

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### **The Historical Background of Chin Migration**

Decades of civil war and the isolationist policy of the Burmese socialist regime between 1962 and 1988 resulted in Myanmar being listed as one of the least developed countries while neighboring countries like Thailand, China and Malaysia experienced dramatic economic growth. The growing demand of labor in these economic booming countries became the pathway of liberating the Burmese people from the social, economic and political repression of the Burmese socialist regime. Economic instability and extreme poverty exist throughout the country but it is particularly acute in areas of forced displacement and underdeveloped rural border regions (Brenda 2002). This also includes Chin State.

Located in the southern part of northwestern Myanmar, bordered by Bangladesh and India to the west, Rakhine State to the south, and Magwe and Sagaing Divisions to the east, Chin State is known as the “Chin Hills” due to its mountainous geography with an average elevation of 5000-8000 feet. The State is home to an estimated 500,000 Chin who are of Sino-Tibetan origin and are related to the Mizos, Kuki, and others. They inhabit a mountain chain which roughly covers the present Chin State in western Burma through to Mizoram in northeast India and small parts of Bangladesh. While the term "Chin" generally refers to one of the many ethnic groups in Myanmar, they are ethnically and linguistically diverse, composed of a number of ethnic groups such as the Asho, Cho, Khumi, Kuki, Laimi, Lushai, and Zomi. Each has its own language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language branch (Lian H. Sakhong 2003). In this study, I use the term Chin people or the Chins interchangeably as a common name although my research target group is considered Laimi by other groups in Chin State. Chin people are mostly Protestant Christians. The religious institution of the church is an integral part of Chin people and society. Historian Lian H. Sakhong (2003) argued that Christianity is a

unifying force for the otherwise divided tribal groups, to form the entire nationality of Chin ethnicity.

Chin political history dates back to the time of the British rule from 1872 to 1889. The British rule divided the Chin territory into separate administrative zones: a southwestern territory governed by the British Governor of Bengal; a northwestern territory controlled by the British Governor of Assam; and an eastern portion governed by British-controlled Burma (Lian H. Sakhong, 2003). The 1886 Chin Hills Regulation Act stated that the British would govern the Chins separately from the rest of Burma, which allowed for traditional Chin chiefs to remain in power while Britain was still allotted power via indirect rule (Human Rights Watch 2009). After India's independence from the British colonial rule, the international boundaries were established incorporating the western part of Chin territory into India, and the eastern part into Burma when Burma got independence on January 4, 1948. Therefore, Chin people are widespread across the Chin State of Myanmar and in parts of India.

Under the initiative of General Aung San, the Chins along with the ethnic Kachin and Shan participated in the Panglong Conference that Aung San organized where the participants signed the Agreement on February 12, 1947. However, after the assassination of Aung San, and the failure to establish a federal union and autonomy for the ethnic states by the successive governments, this set the stage for lasting civil conflict (Lian H. Sakhong 2003). The Chin people have experienced severe political oppression and economic hardships as a result of the internal political conflict between the military and the ethnic Chin which started in 1962. From the 1990s onwards, oppressive rule, meager economic investment, and lack of development in agriculture and infrastructure including communication and transportation have pushed much of the Chin population below the poverty line. A household survey in 2005 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found one-third of the population in Burma lives below the poverty line. However, in Chin State, about 70 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 40 percent are without adequate food sources (Human Rights Watch 2009). Characterized by steep mountains and gorges, Chin State lacks natural resources. The Chin people depend solely on agriculture or shifting cultivation before remittances flow. As the military does not invest substantially in infrastructures including roads, electricity and other public services, Chin State was considered the

least developed among the administrative regions in Myanmar. It is “landlocked” as it has no major link with other cities in Myanmar and neighboring countries lacking modern transportation facilities

The lack of infrastructure, natural resources, and economic opportunities compounded with oppressive policies of the military government and pervasive human rights violations including forced labor exacerbated poverty in Chin State (Human Rights Watch 2009). Rapid militarization in Chin State since 1988 combined with widespread ethnic and religious discrimination have resulted in a litany of human rights violations perpetrated by the Myanmar army. More than 150,000 Chin people are currently seeking refuge in India and Malaysia, while hundred thousands more are estimated to have moved to other areas inside Myanmar, but outside of Chin State (Chin Human Rights Organization 2010). This failing socio-economic condition has resulted in the massive migration of Chin people into neighboring countries. Migration and remittances have thus become their alternative livelihood. Several thousand Chin people are scattered in Europe, Australia and New Zealand as immigrants; most do not return to Chin State. However, Chin people who stay in India's Mizoram state bordering Chin State can go back and forth and thus, can be categorized as temporary migrants.

Chin migration is being caused by a mixture of social, economic and political conditions. Many economic migrants migrate to work in India, Thailand, and Malaysia. Some of these migrants returned home with their accumulated capital; the majority did not. They go to third countries as refugees and have not returned home. Refugee status thus provides Chin people the path or way out of the deteriorating socio-political and economic conditions of Chin State.

