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The Social and Economic Effects of Remigration to Rural Areas in Vietnam

**A Case Study of Khmer People in
O Lam village, Tri Ton District,
An Giang Province**

*Ho Thi Ngan, RCRD, An Giang University,
Vietnam, 2010*

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ABSTRACT

Return migration is a popular topic to be researched in many countries. It is not always a 'natural' process, a matter of simply going home, but an indispensability of migration process. In Vietnam, however, return migration has not been much researched, especially not research on internal remigration of the poor voluntary migrant workers who migrated from rural areas to the urban areas or the cities. The study was carried out in O Lam village, Tri Ton district, An Giang province. This study was conducted to answer three questions as well as to clarify three issues: 1) the reason why Khmer migrant workers return to their home village; 2) the social and economic impacts for the returnees and their families; and 3) the adaptation of both Khmer migrants and villagers to the return of the migrants in the home village. To achieve these objectives, a mixed methodology - ethnological approach combined with PRA tools, secondary data, and literature - was applied in this research. The findings of this study showed that all processes of the migration up to remigration of the Khmer people in this village were generalized. The findings also showed that Khmer return migrants returned home with many various reasons. However, two core ones were due to the fact that most of the Khmer short term returnees could not adapt to the living and working conditions in the destinations, and the seasonal returnees mostly returned to the home village because of rice crop season in the countryside. Besides that, the returnees also re-migrate to the countryside due to health problem, and other reasons. The study also explored that the remigration of both groups of returnees had significant effects on themselves and their families in terms of economic, social, and cultural aspects. Another point was presented that the different groups of return migration had different strategies in order to re-adapt in their home village. Moreover, it was reported the Khmer return migrant workers has not accessed to the support policy for both the migrants and the return migrants because their spontaneous migration.

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May they find good and stable jobs wherever they go!

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Ho Thi Ngan

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES AND TABLES	v
ABBREVIATIONS	vi
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Rationale.....	6
1.2 Problem statement	7
1.3 Objectives and Research Questions	9
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
2.1 Migration in Vietnam	10
2.2 Reasons for migration	11
2.3 Conditions of migrant workers in destinations.....	13
2.4 Reasons for return migration	14
2.5 Effects after return migration	17
2.5.1 The social effects.....	17
2.5.2 The economic effects.....	18
2.5.3 The cultural effects	19
2.6 Strategies of returnees in the homeland.....	21
2.7 Policies for return migrant workers.....	22
2.8 Theoretical framework	23
CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26
3.1 Research site	26
3.2 Data collection.....	40
3.3 Sample size and criteria for selecting samples	43
3.4 Problem analysis.....	45
3.5 Limitation of the study	45
3.6 Thesis organization.....	46
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	47
4.1 Migration flows of Khmer people in O Lam village.....	47
4.2 Conditions before migration.....	49
4.2.1 Family size	49
4.2.2 Occupation and income sources in O Lam village.....	49
4.2.3 Expenditure sources	51
4.2.4 Social relations	51
4.2.5 Culture, custom and education	52
4.3 Reasons for migration	53
4.4 Conditions of Khmer migrant workers in destinations	57
4.4.1 Working condition.....	57
4.4.2 Living condition	63
4.5 Return migration of Khmer migrant workers	66
4.6 The social and economic impacts after return migration	71
4.6.1 Impacts on Social networks.....	71
4.6.2 Impacts on Economic aspect	75
4.6.3 Impacts on Culture	79
4.7 Re-adaptation strategies of Khmer returnees	82
4.8 Policies and implementation	87
4.8.1 Support policies.....	87
4.8.2 Policies for jobless return migrant workers.....	89
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION	91
REFERENCES	93

LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES AND TABLES

Boxes	Page
Box 1. Reason for leaving the countryside to go to the city.....	53
Box 2. Difficulty of Khmer return migrant worker in the company	58
Box 3. Salary of construction migrant workers in the city	59
Box 4. Constraints of the Khmer migrant worker in worksites.....	60
Box 5. Difficulty of accommodation of the Construction migrant workers in the worksite.....	63
Box 6. Difficulty of living place of the seasonal Khmer migrant workers in the farms	64
Box 7. Living place of the short term Khmer migrant workers in the company.....	65
Box 8. Language constraints of the Khmer migrant worker in worksites.....	68
Box 9. Different reasons for remigration of the migrant workers working in the company	69
Box 10. Return migrant workers cannot adapt to the living condition	70
Box 11. The importance of social relations in job application in the city.....	71
Box 12. The returnees' social relations after return home village.....	73
Box 13. Conditions of return migrant workers in their home village	77
Box 14. Occupation of the seasonal returnee back home from farms.....	77
Box 15. The returnees' perception on daily expenditure in the home village.....	78
Box 16. Strategies of the Khmer returnees after back home village	81
Box 17. Income sources of the returnees after return	83
Box 18. The Khmer migrant workers can't access to support policies	89

Figures	Page
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the research.....	25
Figure 2. Maps of research site.....	40
Figure 3. Seasonal calendar of the seasonal returnees in O Lam village	48
Figure 4. Seasonal calendar of the villagers in O Lam village.....	57
Figure 5. Social relations of returnees after remigration	75
Figure 6. Income generation activities of the returnees after return.....	84
Figure 7. Income generation activities of Khmer villagers	87

Tables	Page
Table 1. Number of group discussions in the village	44
Table 2. Number of respondents in in-depth interview in the village	44
Table 3. Three phases of returnee's life story	45
Table 4. Working hours of two migrant groups	61
Table 5. Number of holidays of Khmer migrant workers	62

ABBREVIATIONS

GSO	General Statistic Organization
HBFC	HealthBridge Foundation of Canada
ID	Identification
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IZs	Industrial Zones
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
TV	Tivi
VBSP	Vietnam Bank for Social Policies
VND	Vietnam dong
3-D Jobs	Dirty, dangerous and difficulty jobs

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Migration was considered an equilibrating mechanism that through labor transfer from the surplus labor to the labor deficit sector, finally brought about wage equality in the two sectors (Bilsborrow *et al.*, 2001). For many developed and developing countries, migration has become a crucial issue (Skeldon, 2003; Thanh, 2008). On the other hand, migration played an important role in poverty reduction through remittances sent back to the original country or village in the low-income countries (Ellis, 2003). In addition, in the livelihood approach, migration was considered as a livelihood strategy by livelihood diversification in rural areas (Ellis, 2000; Thanh, 2008; Thanh, 2009). Moreover, migration could solve unemployment and contribute to income diversification of the households as a livelihood strategy (Resurreccion & Khanh, 2006). Furthermore, beside a livelihood strategy for the poor in the rural areas, migration provided an opportunity for poor households to improve their economic situation (WB & DFID, 1999).

In Vietnam, since 1986 the economy of Vietnam has gone through a comprehensive reform known as *Doi Moi* (renovation), which moved Vietnam from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy (Thanh, 2009). Nationals were allocated production land. Agricultural productivity has been increased. Therefore, Vietnam became one of the rice exporting countries in the world. The agricultural sector still plays a principle role in strong growth and poverty reduction (Thanh, 2009), most of the Vietnamese populations live in the rural areas, and the household economy is mainly based on agricultural production activities. In addition, the process of industrialization and modernization in urban areas has created great demand for human resources. Low income and poor living conditions in rural areas, the scarcity of non-farm employments with high incomes has been driving rural workers to look for work in cities. Firstly, there is shortage of agricultural land areas in the rural areas and too few rural employments while high population growth (WB & DFID, 1999). Secondly, transformation of models in agricultural production also created a surplus labor force in rural areas (Thanh, 2009). Furthermore, together with absorbing investment capital after this stage, 149 industrial zones built in 61 provinces and cities that have absorbed millions rural laborers and provided many employment opportunities (Thanh, 2008), thus livelihood diversification away from agriculture as well as diversification of income sources in the rural areas was considered the primary means of the household survival (Thanh, 2009). Since then the strategy for 'leaving the rice fields but not the countryside' has been formed. People diversified their income sources by joining in non-farm sectors and migrating to other places to find jobs. Hence, more and more rural people have been moving into cities or urban areas as temporary migrants. Those were internal migration inside the country. Besides that, transferring the labor force from rural to urban areas within Vietnam increased in the past years, and the laborers have mainly migrated because of economic issue. The majority of migrant workers wanted to improve their income sources and have the better living standard, but they were lacking training and discipline.

Migration has been considered a complex sequence of moves that might include several destinations and regular contact with the origin, which might eventually comprise of return migration (Zhang *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, in opposition to migration, it was recognized that migration flows often tended to generate "counter flows" - mostly return migration. This was inherent to the concept of circular migration. Issues of return migration processes remain to be understood, as they are complex and multilayered. Return migration was defined as the voluntary movements of immigrants back to their original places. This was also known as circular migration (Xpeditions, 2005). Returns broadly were described in three different ways. For instance, the return might be voluntary without compulsion, when the migrants made a decision at any time during their temporary stay to return home at their own choices and cost. The

voluntary under compulsion, when people were at the end of their temporary protected status, refused asylum, or were unable to stay, and chose to return at their own choices. The involuntary, as a result of the authorities of the host State ordering deportation. Return migration to the home country whether temporary or permanent, was able to contribute to decreasing the negative effects of human capital outflows for original countries. Return migration could both enrich the human capital of original countries and contribute to the transfer of technology and of scientific, technical, and economic expertise as well as political, social, and cultural exchanges (McKinley, 2008). In Algeria, the return migrants from developed countries could take advantages of the migration to be trained jobs and to approach education (for low educated migrant only) (Gubert & Nordman, 2008b). Cassarino addressed the factors motivating the interviewees' departure from their country of origin; the impact of the migratory experience abroad on the interviewee's pre- and post-return conditions; and the various post-return conditions of the returnees and their prospects of reintegration (Cassarino, 2008). And definition of return migrant or returnee was described by Cassarino and Gubert as any person who returned to his or her original country, in the course of the last ten years, had been an international migrant (whether short-term or long-term) in another country. Return might be permanent or temporary. It might be independently decided by the migrant or forced by unexpected circumstances." In other word, Bilsborrow et al defined return migrant or returnee as a person returns to the home village, town or city where he or she was usually living before migration, he or she should be considered as a return migrant even if he or she did not return to the same house or household" (Bilsborrow *et al.*, 2001).

1.2 Problem Statement

Adda indicated that specific economic conditions were to be important to both migration decisions to emigrate from the home country and to return to it. Additionally, it was focused on the fact that many migrants today returned to their home countries in crowds after having spent a number of years in the host country (Adda *et al.*, 2006). Houte and Koning (2008), Kuyper (2008) and many scholars conducted majority of researches on return migration of the migrants who have come back from the host country to the home country. The remigration has been due to involuntary return and/or voluntary return. These migrants could be the migrant workers including legal or illegal ex-refugees, but they could also be exported workers who returned to their home country. However, in the context of Vietnam, migration process has happened for a long time. Migration phenomenon has been various with several types such as internal migration, international migration, step migration, chain migration, impelled migration, seasonal migration and return migration (Xpeditions, 2005). However, the focus of this study is on internal migration. Internal migration is defined that people can move from one place to another place within a nation (ibid). This migration flow has been rural to urban migration of the poor people in the rural areas, because they wanted to access to an employment opportunity to improve their livelihoods. Additionally, it was considered a survival strategy for the poor people in the rural areas, because it provided an opportunity for poor households to improve their household economic situation (WB & DFID, 1999).

In this study, the issue of voluntary return migration without compulsion will be in focus. Although, in recent years there has been much speculation about the number of people who were return to their homeland, it could be said that return migration was a relatively new area of migration that there have not been much research on in Vietnam. Return migration remains the great-unwritten item in the history of migration. This may be to due the fact that, in the past, many returns occurred spontaneously and were unrecorded. Additionally, in the context of Vietnam, especially in An Giang province, migration flows of migrant workers returning to the origin of the village have increased in recent years. In stead of working in the cities or in the industrial zones permanently, the return migrant workers decided to back to their home village increasingly, especially Khmer migrant workers in Tri Ton district, An Giang province. These

Khmer migrant workers engaged in and found jobs in the cities such as Ho Chi Minh, Vung Tau, Long Xuyen and industrial zones in several provinces such as Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Long An. Besides that, these returnees also returned from farms such as coffee and rubber. In addition, it is fact that the issue of return migration to home village has been raised from the daily life of Khmer community in O Lam village, Tri ton district, An Giang province. Therefore, my study will concentrate on issues relating to return migration of Khmer poor migrant workers to the home village. Through the study, these research objectives will be achieved, and followed by research questions below.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions

The research is carried out in the context of Khmer people in O Lam village, Tri Ton district of An Giang province in order to have better understanding of the current situation and problems, which the poor Khmer returnees have faced. The research was also focused on Khmer people' adaptation strategies in terms of social and economic aspects in that situation. The research aimed to answer the main research question:

- How does the return migration have economic and social impacts on the Khmer returnees and their households?

The main research question raises the substantive questions:

1. Why did Khmer migrant worker return to the original village?
2. How did the remigration affect the migrants, the household where they stay, and the village at large?
3. What strategies do the migrants use to re-adapt to the life of the home villages?
4. What strategies do the villagers that have remained use to adapt to the return migrants?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will give a short description of migration process, reasons for remigration and effects of remigration on socio-economic and cultural aspects of the returnees. The focus is on Khmer migrant workers and spontaneous Khmer migrants who migrated to seek for jobs in many places in Vietnam far from their home village.

All documents referenced in this study were synthesized from the process of international migration and return migration, even though the process of return migration in Vietnam also happened at the international scale that means the remigration process of migrant returnees was taken place from the other countries to Vietnam. Although the process of the return migration happened in different countries and my study only focused on the regional scale within Vietnam, the references were very useful in finding and comparing similarities and differences in reasons for migration, working and living conditions, and influences on social, economic, and cultural aspects during the process of the migrant worker return.

2.1 Migration flows in Vietnam

In Southeast Asia, there have been many migration studies in both scope and number, but it has not been known much in Vietnam. Population mobility has increased significantly in Vietnam not only because of the major cause of interregional variations in population growth, but also because of its influential role in social and economic change in the affected areas (Dang *et al.*, 1997). Zhang *et al.* (2006) and Anh Dang *et al.*, (1997) pointed out that there were four major phases of migration in Vietnam.

The first phase is the migration under the French colonial period before 1954. In this period, migration, which is a frequent phenomenon under the French colonial rule (1884-1954), includes rural-urban migration of landless peasants, seasonal rural-rural movements of agricultural workers in order to search for temporary employment in agricultural production, and land-hungry peasants from the densely populated areas in the North moving to the Mekong Delta in groups in order to locate on a relatively permanent basis as either tenants or landless laborers. These rural workers worked in plantations and mining, which were opened in upland frontier regions operated by the French. The purpose of migration in this period was for survival strategy adopted by rural households and in response to the labour market demand.

The second is the civil conflict and Indochina Wars from 1954 to 1975. Vietnam was divided into two parts: the North and the South. The goal of migration in this period was because of the war and the different political and ideological orientations of the two regimes. The rural-urban migration flows were increased, specifically in major cities, and these migrants in this stage utilized economic opportunities.

The next one is the post-war reconstruction period of 1975-1986. After the war, the major population movements were under policies of population redistribution. The last phase is the post 1986 reform period, known in Vietnamese as Doi Moi. In this period, the flows of rural mobility to urban areas, especially from the North to the South have increased dramatically for income improvement and a better living standard. Moreover, the migration process included both permanent and seasonal migration. Furthermore, in the beginning and end of 1990s, Vietnam attracted foreign investment capital sources (Hoang *et al.*, 2008). The attraction of foreign investment capital mainly focused on establishment of industrial zones. After this period, the phenomenon of migration from rural to urban has taken place more and more increasingly.

Human migration is often interpreted in terms of “pushes” and “pulls” (Biggs, 2009). Push factors are the conditions in a person’s origin province as the motivation for leaving. Pulls are

the conditions in the destinations that attract a migrant to leave home. Two factors have a mutual relation. In addition, these factors are able to be considered a complex decision for migration. Pushes and pulls can be economic, social, cultural, political, and personal. In addition, migrants' motivations frequently change together with the migration process. Migration's pushes and pulls were possibly best perceived as components of a cost-benefit analysis (Biggs, 2009). Breckner (2000) and Demuth (2000) reported that in order to understand return migration, we should pay attention to the migration, because it was interrelated (Breckner, 2000; Demuth & Andrea, 2000). Thus, before beginning to understand return migration to homeland in general and to O Lam village in particular, it is important to know the reasons why returnees left their homeland.

2.2 Reasons for migration

In terms of the motivation for migration as well as the reasons why people left their home village to the other places to live or to find jobs for improving income, there have been many various reasons for migration in many different countries. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), migration researches in many countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Luxembourg), addressed many motivations behind individual decisions to migrate. It was evident that lack of satisfactory opportunities at home was the main reason driving to the contemporary growth of migration pressures and emigration might help to ease or reduce population pressures and unemployment (ILO, 2004). In the case of the Western Sudan, people decided to migrate because of severe drought and starvation (Salih, 2000). Moreover, the findings in the research of Malhamé (2006) showed that the migrants left their homeland for a few reasons relating to work opportunities, such as the outbreak of the war, for pursuit of their studies or for family considerations. Another idea showed that high levels of unemployment and underemployment in the poorer countries were contributing to pressures for more migration (Jones, 2008).

Similar to this idea, in the context of Vietnam, there were many causes of migration, among which, the main cause was the economic one. That was because of the ever-increasing gap between countries on economic development level, on the accommodation of life, on the income and due to the fast speed of globalization. According to information of the International Labour Organization in 2004 (ILO), Vietnam's population was then 84.2 million and approximately 1.2 million young people enter the labor age each year. In addition, international migration has increased significantly in recent years. Currently, there were about 3.2 million Vietnamese permanently living abroad including 400,000 of them graduated and post-graduated and 500,000 Vietnamese migrant workers working in more than 40 different countries and territories all over the world under time-limited labor contracts (ILO, 2004). Besides that the reasons which forced people to migrate were that the agricultural productivity has been improved much to assist food security for the country, which created a surplus labor in the rural areas. In addition, reduced agricultural land area and a higher population growth in the rural areas compared with the urban areas, unemployment, and underemployment have increased due to too few employments in rural areas. Moreover, due to the high population growth in the rural areas, and labour shortages in urban areas due to urbanization, so migration became an option for rural people wanting to utilize employment opportunities in the cities (Resurreccion & Khanh, 2006).

On the other hand, a major motivation of migration was due to household poverty status, agricultural surplus labour, dependent labour of household, IZ development in sending areas, learning experiences and broadening social networks (Thanh, 2008) and migrant workers wanted to take advantages of employment opportunities to improve income (Thanh & Dung, 2008). Furthermore, migration was able to solve unemployment and contribute to income diversification of the households as a livelihood strategy (Resurreccion & Khanh, 2006). Mostly, these migrants have moved from rural areas to urban areas and these migrant laborers expected

to improve the difficult situation at home, by the way they could send the remittances back to their home for daily expenditure mainly on food (Resurreccion & Khanh, 2006). The migrant labourers could save money and send money back to their family to pay food, farm inputs household equipments, clothes, children's education, and expenditure for annual festivals. However, migration might bring the negative impacts such as the "brain drain" of relatively high-educated migrants, agricultural labor shortage, social problems etc.

That there have been many factors to absorb migrants to the destinations was found in many researches. In general, the migrants tended to migrate to where they were able to access to welfare, security, and peace and avoiding natural calamities and war. Besides that, the destination could at least satisfy the migrants' basic needs such as food security, services, modernity, and especially employment opportunities to help them survive in new places... these influence factors pulled them to destination. Salih's research result showed that migrants had a trend to find security to avoid or limit risks, which took place in their original countries (Salih, 2000). ILO also indicated that migrants also tended to migrate to the fast-growing regions where wages were relatively higher and unemployment was lower (ILO, 2004). Apart from economic reasons, the migrants also made a decision to go to work in foreign countries as they want to explore the outside world and broaden their knowledge and vision. The migrant workers tried doing their best to earn money to send home (Kilic *et al.*, 2007). The rapid growth in several countries would be likely to provoke migratory movements (Jones, 2008). In addition, he addressed that there was an increasing rate in employment opportunities in sectors where young people wanted to work relating to the rate of growth of the labour force, especially in the potential for international labour migration. For instance, the shortage of labour force in some countries like Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia has been also a motivation to absorb the migrants (Ducanes & Abella, 2008). However, in Vietnam, majority of migrant labourers have migrated from rural to urban areas, and these migrant workers have migrated to the cities or urban areas with many various reasons. However, employment opportunity in IZs was one of the most attractive reasons. Besides that procedure of employment recruitment in IZs and labour absorption of local cottage industry were also pull factor of migration (Thanh & Dung, 2008; Thanh, 2008). Furthermore, the research of Resurreccion & Khanh (2006) showed that there were many migrants leaving their home village to find the opportunities to access to food security and employment in destinations.

After the Doi Moi (1986), Vietnam joined in market economy with remarkable growth. People were distributed production land. Agricultural productivity has been increased. Therefore, Vietnam became one of the rice exporting countries in the world. However, most of the Vietnam nationals were in the rural areas, and their household economy mainly based on agricultural production activities. In addition, following the urbanization, land areas in the rural areas has been reduced, and due to too few rural employments while population growth is high (WB & DFID, 1999). Thus, income diversification in the rural areas became interesting. Moreover, the strategy for 'leaving the rice fields, but not the countryside' was formed. People diversified their income sources by joining in non-farm sectors and migrating to other places to find jobs. Hence, more and more rural people have been moving into cities or urban areas as temporary migrants. Those were internal migration inside the country. Besides that, transferring the labour force from rural to urban areas within Vietnam increased in many past years. Mainly, the labourers have migrated because of economic issues. They wanted to improve income source and improve their living standard.

2.3 Conditions of Migrant workers in destination

In terms of concerns of working conditions and the behavior of the migrant workers in destinations, there were many ideas mentioned to this issue. However, before going to the detail of this part, I would like to give a short brief description of labor regulation including the labor

right, and how it was applied in Vietnam. It was referenced in *the Labor Code of Vietnam*¹. These articles below were cited in the labour law.

The labor regulation of Vietnam prescribed the rights of the workers and their employers, the labor standards, the principles to use and to manage the laborers. The Labor Code protects the labour rights, benefits and other rights of the laborers as well as protects the legitimate rights and interests of the employers in order to facilitate for the labor relations to be harmonious and stable.

The rights of the employees were promulgated when they are from 15 years old and have the rights to sign the labour contract. This was cited in the Sixth Article of labour law. And the Article 29 of this labour law promulgated contents of the labor contract between the employers and the employees including the work which the employees or the employers have to do, working hours, working interval, salary, worksite, period of contract, conditions for industrial safety and hygiene, and insurance for the labourers. Besides that, the Article 68 and 69 clearly declared about working time and the agreement of extra working hours respectively. In terms of working time, the labourers will not work more than eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week. Moreover, the employers have rights to assign the working time according to working day or working week, but they have to announce in advanced to the employees. The daily working hours will be shortened from one to two hours for the employees who work in the special worksite such as hard, dangerous, and poisonous places, and these special places were promulgated by Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Welfare, and by Ministry of Public Health. Regarding the extra working time, the employers and the employees are able to negotiate with each other, but the employees will not work overtime more than four hours a day or two hundred hours a year.

Parallel with the above declaration, the Article 56 of the Labour law also prescribed the salary level of the employees. The minimum salary level was appointed according to living cost in order to ensure that the employees can do the simplest work in the normal working condition, for which their labour will be compensated and a part of salary would be accumulated to reproduce the labour. That whenever the cost-of-living index would be increased forced the real salary of the employees to decrease, so the minimum salary level would be adjusted by the government to be guaranteed the real salary level. The Article 37 of this labour law promulgated that the labourers could have the rights to end the labour contract in some cases, particularly the labourers work according to the labour contract, which was set the working time from one year to three years, the seasonal contract or less than one year working, he or she could end the contract before the time-limit in these cases: "...the employees were not assigned the suitable work, worksite, or dissatisfied with the articles in the contract; the employees were not paid enough for their labour or paid unequally their labour in the contract; and the employees were mistreated and forced to work...". However, the employees wanted to end the labour contract, they have to inform the employers about their ending work at least three days before.

However, in practice, according to the research result of ILO showed that although migrants from developing countries tended to work in almost every type of job at the bottom and the top

¹ *The Labor Code of Vietnam: This Code was approved by the National Assembly of Socialist Republic of Vietnam of the 9th Legislature, at the 5th Session on June 23rd, 1994. However, it was supplemented and adjusting over time in order to be suitable for the reality. In 2002 it was supplemented some additional articles of the labor law by the Congress of Vietnam, No. 35/2002/QH1002, date April 2nd, 2002, and was approved by the National Assembly of Socialist Republic of Vietnam of the 10th Legislature at the 11st Session on April 2nd, 2002. And in 2006, it was the next time for supplementing and adjusting some articles in this Labor Law through the agreement of the National Labor Assembly of the 11th Legislature, the 10th Session, No. 74/2006/QH11, Date of November 29th, 2006.*

of the employment ladder. The majorities of migrants were at the bottom of the ladder and often do the dirty, dangerous and difficult, so-called “3-D” jobs (ILO, 2004). However, there were not all migrants having 3D jobs. This result focused on the unskilled migrant workers, who considered their work in destination as temporary employments, because there were not many migrants having been working in the IZs two and a half years (Thanh, 2008). Additionally, it was considered that these issues (remuneration, hours of work, holidays with pay, minimum age for employment, occupational safety and health measures, social security measures and welfare facilities and benefits) were provided in the connection with employment, and security of employment (ILO, 2004). Resurreccion & Khanh (2006) and other scholars addressed that many migrants expected to contribute their income to their family by leaving the original village to find new job, and their employments were much diversified such as workers in the companies or factories, housekeepers or servants, and other jobs such as vendors and waste material collectors.....

Besides temporary works, accommodation and working hours were also issues, which were needed to discuss. Migrant workers find works in the industrial zones (IZs) to live in temporary accommodation in cramped quarters, with material and spiritual deprivation... Accommodation conditions of the migrants were not good and safe, because they used to stay in the slum boardinghouses with high cost, but lack of convenience where the cost of living was very expensive, while the wage was low (Khanh, 2008). Besides that, working in hazardous, dangerous, beaten, or abused environment without protection, underpaid and discriminatory wage... these were the difficulties that migrant workers used to face. In addition, restrictions on language and cultural differences that led to more disadvantages for migrant workers (Phuong, 2009). Furthermore, according to Hien (2009) migrant workers were those who were less protected, the wages were paid unequally to their labor. These labourers had mostly not signed formal contracts, thus their labour rights were not protected. Besides that it was difficult for them to access social services such as housing and good health care, thus they had to live in cramped and polluted houses, and they were not accessed to good health care when they were sick because there was no health insurance (Hien, 2009).

