008, *Annual Report*, DEAR Burma, Bangkok.
- DEAR Burma 2009, *Annual Report*, DEAR Burma, Bangkok.
- DEAR Burma 2010a, *Annual Report*, DEAR Burma, Bangkok.
- DEAR Burma 2010b, *DEAR Burma School Survey With Employers*, DEAR Burma, Bangkok.
- DEAR Burma, *Project Description*, DEAR Burma, Bangkok.
- Descy, P. & Tessaring, M 2005, *The Value of Learning: Evaluation and Impact of Education and Training*, third report on vocational training in Europe, synthesis report, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Freiberg, H.J 1999 (ed.), *School Climate: measuring, improving, and sustaining healthy learning environments*, Falmer Press, Philadelphia.
- Freire, P 1973, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Sheed and Ward, London.
- Hewstone, M & Brown, R 1986, *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Huguet, JW, & Punpung, S 2005, *International Migration in Thailand*, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Bangkok.
- Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) 2009, *Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008*, viewed 16 March 2011,
 <<http://www.ncgub.net/NCGUB/mediagallery/downloadc516.pdf?mid=20091123192152709>>.
- Human Rights Watch 2010, *From the Tiger to the Crocodile: Abuse of Migrant Workers in Thailand*, Human Rights Watch, Thailand.
- Immigration Act in the Name of His Majesty King Bhumibol Enacted on the 24th of February B.E. 2522 the 34th Year of the Present Reign Wherease it is Deemed Proper to Revise the Law on Immigration*, viewed 9 September 2011,
 <http://www.immigration.go.th/nov2004/en/doc/Immigration_Act.pdf>.

- Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (A.D. 1998) with Royal Decree, Ministerial Regulations and Selected Notifications* 1999, English Translation prepared by Chandler and Thong-Ek Law Offices, Nititham, Bangkok.
- Lengthaisong, S 2009, *Thai Laws for Foreigners*, 1st edn, Dharmmasarn, Bangkok.
- MAP Foundation 2010, *Migrant Movements 1996-2010*, MAP Foundation, Thailand, viewed 6 May 2011, <http://www.mapfoundationcm.org/pdf/eng/MigrantMovements_1996-2010.pdf>.
- Martin, P 2007, *the Economic Contribution of Migrant Workers to Thailand: towards policy development*, International Labour Organization, Bangkok.
- Masaquiza, M 2003, "An Unfinished Journey: literacy among indigenous peoples in Ecuador", in UNESCO, *Literacy as Freedom: A UNESCO Round-table*, UNESCO, France, pp. 99-119.
- Mitra, A 2007, *India: Non-formal Education*, Country profile for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008, Education for All by 2015: will we make it? UNESCO, viewed 21 March 2011, <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155560e.pdf>>.
- Muntarbhorn, V 2005, *Employment and Protection of Migrant Workers in Thailand: National Laws/Practices versus International Labour Standards?* ILO, Bangkok, viewed 10 May 2011, <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_bk_pb_30_en.pdf>.
- Naik, C 1980, "Chapter X: Non-formal Education: The Process", pp. 156-176, in Shah, AB & Bhan, S, (ed.), *Non-formal Education and the NAEP*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Nyerere, J.K 1979, "The Overall Educational Conception", pp. 17-55, in Hinzen, H & Hundsorfer, V.H (ed.), *Education for Liberation and Development*, UNESCO, Hamburg.
- Ogata, S & Sen, A 2003, *Human Security Now*, Commission on Human Security, New York, viewed 23 May 2011, <<http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/English/FinalReport.pdf>>.

