

The Plight

OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BURMA

Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)

Issue No.1/2007, March 2007

REPORT:

Women in Poverty: Impacts from Livelihood and Human Rights Violations

I. Economics mis-management and civil war

Burma (Myanmar by the current ruling regime - State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which is rich with its natural resources was declared and accepted a status of 'least development country' (LDC) in 1987 which has been considered as a poorest country in the world. At that time, Burma was ruled by single military party - Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) led military strongman, General Ne Win.

Burma fell into LDC status in the world because of economic mis-management by BSPP in definite. The people in the whole

country of Burma both in rural and urban areas have faced many difficulties for survival with their low income. However, over 80% of people lived in rural areas, although they are hard in economics, but they have some resources such as rice, vegetables, forest products and others, and they can manage to survive because they did not have to totally rely on the markets.

BSPP government has followed 'socialism system of self-reliance' and did not allow any foreign investors to invest in the country, which meant that Gen. Ne Win totally isolated the country. Scarcity

REPORT: Women in Poverty: Impacts from Livelihood and Human Rights Violations

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Message From

Woman And Child Rights Project (Southern Part of Burma)

Woman and Child Right Project (WCRP) is an cooperative activity with Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) and it has main activity in collecting the information related to the human rights violations of women and children in southern part of Burma (Myanmar). It also aims to get world community's awareness for the protection of the rights of women and children.

The Burma's military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997 to guarantee the rights to women in Burma. Similarly the regime also ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 to guarantee the rights to children in Burma. However, the regime has failed in their implementation of the conventional rights and the human rights violations against women and children systematically.

WCRP is dedicated to inform the world community what happens to general women and children in Burma and plans to educate them to know about their rights as the following objectives.

1. To monitor and protect the woman and child rights, by collecting information about their real situation by referencing the CEDAW and CRC, and distribute information to world community.
2. To strengthen women and children community, by providing on their rights accordingly to CEDAW and CRC ratified by regime and encourage them to participate in the struggle in the protection of their own rights.

of employments and lack of income among the people have happened, but the people have no chance to express about 26 years for their dissatisfaction.

BSPP's imported isolation and economics deterioration were also relating to BSPP's political attempts to uproot the activities of ethnic armed groups those had revolved against central Rangoon governments since Independence of Burma in eve 1948. BSPP spent a lot of budget in arms and ammunitions in waging civil war. It totally affected disunity among the ethnic nationalities in Burma and the government could never control the border areas which had rich resources. The BSPP, by nature it was a military regime, just had much focuses on the civil war and uprooting the rebellion, but has a little knowledge in economic management.

But in 1988, there was a pro-demonstration led by students demanding for the political reform of multi-parties democratic system and improve the economy, but the military, the Burmese Army or the so-called *Tatmadaw* refused to abandon the political power and took coup from the demonstrators in September 1988.

The military regime at that time - State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) - followed the same step of economic management adopted by BSPP, although they declared 'open market economy'. In SLORC's open economy, the regime just opened its forests and seas to companies of neighbouring countries and China to exploit under the constructive engagement policy of these countries.

By selling it's rich natural resources such as logs, fishes, minerals, mines, gem stones and others, to some ASEAN countries and China, the SLORC could have raised more budget. But since it has less interest for the economic development, the regime concentrated on wars against ethnic nationalities those based on Thailand and China borders. The revenues have been not effectively in economic management.

Similarly the current regime which changed its name as "State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)" also could not manage the country's economics well and has just focused on war like the previous regimes. While SPDC is spending over 50% of budgets in defense expenditures and it spends less than 7% of budget in education and health care.

Increase of military expenses has created severe economic mis-management and civil war has imported gross human rights violations and population displacement. Most percentages of families in urban areas suffer from economic mis-management such as no employment, lack of wages and incomes, rocketed commodity prices, inflation, corruption and labour exploitation, etc. Families in the ethnic rural areas have suffered from not only economic management, but also gross human rights violations.

When a family in difficult situation of having insufficient food supplies at home, no money to send children to schools, no sufficient money to receive health cares in hospital, no money to buy daily used commodities, and other livelihood related issues, women have to face more stresses than men in Burma, because they have to manage all things at homes while the men need to find works and incomes outside of the homes.