2.4 Reasons for return migration

As the migration mentioned above, many migrations nowadays were temporary (Adda *et al.*, 2006) and the dynamics, and links between return migration and development has interested various national and international actors, comprising of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, migrant associations, and the private sectors (McKinley, 2008). Similar to before the migrants' departure stage, migrants return for different reasons and for different lengths of time (Malhamé, 2006). In addition, the reasons for return were considered push and pull factors in many countries at the international level.

Some might settle down permanently while others might only sojourn (Malhamé, 2006). In Algeria, return migrants from developed countries could take advantages of the migration to train for jobs and to approach education (for low educated migrant only) (Gubert & Nordman, 2008b). Cassarino conducted research on return migrants in three countries of North Africa in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In the research, he addressed the factors motivating the returnees' departure from their country of origin, the impact of the migratory experience abroad on the interviewee's pre- and post-return conditions, and the various post-return conditions of the returnees and their prospects of reintegration (Cassarino, 2008). The research of Malhamé addresses various reasons for return of the migrants. In general, the migrants returning to their homeland with the plans that were set before migration were seen as flexible, rather than as concrete and predetermined including retirement or finished work contract. Another reason is that the war was ended and promises of the new regime in the home country and they think that it is safe to return. Another point showed in his research was that a majority of the old generation

re-migrate to the homeland because most of them had experienced this longing to return while abroad. Other reasons encouraging many migrants to move back to the country are for the sake of their spouses or children and due to feelings of nostalgia. The migrants are to return quite assertive because they feel a lack of identity in a foreign country, and they need to reconnect with the country of origin. It is important to note in this regard, there are also migrants returning to home country due to their patriotic sentiment, they want to share gained knowledge to community. Additionally, many of the young generation have not chosen to return, but their family decided to return. These young people indicated that they spent most of their childhood in the other countries and they had many childhood friends in those countries.

Whereas Cassarino portrayed return migration in neo-classical economics theory as a failed involuntary 'migration experience', in terms of expected earnings, employment, duration' and wasted human capital (Cassarino, 2004), he also addressed new economic theories of labor migration. On the other hand, he tended to describe it as a successful calculated migration experience, which returnees voluntarily undertake once they have sent enough remittances back home to satisfy a targeted goal. Some return due to fact that the human rights or political situation in their home country has been improved. Some return because of feeling that they failed to get a good job in host country or to send remittances back home (Olesen, 2003). Some return to settle matters of family inheritance. Some return out of feelings of obligation to help kin back home (Brettell, 2000). However, some return because of retirement after they have saved enough wealth to come back home while many others experience a corporate transfer. Some return with enough capital to set up their own business and to aid the development process in the country. They help to contribute to the country's development or 'brain gain'. Breckner pointed out that some return due to home-sick feeling (Breckner, 2000).

In the trend of the international integration and globalization, Vietnam was among countries having a big number of people emigrating abroad. The migrants almost stayed in every countries and territories of the world. Every year, many of them return to Vietnam with different purposes: permanent stay (repatriation), visiting their relatives, investment, doing their business. etc. (ILO, 2004). Some migrants failed to meet their expectation of emigration experience; others decided to return when they have saved sufficient funds. Nevertheless, often the deciding factor would be the situation in their country of origin: if the economic promise improved, then returning would be more attractive. When these migrants came back with skills or savings, this was able to make a welcome contribution to development (ILO, 2004).

As Kuyper (2008), Houte and Koning (2008) pointed out the influences of three groups of factors including individual characteristics, migration experience and assistance. The first was the influences of individual characteristics comprising of gender, age, marital status and having children. For single and married returnees, extra financial and moral obligation was their pressure, because they had family in the home country and they were able or unable to provide their children with good education. This responsibility also weighed on the shoulders of single returnees. Additionally, the returnees explained that when they were 30 years old and older experiencing difficulties in finding employment because of their age, because vacancies in the newspapers included a maximum age of 35 years and sometimes even of 30 years. The second was the influences of migration experience. It meant that returnees, who stayed in the host countries for a very long time, made a well-considered decision to return to their original countries, this had a positive effect on their social relations. Moreover, they experienced difficulties and they felt relieved once they returned to their home countries. Therefore, the returnees could gain a learning process in which returnees had to adjust to the new environment and had to investigate, try to experience what their possibilities were. Finally, all returnees had received some assistance forms, either from organizations in the host and home country and/or from family. The returnees had for instance received business assistance to start up a business.

They were returnees from England and/or Germany who received assistance through a program from IOM and the Home Office, and/or from the office for repatriation assistance of the Department of Social Affairs in Munich, Germany. These returnees preferred to invest in an already existing business, because they reported that it was less risky owing to the already existing expertise and a business network. Additionally, the amount of money, which was available for business assistance, was not enough to start a business for themselves. Thus, returnees were able to borrow additional money from their family to start their own small business such as a kiosk or a small shop at the local market.

The type of return might affect returnees' occupational status in their country of origin. Furthermore, the duration of the migration experience has also been presented as an explanatory variable of returnees' socio-professional reintegration (Cassarino, 2008). Many returnees stated to have returned more or less voluntary. Their decision was influenced by a lack of opportunities in the host countries and stories about positive changes in the economic and political situation in Vietnam. They therefore expected to have better opportunities in Vietnam. Returnees also explained that staying abroad without their families, they felt lonely, and this played an important role in their decision to return (Kuyper, 2008). Cassarino indicated that people who decided to return to their homeland because of three main factors: The first one was the expectation to enjoy retirement in the homeland, the second was the desire to do business, and the third is nostalgia (Cassarino, 2008). Otherwise, the report of Ruspini (2009) showed that remigration resulted from failure or success. Some migrants came back to their origin countries because they could not integrate or advance in the host country society or simply could not look for jobs. Furthermore, the migrant workers decide to come back home because they finished their contract. Some of them returned unexpectedly because they were out of work since their employers went bankrupt or their hosts died. Some others were forced to return earlier than planned because of other reasons such as health problems, being deported, and fleeing (Kilic *et al.*, 2007).

On the contrary, many researchers also indicated that people return to their homeland to be paralleled with the economic and political aspects (Ruspini, 2009). The socio-professional reintegration constraints supplemented to the abrupt stoppage of the migration cycle and it had a strong impact on the migrants' remigration desire. Actually, there were more than half of the migrants contemplated leaving again; and 32.6% of them replied they had definitely re-emigrated (*ibid*). For instance, Adda showed that labor migrations from Stark & Taylor (1991) used the theory of relative deprivation and arguments of risk spreading to explain why migrants came back to a less rich economy or region. In addition, Adda also showed that return migration could be optimal if the host country currency had a higher purchasing power in the home country, and if there were higher returns in the home economy on human capital acquired in the host country (Adda *et al.*, 2006).

In addition, one important reason is that the 2007–2009 financial crises have had a crucial effect on rural migrants. As a consequence of the economic recession, factories and many companies dismissed thousands of migrant workers from their job (Yen, 2008). According to Ha (2009), it was also explained that the return of employees was due to effect of global economic crisis in the world. Economic declination averagely made 22% of migrant laborers from the cities go back to the rural areas in every province and more than 17% of exported workers had to back to homeland before signed contract. In addition, around 400,000 international and national migrant workers lost their jobs during this period in Vietnam (Occupation Bureau- Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs, 2009). These people often returned to their home communities. Furthermore, the migrant workers returned home because of polluted working place and under pressure of working hours. Trade Unions played a less important role representing the rights of workers also (Thanh, 2008). Finally, according to (Tien, 2010) many employees tended to

"return" home to work, the main cause was still low incomes, the employees' average salary was from 1.2 to 2.5 million VND/person/ month, but they had to pay boarding house, utilities and the expensive cost of living. Additionally, the employees thought that the cost of living was reduced a half and they did not have to rent boardinghouse. Besides, the support of administrative procedures for the immigrating employees for things such as housing, education, and healthcare has not been paid attention. In particular, the employees have not received housing assistance, and the majority still had to rent the cramped and damp motel room.

2.5 Effects after return migration

2.5.1 The social effects

Social relations were considered very important for social classes, and similarly they were a principle tool in income generation, employment seeking and in the supply of housing (Kuyper, 2008). In his research, he addressed that with the more material function, social relations were crucial in the overall well-being and emotional needs of returnees. As with economic foundation, the range in social networks was broaden. There were returnees who hardly had any social contacts, to returnees who were well embedded in their families and social relations. Returnees in the mid of this range were returnees who had good social relations, but only with a certain group of social contacts, such as their family, or a selective group of friends, in many cases. The returnees thought that they had enough social contacts and their social contacts could help them with material needs.

However, ILO indicated that migration was viewed positively in origin countries not only because it enhanced the economic conditions of migrant families and their communities but also because migration and return have become conduits for new ideas and new ways of doing things, and serves as a window to the outside world (ILO, 2004). For instance, the social costs of labour migration in terms of fractured families and communities were without a doubt at least as significant as those relating to the more measurable economic costs. The effects were almost never gender-neutral. In parts of South Africa, when a man left to work on mines and plantations, the wife totally became the head of a one-parent family. Similarly, in Kerala in India, there were around one million "Gulf wives". On the other hand, when the mother migrates, the consequences for the family could be even more serious. In Sri Lanka, more than half a million women worked in the Gulf and elsewhere. This had many implications for the family and community left behind – particularly for the children. The children of migrant women workers often dropped out of school or found themselves in vulnerable situations of neglect and abuse, including incest. On their return, some women also faced traumatic experiences, such as sexual abuse, violence or family dislocation (ILO, 2004). In the majority of cases this was family and to a lesser extent friends. As it was explained that family relations played an important role for the returnees, because the families provided for returnees housing and the important supports in setting up a business in the homeland. In addition, assets owned by for instance parents or a brother could be helpful to returnees. It gave the family ways to support the returnees (Kuyper, 2008). It was mainly family who made returnees feel safe at home and from whom they received emotional support. It could be concluded that social relations, especially families played the significant importance to returnees.

The returnees said that their social relations could help them with material needs such as finding housing or employment. The majority of migrants who stayed with family and friends were staying with other either Vietnamese, friends they already knew, or people from the Vietnamese community. Through this way, they remained familiar with Vietnamese ways of social interaction and built up a social network that was useful during their time in abroad, but also after return (Kuyper, 2008). His research also indicated that the returnees agreed on the statement 'The social relations I maintained help me to feel more at home'. In addition, returnees

were better trusted by others, because of having a good family background. Again, friends and fellow returnees are also named, but less often than family. Social relations were very important. The returnees explained that there were changes in their social relations with family, former friends, neighbours and people in the community, because of their migration experience.

Additionally, it was difficult to build up new social relations again because of a lack of understanding about why they returned from the side of family, friends, neighbours and people in the community. In other cases it negatively affected both the emotional and material value of social contacts, due to the misunderstanding derived from the lack of trust in the returnees' capacities. This was because the returnee was unable to stay abroad and sent back, when he or she had committed a criminal act. These returnees were looked upon differently in a negative way. However, another scholar indicated that the migrants could experience a diverse range of social support relations in urban destinations. They could access to social supports through the support of someone who was known in the destination, the migrant could borrow money. Additionally, the individuals in whom the returnees believed, they could ask for help in finding a job. The positive influence of social capital was pointed out by the significant, negative odds of returning to the origin linked to migrants' weekly contact with a social support provider (Korinek & Entwisle, 2004). It could be concluded that social relations played an important role to returnees. They were important both for material and for emotional needs.

2.5.2 The economic effects

Return migration, whether temporary or permanent, was able to contribute to decreasing the negative effects of human capital outflows for original countries. Return migration could both enrich the human capital of original countries and contribute to the transfer of technology and of scientific, technical, and economic expertise as well as political, social and cultural exchanges (McKinley, 2008). According to Shinhu, return migration could bring savings and social capital, particularly transnational networks, financial accumulation for investment, transfer of knowledge, and market information into the homeland (Singh, 2003). Its other potential benefits result from capital inflow and productive investment linked with returnees. In terms of financial situation in the original country, when compared with the destination country, 48% of the migrants made decision to return to their country of origin because their financial situation has been improved since their return (Cassarino, 2008). Regarding to highly skilled return migrants in India, they could bring benefits back to their country such as remittances and skills (Singh, 2003). Nevertheless, ILO research on skilled emigration has shown that the net impact of skilled emigration from developing countries was a balance of direct and indirect effects. The most direct effect of skilled emigration was a reduction of human capital stock, which was critical to productivity and economic growth, but it also set in play a number of forces that could promote economic growth through major feedback effects. Return migrants brought back their skills and work experience from abroad, thus boosting productivity. The promise of higher incomes through migration could itself encourage more investment in education, public and private, than might otherwise have been the case. Expatriates who remained abroad contribute funds via remittances. They also transferred knowledge, technology, and investments to countries of origin, which stimulated productivity and economic development (ILO, 2004).

Beside that in origin countries, their nationals abroad could be an important financial source for development, as their remittances could cover family living expenses as well as investment for job creation. Migrants who returned or circulated between sending and receiving countries could also be an important source of new technologies and ideas. When recruitment, remittances, and returns were assembled in a virtuous circle, as in the Indian IT sector, the result could be an important new export industry that also benefited non-migrants (ILO, 2004). There were many returnees who became entrepreneurs (either employers or self-employed) and many who did not after returning to their home countries, using the restricted definition. In Algeria and Tunisia,

entrepreneurs among returnees were more likely to be male in all countries and are on average younger than non-entrepreneurs are. With regard to education, those returnees with high education levels were clearly over-represented among employers in Algeria and Morocco, turned back to the migration, they were those who gained skill and education in the host country (Gubert & Nordman, 2008). The research of Health Bridge Foundation of Canada addressed that many returnees had a better economic situation than before so they could afford more household items, made their living spaces cleaner and more convenient. They also had capital to make gardens, ponds, animal farms, and bought new equipments to expand production activities.

However, after return the returnees also had to face challenges. In the research of Cassarino (2008), it was proven clearly that the return migrants had to face in their country of origin mainly related to administrative constraints, re-adaptation problems and the inefficiency of the Public Healthcare System in the country of origin, especially for those returning to Morocco. On the contrary, the migrants who were forced to come back to the original country report the main difficulties, which mainly related to continuing unemployment in their country of origin, low salaries, difficulties in re-adaptation, and problems with the public authorities of the original countries. Those obstacles partly explained why more than half of the migrants, forced to return showed signs of trouble in their original country. And there were more than 47% of the migrants who were forced to return stated that their financial situation had worsened. This was closely linked with the real constraints, which face migrants after re-migration, as well as with their consequential re-migration desire (Cassarino, 2008). In addition, for return migrant workers return to home country for finished contract or for problem health, etc. The problem was only emerged in the that their income remained as low as before they went abroad due to fact that most of them have not been provided any kind of professional skill training so when they returned, they did not know how to do anything except farming and animal husbandry (HBFC, 2008).

In Vietnam, the initial result of research on return migrant workers in four provinces of An Giang, Binh Thuan, Lang Son and Nam Dinh in Vietnam showed that Nam Dinh had the highest number of employees coming back to the countryside (nearly 40% of the return employees work in the enterprises, and nearly 55% of return employees work in farms). In An Giang province, in the four months of 2009, nearly 30% of exported labor had to return home ahead of time, more than one third of rural laborers who worked in industrial zones were completely lost jobs. The research also indicated that the employments of the migrant workers were unstable. When returning home, they hardly much accumulated both in terms of capital and professional skills (Ha, 2009). In sum, depending on the duration of migration in the host country or in the destination, their employment opportunities and accumulation capacity (knowledge, remittances...), returnees could have success or failure after return to their home country.

2.5.3 The cultural effects

Singh (2003) described that the returnees could transfer social network, information and knowledge when they returned to their home country (Singh, 2003). More generally, the countries that sent a large proportion of their population overseas found that they created a “culture of emigration” which was almost a rite of passage for young people (ILO, 2004). Returnees who stayed in an asylum home while they were abroad explain the contrary. Because they had not been in frequent contact with other Vietnamese, they learned ways of social interaction that helped them in their life in a Western country, but it was unstable when they returned Vietnam. For instance, the returnees reported that they said to have become too direct and that they were not familiar anymore with the Vietnamese way of social interaction. We knew that after return the right way of the social interaction was very crucial in being accepted by others (Kuyper, 2008). ILO indicated that the returnees after return to their homeland were able to experience employment abroad and accumulate knowledge and skill in their work in the

destination. However, Gubert and Nordman, (2008) showed that international migrants returning to Maghreb countries were drawn from a wide spectrum of educational backgrounds. Returnees had higher education, because they took advantage of their overseas stay. Furthermore, the status of employment before and after migration exposed considerable changes between the pre-migration and post-return periods. This increase rose largely because some of those individuals who were wagedworkers prior to migration became employers. This relation between experience abroad and small business development post-return periods was possible because of two reasons.

The first reason was that abroad-accumulated savings were able to contribute to alleviating domestic capital shortage. The second was that overseas working experience could generate new skills and new ideas (Gubert & Nordman, 2008a). Beside achievements, which returnees gained after return they also had impacts on psychology. The return migrants felt marginalized from the local way of life (Cassarino, 2004; Malhamé, 2006). That was because of the duration they spent staying abroad for a long time, and when they returned to the home country they felt difficult to make friendship with other people and feel marginalized or excluded. Moreover, his research also addressed that the absence of ordinary amenities of life such as electricity and water, the lack of public transportation, the lack of urban planning and noise pollution proved difficult to adapt to in the initial stages of the return for the bulk of the respondents.

However, the result of research on the case of return migrant workers in Thai Binh province, in Vietnam, showed that most return migrant workers were reintegrated into the community. It was also reported that the lifestyles of the return migrant workers were not changed. The majority of returnees lived in a harmonious and responsible way. For example, *“They smile quite often and seem more open, polite, and gentle than before, and rarely have quarrels with anyone. That is why we also treat them in a gentler and intimate way than before. How can we treat them differently if they are so nice to us? None of them have signs of showing off.”* The research also indicated that the positive opinions of wives/husbands of migrant workers about their lifestyles after they returned, they were cleaner, tidier, and more polite. Additionally, the returnees also had some improved change in their taste such as house decoration, and well-dressed in appearance (HBFC, 2008). On the other hand, negative aspects were also mentioned. Returning to the home country, the returnees made comparisons between staying abroad and living in the country and they frequently complained about reality. They were affected by various lifestyles of the new culture abroad such as their scantily clothes, having nose rings and naval rings, and less having quarrels and being abusive.

The research also reported that lifestyles of return workers contributed to the changes of the community because they had impacts on their communities such as their politeness, gentleness, solidarity, cheerfulness, and their warm care. This positive factor had a direct effect on customs and lifestyles of communities with a large number of returnees, changed the appearance of localities and created various services and jobs such as hospitality and small businesses. In brief, the return of migrants to the home country definitely contributes to changing themselves and their communities.

2.6 Strategies of returnees in the homeland

Cassarino and other scholars reported that the returnees had diversified strategies to adapt to the situation in their home country after return. Adaptation nicely captured a growing consensus among anthropologists that the nature of men was portrayed neither actively nor passively, but interactive (Graves & Graves, 1974). Cassarino pointed out that the return was largely influenced by the initial incentives of migration as well as by the duration of the stay abroad and specifically by the condition under which the return took place (Cassarino, 2004). The returnees faced difficulties re-adapting to their country of origin because they had to face problematic adaptation in the origin country such as political and economic instabilities (Malhamé, 2006). For migrants

staying for a long time in the host country, after they returned to the origin country, their adaptation to the home country depended on their money, which they accumulated in the stage of migration and the number of years they migrated. With the amount of money, which was saved over years, they were able to do business after return to home country (Gubert & Nordman, 2008). Their research also showed that after remigration, the returnees were not predominantly unemployed or inactive people, but also employed people seeking better living and/or working conditions abroad.

In terms of industry of employment, the migrants returned to broadly similar industrial patterns of employment, in which there were some fewer working in agriculture and construction, some in hotels and restaurants, services and trade (Gubert & Nordman, 2008). Together with this point, another scholar addresses that according to the policy guiding operations of repatriation, and reintegration was to be prepared through a comprehensive development strategy focused on poverty reduction and rural rehabilitation (WB, 1990). In addition, the principle is to support entire rural communities to alleviate poverty rather than earmarking assistance to returnees (Eastmond, 2002). Furthermore, the returnees were able to attain a target level of required savings and skills in order to establish successfully a new business after return (Kilic *et al.*, 2007).

On the other hand, there was research on return migrant reporting that the migrants who had worked in industries as electronics assembly, leather and footwear, textiles and garments, hospitality, carpentry, welding, or construction, a great number of guest workers did not want to resume farming after their return, preferring to leave agriculture to pursue more profitable work. Therefore, they wanted to migrate to other places to find a job again. For instance, this case was cited in (HBFC, 2008), the case of the returnees of Export of Dong Tan commune (Dong Hung county) revealed that migrant workers wanted to go work abroad for the second or even the third term as they find it a far greater chance to improve their family economic situation than working in the country. *"...I returned after working abroad for five years and now I want to leave again because all the savings have been spent on the house construction; also, our children have grown up and they need more money for their study and other expenses. At first, I intended to be back for good, looking after the children and doing housework. However, my hosts want me to return and promise to help me with the procedures. The hosts are kind and the job is not hard, so I think I should not miss the chance, I should go there for a few more years while I am still healthy; if so, I will be able to afford my children's study and ensure them good employment in the future."* (Woman, 39, having been in Taiwan for two terms and going to be back for the third term) (HBFC, 2008). Some returnees explained that their economic situations after coming back home was bad and they were not able to live with the income from farm work, particularly when crops were damaged by mice or harmful insects, thus they decided to go work abroad for seeking jobs. According to Ha (2009), the number of return migrant workers coming back home from foreign countries (22%) and from the city (11%) was high. Moreover, not all of them could find jobs. Mostly, they were still waiting for new employment opportunities in the city. Although the rice production and vegetables were maximized to three rice crops or to four vegetable crops a year, but there were not jobs enough for the returnees because they were too many (Ha, 2009).

In summary, the livelihood strategies of the returnees after coming back to home country were very various. It could be sated that their employment after return depended on the real situation in their homeland. In addition, it was depended on current conditions of the returnees, so they had different strategies being backed home. If the return migrant workers had a good savings from the migration duration in the host countries or in the work destinations, they were able to invest in business in the source country or in their homeland. Otherwise, if the returnees had disadvantage conditions in the work places or in the host countries as mentioned the above, after

they came back home, they faced difficulties in the home country or in their home village or they would choose migration to another place to maintain and improve their income.

2.7 Policies for return migrant workers

Today, return migrants have increasingly characterized by transnational networks, reflecting new migration circumstances that have been developing at the beginning of the 21st century (De Souza, 2006). Most of return migrants were increasingly the young, who were exported workers in the host countries and internal return migrant workers in IZs or in farms. The return migration included both of the skilled and unskilled return migrants. The skilled return migrants were poised to become more important to local government policy. Moreover, they held the potential to help build global networks, forge further links between sending and receiving countries, and directly contribute to development efforts. According to the International Organization for Migration (ILO) in the 1990s, a program of "Migration for Development" was implemented in several countries in Africa and Eastern Europe. Country officials have instituted innovative policy strategies to reach out to this skilled migrant pool. For instance, China and the Republic of Korea persuaded the expatriate researchers back home in order to concentrate high-tech industries or science-related businesses. The governments of the countries have implemented policies to facilitate the long-term re-entry of migrants. For instance, since 1993 the government of Jamaica has been working in order to identify re-entry problems, to reduce red tape, and to propose solutions to common bureaucratic constraints, which returnees faced. Moreover, other policies targeted overseas workers. In the Philippines, for example, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration of the government supports an intergovernmental agency referral system, which was called the Replacement and Monitoring Center. This Center offered returnees job placement services, skills training, livelihood programs, and job opportunity assessments, and gave employers a database of skilled migrant workers. Return migrants have also been encouraged to spend or invest in their homelands, frequently through partnerships with the government and the private sector. In Guyana, for example, the Guyana Office for Investment was established in 1994 in order to attract and facilitate increase in investment to fuel through efficient and effective investor services.

Also following the research of ILO 2004, it was considered that the status of Vietnamese migrant workers mainly exported workers. Before leaving abroad, the migrant workers were allowed to borrow from the banks a certain amount of money with a very soft rate of interests, in order to give them easy condition that they could afford enough money for needed expenditures before departure. These workers were also given opportunity to attend the vocational training courses to improve their technologies, professional skill, to learn English and to study the law, the practices as well as the habits and customs of receiving country. After some years of working abroad, when their labor contracts ended, the workers return home, they were encouraged to use their capital for investment and production. Such doings had a significant role in generating jobs, reducing unemployment, especially in the far distance and remote rural areas. Therefore, the poverty was reduced gradually. Those who gained remarkable achievements and did not violate the law of the original country as well as of the destination country will be offered a new labour contract after finishing the old one.

Regarding the support policy of Vietnam Government for the jobless employees, who lose their jobs due to economic downturn and the businesses, which failed by effect of global economic crisis in the new context, the Government has launched the major support, involving if the entrepreneurs were unable to pay wages to the employees, the State might lend funds to pay to employees (An, 2009). According to Tien (2010), the Government of Vietnam was currently developing policies on development of investment in rural areas, and remote regions, programs of poverty reduction... and there were many incentive taxes to stimulate businesses to invest in these areas. The entrepreneurs paid wages to the employees equivalent to common salary level in

the industrial zones, so this program attracted return employees working at home. For example, the average income of workers in the Thai Nguyen Textile Company was 1.8 million VND per month. He presented that there are many return employees before going back home to work.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This part is a short description of how the research was carried out to collect information in the study site in O Lam village.