Several factors keep Chin migration unabated including transnational networks which connect the migrants and home, the constant flows of capital, and the socio-economic impacts of remittance on the recipient households. Importantly, services that remittances render in time of financial crisis or in the areas of education, health and improved household economy have been noticeable in many rural Chin villages whose economy is largely agricultural-based subsistence farming. About 85 percent of Chin people who live in Chin State today rely on shifting cultivation for their livelihoods (Human Rights Watch 2009). However, steep mountains and deep gorges prevalent in the Chin Hills hinder substantive agricultural development. Soil erosion and exhaustion

are common as a result of the lack of viable farm land and of the farming on sloping hillsides. These environmental factors limit crop production and increase food insecurity in Chin State. Increasingly, the major population of Chin State is depending on remittance flows from its people living abroad. Remittance flows since the 1990s have been sustaining the local livelihood of the Chin people.

As more Chin people migrate overseas and with the potential rise in remittances over the years, this necessitates a systematic inquiry into the factors involved in the organization of migration, in the calling for and management of remittances especially for community development, as well as into the potential impacts of remittances on social relations, cultural practices and some social problems in the community.

### **1.2 Statement of the research problem and justification**

Migration and remittance have increasingly become the source of survival for many Chin households enduring hardship under military rule and a lack of infrastructures - water systems, telephone, electricity and roads. Most of the villages do not have electricity and the water systems are very traditional. The common use of mobile phone started perhaps a couple of years ago; some of the water systems are very traditional. Roads connecting villages and towns are too small for cars to travel on. Since transportation and communication systems are not good, there is no effective economic connectivity within Chin State and with the neighboring countries. Successive governments have failed to construct basic infrastructures and there is no local job available except the government's.

The prevailing social and economic conditions have resulted in massive migration of Chin people to North America, USA, European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and some Asian countries. They have become permanent migrants living in developed countries. Migrating to Malaysia and Thailand takes a few hundred thousand *kyats*. Chin migrants are among those better-off and many families do not have money to migrate. Households without migrants invest in local agriculture and businesses and they are the poor segment of the society. On the contrary, many migrant families have improved their living standard, economy and social influence.

Migrants are a rational economic being (Chimhowu et al. 2005) with altruism and self-interest among the main reasons to migrate and remit (Ballard 2001). Remittance is

a risk sharing resource or risk diversification strategy (Stark and Lucas 1988). As such, it is perceived as livelihood security for households facing risk from market and natural disasters; a mutual benefit contract between those who remit and those who receive - altruistic.

Sending remittance is a fulfillment of family's obligations (Agrawal and Horowitz 2002). Remittances are reported to have multiple effects in sustaining rural livelihoods, establish businesses, improved living conditions, bring people out of poverty, and become capital for social and economic development in the communities. Debates continue however between altruists who see remittances as livelihood security, a risk diversification strategy, and a contribution to community development, and the pessimists who have pointed out the tendency of a culture of dependency, social inequality, and impacts on social relations, among others.

Some studies about remittances sent by Myanmar migrants have found remittances to be the source of capital and livelihood survival (Turnell et al. 2003; Min Za Ni Lin 2009; Tun Min Sandar 2011; Rual Lian Thang 2012). Assessing remittances' impact in Myanmar is difficult due to the political and economic instability in the country. A study by Turnell et al. (2003) highlights the informal nature of Myanmar migrants' remittances made through the informal device of *Hundi* which transfers value rather than the currency. Focusing on the Chin migrants, Rual Lian Thang's (2012) study showed remittances to be a stable source of income for rural Chin households as well as a drive for community development. His study found about 80 percent of villagers receives remittances from relatives who work overseas. Remittances are mainly used for daily basic needs, housing expenses, education, and health. In addition, the remittances were also redistributed within the community for social welfare, construction of roads, schools, and mini-hydroelectric power plant.

While these studies provide an understanding about remittance determinants and on how remittances help sustain household survival and contribute to community development, there has yet been any study which focuses on the aspect of remittances' organization and management in which the wide range of networks have played a significant role. This is of particular relevance to the case of the Chin society. For example, Chin people use their social capital embedded in the kinship network in calling for migration. In addition, Chin society is a devout Christian society in which

both the religious institution and community leaders get involved in providing community needs. Thus, religious and community networks are also an integral part of the Chin social and cultural life. These networks might play an important role in migration and remittances of the Chin people as well. Therefore, the role of these networks in migration and management of remittance needs further study. It is also important to explore the relationship between and among these networks - kinship, religious, and community - and their relationship to migration and remittances of the Chin people. Importantly, my study will examine how these networks are appropriated as a mechanism for the redistribution of remittances within the community for services and development. Furthermore, although Chin people have migrated to different countries due to various reasons including economic hardships, political and religious oppression in Chin State over decades, the impacts of these migrants remittance has not been adequately studied. In many villages receiving remittances, especially in Vanzang village where I have conducted my study, new forms of social and cultural practices arose and the gap have widened between migrants' households, and non-migrants households. As some social issues - dependency, social inequality, and increased drug use - have become more observable in many Chin villages in the aftermath of migration and remittance sending, these phenomena necessitate further inquiry and analysis. Besides, Chin migration's patterns and characteristics as well as the social and cultural impacts of remittances in the society remain unexplored topics.