II. General Livelihood of Women in Southern Burma

Southern Burma in this report will cover Rangoon (Yangon) Division, Pegu Division, Karen State, Mon State and Tenasserim Division. In this area, there are some big cities such as Rangoon (the former capital of Burma), Moulmein (the third capital of Burma and the capital of Mon State), Pa-an (the capital of Karen State), Tavoy (the capital of Tenasserim Division) are considered as cities and there are over 50 towns in the area are considered in the category of "Urban Area". Sub-Towns (which is smaller than a town - which may have about 1500 to 10000 houses) and village communities (which has less than 1500 households) are considered as rural areas.

In urban area, the general livelihood of women usually involve in works such as a sewing and making dresses, trading, shop keeping, water-selling (note: most towns and cities have a very limited water resources), construction works, as factory workers, waiters in restaurants, entertainment places to earn the money. Especially at the restaurant and some entertainment establishments, there are over number of women working there even though they can earn a low wages. For these types of works, they expect some extra bonus from the customers. Most of them are day labourers and it is very difficult to know how much they earn each day in order to support family needs.

In rural area, Karen State, Mon State and Tenasserim Division, many women especially work at homes and farms outside of their village and Sub-Town communities. They almost engage in works such as weaving, sewing and making dresses, day-laboures in rubber plantations, farmlands and fruit plantations. They can earn a very low income for some families their income if compared with the needs of their daily expenses for foods and other commodities at homes. They can not afford to feed their families with sufficient food. Mostly their income is in average of 3,000 Kyat but they have to expend more money than they earn.



A rural area based woman is selling the betel nut

The families in both rural and urban area suffer from paying taxes to all levels of SPDC authorities and troops of Burmese Army. Most of the taxes are not regulated in law and legal regulation of Burma, but the authorities and commanders of Burmese Army have full authorities to collect taxes from the civilians.

These tax collection have great impact to the livelihood of the civilians because they totally can not refuse to pay to the authorities and army when they are demanded.

The families in both rural and urban areas have to pay taxes to following the authorities and their administration bodies:

Village Peace & Development Council - VPDC

Village Tract Peace & Development Council - VTPDC

Sub-town Peace & Development Council - STPDC

Township Peace & Development Council - TPDC

District Peace & Development Council - DPDC

Mon State or Karen State or Tenasserim Division - Mon State or Karen State or Tenasserim Division PDC

A, Livelihood of Women in Rural Area

In most rural villages, the villagers are totally relying on their paddy farms. Although the rice prices have been slightly increasing along with inflation, the commodities' prices have also increased. The farmers have to sell their paddy crops in order

to buy supplement foods and basic commodities. Most said, they spend more for buying supplementary foods and commodities if compared with their income.

The following are some case studies, interviews on the situation.

Case (1)

In February 28, 2007, a 48 year old woman from Kamawet Sub-Town, Mudon Township said:

"I am a farmer and I have been here since I was born. In our Sub-Town, there are almost 10,000 houses and usually they rely on paddy farms, fruits farms and rubber plantations. Especially in our family we rely on the paddy farms and in a year we get 200 basket of paddy from the farms. Except the rice, we have to buy everything. In our family, we earn small amount of money and we spend more than we earn. Normally, we estimate that we spend 1000 kyat per day and totally we spend about 40,000 kyat per month. Even we didn't have extra money we didn't face a huge problem very much for our livelihood (if the authorities are not interfered). But we sometime face a problem to pay monthly porter fee. We have to pay to the VPDC, with 3000 kyat per month.