There were many researches on migration and return migration, which were analyzed in the context of international migration, in which the workers migrated from the origin country to host country and they returned from the host country to the country of origin. However, within the context of Vietnam, the remigration issues of the poor migrant labourers have taken place in many rural communes in the country. However, there has not been research on internal return migration, especially internal return migration in Vietnam. The return of migrant workers to rural areas will concentrate on a specific context of Khmer migrant workers returning to O Lam village Tri ton district, An Giang province. This study was conducted in order to identify three main issues. The first reason was mentioned in the above part is the particular situation of the O Lam village. Many of the poor Khmer people left their home village to the cities and other destinations to find jobs in order to maintain their income source for themselves and for their families, but it was clear that many people returned to their home village. Thus, indentifying the reasons why the poor Khmer migrant workers returned to their home village was one of the goals of the study. Secondly, the remigration of these poor Khmer migrant workers had effects on themselves and their families, economically, socially and culturally. Finally, this study also found strategies, which the Khmer migrant employees used to re-adapt their lives in the home villages, and paralleled with those strategies, the villagers who have remained in the village adapt to the return migrants. A brief description of support policies of the government would be analyzed to understand whether the support policies played an important role to the Khmer returnees' in their adaptation strategies.

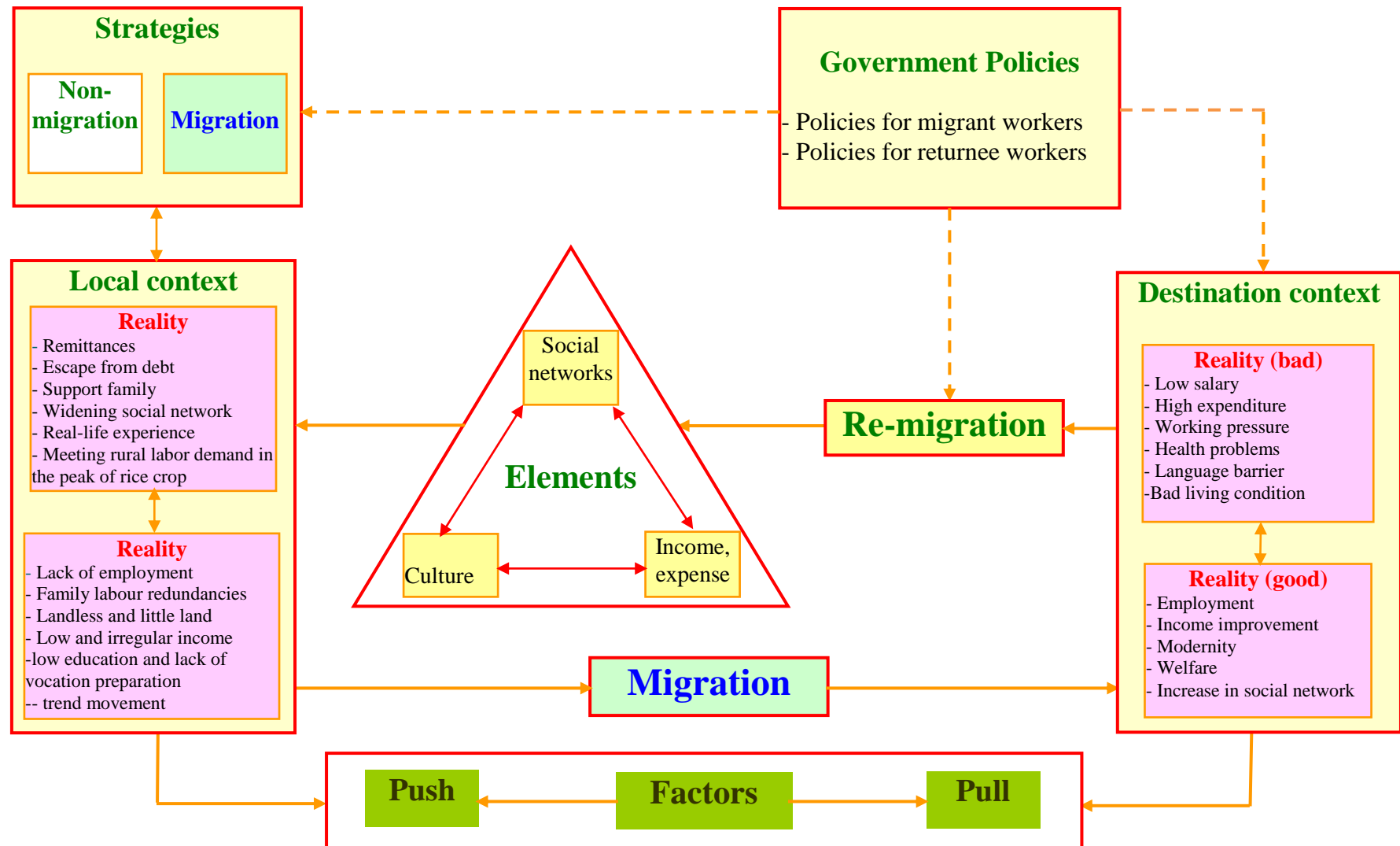
Regarding the effects of the return of Khmer migrant employees, the study focused on effects on three capitals including economic capital, social capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this part, I would like to give a brief description of the reasons why this theory was applied in this study. This theory was designed through the combined process among collecting information in initial survey in the research site – O Lam village, reading reference books on migration researches within Vietnam and in other countries, and together with the instruction of the advisors. For economic capital, it is represented by money, property, etc (Rechardsons, 1986). In this study, it was concentrated on information of the return migrant workers' income and expenditure situation during the migration process and after return home, and information of all income resources of the households from income generation activities (agricultural production, livestock, hired labour...) (Santasombat, 2002), and expenditure (Brauw & Harigaya, 2007), and to know why these returnees could save money and why others were unable.

In reality, individuals and groups used a diversity of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic resources in order to maintain and increase their positions in the social strata. These resources as well as capitals had a mutual interaction of power. Social capital could be seen as one of the several resources used to obtain or maintain positions of power as the networks and norms (Ellis, 2003), acquaintances, contacts and trust which constituted the resources required for individuals, workplaces, groups, organisations and communities to strive for sustainable futures in a changing socio-economic environment (Santasombat, 2002). In the case, the return migrant labourers came back to their home villages from the cities; they were not only affected by the shortage of income sources and increase in expense due to temporary or completely jobless, but

also by affected social networks. The social networks included family, kinship, friendship, neighbourhood, acquaintance and the relationship between returnees and villagers and local authorities and networks of alliances. These capitals are examined in the context of Khmer return migrant workers in O Lam village in order to know how the remigration of the migrant employees affect their social networks under the happening and advantages of mutual interaction among these relations. Brettell (2000) pointed out that social network theory also sheds some useful light on both the 'network mediated' return of returnees and on their adaptation process (Brettell, 2000). In reality, access to jobs and income in the labour market depended not only on cultural capital in the form of educational credentials, work experiences, and skills, but also social capital in the form of networks of family, kinship, friends, acquaintances, and contacts and we had to consider a wide spectrum of factors affecting the possibilities and potentialities of return on family relation, kin networks, neighbourhood, friendship and relationship with local authority in improvement or limitation of households' income pre- and post-return, based on the frequent level of relation. Therefore, those interactions would create the opportunities for the returnees in the rural areas to find jobs or not. However, Recharadsons (1986) indicated that different types of capitals had their own specificity, but they could derive from economic capital (Recharadsons, 1986).

Besides effects of the return of the migrant employees on economic situation and social networks, cultural capital was also mentioned. According to Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992), cultural capital includes three forms, embodied, objectified or institutionalized. In this study, however, cultural capital included elements such as knowledge, skills and work experience, and working habit and recreation. The cultural element also played an important role in the life of Khmer migrant workers. Together with the combination of other economic and social indicators, it indirectly allowed evaluation of various aspects underlying re-migration decisions. Cultural value would be embedded in symbolic values. Symbolic capital could be referred as socially recognized legitimization and also as the resources available to an individual on the basis of honor, prestige or recognition, behavior and functions as an authoritative embodiment of cultural value (Santasombat, 2002). This capital was closely related to cultural forms. This capital was a form of social competition. In this study, the expression of religious belief and lifestyles in Khmer returnees' daily life would be observed and described to recognize the returnees' economic strength after coming back to the home community. In this study, the indicators which were mentioned above would be evaluated by the perceptions of the Khmer return migrant employees. The outcomes which were achieved by classification of "increase", "decrease" or "better" were mostly based on the perception and evaluation of Khmer return migrant employees and inhabitants in the village. Therefore, it was not an absolute assessment.

Figure 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the empirical study of Khmer return migrant workers in O lam village, Tri Ton district, An Giang province, this research was conducted during two phases between June and August of 2009, and between November and January of 2010. The study investigates the socio-economic effects of re-migration to rural areas on the returnees' households after the workers came back to their home village.

3.1 Research Site

In any case study, the choice of case is one of the greatest significance for the possibility of generalizing theories and identifying general categories. Based on this assumption, I selected O Lam village as my research site.

Among thirteen provinces of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, An Giang is a riverhead province in the Southwest region. This province was considered the biggest province in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, with 35,360 square kilometers of total natural areas, including nine districts, one town (Chau Doc) and one city (Long Xuyen) with the 154 communes, wards and towns. The total population of An Giang was about 2.2 million of people (cited in Statistical Yearbook of An Giang province, 2008). An Giang province borders with Dong Thap, Kien Giang, Can Tho provinces and Cambodia with the borderline over 95 km. An Giang was also considered a province which had the high density of population in the Mekong with 636 people/km² (12.7%) (GSO, 2008)², and the rate of the poor households³ in An Giang province was relatively high (7%) compared with the whole Mekong Delta (12.3%). In An Giang, there is more than 70% of population living in the rural areas, and their livelihoods mainly based on agricultural sector. The main economic activities of An Giang have been mainly based on agricultural production and aquaculture. The province situates in the tropical region and has monsoon climate. The average temperature was about 27°C. There are two seasons separately: the dry and the rainy seasons. The rainy season lasts from May to November, and the dry season from December to April. This condition facilitated advantages for development in agricultural production and aquaculture...

Furthermore, the province has four main ethnic groups who have been living in An Giang province: Kinh, Khmer Cham, and Hoa (Chinese), in which Kinh group is the biggest. These four ethnic groups have lived there for long time and have a rich cultural diversity. Besides that, there has been mutual exchange of labor force among these communities. At present, An Giang province has had more than 240,111 households of ethnic minority with

² GSO, 2008: *General Statistic Office in Vietnam in Vietnam*

³ *The poor households: the poverty was measured basing on the consumer price index (CPI). In Vietnam, poverty line has been adjusted to five times in 1993, 1997, 1998, 2001 and 2005. The poverty line of Vietnam was promulgated in 2005 (Decision No. 170/2005/QĐ-TTg on 8-7-2005 by the Prime Minister), and has been applied for the period 2006-2010. The poverty line was calculated based on expenditure needs for food (food needs) per capita per day to ensure there are 2,100 kcal (it must be based on survey results of expense needs of 48 kinds of food, food of poor households to calculate and convert into money) expense needs for food account for 60% of the total of spending needs and for non-food expenditure needs, food (clothing, housing, healthcare, education, culture, travel and social interaction) constituted about 40% of the total expenditure needs. To facilitate the review and cost savings, identify poor households in local establishments, the poverty line was calculated by converting income of households per capita with 200,000VND/person/month for the rural areas and 260,000VND/person/month for urban areas.*

114,632 people, accounting for 5.17% of population of the whole province, in which there were approximately 19,374 Khmer households with 86,592 people, accounting for 75.54% compared with all ethnic groups in An Giang and accounting for 3.9% of the whole population in the province. There were 91,82% of Khmer people living in two mountainous districts of Tinh Bien and Tri Ton. The remaining Khmer people were distributed in some districts such as Chau Phu, Chau Thanh, and Thoai Son. Regarding poverty rate, this district has the relatively high poverty rate (18.26%), of which there are 5,643 *poor households*⁴ with 25,957 poor people, while the poverty rate of the whole province is 6.96% according to the Statistical Yearbook of An Giang province in 2008. Generally, the main income source of the Khmer people was mainly based on agricultural production such as growing rice, vegetables, watermelon, aquaculture exploitation, growing tobacco and traditional handicraft production, raising family animal husbandry, and they took employment such as seasonal hired labour (Nghị, 2008).

Tri Ton is one of two mountainous border districts with the biggest natural area (597.6 km²) and the relatively scattered population of 127,240 people. Tri Ton district is far from Long Xuyen city around 52 km in the West. It is bordered with Chau Thanh and Thoai Son districts in the East, with Tinh Bien district in the west, with Cambodia in NorthWest, and with Kien Giang province in the South. There are two towns and thirteen communes in the district. Among 19,374 Khmer households was mentioned above, there are approximately 8,417 poor households³ equivalent to 39,371 people.

Since 2000 to 2007 (Binh, 2008) An Giang province had a high rate of rural-urban migration, especially to Ho Chi Minh city and Long Xuyen City... and provinces with large industrial zones such as Binh Duong, Dong Nai, and Long An. In these destinations, economic opportunities had attracted rural people who had low income and little land or were landless in the countryside. According to the information from the Office of Labour, Invalids and Social Associations of Tri Ton district in the preliminary survey of 2009, in 2008 and the first months of 2009 there were 2,283 migrant labourers including Kinh people and minority ethnic groups in the whole of Tri Ton district. These people were supported in seeking employment in and out of An Giang province through local associations such as Center for Employment Recommendation, Women's Union, Farmer's Union, Youth Union, and Department of Labour, Invalid and Social Association at district and commune levels (Report of Tri Ton district, the first 6 months, 2009). The rest of the labour force was free labourers who spontaneously found jobs by themselves and by friendship, kinship and neighbor relation. According to the local authority of Tri Ton district, most of employment seekers who were introduced by associations in the district were young labourers of 15 to 25 years old. These labourers were introduced to work in the companies and factories within and out of An Giang province.

However, in the first 6 months of 2009, the whole district had 961 jobless returnees, and there were three communes having the highest number of jobless returnees: Le Tri (196), Chau Lang (164), and O Lam (144). In Le Tri village, there were 94 Khmer return labourers and 102 Kinh returnees. In Chau Lang village, the number of return workers

⁴ *Poor households in Tri Ton district were recognized basing on the consumer price index (CPI) under the Decision No. 170/2005/QĐ-TTg on 8-7-2005 by the Prime Minister. The poverty line was calculated by converting income of households per capita with 200,000VND/person/month for the rural areas and 260,000VND/person/month for urban areas. In O Lam village, the poor household was recognized owing to the following indicator. The poor has total income under 200,000VND per month. This income comprises of all sources such as agricultural practice, animal husbandry, and hired labour...*

including both Kinh and Khmer workers amounted to 43 Kinh labourers and 123 Khmer respectively. Although O Lam was a village which had a number of returnees ranking the third after two villages Le Tri and Chau Lang, O Lam was selected as research site because of some reasons following. Firstly, all labour returnees were Khmer people. Secondly, this village had the high poverty rate accounting for 25.34% compared with 18.25% of the poverty rate of the whole district (according to statistic data of the district in 2008). Internal capacity source of O Lam *village*⁵ was limited. Most of the population in this village was Khmer people accounting for 97.3%, and the rest of population was Kinh people. Mostly, the livelihoods of the Khmer in this village depended on agricultural production (growing rice and vegetables and livestock, and seasonal employment as hired labour). Besides that petty trading was also their subsistence, but it is not much in the village. The educational background of local people, especially migration labour force was low, and this labour force of the village has not trained vocational skills. Most residents were at workable age and unskilled labourers. Furthermore, another critical reason deriving from my curious thinking and stimulating me to select this research site was that O Lam village had poor condition including capacity of human resource, lack of employment in the village and natural condition. Thus, many Khmer people migrated to other places to search for jobs. However, after working some time in their destinations, a large number of Khmer workers returned to their home. Finally, and this reason seems only a comment dictated by feeling, but very important was that the behavior of staffs in O Lam village was recognized as friendlier than in two other villages which were visited in preliminary survey. The staffs were very enthusiastic in supporting and providing secondary information. Therefore, O Lam was selected as research site.

O Lam is a mountainous village of Tri Ton district, An Giang province. This village comprises of six *hamlets*⁶: Phuoc An, Phuoc Binh, Phuoc Lap, Phuoc Loi, Phuoc Long, and Phuoc Tho. The whole village has 4,251 ha of agricultural land areas, in which there are 3,461 ha with two rice crops per year and 790 ha with one rice crop or one vegetable crop per year. Due to its particular location situated in the mountainous area, local people can grow one rice crop or a vegetable crop (mainly peanut, sesame, sweet potato, and water melon) a year in “ruong tren” area – this land area was located near mountain without irrigation, people only grew one crop a year, so cultivation mainly belonged to the rain-fed system. People could also cultivate two rice crops a year mainly in “ruong bung” area – the land area located in the plain with better irrigation system. People grew two kinds of main local rice varieties “Than Nong” and “Nang Nhen”. These kinds of variety were local rice with high quality, but low productivities. Besides that local people have not applied new cultivation techniques in production, so the rice yield has not been high. Generally, the Khmer were allocated land in 2005 with average 0.3 ha per household under the Decision No. 134/2004/QĐ-TTg, date July, 20th 2004, so-called program 134 which was about “several support policies for production land, land for living, housing, clean water for poor ethnic minority households with difficult life”.

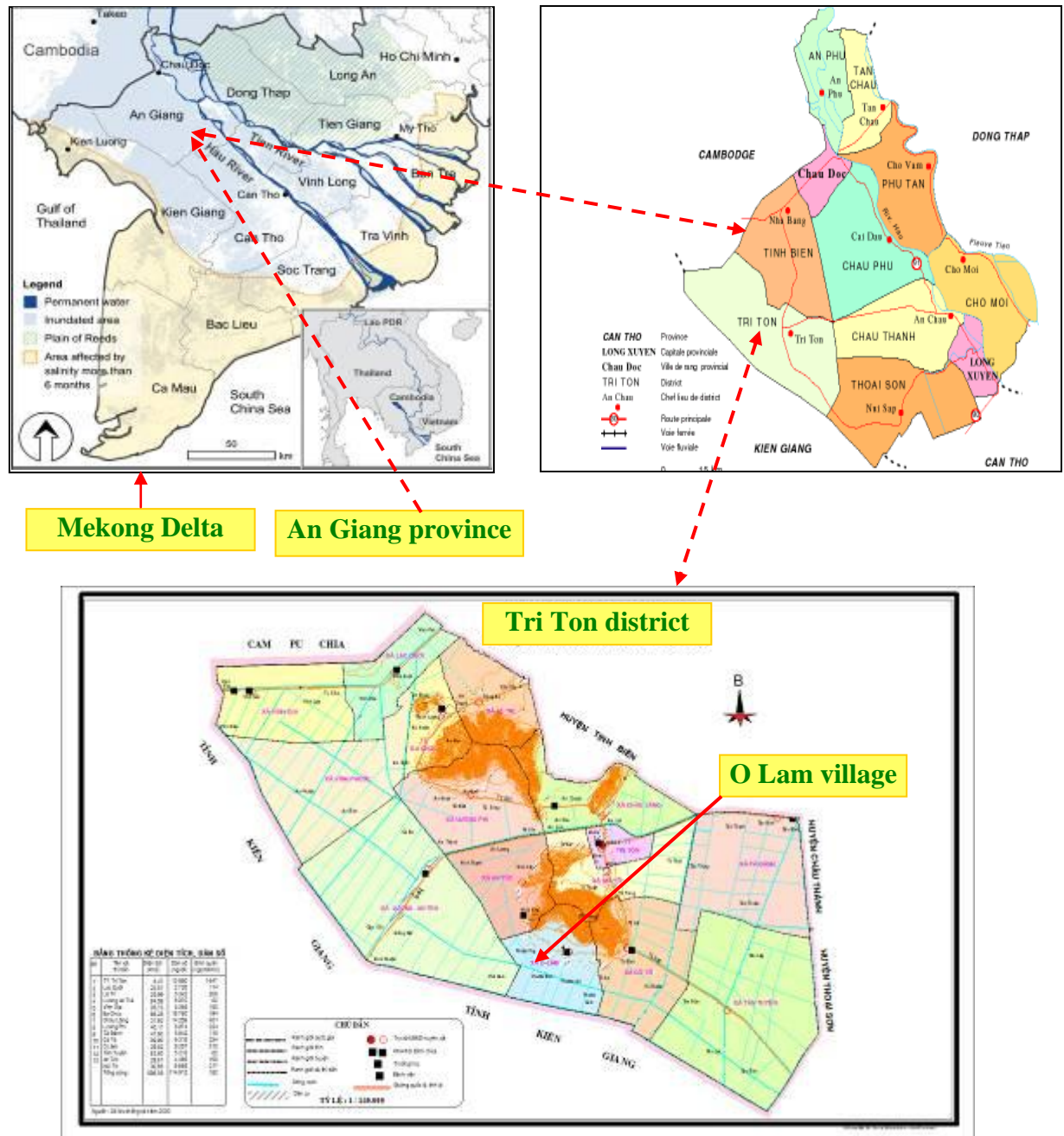
⁵ The term “village”, or “Xa” in Vietnamese, was used in this research to refer to the level of comprehensively governmental administration in the Mekong Delta; with Xa often referred to as a “commune”, derived from its usage in the north of Vietnam. Below this level there are several “Ap”, which refer to hamlets in Vietnamese. It is the lowest level of administrative unit. In this case study, I focus on O Lam village, which is at the commune level.

⁶ Hamlet: Below the level of village there are several hamlets, which refer to “Ap” in Vietnam. It is the lowest level of administrative unit.

In the end of 2008, there were 2,291 poor ethnic minority households in Tri Ton district. O Lam village, one of the poorest mountainous villages of Tri Ton district, with 97.3% of population were Khmer people in the whole commune, and had 815 poor Khmer households and 150 households near the threshold of the poverty line. Average income per capita of Khmer people in Tri Ton and Tinh Bien was around 292,000 to 333,000 VND/person/month, equal to 3.5 – 4 million VND/person per year. Especially the poor Khmer household had low income, average under 120,000VND/person per month in rural areas, and under 150,000 VND/person per month in urban areas. The causes leading to the poverty of the Khmer people in O Lam were lack of capital, lack of knowledge and skills in livelihood improvement. Moreover, the majority of the poor households lack of land for production. Although they owned their land before, but there were 548 household who mortgaged their land to other households. Furthermore, due to increase in population year by year, many young couples had little land or were landless in the village. Lack of rural employment was also a serious problem in the village. The poor households are often those who had many children, low income and landless or little land. They not only have low education and shortages of living conditions such as lack of electricity, running water, and lack of TV, but also lack knowledge of sanitation issue. Therefore, life of Khmer people in this village still faced difficulties.

Regarding the situation of economy and social culture of the Khmer people in the South of Vietnam in general, according to De (2003) - the research result of the AusAID project about poverty of Khmer people in Mekong Delta in 2003 indicated concisely. Firstly, in terms of economic aspect, Khmer people in Mekong Delta had not developed due to some following reasons. Mostly Khmer people have only income source from agricultural production, although in the same situation with the Kinh people, this income source from agricultural production did not bring much profit to farmers. Moreover, the area of production land was small and topographical condition for living as well as for production was difficult as Khmer people have not adapted to and involved in the market economy. The Khmer farmers have not understood about new technologies of cultivating and animal husbandry and they usually practice according to their experience and traditional technique. Besides that, the Khmer people also lack the information of the market in product consumption. They also have not adapted to competition law in the market and a number of their goods produced not much. Thus the economy of Khmer people has not developed. Secondly, it is about the culture of the Khmer people in terms of language. The Khmer people were known as an ethnic minority in Vietnam, thus their language was used to communicate within their community. Mostly Khmer people could not communicate in Vietnamese.

Figure 2. Maps of research site



3.2 Data Collection

This study aims to determine the social and economic effects of re-migration on the returnees after coming back the original village among voluntary return migrants. The research subject is thus voluntary re-migration of workers in the case of Khmer migrant people in O Lam commune, Tri Ton District, An Giang province, Vietnam. As this research only focused on two types of return migrants (seasonal and short-term return migration) and the villagers – non-migrants, it can compare effects among return migrants and non-migrants. However, with background information on the general situation of the

origin village, the results can still be put into a broader perspective.

The research was conducted in one village - O Lam village, Tri Ton District, An Giang province, Vietnam, with the case of Khmer migrant people in four hamlets, namely Phuoc Long, Phuoc Loc, Phuoc Tho and Phuoc An. In this research, the process of data collecting was divided into two fieldwork trips. The first fieldtrip was carried out from June to August of 2009. The second was conducted from November of 2009 to February of 2010. At the beginning, the statement of the research problem was identified and selected as the research site also. Two villages (Ta Danh and O Lam) were chosen. Ta Danh is a village represented for Kinh people, and O Lam is a village represented for Khmer people. However, the final decision was that O Lam village was selected as a unique research site. O Lam village consists of six hamlets as mentioned in introduction part of research site. Although research issue of the study covered all six hamlets of the village, the research was only carried out in four hamlets: Phuoc Loc, Phuoc Long, Phuoc Tho and Phuoc Loi, because time was limited. In the second fieldwork, the research subjects were selected and methods and tools were applied to carry out the research in the reality. However, in this stage there were several changes in the study. Firstly, there was change of research subjects; instead of paying much attention to return migrant workers going back home due to the force of companies' failure. Secondly was a little bit change in research objectives and research questions to fit with the practical. Finally was the change in classifying as well as confirming migration types in the research site. In reality, data collection for social science studies was very complicated, and that the data and information collected at different levels might be interrelated; therefore, a number of data collection techniques were applied at the same time, in order to obtain information at different levels. The result of the research was described by qualitative data collecting including group discussions and in-depth interviews with returnees, villagers and stakeholders.

To investigate income generation activities of local people (villagers and return migrant labourers) in the village and changes in their daily life according to three stages: before migration, during migration and post-return migration - after the migrant workers return to their old village, and their desire as well as adaptation strategies to make a living in the future, different types of data and information needed to be collected. Moreover, various methodologies and data collection techniques also had to be applied.

First of all, secondary data were also collected from already existing sources, particularly from the statistics unit of the People's Committee as well as other institutions, for comparison and cross-checking purposes. However, due to the fact that the migrants move to and move back the home village many times in a year, thus migration phenomenon in this village was very complicated. This practical causes a difficulty for local authorities in population management in the village. Therefore, the local authority could not know exactly a number of migrants who migrated to the cities as well as to the urban areas. The village authority only had name list of migrant workers who asked signature permission through signing their job application letters and they came back home with 144 return workers. However, in reality, the numbers of returnees were much more than that. In addition to secondary data, an ethnographic approach was basically applied during my research. Participant observation as a part of field research is one of the most demanding and the most common ethnographic approach. This is also the important way for gathering data through observing daily lives of local people, particularly daily income generation activities of Khmer returnees in the village, behaviors expressed through style, talking ... The researcher entered in the context, role of the researcher as a participant, the collection

and storage of field notes, and the analysis of field data. Through that in order to understand how re-migration to rural areas has effects on Khmer people's everyday lives in the home village.