- Osuji, S.N, *Education for Fullness: the role of adult education in Nigeria in the 21st Century*, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria, viewed 20 July 2011, <<http://www.usca.edu/essays/vol182006/osuji.pdf>>.
- Protor, P, Sane, S & Taffesse, W, “Migrant Schools: a human rights perspective”, paper prepared for the 12th UNESCO-APEID International Conference, VSO Thailand/Burma, viewed 11 May 2011, <http://www.vso.org.uk/Images/migrant-schools-a-human-rights-perspective_tcm79-23048.pdf>.
- Roland, L 1997, *Adult Education in Asia and the Pacific: policies, issues, and trends*, monograph prepared for the Asia and Pacific Consultation on Adult Education for Development, for the UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, Hamburg, Germany, July, viewed 20 July 2011, <http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACA768.pdf>.
- Sammajivasilpa Mulnidhi Foundation, “Foundation’s Policies”, viewed 7 July 2011, <<http://www.sammajivasil.net/smPolicies.htm>>.
- Schultz, T.W 1975, *The Value of the Ability to Deal with Disequilibria*, Journal of Economic Literature, Vol. 13, No.3, September, pp. 827-846, American Economic Association, viewed 12 July 2011, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2722032.pdf?acceptTC=true>>.
- Sen, A 2003, “Reflection on Literacy”, in UNESCO, *Literacy as Freedom: A UNESCO Round-table*, UNESCO, France, pp. 20-30.
- Sen, A 2004, *Development as Freedom*, Knopf, New York.
- Sicherman, N & Galor, O 1990, *A Theory of Career Mobility*, Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 98, No. 1, February, pp. 169-192, The University of Chicago Press, viewed 12 July 2011, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2937647.pdf?acceptTC=true>>.
- Singh, A 1980, “Chapter V: Non-formal Education and Higher Education” (pp. 47-56) in Shah, AB & Bhan, S, (ed.), *Non-formal Education and the NAEP*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Stewart, E.B 2008, *School Structural Characteristics, Student Effort, Peer Associations, and Parental Involvement: the influence of school- and individual-level factors on academic achievement*, Education and

- Urban Society, January, Vol. 40, No 2, pp. 179-204, viewed 26 July 2011, <<http://eus.sagepub.com/content/40/2/179.full.pdf+html>>.
- TACDB, “Background of Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB)”, viewed 7 July 2011, <http://www.tacdb-burmese.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52%3A2010-11-16-04-28-10&catid=39%3A2010-11-09-11-08-33&Itemid=56&lang=en>.
- Tyler, T.R. & Blader, S 2003, *Procedural Justice, Social Identity, and Cooperative Behaviors*, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 7, 349-361.
- UNESCO 2006, *Education for All: Global Monitoring Report: Literacy for Life*, UNESCO, Paris, viewed 11 July 2011, <<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr06-en.pdf>>.
- UNICEF 1999, *The State of the World’s Children: Education*, United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF, viewed 23 May 2011, <<http://www.unicef.org/sowc99/sowc99a.pdf>>.
- United Nations 1948, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, viewed 23 May 2011, <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>>.
- United Nations 1966, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, viewed 23 May 2011, <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>>.
- United Nations 1966, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, viewed 23 May 2011, <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>>.
- United Nations 1990, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, viewed 30 July 2011, <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/cmw.pdf>>.
- United Nations 1997, “Secretary-General stresses need for political will and resources to meet challenge of fight against illiteracy”, UN Press Release, 4 September, viewed 23 May 2011, <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1997/19970904.SGSM6316.html>>.
- Vasuprasat, P 2010, *Agenda for Labour Migration Policy in Thailand: towards long-term competitiveness*, ILO/ Japan Project on Managing Cross-border

Movement of Labour in Southeast Asia, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO, Bangkok.

Walter, P.G 1990, *Case study of the impact of adult literacy in the lives of low literate adults in rural Thailand*, National Research Council, Bangkok.

Win, M.T 2009, "Educational Survey of DEAR Burma School", 31 July, Communication Arts, Bangkok University, Thailand.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 4 FORMER DEAR STUDENTS

1. Personal Information (optional)
 - Name
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Educational background
 - Ethnicity
 - Occupation
2. Life's experience in home country
 - Where did you live in Burma/Myanmar?
 - What was the situation in your home village?
3. Moving to Thailand
 - Why did you decide to come to Thailand?
 - How did you know about Thailand?
 - DO you have relatives working in Thailand?
 - What did you do when you first arrived at Thailand?
4. Life after learning with DEAR Burma
 - What changes in your life have you noticed after finishing from DEAR?
 - o Talking to boss
 - o Talking to police
 - o Better pay
 - o Feel more confident
 - o Feel safer
 - o Meet more Burmese people
 - o Change a lot of jobs
 - o Know your rights, etc.
 - o How does it change?
 - How do you use that knowledge in your daily life?
 - o Do you use English often?
 - o When do you use English language?