"Currently in our village, the price of the cooking oil for 1 **pitta** (approximately about 1.633 Kilograms) is 2500 kyat, salt for one **pitta** is 200 Kyat, chili for one **pitta** is 5000 Kyat, onion for one **pitta** is 800 Kyat and sugar for one **pitta** is 1,300 Kyat. " **(Note: 1 US Dollar is equal to 1250 Kyat in unofficial exchange rate)**

Case (2)

In March 15, 2007, a 40 year old woman spends her life as a rubber latex collector. She lives in Kalort-tort Village in Mudon Township Mon State. She said:

"I have two children and I work as rubber latex collector to feed them. I have been here since I was born. In our villager there are about 1,200 houses and especially we rely on paddy farm, rubber and garden. In our family we earn 4000 kyat per day and totally we earn more than 120,000 per month. We spend 4,000 kyat per day and totally we spend about 120,000 per month. We something faces a problem to pay porter and development fees to VPDC to our family because we don't have enough income and so that we borrow from our relative house."

B. Livelihood of Women in Urban Area

There has been population growth in both rural and urban areas while the government could not support the people with job opportunity. The people have to find works by themselves. The women who live in the rural areas also have to find works in the towns and cities for better income, while many women in the towns and cities jobless. They have to find some domestic works like dress-making, selling glossaries and opening private tuition classes.

Although some works in factories, selling water and foods, restaurants and constructions are hard, but the women, who want to support their families have worked there. Since the SPDC does not care on the labour standard, or the labour laws are just on the papers, many women had to work over 8 hours a day used by their employers.



Urban women are selling sugar cane juice at the bus station under hottest sun-heat

The cases of some women who worked in towns and cities are as below:

Case (1)

In February 2007, a woman from Nyaung-gone village, Mudon Township said:

"I worked at the Myo-taw-oo restaurant in Mudon town as a waiter. I got a 10,000 kyat per month for my salary but I got bonus from the customers nearly 300,000 kyat per month. It is available to work here. In this restaurant, there are about 50 women working and we have to work from 9:00 a. m. in the morning to till midnight. In one week, every Monday we get a chance for leave."

Case (2)

In March 1 2007, a 35 year old woman from Shwe-myaing-thiri, Moulmein (Mawlamyaine) city said:

"I go around our town ward and sell water (for household use and cooking), I work for the whole day and earn 3,000 Kyat per day. In the rainy season, I don't have any job (because the people in the ward can get rainwater) and so I don't have any income and I face a huge problem for our livelihood very much. My husband is a trishaw driver and he earns very low income because he has always drunk (liquor) and he rarely go to work. I would like to migrate to Thailand to work and have a regular job to support our family because I have two children. We spend 3,500 Kyat per day."

C. Livelihood of women in IDPs area

During the whole course of civil war in Burma, the population displacement has occurred because of armed conflict and human rights violations. The population displacement in southern Burma have been enormous because SPDC and *tatmadaw* have operated intensive military operations against various armed groups such as Karen National Union (KNU) and its armed faction - Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and its armed faction.

Armed Mon political party, New Mon State Party (NMSP) and its armed faction - Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA) agreed for ceasefire in mid-1995, but some Mon armed groups still continued their fights against the central government, SPDC. But human rights violations against the Mon people by SPDC and *tatmadaw* members have continued and the people still have to flee from their homes. Therefore, the problem of "Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)" is a serious one in the course of civil war due to worst human rights records of SPDC.

IDPS who stay under the NMSP controlled areas came from different locations of lower Burma especially from Ye township (of Mon State) and Yepyu township (of Tenasserim Division). They escaped from armed fighting or offensives by SPDC and gross human rights violations. Since NMSP had a ceasefire agreement they took haven in NMSP areas. SPDC also recognized Ye and Yepyu Townships are "Black Area" because the activity of a Mon splinter group. The displaced villagers suffer from human rights violations such as force labor, land confiscation, porter service, rape and sexual harassment and forced relocation.

Human rights violations have forced thousands of people in rural areas to face landless and jobless. Since 2000, the *tatmadaw* members confiscated thousands acres of land force the local farmers to abandon their farming activities and fled into NMSP. NMSP also provides protection for them a local humanitarian organization operates in NMSP area, Mon Relief and Development Committee (MRDC) has been taking care of them in terms of emergency foods and shelters.

Especially in the IDPS area, since the providing of food supply is cross-border program, MRDC can not provide sufficient foods for them. So they cannot rely on only support from MRDC so they have to find a job to earn a little money. In the area where is far away from the city the displaced villagers have faced much difficulties to find a permanent job. The most common jobs in the displaced communities are collecting roofing leaf, engage in slash and burnt hilly paddy cultivation, burn charcoal, small logging and collecting vegetable.