Furthermore, a number of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques were used, such as group discussion in combination with seasonal calendar, ranking, Venn diagram and case study as well as the recording of oral history of the returnees to discover information from the different actors in the village.

+ **Seasonal calendar:** this tool was applied in the research in order to explore and show the sequences of events, culture and even though the income generation activities of the return migrants in order to support their lives in the village. In addition, it could be showed how people spend their leisure time. The respondents would be asked about their frequent activities that they joined and happened within a year with specific duration.

+ **Ranking:** this tool was used to prioritize problems or activities identified by the community. Respondents were firstly asked to identify their main problems, which were listed and given number of candy. Each person has maximum ten candies. This method compares in a systematic way, the listed problems, or activities with each other. Only one person ranked at a time, and the participants took turns. This process was repeated until all people in the group finished their ranking. The participants gave a number of candies to each item. By counting how many candies that item had received in total, one could identify its significance. The items were then ranked according to the numbers of candies, as well as what kinds of employment the returnees chose to maintain their livelihoods after coming back home. The ranking reflected the most important problems in the life of return migrants.

+ **Venn diagram:** Venn diagrams were used to describe the importance of the relation between return migrants and their social relationships (friends, kinship, neighbor, and other relations/acquaintances). The first group of ten people was asked to list the names of organizations and relationships, which they have a close relationship and who have played an important role in the community to them. Paper of different sizes was transferred to the respondents and they were asked to refer to each institution and relationship with a circle paper in such a way that the size of circle reflected the importance of the organization or individual. The most important organizations were referred to the largest circles and the less important by the less large circle according to the ranking done. After identifying the importance of each organization, the respondents were asked to place these circles at a distance from their house in the village. The distance of each paper from the house reflected the closeness of the relation between them and organization/other relationships in the community. The closer the distance or overlapping of the paper was, the closer the relations were. Furthermore, that relationship or organization was the most important for the returnees to help them to maintain sustenance.

Together with PRA technique, in-depth interview was applied with key informants such as the chairmen of provincial and district Department of Labour, Invalid and Social Association, Women's Union of the village, Department of Labour and Employment Solution at commune level, the leaders of selected hamlets. The aim of this tool is to obtain information on the type of work that associations undertook in the field of return in specific context, as well as an overview of the most information on the general situation in the province, especially in the village.

Furthermore, in-depth interview was also applied in order to collect information from residents and return migrant workers across the four research hamlets in the village. In-depth interview is a more personal form of research than questionnaires. In the personal interview, the respondents were interviewed directly. The answers of the interviewees were explored and followed-up, especially with any contingency. In addition, interviews were generally easier for the respondents, especially what was sought as opinions or impressions. This technique was used in order to better understand the life history of the returnee as well as their situation during migration process and after they came back home to the village. The selected interviewees in my study are internal migrants or inter-regional migrant labourers in Vietnam, returning to the home village.

Finally, literature was applied during the process of writing thesis to make arguments during the report.

3.3 Sample size and criteria for selecting samples

This study was mostly qualified as a descriptive study. In total, three group discussions were conducted including one group of non-migration (12 participants), and two groups of migration: seasonal migrants (15 participants) and short-term migrants (10 participants). For non-migration, twelve of male and female labourers in O Lam village were invited, these Khmer labourers were those who are poor and landless or have little land (Table 1). They were the young, the middle age, and the older labour. All of them were at the working age from 18 to 60 years old for the man and from 18 to 55 for the woman. Besides that, fifteen Khmer seasonal return migrant workers were also invited. These seasonal returnees included the male and female labourers who returned from the different destinations. They were also in the poor households being landless or having little land. They were the young, the middle age, and the older labour. Moreover, all of them were at the working age. However, some of them were younger than 18 years old, about 15 years old, because all male and female who were allowed to have Identification (ID) card at the age of 15. All of the participants in group discussions and in-depth interviews were in both nuclear and extended families.

Together with group discussions, a total of twenty-five Khmer returnees within the study site were randomly selected as the target population of the study and were invited to in-depth interview. The number of returnee respondents and the number of participants joined in group discussion in the village were shown (Table 2). Among six non-migrants in the village, they were poor villagers in the households with landless and little land and including the young, the middle, and the older labour. Similarly to those non-migrant respondents, the return migrant workers including seasonal and short-term migrants who were representative for groups of labour remigration from different occupation and working places were interviewed. These returnees were in the nuclear and extended families. They also were in the poor households with little land and landless in the village. They returned from the different companies in different worksites. All Khmer respondents who were randomly selected were male and female, at the age of 15 to 56. Among nineteen returnees, there were ten interviewees coming back home due to seasonal crops, and nine people coming back home due to the fact that they could not adapt to the working conditions in the city, so they could migrate to work less than three months (short term migration). Besides that, returnees in the research site chosen were based on the following criteria:

i) Both of return migrant workers and inhabitants in this study were the Khmer poor people who were landless or had little land for agricultural production.

ii) Migration group is classified based on types of migration: seasonal and short-term migration, workers had left their home village for seeking jobs and they came back from the cities or other places in Vietnam as a voluntary migrant.

iii) This criterion required that the returnees were able to remember the entire migration period as well as his or her full migration story from the beginning onward, even though it took place a long time ago.

iv) An additional criterion was that returnees were those who migrated to the cities or urban areas at least one month and then came back original village.

Table 1. Number of group discussions in the village

Types of migration	Number of participants
Non-migration	12
Seasonal migration	15
Short term migration	10
Total:	37

Table 2. Number of respondents in in-depth interview in the village

Types of migration	Number of interviewees
Non-migration	6
Seasonal migration	10
Short term migration	9
Total:	25

During in-depth interviews with various groups of return migrant workers, actual circumstances of each group of return migrant workers were recognized as complex issues because of two reasons. Firstly, they worked for different companies as well as different places. Even though the returnees worked for the same type of company but they belonged to different kind of migration. For example, with workers in a Construction Company, there were two groups leaving the village to the city for finding job in this company, one group worked as seasonal migrant workers, the other one worked without return due to seasonal crops. Secondly, the returnees were of various ages, including the youth, the married labourers (the middle age returnees) and the old. Therefore, in-depth interviews also followed up these groups. Together with in-depth interview, case studies were enclosed. Each case study of a specific individual was expressed in specific context in my research. Based on the general theme questions applied to ask the return migrants, the information was recorded and followed up in order to explore more information from specific cases as typical examples for each specific case. The table 3 shows the samples, which were selected during the research.

The questionnaire used in this study was generally subject questions and the respondents would be asked and followed up with three phases. The content of the questionnaire will be enclosed below:

Table 3. Three phases of returnee's life story

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Before leaving the original village	Duration migration to urban areas	Return to the original village
		Post-return conditions
1. Occupation status	1. Reasons for leaving the home village;	1. Reasons for return
2. Family conditions	2. Occupation and destination	2. Who decided to return
3. Income and expenditure situation	3. Income and expenditure	3. Effects on their households
4. Social relationships	4. Social network	4. Occupation
5. Culture and recreation	5. Culture and recreation	5. Income and expenditure
6. Who makes decision for migration	6. Education and skills	6. Feeling
7. Type of household before leaving;	7. Social relationships	7. Social relationships
8. Education and skills	8. Living condition	8. experiences and knowledge
	9. Feeling	9. Plans/strategies for post-return and expectation after return.
		10. Policies for returnees

3.4 Problem Analysis

After all data collected from different sources such as secondary data, literature, group discussion, individual surveys via in-depth interviews and key informant interviews, and the participants observation will be analyzed. These data were used for analyzing changes within three capitals (economic, social, and cultural) as well as influences on local livelihoods, social relations and perception or experiences of the returnees after back home village. After the returnees came back their home village, the adaptation strategies were described. Furthermore, the information of support policies for both the returnees and villagers would be mentioned.

Based on all data I collected during the interviews, I grouped them into different types of remigration such as seasonal migration, short term migration and medium migration and in order to identify effects on the way they making a living, see why households pursuit those strategies, opportunities as well as challenges to maintain their livelihoods. This classification provided information on the diversity and complexity of local livelihood strategies, as well as the interaction among them. Furthermore, applying a theoretical background in the exploring collected data also helped me to discover the dynamism of local livelihoods and strategies in the future.

3.5 Limitations of the study

When this research was conducted, the first difficulty, which I had to face, was that the local authority could not have information on the exact number of migrant workers in the village, because the local staffs only took note of those who they introduced to employment, and those migrant workers who wanted to apply for a job in the city and, brought the job application letter to the chairman of the village to ask for signature and seal. The majority of migrant workers spontaneously migrated to the city or urban areas to seek for jobs, these migrant workers could search for job without introduction of the local staffs, thus the local staffs could not update the number of migrant workers in the village.

Although the migration phenomenon in practice was very complicated, I tried to classify

the types of migration in the village by basing on the real situation. It was difficult to make a convincing distinction between the long-term migration and medium migration, because the duration of migration of the medium migrant was about three months to fourteen months. The migrant workers who worked in the companies in the short time at least one month to three months was called the short-term migration.

In addition, the findings of the study did not necessarily represent the entire return population within the studied village. A reason for this was due to language barrier, as directly communicating with certain returnees was very difficult, so translator needed to interpret the information between the interviewers and respondents. Therefore, the interview took more time. Finally, although at the beginning of the interviews, research purposes and position of the researcher were explained clearly to interpreters, there was a misunderstood issue that the respondents considered the researcher as a governmental officer who came to the village to introduce employment.

3.6 Thesis Organization

This report consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the research problems, objectives, and research questions. The following chapter introduces literature review and the theoretical framework of the research. The third chapter shortly sets out the research site and the research methodology of the study. The fourth chapter presents the results, and discusses the main findings that are supported by the qualitative data, followed by a conclusion in the final chapter.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this chapter is to present the major findings of the research with an effort to account for why return migration to O Lam village has taken place, the effects on returnees and their households of the return and how they adapt to the remigration process in the origin village. Before doing so, a brief background of the profiles of the Khmer returnees will be provided by emphasizing the circumstances related to their decisions to break away from and then return to their home village.

4.1 Migration flows of Khmer people in O lam village

In this part, I would like to give a brief description of the history of Khmer people's migration in the South of Vietnam in general and in An Giang province in particular over time that is relevant to the present research. Over ten centuries ago, An Giang and several provinces (Soc Trang, Hau Giang, and Tra Vinh belonging to Mekong River Delta) (Nghị, 2008) were still a marsh, wild and salt-marsh region. After the tenth century, because the sea level had gradually gone down, An Giang province and some neighbouring areas had become fertile areas due to naturally provided alluvium, so the poor Vietnamese, Khmer, and Chinese groups were fascinated by this region. There were over one million and three hundred Khmer people living together with Kinh people, Chinese people and with several minorities in the South of Vietnam. Khmer people, particularly the poor, came to An Giang as well as other provinces in Mekong Delta because they wanted to escape from the oppression of the Feudal system under the Angkor monarchy. Therefore, the wave of spontaneous migration of the Khmer happened. About sixteenth century, there were thousands of Khmer people settling in An Giang, specifically in two districts of Tri Ton and Tinh Bien. They established “*Phum*”, “*Soc*”⁷ – an administrative unit like village - surrounding hills, mountain towards the fields and surrounding the canals. Ethnic Khmer people in An Giang moved to present Vietnam from present Cambodia several generations back. Their custom and language are similar to the native Cambodian in Cambodia. They are very devout Buddhists. Towards 1978, the Southwest Border War happened between Vietnam and Cambodia, residents who settled nearby the border Vietnam-Cambodia had to move to the peaceful places because of war, in which most of Khmer people in An Giang migrated to Soc Trang and Tra Vinh province. One year later after the border war ended, not all of Khmer people returned to their homeland, because several Khmer people wanted to reside in the new homeland. Together with the innovation stage of Vietnam (1986), many Khmer people moved to Ho Chi Minh City to find jobs.

ILO (2004) points out that there are many ways to classify migrant workers based on incentives, skills, age, occupation or distance from origin; the categories most commonly used are based on anticipated duration of stay. Firstly is permanent migration, primarily for highly skilled migrants, family unification, and refugee resettlement. Secondly is temporary migration for all types of employment. This door allows the entry of migrants, commonly known as guest workers, to fill vacant jobs, such as nursing positions. Finally is temporary migration for time-bound employment. The entry of migrants to fill seasonal jobs – jobs that will end with the completion of a project, e.g. a construction – and service providers, trainees and students (ILO, 2004). In O Lam village, that Khmer people left their home village to move into the big cities or other places for seeking jobs has been a

⁷ “*Phum*” or “*Soc*”: is an administrative unit like village and is referred to the lowest level of comprehensive government administration in which they gather in a big group as a hamlet.

phenomenon of rural-urban population mobility. This phenomenon is becoming more common in this village. This population movement has happened since 2000, but mostly 2003 to 2007 and the migrant workers have migrated all year-round. Based on the reality of the village, Khmer people migrated spontaneously to find jobs with various types of migration including seasonal migration and short-term migration. Through the survey, these two types of migration in this commune will be focused on during the research.

Firstly is seasonal migration. With this type of migration, rural employees move to the urban areas, especially in the cities and industrial zones or farms in order to search for jobs and contribute income to the family. The Khmer migrant workers often migrate in the middle of rice crop season and during the flood season. Each year they grow two rice crops in Winter-Spring crop and Summer-Autumn crop. In Winter-Spring crop, they stay at home from two or three first weeks of December for preparing the new rice crop and two or three late weeks of March for harvest rice. In Summer-Autumn crop, they continuously stay at home from two late weeks of March to the first week of April for preparing new rice crop and two first weeks of July for harvest rice. After the rice crop is sown, or harvested, the labourers will come back to the city to continue their work or to seek new jobs. Their particularity of jobs is repeated each year. The majority of them are voluntary unskilled migrant workers working in construction companies. Moreover, these migrant workers who are mainly male labourers look healthy and are under the age limited.

Figure 3. Seasonal calendar of the seasonal returnees in O Lam village

Activities	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Growing rice	S-W crop			S-A crop			Flood season			S-W		
Construction worker	middle crop			Middle crop			in the flood season					
Agri. hired labour												
Livestock	year around											
Festivals	1			2					3		4	

Notes:

1. Vietnamese New Year (7 days-off)
2. Khmer New year (4 days-off)
3. Sen Dolta (4 days-off)
4. OkOmBok (days-off)

Secondly is short-term migration. This type of migration is a bit different from the first. These migrant workers are also unskilled labourers in the countryside. They spontaneously move far from their original commune to urban areas or the cities for seeking jobs in the companies. Their purposes are to generate income and contribute money to their families. Besides that, the short-term migrants want to “get to know” the life in the city. They used to migrate with a group of friends. However, their working duration in the destination was short about one to less than three months. Then they came back home. They are often young labourers at the age 15 to 35 years old including male and female, because at the age of 15 they get an individual Identification (ID) card. This group is able to migrate at any time in the year to find jobs.

In the current context of O Lam village, the seasonal return migrants are those who have worked in a Project of the Construction Companies, Rubber Plantation Farm, and Coffee Farm in Ho Chi Minh City, Vung Tau city and in industrial zones such as Binh Duong

Binh Phuoc and Long An provinces. The short-term return migrants are those who worked in the companies such as Textile Company, Shoes Company, Aquaculture Processing Company, Furniture Company, and Incense Company in Ho Chi Minh City and in Long Xuyen city, and in Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc provinces.

4.2 Condition before Migration

Before going into the details of the research results, I would like to make a short description of the background of the labour force in O Lam village before migration. The circumstance of Khmer migrant workers in this village is much diversified. However, they have had in generally similar socio-economic and cultural situation, so they have the relatively similar background before migration.

4.2.1 Family size

All of Khmer workers involved in this research are in both extended and nuclear families. However, they mostly live in the poor nuclear families with many children as well as with many brothers and sisters in the family, from two to eight children. They are those who have landless or have little land for agriculture in the village. Generally, each Khmer household was allocated 0.3 ha of agricultural land in 2004 - 2005 under the support policy of the government. The landless households are often young couples who have just got marriage and live separately from their parents after getting married. These couples have not been given agricultural land by their parents, because their parents have the small land area, and there are many brothers and sisters in the family. Thus, their parents want to keep that land plot for family livelihood; or the parents had sold their land to other people due to failure in cultivation before.

4.3 Occupation and income sources in O lam village

It is important to know about the employment status in the context of O Lam village. The particular and important characteristics of the village are that it lies in a mountainous area, with forest, animal husbandry (cattle, pig and chicken) and agricultural production. Hence, the key rural employment in this village is on-farm. Besides participating in their family agricultural activities, Khmer people raise fattening pigs and cattle. However, raising cattle needs much money. The Khmer people can raise cattle through two types of capital access. Firstly, they can buy cattle by their own money or by loan credit from the Vietnam Bank for Social Policies (VBSP). Secondly, they can raise cattle for the cattle owners who are mostly Khmer better-off or Kinh people, it is so-called “*nuôi bò rẻ*”⁸. This way can generate income to the poor Khmer people. However, the cattle raiser has to spend much time to take care of the cattle until it has the first calf. The cattle raiser spends at least one year if this cattle is adult. Maybe they spend about three years to take care of a calf. If the cattle get a calf, the price of one calf is about 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 VND. In exceptional cases, the cattle is raised three years, but it is not able to get any calf.

⁸ “*nuôi bò rẻ*”: “*nuoi bo re*” is understood in this case as the cattle raiser would receive two or more than two cattle from the cattle owner with oral negotiated agreement between the cattle raiser and cattle owner with three kinds of agreement. Firstly, the cattle may be from five months old to one year old. If the cattle raiser agrees to raise the young cattle till the cattle breeds the first calf (about three years), the cattle raiser will keep this calf and continued to raise the cow until the cow has the second calf. This time the cattle owner will keep the second calf. The second way is that the cattle owner keeps the first calf and the second calf will be belonged to the cattle raiser. The third way is that when the cow breed the first calf, the cattle owner will sell this calf with the current money and divides that amount of money into two equal parts, a half of money for the cattle raiser and the rest a half for himself.

Fattening pig raising is not more popular than cattle raising. Khmer people usually select piglets from local sows, and they raise these piglets within natural condition and traditional techniques. They do not keep the piglets in a sty; the piglet can go everywhere and eat everything such as rice, banana tree, grass... The piglet grows up slowly, so they cannot sell the fattening pig early and get much money. Local people spend from eight to ten months for raising a piglet. When the fattening pig is around 60 to 70 kilos, they sell it with price of over one million. While other fattening pig raisers, who use industrial feed, only spend four or five months to raise piglet. They sell the fattening pig of one hundred kilos, and they get much more money. Because Khmer people lack capital and techniques in how to take care of livestock, they apply traditional techniques. However, in unexpected cases, the piglet is not able to gain weight (30 kilos) for five or six months, and the raiser decides to sell it with a price of 700,000 to 800,000 VND. It also involves risks to raise piglets. For instance, the piglet dies due to accident on the road or due to bad weather. In these cases, people do not only lose income, but also fall in debt. Therefore, income from raising livestock is low.

Khmer people also raise chicken, but mostly for family consumption with very small scale. They raise about five to twenty chickens, but not all of Khmer people raise chicken, because the chicken not only eats insects but also paddy. When the chicken grows up about 1 kilo/head or over 1 kilo, it is sold in the market, or is sold to the neighbour in the village. The price of each kilo of chicken is about 40,000 to 50,000VND. The Khmer raise pig and chicken with small scale, mainly at household level.

Otherwise, Khmer people tried to find different works by themselves to earn money and support their families. Employments in off-farm sectors are relatively diverse, but irregular such as collecting fresh fodder for selling, collecting crabs/snake/catching fish in the field, and collecting wood in the forest for selling. These employments are also the significant income sources of Khmer people in this village. They are able to earn from 40,000 VND to 60,000VND a day. Besides that, they are able to do petty trading such as cake making, vegetables buying and selling, and grocery shop. With this, they can get about 20,000 to 40,000VND a day. Furthermore, hired labour has been considered a popular employment of local people in this village. For some landless households, hired labour is their main livelihood.

Furthermore, for Khmer people with little land or much land, hired labour is also considered an income generation activities for their family. These people have spare time from their family agricultural activities, and then they are able to go to work as hired labour for other households in the village or in neighbouring villages. The common employment, which Khmer people often get, are land preparation, hand weeding, transplanting, herbicide and pesticide spraying, and fertilizer supplying. The Khmer people can earn from 30.000 VND to 60.000VND a day for these works. In the rice harvest crop, they are hired for rice cutting and rice threshing in the rice field. Their labour is paid by paddy. They receive one “gia”⁹ of paddy when they complete rice cutting over 1,000 m². Fortunately, mechanization or techniques of post-harvest in this region has not been applied much in the field, because most of areas are small rice plots, so people are able to get the jobs in agricultural production activities.

⁹ “gia”: is a unit to scale amount of paddy, a “gia” is equal to 20 kilos of paddy. This unit is used by farmers in the South of Vietnam

However, the number of employment opportunities available in the village has not met the demand of people searching for jobs, and has not resolved the unemployment status of the local people in this village. Therefore, most of the labourers moved to the nearby village to find jobs such as sorting/classifying dry “tea tree”¹⁰, mining in private enterprise, and construction work. An employee can earn about 50,000VND a day for classifying dry “tea tree”, and about 70,000 to 80,000 VND a day for construction labor. In summary, the poor Khmer employees in the village are able to find jobs, but those jobs are not regular, on average, they can work five to ten days a month, and income from those works is not high. Therefore, the labourers have a lot of spare time, while they cannot create income.

4.3.1 *Expenditure sources*

In terms of the expenditure issue, it is reported from other studies that approximately 60% of total of expenditure items of the poor people are for food, the rest of 40% are for others including clothes, houses, healthcare, education, culture, transportation and social communication. Similarly, in the context of Khmer people in O Lam commune the result shows that their daily expenditure sources are very various including food, party/festival, and cost for children’s schooling, medicine, production, and clothes. When the respondents were asked about the priority level, the result indicates that the most important expense item is daily food. Generally, a Khmer family with five members spends about 40,000 to 50,000VND a day for food including rice, fish, and vegetables. However, when there is a period of heavy rain, they are unable to work and thus will have to eat less and more simple food. This is also the case if they get shock; their meals only consist of rice and wild vegetables and fish sauce or with salt. In such cases, they have to borrow rice and money from their neighbour. The poor are able to find vegetables and fish or crabs in nature. The villagers explain that they spend less money on parties and festivals than on food. The parties and festivals, which they participate, are the weeding parties, the traditional festivals (Khmer New Year - Chol Thnam Thmay, OkOmBok, Sen Dolta,...), the Vietnamese New Year, birthdays, death anniversaries, and monthly pagoda worshipping. The third largest expense is children’s school fees. Thereafter comes the cost for agricultural production, followed by clothes and medicine.

4.3.2 *Social relationship*

Social relationships are mutual bonds among individuals of the community, and between classes in the society. Therefore, social interaction has a vital importance for establishing meaningful communication with groups and individuals in the communities. To know social relationships within the Khmer community as well as to gain further broad understandings of human behaviour and social relationships of this ethnic group, the result from my fieldwork discussion in O Lam village indicates that the Khmer people have a close social relationship within the community. These close bonds derive from the history of the forming of this ethnic group. A main reason for the continuous construction of the Khmer ethnic groups is the administrative units “Phum” or “Soc”, where people developed common culture and customs. They communicate with each other through their native language. They are unable to speak Vietnamese fluently. Even though there are several students studying in high school. The everyday life relationships are based on family interaction, kinship, friendship, neighbor relations, and more distant acquaintances, as well as the relations with the local authorities. However, social relationship of the Khmer with the external society is infrequent and weak. This is partly due to their culture and their

¹⁰ *Tea tree: its scientific name is Melaleuca. When this tree is about 7- 10 years old, people cut it and use for wood and/or for construction.*

economic and social marginal position in Vietnam. For example, when I did my fieldwork I found it hard to socialize with the Khmer villagers, which I believe depended on the fact that I am an ethnic Vietnamese, a lady, and I do not speak Khmer.

4.3.3 Culture, customs and education

Many of the factors that influence Khmer migration to the cities depend on educational background, language, culture, interconnected customs, and working habits.

Educational background

The educational background of the respondents of this research is very varied. It includes both literate and illiterate laborers. The majorities of the Khmer labourers are illiterate, and they have not completed the primary school. The illiterate labourers are primarily the middle aged and the older people. Some of the young workers had also finished secondary school. Few young labors had finished high school at grade 10 and 11. Why did not the young workers achieve higher education? That depends on two reasons: 1) their families lacked financial resources and 2) the students had a hard time to learn in school. The poor families are obliged to try to find food every day, and lack money. Moreover, in some poor families who have a lot of children, the oldest children have to take care of younger sisters and brothers when their parents go to work. Therefore, they are not able to go to school or they stop studying at an early stage. After finishing study early, the young unskilled labourers have to help their parents with the housework or find jobs in order to contribute income to the families. There are also students who are unmotivated to study, although they are supported for education by the government. Poor families do not create favorable conditions for learning. However, there are also several youths having achieved high education in college and at the University. In sum, most of the labour force has low education and they are also unemployed or underemployed, because they have not joined any vocational training courses before.

Language

97.3% of the population in O lam village are ethnic Khmer and they speak Khmer language as a mother tongue. However, there are also a lot of Khmer people who can speak Vietnamese well. These people used to live near the main and big road and near the market or live near the Kinh community. They are those who live on trading or have high education. Those who live in the most remote areas are seldom able to speak Vietnamese. Language difficulties are one of constraints when it comes to stimulate Khmer people to integrate in new communities, as well as other new settings.

Culture and interconnected customs

In terms of lifestyle, specifically belief and recreation of Khmer people, Khmer people are devout Buddhists. Therefore, for the Khmer people, pagoda plays a vital important role in their spiritual life and it has been considered a spiritually cultural symbol of peoples. Through the pagoda, people feel that they are members of the community. Therefore, the pagoda and the monks have important roles in the Khmer villages in the south of Vietnam in general and to Khmer people in Tri Ton district in particular. Buddhist religion has both positive and negative consequences for the Khmer. The tenets of Buddha teach people that they should not covet earthly possessions; they should cooperate with each other in the community, and be generous. However, there are also negative effects because of the Khmer tenets, due to restriction of earthly resources; people lack the will to succeed economically in their lives. Deriving from the religious belief, the Khmer believe in the

afterlife, they go to the pagoda at least two times for the poor and the better-off do this four times every month (on 8th, 15th, 24th and 30th every month). When going to the pagoda they use to bring food and money, the offering for worshipping includes cooked rice, cooked meat, and soup. The value of the offering depends on the financial capacity of each household.