- Do you use the computer? When? How?
 - Do you feel more secure after studying at DEAR? Why and how?
 - What problems have you faced?
 - Why are they a problem?
 - How do you cope with those problems?
5. Future prospects
- What is your future plan?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 30 CURRENT DEAR STUDENTS

1. Personal Information (optional)
 - Name
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Educational background
 - Ethnicity
 - Occupation
2. Life's experience in home country
 - Where did you live in Burma/Myanmar?
 - What was the situation in your home village?
3. Moving to Thailand
 - Why did you decide to come to Thailand?
 - How did you know about Thailand?
 - Whom did you get information from about Thailand?
 - DO you have relatives working in Thailand?
 - What did you do when you first arrived at Thailand?
 - Have you faced any problems working in Thailand?
 - o Why are they a problem?
 - o How do you cope with those problems?
4. Life during studying at DEAR Burma
 - Why do you study?
 - How did you know about the school?
 - What does DEAR Burma mean to you?
 - What do you want to learn?
 - What does the school mean to you?
 - How can you use your learning at your work place?
 - What are your expectations learning at DEAR Burma?
5. Future prospects
 - What is your future plan?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

1. Describe the relationship with your donors?
2. Could you tell me about the school's organization chart?
3. Who else does the school have to cooperate with? (NGOs, governmental institution...)
4. How is the curriculum designed?
 - What are the purposes to design this curriculum?
5. What are the challenges has the school faced?
 - o Inside: administration, teachers, staff...
 - o Outside: Thai community, government officers...
 - o Students
 - How does the school cope with those challenges?
6. What achievement has the school accomplished?
7. How does the school deal with the students who have problems?
 - With police
 - Security
 - Abuses
 - Their rights
 - Their status: illegal migrant workers
 - No passport
 - No work permit
8. What are the school's future plan and activities?
9. Do you think that the school helps promote and protect the students' rights as migrant workers?
 - How does the school help?
10. From your observation, what do you think about the students and their situation?
 - Is there any change?
 - What are those changes?
 - How does it change?
11. From your perspective, do you think what does the school mean to the students?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR

1. What are your responsibilities as a program coordinator?
2. Who do you have to deal with?
 - Is there any problem dealing with those people?
 - What are the problems?
 - How do you deal with those problems?
3. What are the challenges have you faced working as program coordinator?
 - How do you deal with those challenges?
4. Do you think that the school helps promote and protect the students' rights as migrant workers?
 - How does the school help?
5. From your observation, what do you think about the students and their situation?
 - Is there any change?
 - What are those changes?
 - How does it change?
6. From your perspective, do you think what does the school mean to the students?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

1. What are your responsibilities as school teacher?
2. Who do you have to deal with?
 - Is there any problem dealing with those people?
 - What are the problems?
 - How do you deal with those problems?
3. What are the challenges have you faced teaching at DEAR Burma?
 - How do you deal with those challenges?
4. Do you think that the school helps promote and protect the students' rights as migrant workers?
 - How does the school help?
5. From your observation, what do you think about the students and their situation?
 - Is there any change?
 - What are those changes?
 - How does it change?
6. From your perspective, do you think what does the school mean to the students?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINER

1. What were your responsibilities as English Teacher Trainer?
2. Who did you have to deal with?
 - Was there any problem dealing with those people?
 - What were the problems?
3. What challenges had you faced during your observation?
 - How did you deal with those challenges?
4. Do you think that the school helps promote and protect the students' rights as migrant workers?
 - How does the school help?
5. From your observation, what do you think about the students and their situation?
 - Is there any change?
 - What are those changes?
 - How does it change?
7. From your observation, do you think what does the school mean to the students?