Some of case studies of women's livelihood from the displaced communities are:

News:

Low morale in health care: A private medic tries to rape a patient

In 2nd Week of February, 2007, a retired army medic from Burmese Army, 40 years old Arakanese ethnic man, tries to rape a patient, Mi W--, 35 years old Mon woman. She is from Kan-nee village, Kawkareik Township in Karen State.

Mi W-- have suffered from backache and she went to the medic's house (he opens his clinic in his house) on 6-7 pm evening, when the electricity light was bright in the village. She told the medic "My waist is pain", so the medic told her "go to the patient bed" and starts to experiment unrelated parts of the body. She thought it is experiment of her disease and she did not say anything. After that, the medic told her "I will inject you preventing (pregnancy) medicine." The women be came worry because her husband had in Malaysia and why she need to inject the prevent medicine. But she taught it is related with her diseases and she accepts the treatment. After that the medic asked her "shall I have to go to your house or will you come to my house?" The medic gave her narcotic drugs about 3-4 tablets to take it. But she does not take and try to wake up. Ate that time the medic tries to rape her and she refused.

"Don't do me like that, I don't like" and then she run outside of the house and went to the Nai Min Ngwe Thein (headman house in the village) by motorbike the one she rent. She was prosecuting about her case.

On the next day, the village judicial court or the village Justice Committee investigated about the case. The women request the medic to not live in the village or compensation 6 million Kyat.

The headman Nai Min Ngwe Thein, Secretary Nai San Nyein and committee of the village made decision for compensation of 1 Million Kyat to pay for Mi Wout because there was no enough witness (just medic) in the whole case and took 300, 000 Kyat for court's expenses and service (while is slightly too much).

Mi W- had to accept the decision unavoidably because she was afraid of the village headman and on the other hand, she did not have sufficient evidences to put him in detention or better trial.

His character was bad, because he always discourteously on the women patients unrelated parts of the body. In Mon culture if they are facing like that type of harassment, many women don't want to expose to others because of shame and feel uncomfortable. They just decide to not go and treat the medic again.

"When I was sick, I went there (the same clinic) to receive the treatment but he was experimenting unrelated parts of my body. So, I hate his character, even though I am going to die I never go to receive his treatment again", said another woman from the village.

A lot of women in the village and villages nearby also faced similar sexual harassment by retired army medic. This medic was a Burmese Army's deserter, who fled from Burmese Army's Medical Unit for some years and set up clinic in Kan-nee village and never returned to his native Arakan State, western Burma bordering Bangladesh and India. But the villagers said he has no any certificate qualified as a medical worker.

Since the village has no government clinic and medical treatment and they have to go very far to reach the hospital in Kaw-bein village, which is about 30 Kilometers far, to receive medical care, they have relied on these fake medic or unskilled medic in the village.

This fake or unskilled medic settled in this village about 10 years. When he arrived to the Kan-nee village, he has nothing. Now, he owned a house, a motorbike and other household things from the medical treatment because he took expensive cost from the patients and exploits a good opportunity from the lack of knowledge in the community.

Totally, in the village have about five or six medics include practitioner of indigenous medicine and those who completed from medical training in the New Mon State Party, a Mon political party which agreed for ceasefire with the regime.

Now, the retired army medic is still living in the village and he is continuing his jobs, because the villagers believed he has a very connection with higher commanders to ensure for this stay in the village.

Case (1)

In February 18, 2007, a 18 year old girl from Che-daik (Mon) IDP village, which is under NMSP control area said:

"I have been here about two year. I am a day labourer. During the summer and cold season I collect roofing leaf and I earn 30 Baht per day. Sometime I collect the vegetable at the forest and sell it at the market. I earn small income from roofing leaf and collect the vegetable. We access some rice from the Mon Relief Development Committee but it isn't enough for our family. So we have to find a job to access income and to feed our family. Especially in this village, there have some

Activities:

International Women's Day Ceremony Completed

By the coordination of all women's organizations from Thai, Mon and Karen communities in Sangkhlaburi, the International Women's Day was completely held in the border town Sangkhlaburi, Kanchanaburi Province of Thailand on March 10, 2007.