Through the survey, it is able to say that the culture of the Khmer people differs from ethnic Vietnamese. The Khmer ethnic group has many traditional celebrations during a year, but the major ones will be mentioned in this research. Chol Thnam Thmay or Khmer New Year is celebrated from 14th to 16th April every year; Sen Dolta takes place from 15th to 30th September every year, and the so-called festival for showing gratitude to one's parents; and OkOmBok is celebrated on 15 November. This festival is so-called "New Year of Agriculture" or "Festival to Pray to the Moon – Lễ Cúng Trăng" or "Festival for Making Sticky Rice - Lễ Đút Cốm Dẹp". Besides the traditional celebrations, Vietnamese New Year, is also celebrated from the 1st to 3rd of January (according to lunar calendar). Although the festivals are taken place in short time, local people have to spend time to prepare for the festivals several weeks in advance. In these traditional festivals, all Khmer people get together in the pagoda to worship and play traditional games. In average, they spend 3 to 4 days to enjoy these big traditional festivals. In the other festivals, most of young people gather in The Cultural Center of the District to enjoy live performances.

Working habits

The majority of poor Khmer labourers in O Lam village are unskilled labourers, working either with their own plots or as hired labour in agriculture. Their work in the field is very hard, but the working hours are very flexible. Moreover, they still have a habit of stopping to work in order to welcome and enjoy entertainment activities in traditional festivals and Vietnamese New Year after the hardworking months. The festivals are opportunities in which people can meet together. When festivals are closed they continue to work as usual.

4.4 Reasons for migration

Many researches on migration indicate that reasons for rural-urban migration are economic difficulties, which the households face in rural areas, surplus labour force, and severe lack of employment in the rural areas. Rural people want to leave their home village in order to obtain economic opportunities through new works, especially in the big cities or developing industrial zones in the country. Besides that, rural-urban migrants want to improve their families' economy in the rural areas by sending remittances back to the families. Similar to these points, I asked the Khmer return migrant workers who I encountered in the O Lam village "*why did you migrate to the city?*" The migrants gave many various reasons for their decision of leaving their village. Both the seasonal and short-term migrants had similar reasons for migrating to the cities. For instance, the case of Mr. S. Ph in O lam village was one of the typical cases.

Box 1. Reason for leaving the countryside to go to the city

S. Ph is a young man, 21 years old. He lives in the family with 10 people including parents, seven brothers and sisters in O Lam village, Tri Ton district, An Giang province. He is single. Mr. S.Ph stopped studying at grade 11 in 2006, due to difficult circumstances. He is the youngest son in his family and is currently living with his parents. His brothers and sisters have married and have settled down to married life. His family owns small plot of land, 0.3 ha. His parents are the main laborers of the family. His family's livelihood is mainly based on agriculture. They harvest two crops of rice

per year and they work as hired labor after the rice harvests are finished. After Mr. S.Ph had given up studying in 2007, he registered his name at the commune staffs in order to try to become a migrant work in Malaysia... After working one year in Malaysia, he came back home with the failure in saving money and paying debt for the bank (VSPB bank), and he continued to help his parents to produce rice on his family's own land area, and went to work as a hired laborer for other owners in the village.

In the beginning of 2009, his friend introduced him a job at a textile company in the industrial zone in Binh Duong province. Mr. S. Ph wanted to go to Ho Chi Minh for two reasons. Firstly, he has found a job and secondly, he wanted to study a short training course in tourism. He wanted both to work to earn money and to use that money for study. Therefore, he invited a friend to go to Binh Duong to work. (*Mr. S. Ph, O Lam village – in-depth interview, Dec, 24th 2009*).

The respondent explained that there was not much employment in the village. Although some employment is available, it has not met the demand of the employees in the village. The employment was not regular and low wage-paid. In addition, most of the migrant workers had many children. The number of family members increased (the rate of population growth in O Lam village in 2008 was high (1.56%), according to the information source from the annual report of the village in 2008), while there were the poor households who were either landless or who had little land for production. Sources of incomes were therefore limited, and people had to seek employment elsewhere. For instance, for households with little land, in the crop season all members had to do their work in the field. When the crops finishes, they became surplus labour force in the family. Therefore, they wanted to go to find jobs and worked as on-farm and non-farm hired labourers. For the landless household, after there was no longer work in the village, they moved to other village in order to find other jobs. Moreover, together with the underdevelopment due to disadvantageous natural conditions of O Lam village, the Khmer people were able to cultivate two rice crops per year, or one rice crop and one vegetable crop, or only one rice crop per year. Therefore, they had much spare time, while they lacked income to nourish their families. The inhabitants also presented that the productivity of rice and vegetable were low. The yield of agricultural commodities was sold in order to pay debts including agricultural materials and daily borrowing expense items, and remaining products were kept for family consumption. Therefore, their lives were unstable.

Furthermore, the Khmer people's low education level was a hinder to be able to take the short-term training courses for occupation in the cities, which were held in the village. O Lam was therefore a poor village, the lives of the Khmer labourers were inherently penurious before, but became increasingly difficult. Besides the above reasons, the majority of the young Khmer labourers showed that they also wanted to migrate to the city for seeking jobs, both in order to improve the income of their families and to achieve social mobility - the young migrant workers wanted to know the modernity in the city due to their curiousness. The families of the Khmer migrant workers used to be indebted, so they needed to pay back the loans, raise their living standards and contribute to the education costs for their children. Finally, most of the Khmer return migrants also said that they went to the city and other places to find jobs, because they heard the oral information from the rumor of acquaintances in the village and outsiders that work in the cities would give much money. Migration to the city or other places to find employment opportunities was the best way to generate the necessary income to cover all these expenses.

There were also other reasons, which pulled them to the cities. Migrant groups give different reasons for their migration to the cities. However, both of the groups of the Khmer return migrant employees stated that the work, which they performed in companies in the cities, are furniture, construction, aquaculture processing, incense, textile, and shoes, or works found in the farms (planting rubber trees and collecting coffee beans). These works were more regular than in the countryside. In the city, the Khmer migrant workers were able to get monthly regular wages, in contrast to the countryside. The more people moved to the city, the better networks were created, thus facilitating further migration.

Seasonal Khmer returnees stated that the works in companies in the cities were better paid than jobs in the countryside. They were able to save money and send remittances back to their homes. It also generated more money than agriculture. Doing agriculture was hard, but the seasonal Khmer migrants could not get profit and save money. Several return migrants said that they migrated to the city to find jobs because they owned very small plots of land in the countryside, often about 0.005 ha to 0.1 ha. These seasonal Khmer migrants had inherited their land from their parents; they could grow rice with two crops within a year with a yield of each crop of about 0.6 to 0.7 ton of paddy a year. After the rice was harvested, half of the rice was sold to the middlemen in order to return cash to the agricultural shopkeeper, pay debts, and less than a half was kept for family consumption. Therefore, the seasonal Khmer migrants could not get profit from their parcels of land area, nor improve their income. These seasonal returnees showed me that they also received other forms of benefits (bonus, being on holidays) from the companies and farms. The seasonal migrant workers mostly consisted of single husbands and wives, or entire families, husbands, wives and children.

The short-term migrant presented that they were able to have more regular jobs in the cities than in their village, and they were able to get salary every month as well. The short-term migrant workers were able to maintain income source by working in non-farm and off-farm sectors. Some short-term migrant workers stated that their social networks were broadened, because they got contact with many people. The young short-term migrants were also attracted by the notions of the modernity of the city, because most of them were the young Khmer workers in the countryside have heard about “Ho Chi Minh City”, but they have never gone there, as well as never gone far from their home village. Therefore, they wanted to experience other forms of life than in the countryside, and change their lifestyles. Most of them migrate after being invited by friends who had already migrated. Their parents gave the consent to them. The youngest migrants often contributed quite small amounts to their families. Normally, these young people easily found work in the companies (textile, shoes making, incense and aquaculture), since they were believed to be able to work hard. When they worked in the city, their parents continued to toil the land in the village, or some members in their house doing the housework, which they had done.

The study also found that both of the Khmer seasonal and short-term migrant workers in this village mostly were able to seek jobs in the companies and in the farms due to the employment introduction of family relationship, friendship, neighbor relations, and kinship. Besides both of them also stated that there was a member family going to find job in the city in advance, and that member worked there and then called other family members to come to work in the same company or in the same farm with him/her. The Khmer migrant workers also explained that in the first time they went to the city to find the jobs, they went in groups of five or six Khmer people, most of their group heard information of employment from the oral rumor of the acquaintances. Then they went to

search for jobs in the city and in the industrial zones. In this case, some of them were able to find jobs and some of them could not and came back home. The Khmer migrant workers also provided more information that although they only heard the information source inexactly, they also wanted to go to find jobs as a trial. If they could get job they would stay and work in those destinations. If they could not get job, they would come back home. It is showed that their process of job application in destinations was unstable.

Although there were many poor workers in O Lam village, not all of them left their home village to the city or to the industrial zones to search for jobs. The poor Khmer villagers were mainly those who were landless or had small plots for agricultural production. They have lived and worked in the village. When the work in the village was finished, the Khmer habitants moved to the neighbouring villages in order to find jobs, but they did not stay there for a long time, unlike the Khmer migrants in the cities. The Khmer villagers who had not migrated to the cities or other places very far from their home village to find jobs, did not go because of several following reasons. First of all, they explained that most of them did not want to live far from their families because of nostalgia. And they did not have relatives or friends in the city, so nobody introduced them to jobs there. Additionally, these habitants were afraid of living in the strange atmosphere, because this is partly affected by their custom. Moreover, there would not be anybody at home to take care of their children and housework. The young Khmer women presented that they did not want their husbands to migrate to the city to work, because they were afraid of losing their husbands. These people also showed that they could find jobs in the village and in villages nearby, although the work was not regular. They worked as hired labourers. The male Khmer villagers answered that if they worked far from their houses, there would not be anybody undertaking the heavy work in the house. Therefore, they stayed at home to do housework and to find jobs.

The major income generation activities of the Khmer inhabitants in O Lam village were rice growing, hired labour (quarry mining-stone breaking and stone carrying, transplanting, rice sowing, rice cutting and rice threshing), and animal husbandry. Besides that, common work to generate income were stone breaking and stone carrying, transplanting, rice sowing, rice cutting and rice threshing. Besides that, the Khmer habitants secured their livelihoods by such work as collecting crabs in the field, catching fish, collecting wood in the forest and collecting fresh fodder or they conducted petty trading (selling vegetables in the village market or beverage at home). In dry season, the Khmer inhabitants could make palm sugar to sell. They could borrow or rent the sugar palm trees from their Khmer neighbors in order to collect the liquid inside the sugar palm fruits to make sugar and sell in the market. Furthermore, they could generate their income source by making “Côm dệp”- sticky rice making - during some months in a year. In the festivals, they sold beverages at the Cultural Center of Tri Ton district and at the pagodas. Both landless and small scale-farmers performed many different tasks in the countryside, thus, they have never migrated to find jobs.

Figure 4. Seasonal calendar of the villagers in O Lam village

Activities	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Growing rice	S-W crop			S-A crop			Flood season				S-W	
Agri. hired labour	Seeding, transplanting			Rice cutting, threshing							Land preparation	
Animal husbandry	year around											
Collecting fresh fodder							in group					
Collecting crabs/fish			Free time				Collecting crabs/snails, catching fish					
Palm sugar making	Dry season											Dry
“Côm dẹp” making		Sticky rice			Sticky rice		Sticky rice					
Quarry mining			Off-farm				In flood season					
Petty trading	year around											
Festivals	1			2					3		4	

Notes:

1. Vietnamese New Year (7 days-off)
2. Khmer New year (4 days-off)
3. Sen Dolta (4 days-off)
4. OkOmBok (days-off)

This part will present the findings of the working and living conditions of Khmer migrant workers in O Lam village after they left their home village in order to arrive to work destinations such as companies and farms.

According to Zhao (2003), migrant networks had the important role in labour migration in developed countries, as well as in the developing countries. Because the migrant networks were in a position to see and provide information on the situations, which the migrant workers moved to, with a different culture or environment, and see if the labour market of destinations was hostile to the migrant workers. Thus the migrant workers who had the same ethnic background or origin tended to form their own communities in the cities. Zhao (2003) and Massey *et al.* (1993) showed that “migrant networks are sets of the interpersonal ties, which links migrants, former migrants and non-migrant in origins and destinations through ties of kinship, friendship, and share community origin”. Although this point was considered in the international scale, in terms of smaller scale such as internal migration of Khmer migrant group in Vietnam, this point was showed similarity, which is described in the sections of working and living conditions of the Khmer migrant workers below.

4.5.1 Working condition

As ILO (2004) and other scholars point out, the employment opportunities in the big cities, and the developed industrial zones (IZs) are the major destinations for a majority of the rural migrants. I argue that the Khmer migrant employees not only found jobs in the cities and IZs, but also in farms in the provinces. Those destinations are Ho Chi Minh city, Long Xuyen city, Vung Tau city and Binh Duong, Dong Nai, and Long An provinces. Besides that, there are still some other provinces such as Kien Giang, Tien Giang and Dong Thap – western provinces in the south of Vietnam. The poor Khmer migrant in O Lam village left home to find jobs in these places. What do they work in these cities? The result of research of ILO shows that due to temporary irregular status, the work of the majority of the unorganized migrant workers used to be so-called 3D-jobs - dirty, dangerous, and difficult.

Based on the result of the research, I discuss that most of the Khmer migrant workers took only unskilled jobs, which were hard, insecure and under pressure of time.

Box 2. Difficulty of Khmer return migrant worker in the company

Mr. K was born in 1989 in a poor Khmer family with seven members. He is the youngest son in his family. All of his brothers and sisters got married already and lived separately from his parents. At present, he lives with his parents. He described that he was one of many unemployed Khmer people in the village. He was introduced a job by his friend. He had worked in the Incense Making Company in Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh City in 2008. He and his friends worked in this company. He had worked for one month and come back home. He had responsibility for mixing chemicals (color and fragrance) and incense materials together. He said that he was able to earn much money and save money to support his parents, because salary was high (maximum 3,000,000 VND/month), but he had to work all week except Sundays within the month. He had worked for 2 weeks. He had a headache because he was frequently exposed to chemicals, especially the fragrance chemicals and dust of incense (Mr. Khon, O Lam village, in-depth interview on Dec, 27th 2009).

There were not only Mr. K but also many other Khmer migrants finding jobs in the cities and IZs or farms facing difficulties in their work destination. The seasonal migrant group in this study explained that the unskilled employment in building projects in Construction Company, and coffee and rubber plantation farms mostly attract them, because these jobs did not need high requirements of education and skills, the salary was relatively high and regular. Additionally, the procedures to apply for jobs were easy, and very simple without thorough confirmation signature or recommendation from the local authorities of O Lam village. These Khmer migrant job seekers could be accepted for a job in the company through oral introduction of members in the family, relative, friends, and neighbor. And they only need to have their Identification (ID) card to prove who they are and where they are from. Their IDs were kept by the manager with three issues: making the name card for the worker, completing the registration procedure of temporary staying in destination, and making a name list to deliver salary. Moreover, the respondents showed that the manager could allow migrant job seekers to work in his project without the age limitation, as long as the migrant job-seekers look healthy, even though the labourers were merely 14-15 year-old only.

The first wave of migrants was construction workers, working with building projects, which did not require specific skills. Normally, the Khmer male migrant worked with carrying construction material, bringing iron/steel, mixing cement, sand, stone and water together, and tightening steel frames. The female migrant employees used to tidy up and take away construction materials and instruments after work hours. The male migrants' works were more strenuous than the female workers' were. Therefore, the salary of the men employees was always higher than that of the female employees (see the table 4). When the building project was about to be finished, the workers worked very hard, about 12 hours a day, but their salaries would be increased. The working nightshift would be paid 1.5 more than normal per day; about 60,000VND to 75,000VND to the females, and 105,000VND to 135,000VND to males. In the construction company, the workers did not have to work extra hours. The workers would earn more money than normally if they agreed to work extra hours. The return migrant workers said that although work in the building project was harder than doing agriculture in the home village, due to hard working in the sun, but they could have much more money. Moreover, they could regularly receive

salary once a week or twice every month. In addition, they could borrow money from the company in advance in urgent situations such as disease or busy with family work. Although working outside (in the sun) was hard, the seasonal migrant worker felt more comfortable than the short term migrant workers, because the rules for working disciplines as well as working atmosphere in the building project was more flexible than working in other companies. That meant the workers could temporarily stop their work during some minutes, they could go back and forth, stand, sit and talk to their coworkers, while the short-term migrant workers said that they had to stand and work at the same place during many hours a day. Most of the Khmer migrant workers were more attracted to jobs in the building project, more than other jobs because the salary was higher than other jobs in the companies, though the work was harder than work indoor.

Box 3. Salary of construction migrant workers in the city

Due to the fact that there was not much employment in the village and poverty of family, Mrs. K and her husband decided to allow their oldest son to go to the city. Her son had worked in construction company a month. He received a relatively high salary level (80,000VND/day) the first week. The second week, his salary was increased to 85,000 VND a day. She said that if one subtracted his daily expenses including food (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and beverages (coffee, pure water), he could save and send 500,000VND to his family the first month. She described that this work could help her family to improve the family income, so she and her husband went to work in the same company together with her son. She had to tidy construction materials, her husband had to bring construction materials, and her son had to mix and prepare construction materials for the builders. Although the work was rather hard, three labourers could save at least 1,5 million VND per month. Every month she sent money back to her three children in the countryside, amounting to 300.000 VND. She said that she was very happy with the current salary because it was really higher than in the countryside and she could have a regular job and receive money every month. The saved amount of money could help her to pay debt and have money for the daily expense of her family. Her children could go to school. She could also buy some new clothes for children and some jewelry. Her family's condition was improved due to her saving money from migration labor.

She said that when she had worked in the city with her husband and her oldest son, she had only spent for food for three members and for her three children in the countryside. The only money she spent was for food every day in the city, which amounted to about 70,000VND for three people, but she did not worry much, due to that the three of them had regular income. Besides food expense, she did not spend much money on anything else. Therefore, she saved the rest of money. However, after that she and her husband decided to return home. (*Mrs. Kim, O Lam village – in-depth interview, Jan 3rd 2010*)

Similarly, the Khmer migrant workers in the farms had the same procedure of job application with construction workers. The Khmer migrant labourers working in farms explained that they were satisfied with the working hours in the farm. They worked 8 hours a day with 1.5 million VND a month. In rubber farm, the male employees dug the ground and planted young rubber trees. The female employees had to put the young rubber tree in the dug holes available. In the coffee farm, both of the male and female employees pick coffee beans. However, the men had to carry coffee bags after harvest. For the Khmer migrants working in the farms, their working condition was not as advantageous as the construction workers, most of them had to work in the forest, and they also faced many problems such as health problem, sanitation, and food. They stayed far from the market

and it seemed to be isolated from the world outside. However, they did not have to work extra hours.

While the group of short-term migrant workers explained that they were interested in working indoors. Thus, they engaged in companies. They thought that work in the companies has high salary. They believed the recruiters that working in the companies would receive high salary. Similar to seasonal migrants, the recruitment conditions of the companies did not require high skills and education, but the workers had to have completed primary school. However, procedures to apply for jobs in the companies were more complicated than the case of seasonal migrants, and very high pressure with working hours. The migrant job seekers have to follow the strict rules of the companies. It means that although the migrant workers are introduced to the companies by social relationships (kinship, friendship, neighbours and acquaintances), the job-seekers must have a set of documents for job application, which includes an ID copy, a letter of job application with the seal, signature and certification of the chairmen in their home village, and a paper of individual health examination,. Moreover, after they are accepted by the company, these migrant workers have to sign the labour contract with the company. Salary is paid according to the agreement between the company and the employee. The employees will have insurance after working 6 months. The employees have to work extra hours (nightshift) according to the rule of the companies, 10 to 12 hours a day at least 4 days a week. Normally, the Khmer migrant workers used to work with extra time during 6 days a week. However, the salary is not high (see the table 4). The migrant workers are able to receive salary regularly twice a month, and it is very difficult to borrow money from the company in advance in urgent situations, because their working time is not long enough.

Majority of short term migrant presented that they are under very high pressure with working hours in the company.

Box 4. Constraints of the Khmer migrant worker in worksites

Mr. L is a 20 year- old man, and one of the five children of his family. His family has 0.4 ha of agricultural land. His parents were old and sick, so his younger brother took care of most of the agricultural work. After receiving information about assembly line work from his neighbor and relatives, Mr. L made a decision to work far from his home. He applied for a job in Nam Viet Aquaculture Processing Company in Long Xuyen City, An Giang province. The reason for his migration was that his family owned a very small area of land, and the income from cultivating rice was not enough to cover the family's daily expenses. Additionally, there was not any available job in the village, but many unemployed. Thus, he wanted to find an opportunity to improve his family's income.

In the end of 2009, after obtaining the information from several of his Khmer fellowmen, who had worked in Nam Viet company previously, Mr. L and four friends in O Lam village went to work in this company. He received 1,7 million VND per month, and he had to work from 7:00 to 11:00 in the morning, from 11:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m is lunch time, and it starts again from 12:00 to 17: 30 p.m. He had three days to work extra hours. He says that extra hour work was forced by the company. After finishing work at 17:30 p.m he had only 30 minutes for dinner and he had to start to work again at 18:00 p.m., until 21:00 p.m when he came back to the boardinghouse. He said that he could not continue to work during a long time in the future, because of the tiredness and time pressure... (Mr. L, O Lam village, in-depth interview Dec, 24th 2009)

For some Khmer woman migrant workers working in Furniture Company state that their works are not heavy or hard. They used the sand paper to polish tables, chairs, and cabinets. Mostly, Khmer migrant women responded that this work was not hard but dirty because of much dust of wood. The male workers have to carry and transport the chairs, the tables, and the cabinets. Besides that, the male workers have to carry and log the wood. Most of them say that the men's works are heavier and harder than the women's are. The salary is not high (see the table 4). They have to work hard in the dusty environment.

Table 4. Salary of Khmer migrant workers in different jobs in different worksites

Companies	Activities	Working hours (hours/day)	Salary/month (VND)	
			Male	Female
Construction	0 nightshift	8	2,100,000	1,200,000
	Nightshift	12	2,700,000	1,500,000
Rubber/coffee farm	0 nightshift	8	1,500,000	1,500,000
Furniture	0 nightshift	9	1,100,000	1,100,000
	Nightshift	13	1,900,000	1,900,000
Aquaculture	0 nightshift	10	900,000	900,000
	Nightshift	13.5	1,300,000	1,300,000
Textile	Nightshift	13.5	1,500,000	1,500,000
Shoes	Nightshift	13.5	1,500,000	1,500,000
Incense	Nightshift	13	2,500,000	-

Through the discussion result of two groups (seasonal migrants and short-term migrants), the table 5 below would show the working hours of these two Khmer migrant groups. The purpose of this table is to illustrate the hard time that the Khmer migrant workers experience in the worksite in the cities and in the farms. The Khmer migrant workers did 3-D jobs, but their interval was not much to recover after hard working time.

Table 5. Working hours of two migrant groups

Companies	Activities	Working hours			No. of nightshift/week
		Morning	Afternoon	Evening	
Construction	0 nightshift	7:30-11:30	13:00-17:00		0
	Nightshift	7:30-11:30	13:00-17:00	17:30-21:00	3
Rubber/coffee farm	0 nightshift	7:00-11:00	12:30-16:30		0
Furniture	0 nightshift	7:00-11:00	12:00-17:00		0
	Nightshift	7:00-11:00	12:00-17:00	17:30-21:00	6
Aquaculture	0 nightshift	7:00-11:30	12:00-17:30		0
	Nightshift	7:00-11:30	12:00-17:30	18:00-21:00	4
Textile	Nightshift	7:00-11:00	12:00-17:30	18:00-21:00	6
Shoes	Nightshift	7:00-11:00	12:00-17:30	18:00-21:00	6
Incense	0 Nightshift	7:00-11:00	12:00-17:00	17:30-21:00	6

The migrant labourers also had welfare (money and present) and holidays in a year (table 6). In terms of holidays, both the seasonal and short term returnees stated that they were permitted to stop working in *popular holidays*¹¹ in Vietnam and they were given bonus or present on these holidays. However, they only had the holidays in the popular holidays in

¹¹ Popular holidays: Vietnamese New Year (1st - 3rd in lunar calendar), Western New Year (January 1st), International Day (May 1st), Liberation Day of Vietnam (April 30th), and National Day (September 2nd).

Vietnam, if they wanted to go back home on their traditional festivals, they would have to ask for permission.

Table 6. Number of holidays of Khmer migrant workers

Name of festivals		Vietnamese New Year	Western New Year	Liberation Day of Vietnam	International Day	National Day	Khmer traditional festivals	Bonus and present
Types of migration	Workplace	Number of day-offs						
Seasonal migration	Construction company	7	1	1	1	1	0	present, money
	Rubber/coffee farms	7	0	0	0	0	12	money
	Aquaculture company	7	1	1	1	1	0	money
Short term migration	Furniture company	7	1	1	1	1	0	money
	Textile company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Incense company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Shoes company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

For construction migrant workers, they were permitted to go back home on their traditional festivals, but they did not receive bonus including money and present from the company. However, for the migrant workers in farms, the landlords support the migrant employees some money for bus cost. The seasonal returnees respond that they only returned home to visit family on their traditional festivals (4 days) and on Vietnamese New Year (7 days). They did not come back home on the other popular holidays (except Vietnamese New Year), because of few holidays, and the distance from the work places to their home was very far and spend a lot of money for bus transportation. The construction labourers could go downtown to enjoy city life, or sometimes bought some beer back to the room and drank together on the weekend. They also said that they do not dare to go out, because they wanted to save money for their families. In the construction companies, the workers were able to ask for stopping their work some days, when they felt very tired and sick due to hard working or their family has urgent problems. Furthermore, when they spontaneously stopped working one day, they would not get salary for that day. Moreover, this case was the same with the Khmer migrant worker working in the farms, but the workers in farms cannot go downtown because their work places were very far from the downtown.