APPENDIX B
FIELD RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Date	No. of informant(s)	Place	Remark
5 June 2011	1	DEAR Burma School	Burmese activist
14 June 2011	1	By email, she went back to France	English Teacher Trainer
16 June 2011	1	TACDB office, Bangkok	School Director
18 June 2011	1	A coffee shop in Bangkok	Former student
19 June 2011	1	DEAR Burma School	English language teacher
	1	DEAR Burma School	Former student
	6	DEAR Burma School	Current student
	13	DEAR Burma school	2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
24 June 2011	1	A coffee shop in Bangkok	Former student
25 June 2011	2	A coffee shop in Bangkok	Current student
26 June 2011	1	DEAR Burma school	Former student
	13	DEAR Burma school	Current former
5 July 2011	1	Nakorn Pathum Province	House visit
6 July 2011	1	Bangkok	House visit
10 July 2011	1	DEAR Burma School	Program Coordinator
	1	DEAR Burma School	Thai language Teacher
	9	DEAR Burma School	Current students
1 August 2011	1	Bangkok	Workplace visit
Total		40	informants
		2	FGDs (13 people)
		2	House visits
		1	Workplace visit

APPENDIX C

BRIEF ACTIVITIES THE SCHOOL HAS DONE

- In June 2006, a guest speaker from Migrant Affairs came to the school and explained the students on how to prepare for extension of work permit as well as Thai Labor Laws and registration process. In July the same year, a Thai lawyer was also invited to discuss with students about the criminal law so that the students could be aware of legal issue that would unpredictably occur in any circumstance.
- In 2008, in cooperation with ILO, a training session and Focus Group Discussion concerning “anti-human trafficking” were also conducted with the students providing them insight knowledge and be able to protect themselves from any abuse.
- From September 2008 to May 2009, with the assistance from International Rescue Committee (IRC) a training program on “The Reaching Migrant for HIV/ AIDS Prevention in Bangkok” was also provided to DEAR Burma students to disseminate them the knowledge of HIV/ AIDS and Sexual Transmitted Infection (STI) and HIV/ AIDS prevention knowledge.
- Early 2011, an invited guest speaker from Council of Work and Environment Related Patients’ Network of Thailand (WEPT) came to provide the knowledge to students about the environmental health on the topic of “the basic occupational health and safety in the workplace, business services, restaurants and people working at home.”
- On 6 March 2011, with Action Network for migrant (ANM), Development and Relief of Thailand (ADRA), Thai Labor Campaign (TLC), Thai Allied Committee with Desegregated Foundation, Foundation of Labor HIV/ AIDS, MAP Foundation, Raks Thai Foundation, and Friends of Women Foundation that DEAR Burma school joined hands, together held a seminar on “100 years

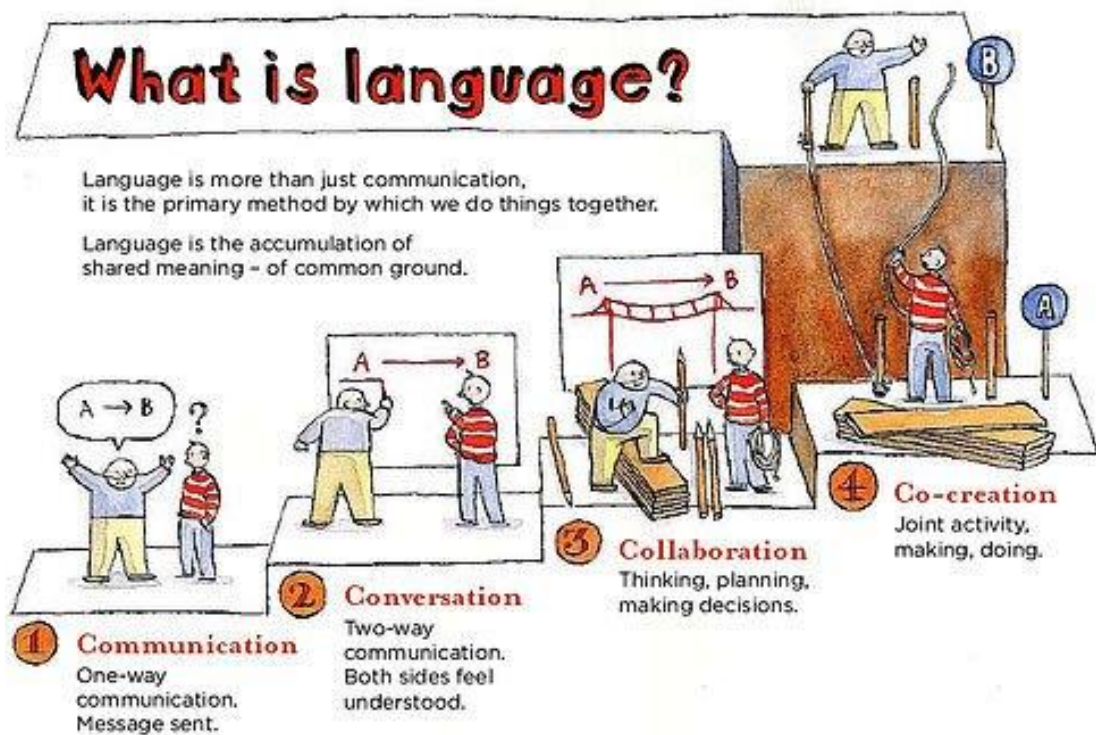
of International Women's Day on the situation of woman migrant workers" equipped the students with the knowledge of Women's Rights and the issues that frequently occur to women at the workplace.