Over 150 participants from 10 organizations from Sangkhlaburi attended the ceremony and they also expressed on the history background of IWD, current discrimination against women in communities and the situation of women and girls in Burma. Daw Paw Lu Lu, for Save House, displaced patients center in Sangkhlaburi District explained about the background of IWD and a member from Mon Youth Progressive Organization read out the Statement from Women League of Burma (WLB). A member from (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project explained about the women leadership in the world.

A representative from New Mon State Party (NMSP), a local Mon political party, explained on the struggle for the equal rights between men and women and how the IWD has been recognized around the world. He expressed under the rule of the military regime SPDC in Burma, women are oppressed physically and morally. He also pointed out that while the world's women are struggling for the political leadership in the world, SPDC's coming Constitution decided from its National Convention will not allow those who are not served in army to be President. It means the regime is totally rejecting the women leadership in politics. Anyhow, it is so important for woman to be leader in the politics.

Nai Sunthorn, President of Mon Unity League (MUL), an umbrella organization of Mon civil society in Thailand, said there has been increasing role of women in all sectors including democratic political movement. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is just



Naw Paw Lu Lu gave a speech

a woman and he can lead a big political party and the military leaders are afraid of her and so that they detained her in house arrest, he said. He also asked, if the military regime is sincere for national reconciliation, they must release all women from prisons.

Then the participants are divided into small groups, discussed on the topic of "Work Together to Combat Discrimination Against Women". After the discussion, they also presented to whole group and the groups expressed there must be more unity among women, need to speak openly on their situation, build up more capacities and education, help more for women's livelihood for survival, refuse the opinion of women are second class people, build confidence among women, and represent women in all places and occasions.

The ceremony ends with questions to participants related to International Women's Day.

kind of job to earn money such as collecting the leaf, hilly rice cultivation, logging, burn charcoal and selling the vegetable.

Case (2)

In March 15 2007, a 27 year old woman from Baleh-donophai village said that she has been here almost 8 years. She opens a tea shop at her house and she earns 50 baht per day and in a month she earns about 1, 500 to 2, 000 Baht per month. In the past, they got support from the MRDC such as mosquito net, rice, salt, chili and other. But currently they

just get 6 tin of rice for each in the whole year. They don't have enough support and they have to find the job to earn small income.