Similar to the seasonal migrant workers, especially construction workers, the Khmer short-term migrants were allowed to stop working on popular holidays. They were also given money on the holidays. They were not allowed to stop working on their traditional festivals. Moreover, they had to work extra hours at least three times a week. If they wanted to stop working with permission of the manager or the director of the company, the workers had to write a letter and submit one week in advance. If the manager or director agreed, they could come back home, and their salary would be reduced with the number of days they were absent from the company. If they stopped working one day without asking for permission, their salary would be reduced from 4 to 10 times of the number of days they were absent from the company. The short-term migrant workers described that the discipline in the company were very strict. Therefore, they seldom visited their home although they missed their families very much.

In summary, except the case of the Khmer migrant workers in the farms, the seasonal and short term workers were able to access to social services (entertainment, post office, money transfer service by bus...), and the modernity of the new place, although it was still limited. Majority of these labourers had the similar insecure working condition, because they did not have labour insurance. The construction workers presented that they were only given booths, gloves, and helmets while they were working. The workers in the farm did also not have human insurance. Furthermore, the workers in the company were the same, because these workers had a short time to work in the company. The migrant workers were given medicine, when they got common sickness such as flu, fever, cold, headache...if they got serious sick, they had to go to see the doctor and pay their own money.

4.5.2 *Living condition*

Khanh (2008), Hien (2009) and Phuong (2009) pointed out that the migrant workers almost lived in the slum and it was difficult to access social services (housing, health care...). I completely agreed with this point, because the result of the study showed that the case of the Khmer migrant workers in O Lam village was similar. The Khmer migrant employees had access to social services (entertainment, post office, money transfer services...), but limited, because of poverty. In terms of accommodation of the migrants, many researchers indicated that the migrants wanted to migrate in order to find safe condition and good asylum, but this study found that accommodation of Khmer migrant workers was unsafe and their living conditions were not good. Majority of them explained that their accommodations in destinations were very temporary. They had to share room with many coworkers, or they had to live in narrow places and lack of living conditions such as clean water, electricity, with a lot of mosquitoes... Besides that, the Khmer migrant workers also faced language difficulties. Although there were some similar difficulties among migrant workers, each group of migrant labour had different difficult situations from each other.

For seasonal migrant workers, majority of them were construction workers and farm workers. The construction workers presented that the project covered their accommodation during the time that the project was carried out. Their living places were however unsafe and spare, and had a lot of mosquitoes. The project covered the accommodation by building a big temporary cottage, which is called “*Láng*”, but the cottage was a temporary lodging, which the migrant workers divided into many small spaces to live. Their living places sometimes were flooded by heavy rains. Normally, the Khmer migrant workers shared accommodation and cooked food together. Four to five people had to share in the same net mosquito about 4m². They explain that at the beginning, they could not adapt to this situation, but after that they became familiar with the situation due to having no choices. In terms of daily expense of the construction migrant workers, they spent about 40,000 VND to 50,000VND/labour/day. Compared with the expense level in the countryside they spent too much more, because they worked hard and did heavy work. Their expenses were mainly for food (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), and they also spent for drinking coffee or beverage (ice tea, sugar cane...). They could receive salary once a week and saved money every month. They sent remittances back home by bus or sent to the acquaintances, or when they visited home.

Box 5. Difficulty of accommodation of the Construction migrant workers in the worksite

I have lived in O Lam village from I was born until now. Due to the difficult circumstances, I found a job in a Construction Company in District 2, Ho Chi Minh city through introduction of my neighbours in the same village. I worked as a seasonal

construction worker for four years. My work was to mix construction materials together and prepare those materials for builders. At the first year my salary was only 70.000VND a day, and then it was gradually increased after a week working, until my salary was 90,000 VND a day. Each month I worked, I could earn about 2.4 to 2.5 million VND. Sometimes I ask permission to stop working because I was tired from hard work. Minus all of my daily expenses for myself (daily food, smoking, coffee, call home...), I save average 1.5 million VND each month and send remittances back to my wife, who is taking care of my parents, children and rice field at home. Working in the building project is harder than in the field, because I had to mostly work in the sun, and sometimes I have to work nightshift in a month. Working time was quite hard from 7:30 a.m to 11:30 a.m, 13:00p.m to 17:00 p.m, and 17:30 p.m to 21:00p.m, but in days of nightshift, I was paid 1.5 time of a normal labour day. In the construction project, many Khmer workmates and I had stayed in “Lang”, a kind of temporary cottage for building workers staying. This temporary cottage was built by the company. We lived in there without money. Each mosquito net with about 3m² was shared by 4- 6 persons inside. At the first time, I could not stand it, but I gradually adapt to this situation, because my work was hard and tiring, so I tried to sleep in order to keep healthy for work. I did not cook rice, because the interval between the morning and the afternoon was not long...(Mr. S, 35 year-old, O Lam village – In-depth interview on Dec, 24th 2009)

For Khmer migrant workers in the farms, their living condition is worse than the situation of construction workers, because they worked in the forest, so they had to live at the farm in the forest. The landlord did not cover the accommodation, so they themselves had to find place for sleeping. These Khmer migrant workers had to face many problems with their accommodation. The living condition is dangerous for their health, because they had to sleep in the plastic tent in the forest, or they tighten hammock between the trees and covered themselves by blanket, or they covered the plastic mat on the ground and hang the mosquito net. Additionally, due to staying in the forest, there was not electricity, clean water source, and it is quite far from the market. The farm workers did not receive salary each month, and they sent their salary to the landlord, because their work place is not safe. They received salary one time at the end of two or three months when they wanted to visit home or there was someone (relatives or acquaintances) who went back home, their helper would bring remittances back to their family, or they sent remittances back home by transfer money service at the bus station. Their daily expenses were very low. They mainly spent money for daily food. It was about 20.000 VND/person/day while they earned 50.000 VND/day. They described that they could save at least 500.000 VND a month and send back to their home.

Box 6. Difficulty of living place of the seasonal Khmer migrant workers in the farms

... At present, my family has three people – my father, my elder brother, and me-working in the rubber farm in Binh Phuoc province. My father and my brother have worked in this rubber farm for one year. I had just worked for one month ... As many other migrant workers, I had to work from 7:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m, in the afternoon we started from 13:00 p.m and finished working at 4:30 p.m. but the living condition in the forest was not safe and easy to catch diseases. Most of our migrant workers lived in the remote area, because it was very far from the city, and even from the market. My elder brother and I went to the market every four days to buy food and some necessary objects, because we had to cook food by ourselves. Living condition in the market was very difficult because we could not use clean water and food used to be re-cooked except

for cooking rice. There was only one stream nearby the farm, so all daily living activities (bathing, cooking, and washing) of all migrant workers took place in this stream. In my worksite, there were around a hundred Khmer migrant workers, so we only spoke Khmer language. We rarely communicated in Vietnamese, so we could not improve Vietnamese-speaking skill... (Ms. S. Phone, in Phuoc Loi hamlet, O Lam village - in-depth interview, January 2nd 2010)

For the short-term migrant workers, the study showed that the living condition of the short-term migrants was more advantageous than that of the seasonal migrant workers, because some got their accommodation covered by the company during the three first months according to contract. They stayed in the tenement house for workers. Thus, their accommodations were safer than for the seasonal migrants', but they had to share room with other roommates. Some had to rent at the boardinghouse. The short-term return migrants explained that cost for boardinghouse was expensive, and they also wanted to save money to send back home. Therefore, about 4-6 people shared a room together. Each person paid about 100,000 VND to 130,000 VND a month. Besides that they also paid for daily food, beverage and a little for shopping. Some went to eat outside, because they did not have much time for cooking. Some were covered lunches and dinners by the company, but the company deducted the cost from their salary each month. Some could cook food by themselves, because they tried to save money. These migrants usually prepared food for some days, and re-cooked it when they had a meal. Sometimes they also ate outside with Khmer countrymen for fun. Generally, the Khmer short-term migrant workers spent about 30,000 to 50,000 VND a day, because living cost in working place was high. They also said that they spent much money for food, because they had to work extra hours, after finishing work they felt hungry and had to have supper as the main meal. Therefore, they did not save much money. Some could send little remittance back home (300,000 to 400,000 VND a month), and some could not send money back home. Let's continue to the story of Mr L. – the short term Khmer migrant worker in O Lam village.

Box 7. Living place of the short-term Khmer migrant workers in the company

Mr. L worked in the aquaculture processing company in Long Xuyen city, the company covered his two meals–lunch and dinner, but he had to share the boardinghouse with three other Khmer workers. The area of the room was too small without bed and necessary object inside. The room was about 10 to 12 square meter, he and his roommates had to sleep on the rush-mat on the floor. The total rent was 100,000VND/person/month. He also said that the boardinghouse was temporary for sleep because in daytime, he was busy with his work in the company and in the break time, he could not come back to the room because the interval was very short...

The majorities of the migrants presented that they missed home very much. However, they could not go back home, because their houses were very far from the working places. They also said that they spent much time and much money for going back home, so they sometimes called home by public telephone. Some short-term migrants had mobile phone to call their home - (when the Khmer migrant workers missed home, they called via the telephone at their neighbour, and this person would call the migrant workers' family member to hear the phone). They usually visited home on the holidays or on their traditional festivals or they could go back home when their families had urgent problems (disease, rice crop...) which needed them to solve. Language difficulty was one of the biggest constraints for the Khmer migrant employees. Majority of them coming from O Lam village could not speak Vietnamese well. Mostly, they came together with a *Khmer*

*group leader*¹², because this person was also the Khmer who has experienced working for a long time in the working place. He could convey work guidelines or work information to Khmer labourers.

4.6 Return migration of Khmer migrant workers

Research of Adda (2006), McKinley (2008) and Malhamé (2006) and many other scholars indicated that the reasons of the returnees were very different and it was closely related to the stage of the departure of the migration. However, in terms of the situation of Vietnam, especially with the case of the Khmer migrant workers in O Lam village, the study found out that the majorities of the Khmer migrant workers made decisions to migrate to find jobs out of O Lam village spontaneously and temporarily. These Khmer migrants migrated by themselves and by the agreement of their families. The Khmer migrant workers did not think that they were permanent migrants, due to the poor current status, the Khmer migrant workers decided to migrate for economic purpose. They returned home with many various reasons. Their return migration to the village of origin was significantly related to the reasons to migrate and the expectation that the migrant workers had as well as the working and living conditions in the destination. Most of the returnee respondents had expected to find regular jobs and to have income in order to contribute to their families' economic difficulties. These return migrant labourers mainly consisted of the Khmer poor people from the remote rural areas in the Tri Ton district, An Giang province. They left their home village because of reasons predominantly related to the poverty in the village, to unemployment and to the low income levels in the original village. The Khmer migrants' expectations of being able to improve both their own and their families' economic conditions were high, before they migrated. However, in spite of the fact that they would find jobs and succeed in earning money on a regular basis, the working and living conditions in the cities, in the big industrial zones and in other places were so hard and unpleasant that many chose to return to their home village. My research results in O Lam village, though, demonstrated that different migration groups had different motivation for the migration. However, the Khmer migrant workers' the reasons for return closely related to and derived from their working and living conditions in worksites. In general, after they had worked in companies for a while, the majority of Khmer migrant workers decide to return their homeland, because of a number of reasons. Let's start with the reasons for seasonal remigration.

The seasonal returnees, who had worked in the construction company and in the farms, would go back to their village in order to take part in the annual planting of rice and rice harvest. Therefore, these return migrants already knew before they migrated that they had to return to contribute to the rice production. After they finished working with the rice, they would migrate to the cities again. It is clear that they had to do their work at home according to rice crops within year. These return migrants had the plan at the beginning of their migration process. They had to return before starting rice crops and harvesting the rice crops. It is proven that their return process was set up and they migrated to the city again after finishing their works in the field. Additionally, the majority of the interviewed respondents showed that return to the countryside was also an opportunity for them to visit their families and bring money back home after a long time of hard work.

¹² *Khmer group leader: this person was mostly in the same village with the migrant workers, he was in the family with many children and with little land, or he was the divorced person. He went to work in the city for a long time, and his housework was undertaken by his children in the countryside.*

Moreover, they also explained that it was a good opportunity for them to release tiredness after long time continuously hard working. They themselves were those who decided to return, due to lack of family labour in two crop seasons. The first rice crop was the Spring-Winter crop lasting from December to March. The second rice crop was Summer-Autumn crop from April to the middle of July. Seasonal returnees returned to the countryside at the beginning of each harvest, staying for approximately half a month. In the beginning of each production cycle, the return workers had to prepare land for seeding. After seeding rice they still stayed at home to visit and take care of their field until their rice was about ten days old, then they went back to the cities to work again in the same company or find jobs in another company. Moreover, during the rice harvest, the returnees went back home to help families to cut and thresh the rice. At the end of the Spring-Winter crop, they still stay at home around one month to prepare land for the new rice crop, Summer-Autumn crop. Although they stayed at home during one month, they did not work all that time in their own field, thus they had spare time. In this spare time the returnee either find jobs as agricultural hired labor in the village or move to another village to find jobs such as rice cutting and rice threshing. The landowner paid them with rice, so they could store rice for family members at home. In addition, they could also collect crabs for family consumption and collect fresh fodder to sell. The landless seasonal returnees would also return, although they lacked land for production, they also returned to the countryside at the same time as those who owned land. They explained that it was easy for them to find jobs in the home village and in the neighbor village, due to lack of labor in the rice peak seasons, and it also was a good opportunity for them to visit the family and to rest a bit between periods of hard work in the city. After ending the Summer-Autumn rice crop, in the middle of July the flooding starts and continues November. During the flood season, the migrants return to the city in order to work.

For the seasonal returnees working in the farms were very different from the construction return migrants. A majority of these returnees state that due to dangerous living condition in the forest, they got serious disease, malaria. The causes leading to their serious disease were lack of the clean water source, there was merely a stream near their working place. Their daily activities including cooking, bathing, and washing were mostly based on this stream. However, the water source of this stream was polluted by leaves of trees, because the leaves fell into the stream and spoiled the water. Additionally, their accommodation was very temporary, and epidemic disease was easy to be infected. Therefore, they decided to return home in order to treat the disease. The parents were those who make a decision to take the migrant laborers back home.

The reasons for return migration of the short-term returnees were very different from the group of seasonal migrants. A majority of the former group were young laborers from 16 to 35 years old. Most of these migrants used to work in companies such as Textile, Incense, Shoes, Aquaculture Processing and Furniture. They stated that they had two reasons for remigration to their home village, but were the most related to the working conditions in the cities and in the IZs. Firstly, they had not adapted to the new working condition and secondly, they were dissatisfied with the working condition because of pressures of the working time and strict rules of the companies.

The result of the study showed that the working conditions of the Khmer return migrant workers in destination had many constraints including working style, working time, and language barrier. Most of Khmer returnees explained that all of the migrant workers were peasants and/or hired laborers in agricultural production in the countryside, and all of them

lack industrial working skills. Moreover, they have not been trained in any vocation so far. Employments in the company did not require many skills, but the laborers had to work and adapt themselves to the working rhythm and discipline of industrial jobs, which were different from the rhythm of agricultural labor. In the companies, the workers had to work continuously according to the needs of industrial assembly lines. The discipline of the assembly lines was very strict. The migrant workers also presented that they have to always work very hard for periods of up to at least 10 – 12 hours a day and at least 4 days a week (in Aquaculture) and six days a week (in Textile, Shoes, Incense and Furniture Companies). Mostly, the interval, lasting 30 to 60 minutes, between working periods was not long enough for lunch, dinner, and rest, making the workers very tired. However, the workers were required to work continuously day after day, except on Sundays and special popular holidays in Vietnam. Therefore, many of the migrant workers said that they could not endure working continuously for more than some months. Besides that, the communicative language was one of the most difficulties when the Khmer migrant engaged in the new community to work. The following case of Mr. L in O lam village demonstrated this argument clearly.

Box 8. Language constraints of the Khmer migrant worker in worksites

... His daily expense for breakfast and coffee...was about 10,000VND/day. He sent remittance back to his family, amounting to 1 million VND in the first month. The remittance was used for paying family's daily food, buying bran rice for pig, and buying fertilizer and pesticide for rice. He thought that this income level was more stable and higher than in his the countryside. He felt happy because he could contribute income to his family. However, unlike other Khmer workers, he worked with adjusting and putting Fillet fish in boxes. He said that this work was simple, he just did as the instructor the first time, and he would gradually become more experiences in his work later on. However, he also realized that he was going to be unable to stay on this work during a prolonged period of time. The first reason for this was his inability to speak Vietnamese. Moreover, although the work was simple, the manager sometimes wanted to convey new information related to the work (e.g. classify different types of fish: type 1, type 2,...), he did not understand clearly, while his Khmer coworkers who could speak Vietnamese well, were working in other phases of the work, so they could not help him to understand the instructions. He felt more and more isolated, because the manager was not enthusiastic in conveying information to him, and Vietnamese workers were not friendly. He found it was difficult to ask co-workers. He said that he was very depressed at that time and could not endure much more, though he tried. Furthermore, he also said that the temperature in the fish classification room was very cold, and he had to work continuously during many hours, so he became very cold and tired. Unfortunately, his father got sick at the same time, so he wanted to return home after two months working in this company. After coming back home he helps his younger brother works in the field ... (Mr. L, O Lam village, in-depth interview Dec, 24th 2009)

The return reason for remigration was mostly due to language difficulty in communication in the work as well as in the everyday conversation. One of the reasons that made the Khmer migrant workers return to the countryside was that they could not speak Vietnamese well. The characteristics of the short-term returnees were because that they migrate with a group, in which there were at least one or two Khmer people could speak Vietnamese better than others. This bilingual person became a group leader. The group leader was a person who could represent the group of laborers when they sign work

contract and he would also help others in the group to receive their salaries. Therefore, when this group leader returns to home, most of them wanted to follow him.

The result of my research also shows that the returnees were dissatisfied with working condition because of the strict disciplines enforced by the company, low salaries and high expenditure levels in the cities. Most of the returnees explained that the discipline of the company was strict, and they argued that the working time was both long and very strict. They were not allowed outside in the nighttime to relax or enjoy themselves. Working nightshift also made the laborers feel very tired. However, the workers in general and the Khmer migrant workers in particular would get serious disadvantages on their salary when they did not follow the rule of the worksite. For example, if the migrant workers took a day off in agreement with the employer, they would lose the pay of one labor day, but if they took a day off without permission, they would lose the equivalent of the salary of 4 to 10 labor days. Moreover, the unskilled migrants would only receive short-term vocational training courses, which were held by the companies at the beginning of the working period. However, the workers primarily learned skills by practicing directly while working. When they made mistakes while they were working the manager of the company would feel insulted.

Box 9. Different reasons for remigration of the migrant workers working in the company

.... Ms. M.H worked in the furniture company in Binh Duong province nearly one year due to work under much pressure of working hours and the working condition was unsafe, she returned to the countryside. She also found a new opportunity to search for a new job in the textile company in Ho Chi Minh city, after two months working in this company she decided to return home, because she said that she was trained on practice sewing one week in the company, while she was learning by doing on the product. Moreover, after one week, she started to her work. However, she had not practice well on the product, sometimes she made mistake on the products, so the manager shouted her. Together with other reasons such as low salary and high expenditure in the worksite, so she decided to return home... (*Ms Mai Huong, 24 year-old, O Lam village-in-depth interview Dec 2009*)

The majority of the short-term migrants said that the salary level was too low, considering how hard they work and that they worked nightshifts. Each hour of nightshift work was paid by 10.000VND to 15.000VND by companies (Aquaculture Company, Textile and Shoes Companies, and Dai Seng Furniture Company). Otherwise, their salaries were low but they had to pay expense for many things in the cities such as food, boardinghouse, shopping (sometimes), and medicine for illness that was caused by the hard work and working nights... And they said that the expense level in the city was very high and that their salaries could not support their lives in the cities. Another reason was that the labor recruiter did not hold his promises. The respondents explained that when the representative of the Company directly came to the village to recruit the laborers, he stated that the work would be easy, but be compensated by high salaries and that workers' salaries would be increased after one month. Nevertheless, the reality turned out to be very different. The work was very hard, the salary was low and there was no increase. This made the Khmer migrant workers depressed and they wanted to turn home. Mr. S.Ph. was one of the short-term migrants who returned to the countryside because he could not adapt to working condition in the city.

Box 10. Return migrant workers cannot adapt to the living condition

S. Ph was introduced a job by his friend at a textile company in the industrial zone in Binh Duong province. The work demanded that he should put 60 small marbles into a hole during 45 seconds, the work required skill and quickness. He could not adapt to this work. Moreover, together with his friend, he decided to leave this company two days later. He without salary had to practice trial work in advance within one week, but 2 days only. He left the company in silence and without receiving a salary.

Simultaneously, Mr. S. Ph. was introduced to another job in a shoes production company in Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh City. Together with him, there were more than ten Khmer countrymen(males and females), who had just arrived from the countryside and worked in the same company. Among this group, Mr. S. Ph. was selected as a group leader, because he was active and he could speak Vietnamese better than the others in the group could. Moreover, he had experience to work far from home (in Malaysia). In this company, he helped his Khmer friends to sign the labor contracts with the company, to receive wage for group, and to convey information related to work to his friends.

He worked in this company for one month, earning 1.5 million VND a month. His task was to set the machine, which makes the strap sandals, because he had experienced this in Malaysia. Mr. S. Ph. explains that the company kept 10% of his salary as well as of all workers every month for welfare until at the end of the year, when this sum will be paid back to the workers. He said that salary was very low, but he had to work 12 hours a day except Sunday. His working hours started from 7:00 a.m to 11:00 in the morning. He had only one hour for lunch time and then started to work again at 12:00 to 17:00 pm. After finishing the work at 17:00 p.m, he had 30 minutes for dinner and continued his work at 17:30 p.m until 21:00 p.m. He had only 30 minutes to eat a fast dinner, and continued his work nightshift at 17:30. He also said that after finishing the work at 21:00 p.m, he was very tired and felt very hungry, he had to have a big supper. He stated that due to working very hard, going back to the room late and feeling very tired. Sometimes he and his Khmer friends took a bus and went to visit landscapes together on Sunday. He and his friends went shopping, but they mostly took a look because they had not much money and the price of any product was expensive. He said that the daily expense was high in the city.

In this company, he stayed in the tenement house of the company, he shared the small room with 5 Khmer guys, and he did not have to pay money for accommodation. However, he and his roommates had to follow the strict rule of the company. They were not allowed to be outside in the evening, because they were new workers. He also presented that although he was very economical and mainly paid for food, he could not save money. He spent about 40,000VDN every day in the city. This amount of money would cover one day of food expenditure for his family with 3 members in the countryside. Together with some other reasons, for instance, the manager did not increase Mr. S. Ph's salary as his promise. Additionally, S. Ph. did not find any training course to study tourism, because the course was opened for students who completed the high school, while he has not completed high school yet. The company did not forbid the workers to be outside in the evening. He decided to return to his family after one month working with 1,350,000 VDN. He was very economical concerning all expenses. He said that he was lucky because he did not fall in debt as his friends after he returned to the village. However, he still depended on his family because he had not found any

job after his return. (Mr. S. Ph, O Lam village – in-depth interview, Dec, 24th 2009).

4.7 Social and Economic impacts after return migration

After the Khmer return migrant workers re-migrated to home village, it is clear for them what it means to settle down again in their countryside. When the returnees came back, they experienced several positive and negative advantages and disadvantages which are embedded economically, socially and culturally. This part will provide a description of the different effects on each group of Khmer returnees and their families in terms of income and expenditure, social relationship and culture after their return to home village.

4.7.1 Impacts on Social networks

Box 11. The importance of social relations in job application in the city

“To achieve the dream of contributing income to my family, my family helped me and my younger brother to get a job in Binh Duong province. A friend introduced me to worksite, and the local authorities helped me to sign the job-application letter. Two of us went to work in a furniture company...” (Mai Huong, female, 24, Phuoc Tho hamlet, O Lam village, Dec 27, 2009)

As Singh (2003), ILO (2004) and Cassarino (2008) pointed out that the return migrants may transfer transitional social networks to their homeland. Additionally, many studies also showed that the social relations of different kinds are very significant for finding suitable employments. Besides, the relations, material importance, social relations also very important for the overall well-being and emotional needs of returnees (Kuyper, 2008). The range of the social network that had an important role to play when it comes to livelihoods were. There was a large variation among migrants from those who hardly had any social contacts to others, who had a large network of kin and acquaintances. Otherwise, there were returnees who had good social relations, but only with a particular social group, such as their family, or a selective group of friends, in many cases other return migrants. This research shows that a majority of Khmer return migrants in O Lam village possessed broad social relations such as family relationship, kinship, neighbors, friendship and acquaintance/workmates and relationships with associations at the village. Moreover, there are both relations (kinship and neighbor, friendship or associations with local authority in the countryside) and there are new relationships, which they have forged at the worksite in the cities, normally workmate, and people from the same parts of the countryside as themselves. The interactions between the return migrants and other people in the community were relatively complicated. In addition, these networks of relations had two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. In addition, how were these relationships affected by the remigration of the migrant workers? I will discuss the importance of vertical and horizontal relations for finding employment in the cities for both groups of return migrants. Vertical relations consisted of relation between the return migrants and social institutions such as pagoda and local authorities. Horizontal networks conclude family relationship and kinship, which included interactions between the returnees and their family, and between the returnees and their kindred. Moreover, the other social relations such as friendship, neighbor, and acquaintances were also implanted in horizontal relations. However, these relations would be embedded in two different groups of Khmer people: returnees and villagers.

Horizontal networks

The first aspect to consider is how the return migrants regarded close kin relations. The scholars pointed out that the family relation is important for the returnees after they return their home, but there are also changes in their social relations with family because of the returnees' migration experience. However, this study found that the majority of the returnees stated that family relations were perhaps the most important of all relations. Besides emotional aspects, the families helped the migrants to get work in the countryside, when they returned. The return to the home villages also renewed kinship bonds and made all forms of migrants aware of that their major responsibility they had was towards their own close kin. They also knew that if they would not endure the work at the assembly lines, if they lost the job, or if they became indebted their family constituted their main economic and social security. The families, furthermore, functioned as a bridgehead to the neighbors in their home village, who also constituted an important part of their social networks.