- Lately in June 2011, a guest speaker invited from a Burmese NGO working for the sake of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand came to explain and share the newly enrolled students the knowledge of occupational health and safety at workplace.

Besides the above activities that DEAR Burma school has initiated, the school has also set up other events that the students can participate for instance the commemoration day, Buddhist ceremony, and other charity events.

APPENDIX C

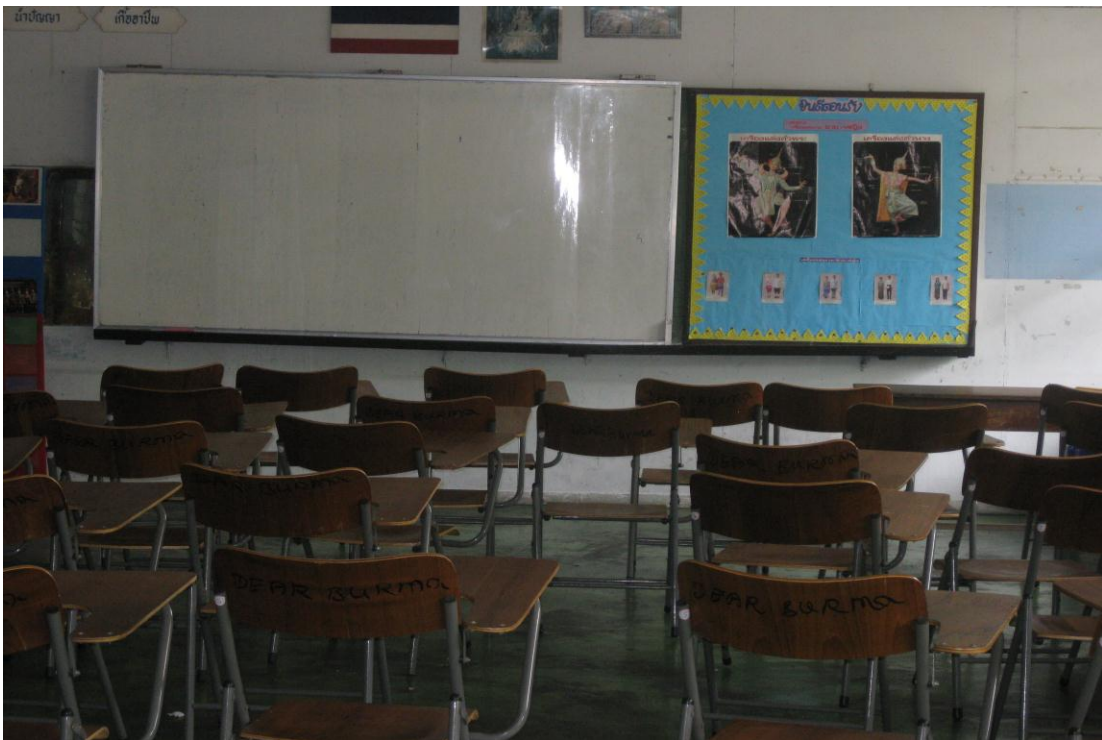
PHOTOS



Source: <http://www.psfk.com/2010/07/how-language-influences-the-way-we-view-the-world.html>