III. Movement restriction

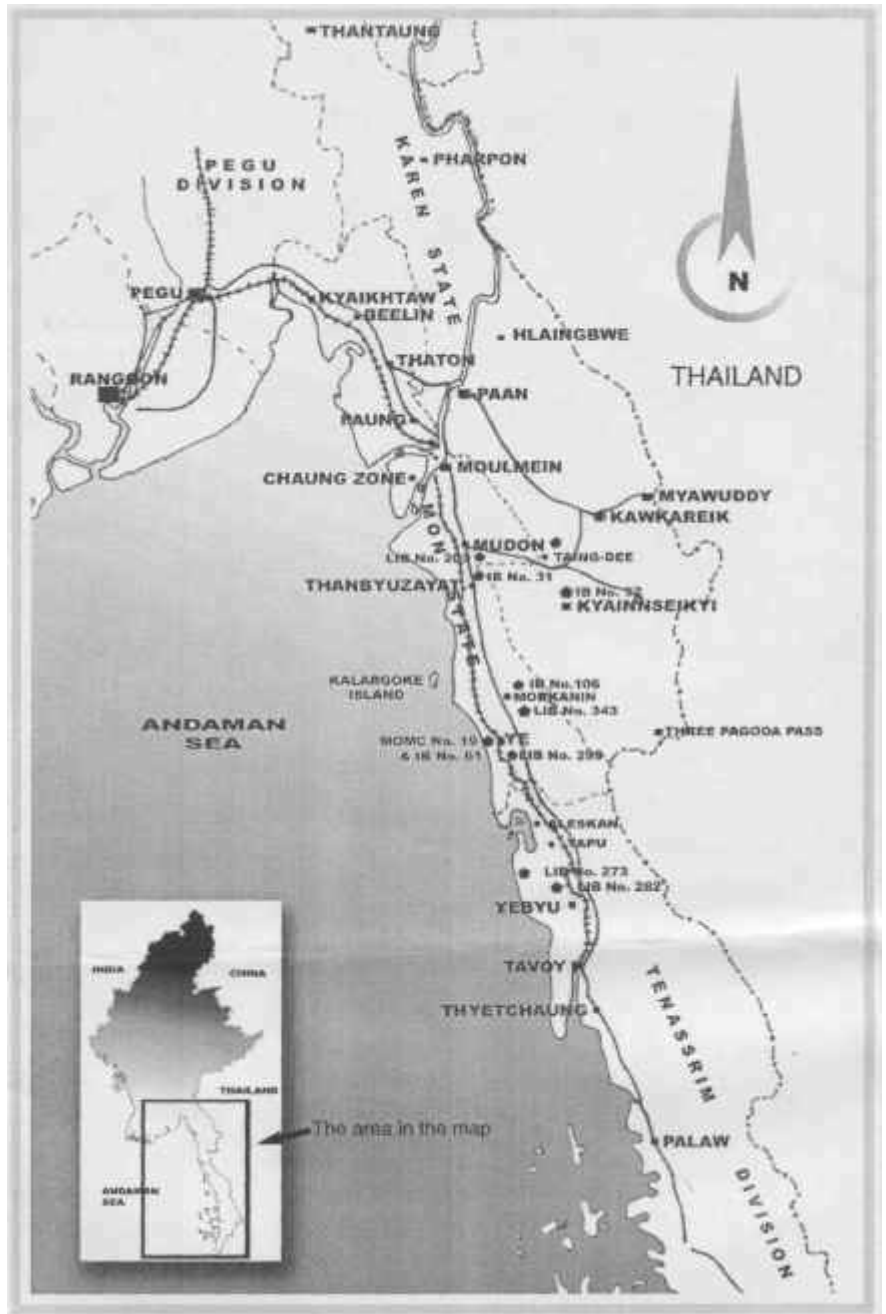
SPDC's military operations, offensives and patrols have imposed 'movement restriction' in the rural areas where the fighting happens, and the rebels soldiers are in active. Especially in southern part of Ye township, Mon State, SPDC still does not allow the villagers to go to their work - farms, orchard plantations, - freely since 2005. Currently in Kaw-Zar, Han-gan and Toe-tat-ywa-thit villages in southern part of Burma have faced more restriction after a fighting happened in late 2006. The local military battalion still forbids the villagers for to go to their farm such as rubber, fruit and betel nut plantation when they have the military activities in the area or when the heard the news about the activity of a Mon armed group.

Normally SPDC battalion commander have allowed the villagers to leave from home about 4: 00 - 6: 00 a.m in the morning and they need to arrive back their homes about 6: 00 p.m. in the evening. They are not allowed to stay in farms at night. It is a limited time for farmers to work at their farms. Traditionally, the farmers want to stay at their farms many days because they want to accomplish a lot of their works such as planting seedling, harvesting paddy grains or fruits, cleaning grasses. If

they stay at farms or orchard plantations, they have sufficient time to work. But since the army commander did not allow them to stay at night in their farms and they have to waste their time of walking forth and back between farms and villages on a daily basis.

Especially in southern part of Mon State and Tenasserim Division, some ethnic rebel armed groups such as a Mon splinter group MNLA and KNLA have launched the military fighting against the Burmese Army. So SPDC battalion accused the villagers that the they have a relationship with ethnic rebel armed groups and give some food and shelters to the rebel groups. Although the SPDC soldiers allow the villagers to go to their farms, they did not allow to take extra rice with them because they though that the villagers would give food support to the rebel groups.

Since most villagers have relied on the farms, rubber plantations, betel nut plantations and fruit plantations, movement restriction creates big problems to them. So when the SPDC limits the time of farmers to go to work, it affects to their livelihood. Additionally, based on this movement restriction plan, the local authorities and army commanders again made money from the local villagers and farmers as tax.