More distant forms of kinship also played a vital role, albeit less important than their families, because their distant kin tended to live in other villages, and they had mostly only irregular contacts with their relatives. The migrants said that kinship was less important than good relations to their neighbors, because if they needed urgent help their relatives were, because of the distance, not able to help them immediately. Even so, however, they strived to maintain the bonds with their distant kin, not least because they filled an important part for the celebration of rituals. When official rituals were conducted the relatives would invite the returnees and their families to take part in the celebrations, and vice versa. The returnees also shared reciprocal agricultural labor services with their relatives. These are very important since the migrants and their families often lack capital and try to maintain labor costs to a minimum. Kin networks were also a major node when it came to being introduced to jobs in the city or being recommended to specific employers. Similarly, the villager explained that family was very important for them because no matter how in any circumstances family relation is still the most important. However, mostly the villagers showed that the kinship was not important because their relatives lived far from them and their relatives were also poor, so they did not help each other when they had difficulty.

Even though the families, the neighbors, kin and friends in the village continued to be the most important parts of the migrants' social capital, their relations expanded significantly in the cities. The main new forms of relations here were friends and acquaintances. These relations were perhaps the most important source for finding employment opportunities. These friends consisted of both ethnic Kinh and Khmer people. The new relations, forged in the cities, included Khmer people from their own village, as well as Khmer from other villages. They both worked in the same companies and shared the same accommodation. Many of the Khmers who came from the same village had not known each other well before they migrated to the cities. After they returned to their home village, the returnees continued to interact with their new Khmer friends. The relations with the ethnic Kinh were not as strong, mainly because of the language barrier.

The seasonal return migrant workers used to keep in contact with *the Khmer group leader*¹³ in the city after the return to the village, and this contact was very significant, because this person would inform them about available employments in the city and

¹³ *The Khmer group leader: is a person who has worked in the city for a long time. When the project in the city needed employees, he would call the return migrant to come back to the city to work or he would provide information related to employment in the city for the returnees.*

summon them to work. This group leader was also a person who lived in the same village with them. And when the group leader sent message to the villages and asked them to come back and work, they also shared this information with their relatives, friends and neighbors. They explained that when there was job available which needed many people they used to share this information with the others in the village, because they used to migrate collectively so that they could support each other. Many of the short term return migrants had very limited social networks. These people just maintained close relationships with neighbors and friends, who they knew before they migrated. They were afraid to establish new relations with strangers. Besides, their working time in the city was too short and their language difficulties too severe to forge new lasting social bonds. On the other hand, friendship and neighbor relations were not only important to the returnees, but also to their families, since the latter thus received support with a number of issues: such as borrowing money, rice... when they passed through different crisis. However, not all return workers who moved back possessed wide and dense networks. The acquaintances of various types were also of importance for the returnees, because they would often get information about available jobs from them. A majority of returnees in O Lam commune after remigration could find jobs based on old acquaintance, which they had.

Box 12. The returnees' social relations after return home village

After two times of migration to Ho Chi Minh city to find jobs in the construction company (2007) and in the furniture company (2008), Mr. G had returned to his village. He was more fortunate than most other returnees, because he sought a stable job immediately after return to home, because before working in the furniture company he had worked for a company which was mainly harvesting and planting cajuput trees in Hon Dat district, Kien Giang province. He said that after the return he came to this company and asked for a job, the boss agreed to take him on and Mr. G started to work. His salary in this company was 2,1 million VDN per month. He would receive salary every two weeks. The salary was stable and higher than in the furniture company in Binh Duong province. He has worked for the "tea tree" company for 9 months, and for three months he has worked as a hired labourer in agriculture (cutting rice) in the home village. He and his wife earned 25-30 paddy bushels a crop, with two crops a year. He used half of the income for family consumption and half for daily family expenses. Sometimes he also worked as a construction worker in his village. (*Mr. Giau, O Lam village, in-depth interview on Dec, 29th 2009*)

However, compared with the villagers, the returnees have a more extensive social network than the villagers, because they have forged new relations in the cities. When many return migrants came back home after a period of work in the city their relations to some groups in the countryside had changed, while the villagers' relations were also family, relative, friendship, neighbor, acquaintance and relation with local authority. These relations were maintained more frequently than the returnees, because the villagers contacted with people in their community more often than the return migrants. For instance, the relation among villagers such as employees and employers, the villagers said that they were hired frequently by the employers who had a big land area, due to the fact that they were available in the village more often than the returnees were. Moreover, the villagers responded that followed by the family relation was neighbor relation, this relation was important for them because the neighbor were those who lived near them. Although they could not help much, their neighbor could help them directly and timely in urgent situations such as sickness, lack of food, money. Nevertheless, the kin was less important than their neighbors, because they lived far from them and the villagers also said that their

relatives were also poor, so their relatives had not helped the villagers. And the next is the friendship. They stated that their friends also provided information related to employment to them.

Vertical networks

The migrants mostly interacted with authorities of institutions at village levels, because they stated that they had little knowledge about institutions at district and provincial levels. The institutions that they mostly interacted with were the pagoda, the Women's Union, the Farmer' Union, the Youth Union, the staffs at *the hamlet*¹⁴ level, representative staffs of the banks and staffs of governmental development projects.

Pagoda plays a center importance to the returnees and their families, because the pagoda was a cultural center in which Khmer people could get together for both exchange information and express their devoutness to the Buddha. Moreover, mostly, information was conveyed by the monks in the pagoda or from the loudspeaker in Khmer language. The returnees also got information about employment from this information channel. When it came to the relations with authorities and formal associations the majority of returnees explained that the connection between themselves and representatives of the former were very weak, because the returnees mostly got jobs by themselves, based on informal personal relationships in the community. They seldom found jobs through employment recommendation of the associations local authority because of four main reasons. First of all the migrant labourers, who was introduced to the company by the local authorities, had to be trained in vocational skills. Secondly, the labourers had to at least have completed primary school (the grade 5). Thirdly, the labourer had to follow the formal procedure process, which the local authorities demanded; including completing the job application document. Finally, the migrant labourers had to wait for jobs because after they were introduced to the company, it would take at least one month before they could get permission to start working and sign a contract with the company. Nevertheless, they had to earn money each day to support their families. Most of the labourers in O Lam were not able to live up to demands of the authorities. Therefore, the returnees did not involve the authorities in their search for jobs.

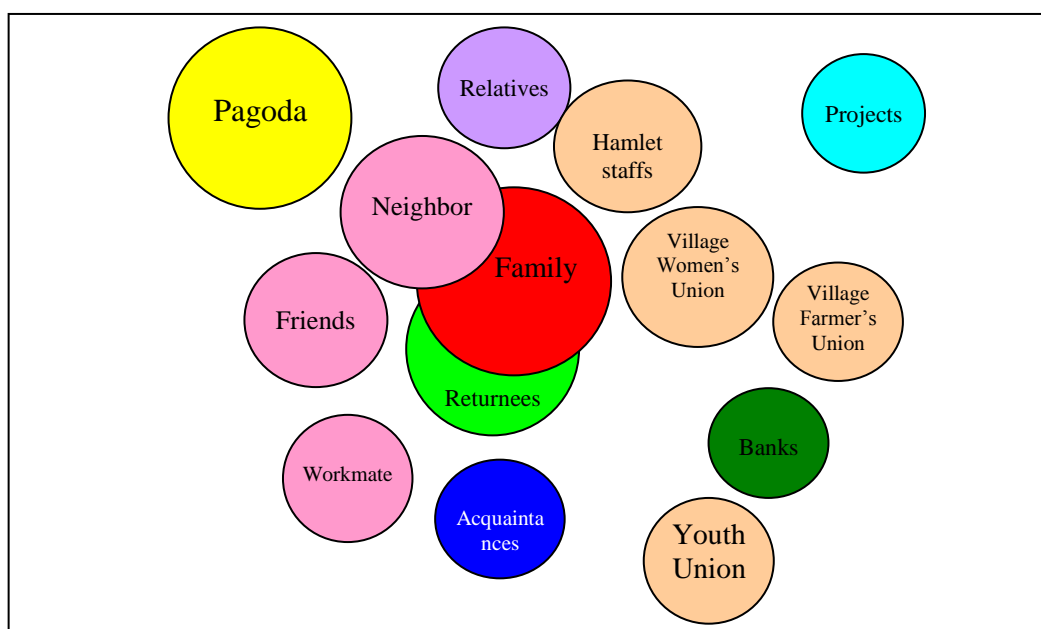
Although the returnees could not get jobs through the recommendation of the village staffs (Women's Union, Farmer' Union and hamlet office, and the center for employment introduction), the returnees did not also deny the role and the assistance of the village staffs, because these staffs helped the migrant labourers to complete the procedure to apply for jobs in the companies in the cities. The women's Union and the hamlet staffs were those who had the nearest relationship with returnees and returnees' families, because the Women's Union used to convey information to the local people about employment, vocational training, and issues relevant to children and women, such as schooling. The hamlet staffs were those who had most access to local people though. These staffs were considered to be a channel of information from local authority to the local people and to transfer ideas of local people to the local authority. Farmer's Union conveyed information about training courses on vocation and techniques on agricultural practices to the migrants and their families. The returnees also said that they received the assistances of the banks and the projects, which were present in the village. However, their relationship with the banks and projects was very weak, because the returnees were beneficiaries from support programs of these organizations through the village staffs.

¹⁴ *The hamlet: is the lowest level of administrative unit below the commune or village level in Vietnam. In this case study, the staffs of the hamlet are those who are working in the hamlet office.*

The villagers, who remained, had more frequent and better contacts with the local authorities than the returnees, since the villagers stayed in the village, they would also catch information, which the returnees would not. The most important information of the authorities is to concern labour and employment solution, sanitation and environment, livelihood improvement, and education support. It should also be mentioned that the returnees were often more socially active than those who remained in the village. When there were not available employments in their home villages they would move to neighbour communes or provinces to find jobs. They often moved together with some family members and neighbors.

The last but important point, which could not be ignored, was that the returnees and villagers could find jobs by themselves. It was described that these people were not those who were very limited in their social relations, so they only had relations with the neighbor who lived near their houses. Due to lack of employment in the village, these people moved to find jobs in other neighbor communes or provinces, especially with a group including family members and neighbors.

Figure 5. Social relations of returnees after remigration



4.7.2 Economic impacts of remigration

Different elements were imbedded in economic capital including the ownership of and access to assets, including house, savings, land, and independent means of transportation and production tools. I also include all forms of income generation, access to healthcare and education in the category ‘economic capital’. However, regarding the situation of the Khmer returnees in O Lam village, I will focus on two elements of income and expenditure. As Singh (2003), ILO (2004) and Cassarino (2008) reported that the return migration may bring back remittances or savings, knowledge and skills, technology, and investments, and even though they are able to contribute to development promotion of their homeland by transferring skills and work experience and knowledge. The returnees may have a better economic situation after return home. However, Ha (2009) and the above mentioned scholars also indicated that the return migrants face the difficulties after return to their homeland such as problem health, unemployment, and lack of basic public services and even though they are unable to accumulate much both capital and professional skills.

In the particular context of O Lam village, I argue that the Khmer return migrant workers had not only brought knowledge and skills, technology, and investments and savings to their village of origin, but they had to face troubles on economic situation, particularly decrease in income source generation and increase in daily expenditures. Most of Khmer return migrant workers presented that their biggest challenges as well as their biggest concerns were that they could not find the regular wage jobs in their home village, while their family daily expenses were increased because of the increase in number of the underemployed and unemployed in their families.

The majority of the Khmer returnees said that the work that the Khmer laborers held in the cities, offering them regular incomes, was very significant for themselves and their families and it was also a way to help them survive, despite the fact that their absence created labor shortages of their own fields in their home villages. However, the return to their home villages affected their economic situation in a negative way.

Group of seasonal return migrants explained that among their families' all income sources are from agricultural production, animal husbandry, and hired labor in the countryside and in the cities or in the farms. Besides that, remittance played the most significant role for their family, because it is accumulated during time the returnees have jobs in the city and sent back home, the remittance helped to improve their family condition better than before. The remittance was used for many different purposes. Firstly, it could be used for family's daily expenses and paying debt. Secondly was to nourish old parents, children and support children's school fee. Furthermore, that money was used to buy some households appliances (mobile phone and motorcycle...) and agricultural materials (pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer) and production tools (sprayer, baskets...). Finally, the remittances were used to contribute to monthly worship in the pagoda and construction or reconstruction in the pagoda. However, most of the seasonal return migrants said that their personal expenditures were reduced after back home due to low living standard in the countryside, but their family expenditures were increased due to their return home.

The seasonal return migrants who have the little land portrayed that their income was much reduced, due to fact that they almost helped their families to do agriculture on their own land areas. They seldom had regular employment. It can be said that their main income within duration of their remigration was from agriculture for their own land and from irregular hired labor in agriculture. However, they could not earn money as much as in the city, they contributed income indirectly to their family by their labor days on their own land through their rice productivity, which they harvested. They also said that when their housework was finished, they tried to find employment and worked as hired labor. The employments that they used to work were rice cutting, rice threshing, rice transplanting, pesticide or herbicide spraying, and fresh fodder collecting. Some return migrants described that they became the unemployed during five days to haft of month after return home, due to their absence from the village long time, so the landowners did not hire them, but hired the inhabitants. Within their days of jobless, they went to catch fish or collect crabs in the field for family consumption or collect fodder for selling.

Box 13. Conditions of return migrant workers in their home village

I returned to my home village for a month to help my wife prepare our land of 0.3 hectare with new rice plants. However, I only worked about 20 days on my own field, the rest of the time, I did not have work to do, some neighbors and I went to catch fish and collect crabs for daily meals. The week later, I went back to the city to apply for job.

On the contrary, the landless seasonal returnees could generate income in the rice crop seasons. They explained that they were easy to find jobs and to work as hired labor in the village and in the neighbor villages in the peak rice crops. Although the work in the countryside was not as regular as in the city, they wanted to store rice for their family consumption, because when they were hired to harvest rice, the landowners paid them rice. However, the landless return migrants also explained that their income was lower than in the city. Some return migrants returning from the farms said that their income really decreased because they had health problems, and they had to treat their diseases. Therefore, they had not found work in the rice crop.

Box 14. Occupation of the seasonal returnee back home from farms

Mrs. K is a Khmer woman, born in 1969. She grew up in Phuoc Loi hamlet, a part of O Lam village, Tri Ton district, An Giang province. She is married and has four children. Her oldest son is twenty-one year-old, and her oldest daughter is fifteen years, studying in the 5th grade. The two youngest sons are nine and six respectively, one of them is studying at grade 2, and the youngest has not started school yet. Her husband is also Khmer, born in 1972. Totally, there are three members of the family have worked as construction, that is she, her husband and her oldest son. Her family was landless, and survived on hired labor in the countryside, before migration to Ho Chi Minh city. Because there were not many employments in the village, she her husband and her oldest son applied for jobs in the construction in the city and worked there... However, after her husband and she decided to return home, because her husband seriously hurt his back because of the hard work. Hence, she had to take care of him. She took him back to the countryside to treat his disease, because her family had not much money to treat his disease in the city while the cost for treatment and for food too expensive in the city. She was unable to save as much as money in the city because she had to pay for food for five members of the household, for her children's schooling, her husband's disease treatment and parties (wedding party, birthday, death anniversary...) while her husband could not work. In the countryside, she was unemployed. Her family's key income mainly based on her son's remittance. In her spare time, she went to find work as hired labor in the village and collected crabs for her family consumption. She explained with depressed feeling that her family life was very difficult in the countryside. She hoped that her husband will be better so that she and her husband could go back to the old company to work. (Mrs. Kim, O Lam village – in-depth interview, Jan 3rd 2010)

Members of the short-term returnee group explained to me that they were not able to send back much money to their families during the time they spent in the city, since their working period there was too short. Therefore, they could not save money. However, the short-term returnees also shared information that they did not have to spend much money of the families while they were working in the cities. They were completely independent from support of their parents within the short-term duration of migration. After back home, they did not contribute income to their families, and some were dependent on their families or received family's assistance because some had to borrow money of their friends or acquaintances to come back home and they fell in debt after back home. They had to face to job instability in the countryside. Besides they help their families the housework, they had a lot of leisure time and they became the unemployed in the village. They said that

their income source was really limited. They also stated that their personal expenditure was much more decreased in the countryside, but their family expense was increased.

Box 15. The returnees' perception on daily expenditure in the home village

.... After return from the city I lived in my home and helped my parents to do the housework in the field. I had come back from the city for one month, but I did not have a job, because the rice crop had just finished. Sometime, the landowners hired me to spray pesticide in their fields about two or three days... at home my expenditure was much decreased, I only spent about ten thousand a day for soft drinking or have breakfast, sometimes I did not spend money because I did not have work. I seldom went outside with his friends also, because I did not have money, and I had to ask my parents about money... (Mr. S.Ph, O Lam village- in-depth interview, Dec 24th 2009)

Together with Mr. Phol, many Khmer short term return migrant workers came back home and had the similar situation such as Mr. Ri, Mr. Luonl, Ms Thuong, Ms. Mieu...

Will the return of migrant workers have a negative impact on available jobs in the countryside, because of increased job competition? The result found that there was not any job competition between the return migrants and the inhabitants in the village, because the villagers explained that except in the peak rice crops, the employment needs labor but normally, local people needed employment, because the employment in the village was very limited. The inhabitants also said that the landowners used to hire the inhabitants to work in their fields, because the seasonal migrants frequently go to the city and go back to the village, so the landowners did not know when the seasonal migrants were at home. Moreover, due to the effect of the Khmer people's custom, when they lived together in the "Phum or Soc" they could help and protect each other as well as when they worked far from their home, they used to go to work with group. So, although lack of work in the village, they had work, they would go to work together with small group. For instance, in the group discussion as well as in-depth interview, the villagers said that when they went to collect crabs or collect fresh fodder in the neighbor villages, they used to go with group including the villagers, the seasonal return migrant, and the short-term return migrants. They thought that they are poor, so they needed to share and help each other in their lives by themselves to support their lives. In group discussion, they presented that it was difficult for all people to find work in their village, so they had to find work in the other places, especially in the flooding season. There was nobody hire them to work in this season. Thus, they had to find the way to make their living by themselves such as collect crabs, catching fish in the field and collect fresh fodder...Some local people went to find work in Kien Giang province- a border province of An Giang province, they found a fodder field. Then they invited their relatives and their neighbors go to there to collect fresh fodder. They contributed money together in order to hire two motorboats, one shipped people and another shipped fodder. Furthermore, the villagers stated that due to the poor condition, so they engaged in on-farm and off-farm and non-farm activities in order to generate income and satisfy their families' daily expenses, although these work were not regular and stable and brought little money to them, even though their income was less than 20,000 to 50,000VND a day. They also reported that this income level was able to be enough for a day of food in the countryside. However, when relatives or neighbor invited parties or they got diseases, that amount of money was not enough, so they had to borrow from their neighbor and returned money to their neighbor latter.

In addition, the scholars also showed that these scholars showed that the return of the migrants might contribute to enrich human capital in their homeland. This study found that the Khmer return migrant workers merely contributed to their human resource in the peak rice crops for their community in general and for their families in particular. For the Khmer return migrant workers, rural employment is one of their most concerns, because there were not much employment to meet the demand of the labor force before they decided to migrate. Most of the returnees after re-migrate to the home village are only the ones with semi-stable employment, temporary or daily wage labor or unemployed. Therefore, searching for stable and regular employment and having stable and regular income is one of the biggest concerns of the returnees. They needed to have employments in order to support their families and to have faith in the future basing on regular income.

Besides that, the economic impacts of remigration also had mutually positive and negative effects on their social networks in the community within two groups of remigration. Some of seasonal returnees reported that after returning home, they were sometimes invited to join in the parties of their relatives and neighbor, but they could not join in the parties because of having little money. However, some of the seasonal returnees stated that they only joined in the parties without money, but they could bring gifts they had to the parties such as chicken or food or they contributed their labour in preparation and decoration of the party. Some of seasonal returnees said that they were also limited in keeping contact with their relatives who lived far from them because they did not have money to visit their relatives. The short term migrant worker returnees explained that when working in the companies in the city they could earn money, so they used to contact with their Khmer friends and went outside together to drink beverages on the weekends, but after coming back home they seldom went in group like in the city before because money limitation in the countryside.

4.7.3 Impacts on Culture

Related to economic and social effect, cultural element of Khmer returnee was also affected. In terms of cultural effect after return home, Gubert & Nordman (2008) and ILO (2004) pointed out that the return migrant experienced employment abroad and accumulated knowledge and skills in their work in the destination. In addition, Cassarino (2004) and Malhamé (2006) indicated that the return migrants felt marginalized from their homeland, because of their time for migration was long. The research result of the HealthBridge Foundation of Canada (2008) pointed out that the behavior of return workers positively contributed to the changes of the community of origin such as their politeness, gentleness, solidarity, cheerfulness, and their warm care. This positive issue had a direct effect on customs and lifestyles of communities with a large number of returnees, change the appearance of localities and created various services and jobs such as hospitality and small businesses. However, in the context of O Lam village and in the particular situation of Khmer people, the study found that not only did the return of the migrants have economic and social impacts for their families and their villages, but it also affected their culture. Those changes included behaviour, lifestyle, knowledge/experience, language, and their working habits. All migrant groups, both seasonal and short term, explained that the life in the city and other external worksites, such as rubber farms and other enterprises, was very difficult, because they were always dependent of having available cash, to cover daily food expenses, so they had to work hard in order to earn money for survival. Poor people in their home villages might lack money some days, but they could still borrow rice and some money from their neighbours. They would pay back the loans in one or two days or one week later.

Furthermore, the returnees remembered how hard they were forced to work in the cities. The returnees I interviewed realized that to get money to support both themselves and their families, they would have to learn vocational skills and the Vietnamese language if they wanted to be able to increase their salary. The reason why they had spoken Vietnamese was quite self-evident. The returnees argued that because they worked in worksites where the majority was ethnic Vietnamese they needed to speak the Vietnamese language so that they could communicate well and understand what the manager said and adapt to the work environment. They would be able to get more advanced work tasks, and thus be able to maintain the jobs for longer periods. Those of the migrants who lacked vocational skills were delegated to monotonous and low-paid work. Often they found that the life far from home was also psychologically hard to cope with. They were often bawled out by the managers when they committed mistakes in the production or when they did not understand the instructions. The unfriendly atmosphere was increased by the monotonous work, the long work hours, and the bad standard of accommodations. Their experiences at the assembly lines in the cities would affect them deeply and make them perceive village life in a different way than before migration.

The majority of the Khmer people (migrants and non-migrants) in O Lam village live a simple life expressed in daily clothes and in the spiritual life. They are devoted Buddhists, despite economic and social differences. They try to go to the pagoda at least two to four times a month, and participate in their traditional festivals. However, a few of the returnees (mainly those had worked in aquaculture companies) said that while they were working in the city, besides the special day-offs) all the remaining days were working days, according to the companies, so when the festivals were held, the migrants asked for permission to go back home and participate in the festivals,. Most of the seasonal migrants not only tried to cut down on daily expenses, and tried to save money to go home during the festivals. The short-term migrants did mostly not work during the periods when the festivals were held, so they could participate without asking for permission. Returnees who had worked in furniture and Aquaculture companies said that they could not back home during the festivals, because the companies demanded that they should work nightshifts. These migrants explained that felt very home sick during festival days, but they could not came back home. The returnees also said that they recognized the difficulties of the city life when they were working far from families. Most of the returnees said that they felt very happy after they had moved home to the village again, but that they also worried about the elevated living expenses.

The short-term migration workers explained that they felt depressed when they had to remember their time in the city, not least, because of the monotonous and arduous work and the high level of expenses. Some of them explained that if there was a chance to work in the city again, they would try to find jobs, which had more flexible working hours than the work in the textile and shoes companies. Seasonal migrants, who returned to their home village, were able to save money when they worked in the city, so they bought household appliances, such as motor bikes and agricultural tools, invested in their children's education and paid back debts. The older returnees, especially the women, bought gold. They said that the money could save them from the city, because after they had sent remittances back to the countryside to support families, they still had cash, and when they had accumulated enough cash, they visited their families and bought gold. They wore the gold, which only amounted to small quantities, since they could not keep the cash safely. These migrants explained that they had to save some cash and invest in their home villages, since they knew that they could only keep up with this type of job when they were

young and strong. However, a few of the young migrants bought mobile phone to maintain contact with their families and friends, and bought some jewelry for themselves. The life-style of the young migrants did not change very much in the city, even though they liked to dress up and shop, because they understood that their income was very limited.

Even though all migrants seemed to share the characteristics described above, the different groups of migrants also had demonstrated distinct qualities. For example, the seasonal migrants stated that they had improved their Vietnamese substantially during their stay in the cities. Short-term migrants, however, were mostly not able to improve their Vietnamese. Some of these migrants worked on farms and argued that they could not improve their Vietnamese, because there were a lot of Khmer countrymen at their worksite, so they spoke Khmer with each other in everyday conversation. In the cities, they also talked Khmer with most of their workmates and they stayed so short time so they did not improve their Vietnamese. In spite of the hardships they suffered in the cities, the seasonal migrants said that they would try to find jobs to be able to cover their families' daily expense and to support the children of the family who went to school. These aims made them determined to stay in the city during long periods, even though they despised the life there. Since they were already accustomed to hard work in the fields, they were able to stand the arduous working conditions in the city. The middle aged and the old migrants understood that they had to work hard to earn the money that they and their families needed and they wanted to invest in the education of the next generation.

Box 16. Strategies of the Khmer returnees after back home village

.....Currently, he also save some money, he said that after a long time working far from home, he recognized that the life in the countryside is better if the government built factory or established a company to solve the unemployment labor force in the village. He also said that although income in the rural area was low, expense was also lower than in Binh Duong and working time was more flexible. To be near wife and children, he was less worried about them than when he worked far from home. He also experienced many things in all time working far from home because the particularity of work was that "we have to do what the manager orders". After back home, he could not also apply that skill in the village because the village has not had that work. He wishes he could save money enough in order to redeem a plot of land mortgaged before, come back to Kien Giang and continue to live on growing rice... (Mr. Giau, 41 year-old, O Lam village – in-depth interview Dec, 29th 2009)

The young migrants, however, were mainly interested in earning money that they could spend on themselves. They returned to the countryside because of the difficulties they faced in the cities, and they bided their time there until there was an opportunity to find a new job. Almost all Khmer migrant workers were unskilled. They were also accustomed to the rhythm of agricultural labor, which is totally different from the rhythm of the assembly lines, so many thus went back to their home villages, because they could not adapt to industrial work. In the countryside, they could stop working when they felt tired, which was opposed to the situation in the cities. The young migrants appear to have endured much harder working conditions than seasonal migrants, who also were more skilled. The results of my study demonstrates that the migrants' working style and discipline did not change after they had returned to their home villages, compared to the situation before they migrated to the cities.