Caption: on the compound of DEAR Burma School. The school shares the same compound with Sammajivasilpa Primary School



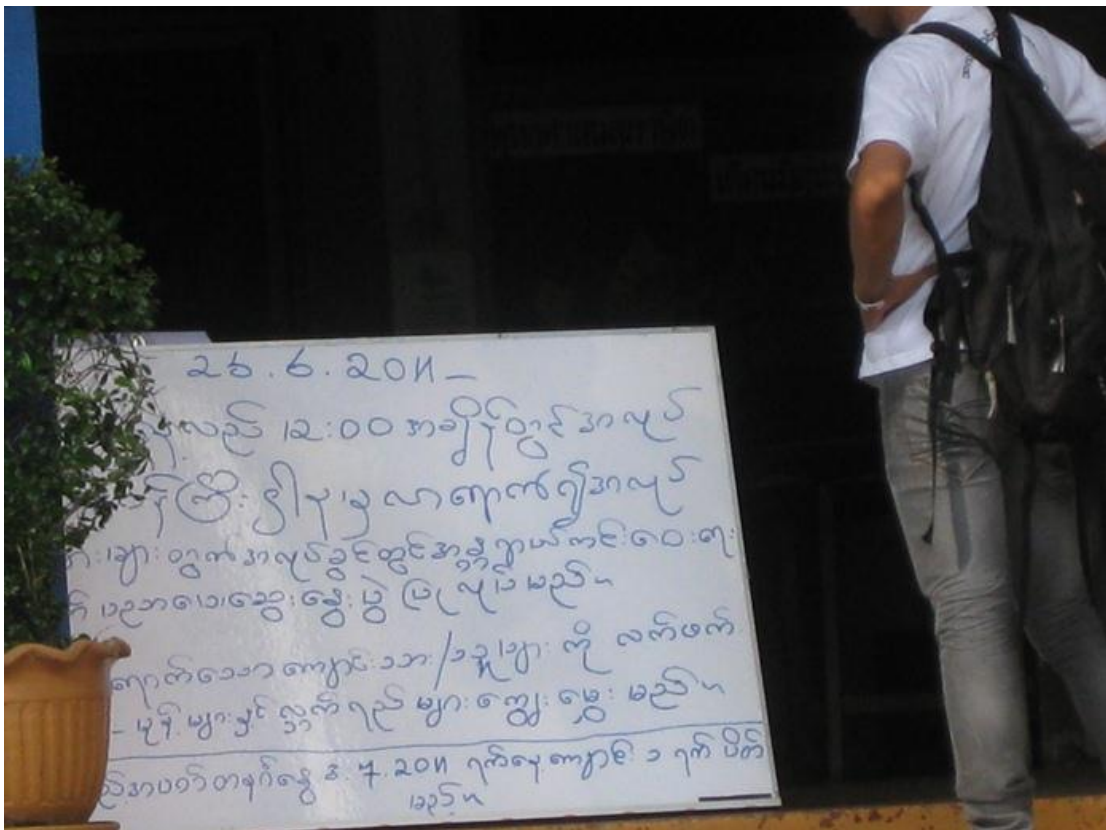
Caption: classroom



Caption: the school's canteen. The students can find Burmese foods at the canteen.



Caption: the students are looking for a book to read in the Sunday Library



Caption: a student is reading the school's announcement. The announcement is about a presentation on "the safety at workplace" by a guest speaker.



Caption: the students attend the workshop on "the safety at workplace" presented by a guest speaker.



Caption: outside of the rented room of an informant (house visit)



Caption: a bookshelf at the house of an informant (house visit)



Caption: workplace visit of an informant (this informant works as restaurant staff)

BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Men was born in Phnom Penh, Capital City of Cambodia. Mr. Men holds a bachelor of arts in tourism from the National University of Management, Phnom Penh in 2008. Mr. Men has been a staff member of the Victim Participation Project of DC-Cam (Documentation Center of Cambodia) for the past three years, 2007-2010, during which time he assisted Khmer Rouge survivors in exercising their participation rights as complainants or civil parties in the ongoing Khmer Rouge Tribunal proceedings. He also conducted interviews with villagers to record their live stories during Khmer Rouge Regime.