Map of Southern Part of Burma

To go out from the village, the villagers have to make traveling document to pass the village's entrance checkpoint which is set by the army. Otherwise the villagers cannot go out from the village. To get the document the villages have to pay 500 kyat for allowance of 15 days. Therefore when they get out from their villages they have to show their traveling document and while they are in farms, if the SPDC soldiers reached, they have to show it.

This movement restriction makes difficulties for the livelihood of farmers including many women. Here are some case studies:

Case (1)

According to the 40 years old woman from Kaw-zar Sub-Town, southern part of Ye said:

"In March 23rd 2007, LIB No. 31 battalion commander Ye Lwin Oo ordered the villagers not to go to the farm and rubber plantation. The reason that when the SPDC troop planned to fight against with the rebel groups. They banned the villagers not to go the farm and they also accused us that we, the villagers, give some food to the rebel group.

"Normally we have to take document along with us to get out from the village to go to our farms. SPDC commander allowed to work from 6 a. m. to 6 p. m in the evening. Except this time we can not get out from the village. When we go to the farm we can not take the rice and extra food with us and we can not sleep at the farm. If we do not have any document to pass the village checkpoint set SPDC soldiers, they will beat you and punish to give **1 pitta** (1.633kgs) of chicken to the commander. They charge 500 kyat per farmer for 15 days allowance in the document.

Case (2)

According to 50 years old woman from Toe-tat-ywa-thit village, southern part of Ye said:

"In March 20th 2007, LIB No 591 Kyone-ywa battalion didn't let us go to the farms. Because they said it is close to Armed Force (*Tatmadaw Day*) Day and they though other armed groups will fight them. Normally they allowed us to go from 4 a.m. to 6 p. m. in the evening. Except this time the battalion didn't allowed us to go out from the village. At the moment, the SPDC soldiers didn't allow the villagers to go out from the village. When we went to the farm we should take traveling document with us to pass the village checkpoint, otherwise the soldiers will beat the villagers and let the villagers to pay one bag of sand as a punishment. To do traveling document for pass the village checkpoint we have to buy 500 Kyat for 15 days permission."

Case (3)

According to 27 years old woman from Han-gan village, southern part Ye said:

"In March from 25th to 26th 2007, LIB. No. 299 battalion didn't allow us to go to work (for the same reason of Armed Force Day). Normal they allow us to go and work in our farms from 6 a.m. to 6 p. m. except this time the villagers can't go outside from the villager. If they get the information about the ethnic rebel armed group they close the check-point. If we go to our own farms we need the document to pass check-point, if not they are going to punish us such as beating."

During this movement restriction, women who worked in farms or plantations could also face sexual harassment by soldiers. When the soldiers moved around in one areas, if they founded women or girls working, they raped them.

IV. Women access different wages from Men

In Burma, mostly in work place like companies, factories, restaurant or day labour, woman does not have access to receive equal payment as man because the employers believe women can contribute less work or labour than men. For several years until now, most people traditionally think that woman is not strong enough as man and women should not access equal wages as men even they do the same job and spend the same time. Traditionally, most people do not agree that the women and men should have the same opportunity whenever they spend the same time in work place.

As traditions have taken roots for so long, the general women also believed that they should get lower wages than men even they work the same hours and work like a hard paddy harvesting works. For example, in harvest season, both women and men are under sun heat for the whole day and amount reaping paddy grains are much not so different.

But at the government departments, there is no discrimination on the wages but depending on the positions held by men or women. But for the private day labour works and works in the factories, farms and construction, women could not enjoy equal payment and wages.

Most women in Burma did not know they have a right that if they take the same job as men they have the same wages. Although the ruling regime SPDC ratified the CEDAW, the convention that guarantee the equal rights of women, there has been no law enforcement for equal wages for equal work regardless of sex.