The experiences, which the migrants had in the cities, would make them differ from the villagers, who stayed in the countryside. Many of the problems that the migrants faced in

the cities were also found in the villages, such as problems to communicate in Vietnamese, and covering their expenses, but in the villages, people were able to draw on their networks of kin and neighbors.

4.8 Re-adaptation strategies of Khmer returnees

This part explores the strategies employed by both migrants and villagers concerning their adaptation strategies. The households tried to diversify their sources of income. The strategies of returnees and villagers varied according to their internal household structure in terms of size, composition, and capital. As Graves & Graves (1974) and Cassino (2004) pointed out that the returnees have diversified strategies to adapt to the situation in their home country after to return. In addition, they stated that the adaptation of returnees in their homeland was neither active nor passive, but interactive. As Gubert & Nordman (2008) and Kilic *et al.* (2007) reported that the returnees could achieve savings and skills in order to establish successfully a new business after return. However, Malhamé (2006) indicated that after return the returnees faced to difficulties in their homeland such as political and job instability. Gubert & Nordman (2008) showed that the returnees' adaptation depended on their amount of money they saved during their stage of migration. According to Ha (2009), a number of return migrant workers back home from foreign countries and from the city are high, but few of them could search for employment. Some were waiting for the new chance and they would migrate to the city again, because of lack of work in the rural areas. In addition, according to HealthBridge Foundation of Canada (2008), many returnees did not want to want to continue their farming again, but they referred profitable work in industries. However, I discuss that the Khmer returnees had to face job instability and unemployment after they return. Although some Khmer returnees could save some money, they could not invest to do business. Generally, the seasonal return migrants could improve their lives due to saving remittances sent back home, but the short term return migrants could not save money after back home. The study found that since the migrant workers re-migrated back home village, it can be said that employment issue was one of the most concerns of all returnees and villagers. The returnees generally could get jobs in the countryside after return, but their jobs were not regular, their income was low and unstable. They were mainly hired labor in agricultural sector. Moreover, O Lam is a poor mountainous village in Tri Ton District, since it has a high rate of Khmer people and a high rate of poverty. As mentioned in chapter 2, before migration started, livelihoods of local people were mainly based on agricultural production, animal husbandry, and seasonal hired labour. The Khmer people used to raise livestock the year around. Their main husbandry consisted of cattle and pigs. They used to accept to raise cattle with “*nuoi bo re*” due to lack of investment capital. In the dry season, the villagers produced two rice crops annually (Spring-Winter crop and Summer- Autumn crop) or one rice crop (Spring-Winter crop) and one vegetable crop (peanut, watermelon, and sesame). However, because the terrain in some parts was un-arable some villagers could only grow one rice crop a year. The landless people, on their hand, could only make their living by selling their labour to the larger, land-owning farmers in the village and in near villages. They used to get jobs, such as land leveling, seeding, fertilizer applying, pesticide and herbicide spraying, transplanting, hand weeding, rice cutting, and rice threshing. Beside they also engaged themselves in other jobs, such as making sugar from palms, doing petty trading, and quarry mining (stone breaking and stone carrying). In the flooding season, local people went to catch fish and snails in the field. They also moved to find jobs in neighbor villages. Case of Mrs. N. N is one of evidence for this point.

Box 17. Income sources of the returnees after return

Mrs. N is 30 years old and lives in Phuoc Tho hamlet, O lam village. She was born and grew up in a poor family with eight members, including her parents, and five younger brothers and sisters. Her mother is fifty-five years old. Her father is fifty. She is the oldest daughter in the family. She got marriage, and divorced. She and her parents are the main labourers in the family. She has three younger brothers, they are 15, 13 and 10, respectively, and two younger sisters are 11 and 12. No members of her family have completed primary school. Her family mainly survives by working as rural workers, employed by farmers, catching crabs (she and her mum), catching snakes (her father), and “nuoi bo re”, i.e. - raising cattle for other people (the oldest boy- 15 year-old). The remained brothers and sisters study and help with housework (cooking, taking care of the house).

Introduced by friends and neighbours in the village, she and her parents got a job at a coffee farm in Binh Duong province. Together with her parents and acquaintances in the village, she went to grow coffee trees. Her salary was 1,2 million VDN a month. Out of this amount of money she could save at least 1 million VND because mostly she did not had to pay much money for other costs, the landowner offered three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). She thought that working hours was good for her, in the morning she had to start to work from 7:00 to 11:00 and in the afternoon from 13:00 to 16:30. Although she worked with her parents, after arriving to Binh Duong province she felt very homesick because that was the first time she lived far from her brothers and sisters. However, after one month of working she came back home because she got malaria disease. Her parents took her back to the countryside for treatment.

She stayed at home two months, and then she recovered. During her convalescence, she worked as a hired labour in the countryside. Since it was not for seasonal crops, she had to ride a bicycle to Ba Chuc commune – a neighbor commune- every day in order to collect crabs. To reach to Ba Chuc village, she had to get up very early and prepare food for entire day. Her route from her house to the worksite took around one hour by bicycle. She had to get up at 4:00 a.m and around 5:00 a.m she arrived to the fields of Ba Chuc. She started by having a quick small breakfast, and then started to work. Average she could collect 7 kilos of crabs every day, which amounted to a value of 56,000 VND. Around 4:30 p.m she rode back home. She had to go every day to earn an income. She could not do this work in the home village because “there were a lot of people finding crabs in this village, so crabs were very rare, and when she dug in the ground, the landowner did not allow her, because the land would be broken. Therefore, she had to move to Ba Chuc village to collect crabs. She also said *“To move around everyday move is my work!”* (Mrs. N, O Lam village – in-depth interview, Dec, 28th 2009)

However, the study also showed that owing to many reasons as focused on the above, the poor Khmer people migrate to many provinces and cities to search for jobs in order to generate income. Then due to facing to many challenges in the destination, thus the massive movement of Khmer migrant workers returned the original village. Since the migrant workers re-migrated back home village, it can be said that employment issue was one of the most interests of all returnees and villagers. Identifying the current and evolving livelihood strategies can be achieved by finding out income and expenditure sources through household economic activities and budgets, and knowing how they mitigate the shortage what they solve the surplus. After return to the old village in the context of increasing daily expenses, most of Khmer households constructed their livelihood

strategies based on the real situation. That also means that each person each different situation, thus returnees of each group had various solutions as well as strategies for their lives. However, livelihood adaptations of each group of returnee were different each other.

The seasonal migrant group explained that after return home they still engage in income generation activities from agricultural production. Besides their small plot of land, they find work as hired labor. They continued to help their families to raise cattle of their families or raised “bo nuoi re” for other landowners, and they also wait for a new employment opportunity in the city and they would migrate to the city again. They also stated that they would continue to find jobs in the cities, because they could pay salaries every month and that money significantly contributed to their families’ income source. While they could not find regular employment in their home village and their employments were paid low salaries. In addition, while they were waiting for the Khmer group leader in the city called them, they themselves found the temporary employment to work such as collecting fodder, collecting iron, collecting wood in the forest, or collect crabs. These works had not brought to them much income, but mainly for family consumption. They also share information of their expectation that they expect there will have a lot of construction projects in order that they can work and will introduce their friends and neighbor in the village. They expect they can save money and support family (parents, children), children’s study, and offering to the pagoda. It was very necessary for them to have a stable job with regular salary.



Figure 6. Income generation activities of the returnees after return

Some of the short-term returnees became unemployed and underemployed after coming back home. They only helped their families’ housework (doing petty trading, doing their own agriculture) and some could find jobs as a hired labor. After the crops in the village were finished, they moved to work Dong Thap province in order to find jobs such as rice cutting and rice threshing and then they turned back to the village. The female short-term returnees did petty trading in the village (vegetables, and making cakes). With this work each day, they could only 20,000 to 30,000 VND. In the festival days, the majority of them opened small beverage shop of at the Culture Center of the District; this income generation activity had just been taken place only one week when there were festivals or performances. In addition, the profit in these days was very high about 100.000VND to 200,000VND days. With this profit, they saved for expenditure of the jobless days. The short term returnees also described that when these activities were finished they hardly had

work to do and waited until the crops came they would find jobs. In jobless days, they had to find work by themselves. For instance, they went to collect iron in the field (7,000-10,000 VND/day), catch snakes, and collect wood in the forest, they could earn 20,000-30,000 VND per day. Additionally, the returnees presented that although they could find the living way in the countryside, their current jobs were similar to before migration or even though it was more difficult than before, because the natural resources in the commune were gradually limited due to daily human access. In the dry season, they had to move to other communes (Ba Chuc, Ta Danh, and Co To) to collect crabs. These destinations were quite far from their houses more than ten kilometers; they had to prepare food in the early morning to get to the fields. They rode bicycles to there and started work at 6:00 a.m. Each day they could earn 5 to 8 kilo crabs. The crabs, which were collected were partly used for family consumption, and the rest was sold to other people. Each kilo was sold about 8,000 VND they could earn average 40,000-50,000 VND/day. With this income, they could secure the daily meals of family for a day and can save 10,000 to 15,000 VND a day.

Otherwise, some short-term returnees and the majority of villagers in the village moved to Kien Giang- a neighbor province in order to exploit fresh fodder. They said that this activity was only taken place in the flooding season, because this season grass developed well. Due to having no transportation means to move to Kien Giang province, they had to contribute money together to rent two “*chet*” – a kind of small ferry- as a transportation means, the one “*chet*” was used to ship people, and another one was used for shipping fresh fodder. About 20-30 people went to collect fresh fodder together in Kien Giang province. They really worked very hard. They had to prepare food for their entire day at 3:00 a.m. They departed at 4:00 a.m and nearly 6:00 a.m all of them reached to the grass fields, the natural asset was given to them to reduce their burden of everyday spending. They tried to collect these natural spoils. At 3:00 p.m, all of them came back to home and sold their fresh fodder products to cattle raisers. They could save 20,000-30,000VND a day. They explained that these jobs were quite hard because they had to prepare very early to go collect crabs and fresh fodder in other villages and provinces. Some of the short term could also get relatively regular jobs in stones private enterprises and the “tea tree” enterprise. Although these works did not bring much money to them, they could reduce their daily expenditure difficulties.

Some female returnees contended that they stayed at home and learn apprentice such as sewing, because they wanted to live near their families. Some were waiting for the new job opportunities in the cities. These short-term returnees they said that the life in the countryside was hard and it was difficult to create regular income.

The study found that most of the returnees did not have long-term plans for their living in the future. The seasonal return migrants explained that they continued to find jobs in the cities and in the farms, and when the project or the work in the farms were finished, they would find other jobs. The returnees did not find jobs in the companies, because of strict rules, working hour pressure, and workable age limitation. The short-term returnees said that they wanted to find stable jobs with regular salary, but their works in the companies were hard and low salary and they could not also adapt to the working hours in the company. Most of the returnees presented that they liked to work near their families in order to take care of their families. If there is any company near the commune, they will work. In Tri Ton district, there were some companies such as company for cashew seed production and Tuynel brick company, these companies absorbed many labor in Tri Ton

district, but these companies could not solve employment for all the young labors entire the district. The laborers expect that they had regular work to ensure their two meals a day and help their families. Moreover, they needed capital to raise cattle and do petty trading. This point was similar to the villagers', because the villagers contented that they will go to work every day, everyday work are strategies. Furthermore, when asked about "if natural resource (crabs and green fodder- the gift of nature) no longer preferred them, what will they do for their living?" the villagers explained that they will move to the other place to find jobs, because if they did not find work we would be starved. It is clear that their strategies for making living have not been clear owing to their weak internal capacity sources (education, working style, and vocational skills).

The employments of the villagers were not regular and unstable. The villagers presented that they could find temporary jobs ten days a month, and the income was low and irregular. They had a lot of leisure time. However, they could have jobs frequently in rice crops. The little land villagers said that they worked as hired labor in their spare time and the landless villagers said that hired labor was realized as their main income generation activity. These villagers not only found jobs within the village, but also outside the village, because there were too few employments in their village. Although the villagers could find jobs in the other places, they had to face difficulties such as the irregular employment and lack of was not regular transportation means to find jobs. They said that their main transportation means were bicycles, motorcycles (better-off households only), and cattle carts. Most of them moved from this place to another place by bicycle or going on foot. Therefore, it was very difficult for them to find work far from their village, because it took time for arriving to the worksites. Besides engaging in agricultural production activities and hired labour, the villagers also generated their income from making palm sugar, making "cop dep", collecting crabs, quarry miner, construction worker, and petty trading. These works were done according to seasonal crops and the income was also low. Nevertheless, there were not all of them being able to do these works. The villagers could practice making palm sugar in dry season, mainly three months. Income from this activity was about 15,000 to 25,000 VND a day. The returnees explained that they did not make "com dep" and sugar palm, because there were many sellers, but there were not many buyers.





Figure 7. Income generation activities of Khmer villagers

In summary, after return the O Lam village, Khmer returnees were the semi-stable employed - temporary or daily wage labor, or were unemployed. Similarly, the villagers also lacked employments in the village. Therefore, the main concerns of all of them were to have stable employments and stable income in order to support their families and have belief in their future.

4.9 Policies and implementation

4.9.1 Support policies

The support policies played an important role in seeking jobs and improving income for the Khmer people. Generally, Khmer people in O Lam commune were received support policies from the government. There were a lot of programs, projects and policies to support the minority group from Vietnamese Government and NGOs such as 134 Program, 135 Program, and Decision No. 81/2005/QĐ-TTg, Date 18/4/2005, Decision No. 74/QĐ-TTg, Decision No. 167/QĐ-TTg. These programs mainly supported Khmer people on land for building house, production land, short-term vocational training and employment resolution, loan capital with low interest, and support housing for the poor. The commune officials implemented the decision of the provincial committee. The Decision No. 81/2005/QĐ-TTg, Date 18/4/2005 was about support for short-term vocational training for labor force in the rural areas. The staffs of O Lam village opened short term training courses such as agriculture practice, growing mushroom, and raising cattle, stone handicraft carving, Honda repairing, and industrial sewing. The local staffs also introduced employment for many Khmer laborers in the village. However, these training courses were opened, it was not maintained long time and the local staffs could not introduce jobs to the Khmer people in O Lam village because the following difficulties.

Firstly, the short-term training courses were held in order to give agricultural techniques, growing mushroom, Honda repairing, handicraft mining, sewing... There were three to four training courses within a year. For example, the short term training course on Honda repairing, at the beginning there were over 30 Khmer learners, they attended to the course seriously and fully. The course was opened during 2.5 months, but it was about 2 months, the amount of trainees was gradually decreased, there were only two trainees. Therefore, that course was ended earlier than proposed time. According to the rule of support policy, the participants were the poor Khmer, and they would be supported allowance 10,000 VND a day for meals. Moreover, after the course was finished, the trainees would have

certificates and they would be introduced employment by commune staffs. However, the local staffs said that because the courses took a long time and the trainees had to learn every day. However, they had just been supported a small money, amounting to 10,000VND/day, while most of the Khmer learners were the poor, they needed to work and earned money for daily survival. The participants who joined in the course were men and they were also the main laborers in their families. Furthermore, they were also interested in courses of vocational training, but they could not give up daily earning money during 2.5 months. That was the reason, which led to the failure of the training courses held in the village. Additionally, the provincial project, which was about the financial support for the migrant workers who were working out of An Giang, especially the Khmer laborers who worked out of the province and those Khmer migrant employees would be received “initial allowance”, only one time from the provincial government. However, the Khmer migrant laborers had to satisfy these following conditions. Firstly, they had to be Khmer people who worked out of the province. Secondly, they had to be introduced employment by commune staffs in O Lam village including commune associations or the center for employment introduction under governmental management system. Finally, they had to work stably in the worksite at least three months. Therefore, they would be received the initial allowance, amounting to 700.000VND/labor. If the Khmer migrant workers worked in many worksites, although they worked stably more than three months, they only received one time of support (the new support level for the Khmer migrant workers was 700.000VND in 2009, it was 500.000VND before 2008). However, based on the information from the local staffs and returnees, there were not any migrant workers who were received this initial allowance in 2009, because the majority of Khmer migrant workers searched for jobs through the introduction of kinship, friends, neighbor and acquaintance. Most of them were spontaneous migrant workers.

Secondly was the difficulty of the local staffs in the implementation of employment introduction to the Khmer laborers. The local staffs stated that through the cooperation with the companies or factories, and private enterprises in and out of the province in Ho Chi Minh City and in Binh Duong and Dong Nai provinces, the staffs had many times to facilitate to introduce employments to Khmer workers. However, the number of Khmer workers who were introduced to companies were not much. The staffs also stated that when the Khmer people were announced about labor recruitment in the cities and provinces, many of them registered their name with staffs in the commune. They were also received the support of local staffs in order to finish the document of job application. However, these job-seekers had to wait for work one to two months, because the companies had not given responses, whereas most of them could not wait for job within two months, thus the Khmer job-seekers had to find jobs by themselves or by their social relations. Therefore, the majority of them could not receive the allowance form the government.

However, the local staffs also facilitated in order to help the Khmer job seekers who could search for jobs in the companies in the cities. The staffs help the Khmer job seekers to finish the procedures for job application, by the way, the Khmer migrant workers prepare some letters of job application, of which there was one letter had the exact name of the company in the city, and others were without names of companies. The staffs signed and sealed on these letters in advance. When the Khmer job seekers wanted to change into the other company, they needed to write the name of the new company in the new letter.

Box 18. The Khmer migrant workers can't access to support policies

Ms. M. H is 24 years old and lives in a family with six people in O Lam village, including her parents, and an older brother. He is 25 years old. He is married and lived independently with her parents. In addition, two younger brothers are 22 and 18 respectively. Her family has 0,1 hectare of land for agricultural production. Her family survived on growing rice in small plot of land and hired labor. Her mother and her older brother cultivated rice at home. In the spare time, they also find work as hired labor in the countryside. Her father and her next younger brother worked in rubber farms in Binh Phuoc province in 2009. She and the youngest brother worked in furniture company in Binh Duong province in November 2008.

Through a relative in Vinh Trung village, a village of a border district - Tinh Bien, her younger brother and she were introduced jobs in DaiSeng furniture company in the IZ in Binh Duong province. Miss M.H and her younger brother worked in this company nearly one year. Two of them return to the countryside due to hard work, work nightshift, and unsafe worksite. After return, she continued to search for another job in the textile company in Ho Chi Minh city. In this company, she worked two months and she returned home due to hard work, work nightshift, and low salary.

She stated that in the first time she migrated to work in the furniture company, her relative –a village staff of Women’s union in Vinh Trung village- introduced job to her. The second time she work in the textile company due to the staffs of O Lam village introduced job to her. Both of her two times of migration to find jobs was helped by the local staffs of O Lam village. She said that the local staff helped her to complete the job-application procedure. However, she did not receive the allowance from the local authority, because two reasons:

Firstly, in her first migration, although she worked in furniture company nearly one year, but she was not introduced job by the staffs of O Lam village.

Secondly, in the second migration, although she was introduced job by the local staffs in O Lam village, her working time in the textile company was shorter than three months. Therefore, both of two times for migration to find jobs she did not receive the initial allowance. (Ms Mai Huong, O Lam village- in-depth interview on Dec, 2009)

4.9.2 Policies for jobless return migrant workers

The Decision No.30/2009/QĐ-TTg was promulgated by the Vietnamese government, date February 23rd 2009, which was about the support for jobless workers in the enterprises due to economic downturn, in the Article 2 and 3 of this Decision, prescribed clearly. “Article 2. The laborers lost their jobs in enterprises whose owners were fled the business in 2009: People’s Committees of provinces and cities directly under the Central were borrowed from the local budgets in advance in order to pay the salary arrears for employees who were on the list of enterprises. Source of finance, which was borrowed in advance, would be reimbursed from local budget revenues due to the implementation process of enterprise assets as prescribed by law. In the case, the process of the enterprise assets was insufficient, it should be reported to Prime Minister for considering and deciding to support; the Article 3 stated that the laborers who were received support from the government had to satisfy the following criteria: the workers in the country were lost their jobs in 2009 (as stipulated in Article 1 and Article 2 of this Decision), and the workers, who worked in abroad and were lost their jobs due to business difficulties, had to return their home before the contract. Those workers would get loans from the National Fund for

employment under the National Target Program for Employment to self-employment; and get loans for vocational training under Decision No. 157/2007/QĐ-TTg September 27, 2007 of the Prime Minister, which was about credit for undergraduate students in 12 months since the laborers lose their jobs. They were loaned money from the Vietnam Bank for Social Policy (VBSP) as the policy was specified in Decision No. 365/2004/QĐ-NHNN April 13, 2004 of the State Bank of Vietnam in 12 months since the workers have lost their jobs or since the workers have returned to the country.”

The study showed that returnees, there have not been any Khmer return migrant workers in O Lam village who were supported so far. The local staffs said that the return migrant workers did not receive any support because of two reasons. Firstly, the return migrant workers spontaneously went to seek the jobs in the city without the employment introduction of the staffs in O Lam Commune People’s Committee, or in centers for employment introduction of the district, because they only brought their IDs to the destination and registered their name, so they could stay and work in the city. The Khmer migrant workers moved to the city for seeking jobs and came back to their home freely, thus the labor force management of the managers at the village level was difficulty. Secondly, although the Khmer migrant workers were introduced jobs by the local staffs in Committee People of O Lam village, most of them have not received the initial support, because their working time was less than 3 months.

In brief, the return migrant workers did not meet the criteria as promulgated. Therefore, they had not received support of the local authorities after they returned to their home village. Most of the Khmer returnees found jobs by themselves or by the other helps such as family, kinship, friendship, neighbor, and acquaintances.

5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion of the main findings of the study on return migration of the Khmer people in O Lam village. Based on the literature review on migration and return migration, it was presented that the phenomenon of the internal return migration in Vietnam and effects of remigration on the returnees in general have not been known much. Particularly, the research on the return migration of the Khmer people in O Lam village was carried out to answer the research questions.

First of all of the aims of this study pointed out the reasons why return migration took place in O Lam village. The main reasons led to the remigration of Khmer migrant workers were belonged to specific situation of each Khmer migration group. Firstly, the seasonal migration group returned home because of lack of the family labor in practicing agriculture. Besides that, the seasonal Khmer migrant workers returned home due to bringing money back home and visiting home and having problem health. Secondly, the short term Khmer migration group returned home because the Khmer migrant workers could not adapt to the living condition and working condition in destinations, especially high expenditure, low income, language difficulty and pressure of working time.

Secondly, the remigration of the Khmer migrant workers affected themselves and their households positively and negatively. In terms of positive aspect, through the migration process of finding jobs and working in the companies and in the farms, the Khmer migrant workers were aware of the difficulties and their weakness in involving in the world outside their community – O Lam village. Besides that, some of the Khmer migrant workers accessed to the modernity of the life in the city. This access and awareness will help them to have better career orientation in the future, if they want to migrate to find the jobs in the city. The next is after return their social networks were mostly broadened. This element needs to be maintained and developed in the next time. In terms of economic issue, some of the Khmer migrant workers could succeed in saving money to support their family, but mostly the Khmer migrant workers were seriously affected their income as well as of their families. Their most concerns after return home was lack of regular employment in the countryside and decrease in income sources whereas the expenditure tended to be increased. Besides the significant income reduction of the Khmer migrant workers after return home, due to particularly difficult condition of the village- lack of rural employment. This aspect also needed to be concerned and solved, particularly vocational training on vocational skills and industrial style, employment generation and employment introduction for the labour force in the rural areas in order to the poor labourers themselves as well as the next generation can guarantee their lives and have the believes in their future. Through this solution, it will contribute to the unemployment reduction in the countryside.

Thirdly, the study generalized all processes of the migration to remigration of the Khmer people in this village. The study also found the specific strategies of each group of the Khmer migrant returnees in order to readapt in their home village. The seasonal returnee group mostly had clearer than the short-term returnee group's because the seasonal returnees set up the plan to continue to migrate after they finish the housework within the rice crops. Whereas the short-term returnees had not the clear strategies due to the fact that most of them lack of vocational skills and could not adapt to the industrial working style. Some of the short-term Khmer migrant workers want to migrate to find other jobs while some did not want to search for jobs far from their houses. However, the strategies of

Khmer migrant returnees may have temporary effect, if it was considered in the long period, it will not be sustainable, because all of the Khmer migrant were unskilled workers and they engaged in 3-D jobs, they had to work hard, but their salaries were low. Besides that the Khmer migrant workers were not completely covered insurance allowance in the worksites, and priority of social welfare for the labourers in the company will not be reached to them, because their working time was too short and unstable, thus when the old age came, they would not afford to continue the present work.

Additionally, in the setting of O Lam village, Khmer labourers including the migrant returnees and inhabitants had to face serious lack of employment in the rural areas. Therefore, in this case it is necessary to have the support of the local authority in planning strategies in order to improve and strengthen the living standard and the poor labourers' income by capital support, vocational training, and employment introduction for the poor Khmer returnees and the poor villagers. In addition, the Khmer return migrant workers were almost voluntary return migrants, so they have not completely accessed to the support policies of the government. Furthermore, in their re-adaptation plan in the home village, the support policy - vocational training courses for the Khmer people- has not attracted the returnees' participation due to level of support was still low, and duration for opening the vocational training courses needs to adjust flexibly and reasonably in order to help the Khmer people who can both learn the apprentice and earn money to support their families during the time they join in the training course. That means the course should be opened intercalative three or four days a week, the rest days the Khmer people can find work to support their family, if this will be carried out together with increase in allowance support, it also limits the failure of support policy. Otherwise, due to the fact that the Khmer people were affected by tenets of Buddha religion, so the willing to escape from poverty to be rich of Khmer people were limit, so besides the support policies for the Khmer people in terms of material such as capital, education, vocational training... It will be necessary to have programs, which aim to convince and encourage the Khmer people in terms of psychology in order to create strong motivation in their willing and their awareness to reach the prosperity by increasing income and quality of life by themselves.

Finally, most of the Khmer migrant workers did not know clearly about the labour law and the right of the labourers. This issue needs to be conveyed to the Khmer migrant workers via the media or inserted in the vocational training courses/programs in order that the Khmer migrant workers are able to understand basically about when they work in the company.

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