Inequality of wages also affects to the livelihood of working women. Some of case studies are as below:

Case (1)

In March 12th 2007, a 50 years old woman day worker from Kalawthut village, Mudon Township, Mon State said:
"They hire me to reap the paddy grains and I spent to reap it almost 9 hours a day as the same as man but I didn't get equal daily wages as man. I feel so upset. I feel that they discriminate between man and woman because they said that the women are not strong enough as men and they also can't work quickly like man. So the men should get more payment than women. I think we both did the same amount of work and took the same time but we women didn't access equal payment as men. For the women they pay 1, 600 kyat per day and for the men they pay 2, 200 Kyat. It is such big different. In my opinion, it isn't fair. It should be fair and shouldn't discriminate between women and men."

Case (2)

In March 10th 2007, a 50 years old woman day worker from Taung-pa village, Mudon township also said:
"I reap the paddies and I spend the time almost 9 hours in a day as the same as man but they pay the salary less than men. We did the same job and took the same time, tired the same but I didn't get the same income as men, and we should get the same income. We women get 1, 800 Kyat and men get 2, 500 Kyat per day".

Case (3)

In March 10 2007, 20 year old lady from Abit village, Mudon Township said:
"I am a day worker who cut the grass at the rubber plantation. I got 2000 Kyat for my salary and I worked nearly 8 hours per day. There are also male worker too, they cut and clean grasses in the rubber plantation and spend the same time with us but they got more wages than us. Not only they cleaning grasses in the plantations in every work place such as reap the paddies and grow the seedlings, even woman and man do the same job and spend the same time man earn more than women. I would like to get the same salary as man because I spend the same time to work as man".

Especially people in Burma, they still do not have knowledge that woman and man have equal opportunity in every corner. They just look on physically and decide that man can do more quickly than woman so woman and man shouldn't pay the same price.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

In Burma, if compared with men, many women do not have works and sufficient income. But at the same time, they have big responsibility to take care and feed the family members on day to day basis. Traditionally, the men just need to find money and give women at homes to feed the families. But almost the income by men are not sufficient to feed family members, education and health purposes, many women have to engage in domestic works or day labour works which are too hard for them to work. But women can not refuse because it is for their survival.

On other hand, the ruling military regime SPDC just talks a lip service in their controlled media on the livelihood and work opportunities for the women and they could not help anything. Government Organized NGOs - like "The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA)" and "Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAF)" have no authority and no budget to improve the life and livelihood of the women.

Invitation for Feedback to Our Publication "The Plight" of Women and Children in Southern Burma

Dear Readers,

With objectives to monitor the situation of women and children in southern part of Burma and to empower them with the rights described in CEDAW and CRC, which are both ratified by the current military regime in Burma, our "Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)" came into existence since 2000.

Under this project, "The Plight" Newsletter is produced quarterly and this newsletter especially describe the general situation of women and children in Burma and how their human rights are violated by the ruling regime and its army.

In a plan to evaluate our publication, we wish to get the FEEDBACK of our readers. Hence, you can kindly send your feedback. If you know anyone who would like to receive the newsletter or if you wish to send your feedback, please feel free to contact the following mailing and e-mail address.

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With regards,
Project Coordinator

Currently, there are some UN Agencies, International NGOs, and local NGOs and community organizations in Burma are involving for the rights and development of women. Herein, **Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)** recommends for the relief of women in poverty as below:

- Community women's organization must be founded and they must be empowered to engage in work opportunity and protect the rights of women. Work trainings should be arranged.
- A program that supports women's employment and equal rights in works must be established. This program must focus on providing works for women.
- An inter-agency, with the collaboration among the groups working for women, must be set up to explore 'employments for women' and 'equality rights between women and men in works'.



Displaced women in a literacy training

In this "The Plight Newsletter":



International Women's Day is held in Thailand-Burma for Community Awareness on the Role of Women

On Page 7



The lives of displaced women in internally displaced communities are hard. Limited assistance and movement restriction create doubled suffering to them

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Acronyms

- BSPP-** Burmese Socialist Programme Party
- CEDAW-** Covention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CRC-** Convention on the Rights of the Child
- KNLA-** Karen National Liberation Army
- KNPP-** Karenni National Progressive Party
- KNU-** Karen National Union
- MNLA-** Mon National Libration Army
- SLORC-** State Law and Order Restoration Council
- SPDC-** State Peace and Develop ment Council
- LCD-**Least Developed Country

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