This research therefore have been done to fill the knowledge gap in remittance research in Myanmar by exploring the role of kinship, religious, and community networks in the management of remittances for community services and development. This pioneer study has also examined how remittances contributed to shifting social relations and cultural practices in the rural community, as well as investigating the social costs of migration and remittances on society in general and the impacts of remittance on rural Chin community development in particular. This study's findings hoped to contribute to a large community of academics interested in migration and the impacts of remittances at national, community, and household levels.

### 1.3 Research Questions

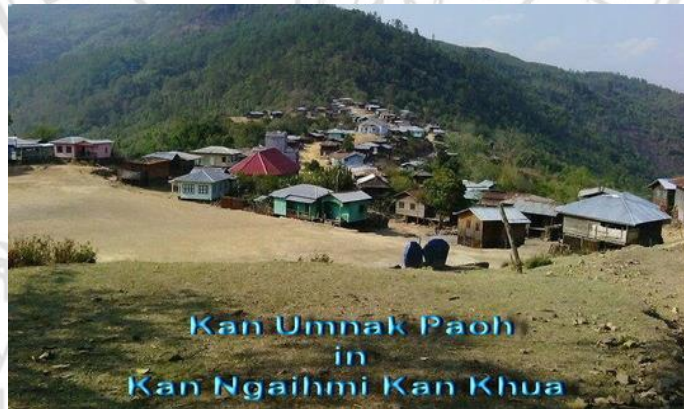
- (1) What are the roles of kinship, religious, and community networks in community development in rural Chin village?
- (2) In what ways have these networks been mobilized for the redistribution of remittances for community development?
- (3) How have remittances affected the changes in cultural practices, social relations and increased social problems in rural Chin village?

### 1.4 Research Objectives

- (1) To understand the roles of kinship, religion, and community networks in the management of remittances for community development in the rural Chin village.
- (2) To comprehend the impacts of remittances on cultural practices, social relations, and increases in social problems in the rural Chin community.

### 1.5 Research methodology

#### 1.5.1 Research Site



**Figure 1.1** Vanzang Village from Vanzang Overseas Webpage with permission

I did my research project in Vanzang village located in Chin State close to India's border. Vanzang village is located in the northern part of Chin State, 24 miles from Thantlang town. It has 106 households of which 38 are non-migrant families. Migration of Vanzang people to Malaysia started initially due to the increased military oppression, early in the 1990s. The village has severely suffered from the atrocities

committed by the military in its attempt to suppress and control the political movement of the Chin students known as the Chin National Front (CNF or the army wing, Chin National Army (CNA). The CNA operated in and out the India-Burma border in the aftermath of the students uprising in Myanmar in 1988. The fighting was severe from 1994 onwards. The atrocities caused many villagers located closed to India to run to the Mizoram state of Indian for safety. In the case of Vanzang village, the people mostly went to Malaysia. The main reason was there were some people who went to work in Malaysia. Additionally, around 1994, one villager of Vanzang was working as a broker sending Chin people to Malaysia. Having this connection, it was easier to go abroad for the people of Vanzang. Faced with the oppressive Burmese Army and the persuasive recruitment of the CNF, plus the extreme poverty, the Vanzang people started to migrate to Malaysia. The migration of Vanzang people can be divided into two groups, one is those who have migrated into Malaysia for economic purposes and the other one is those who go to seek UNHCR card and its resettlement program. There is massive migration as they can apply for the refugee status. Most of Vanzang people go to developed countries through Malaysia, the UNHCR settlement program. Today, there are around 100 people working and applying for UNHCR card and its resettlement program. Over 200 people have settled in developed countries such as the USA, Australia and the European countries.

I have chosen this village as there have been noticeable activities as a result of the remittance received through the networking with oversea migrants, the redistribution of the remittances for community development as well as an increasing the social cultural transformations taking place in the village.

### **1.5.2 Unit and Level of Analysis**

In this research, the households and community are the units of my analysis. Qualitative research approach is deployed. I analyze the household perception towards the mobilization of remittances by the community networks for the purposes of community development. I also analyze how remittances can be pooled for the better use of remittances for community development. At the community level, I analyze the different roles of kinship, religious, and community networks and many stakeholders involved in the management and use of remittances for community development.

This research focuses on a rural Chin village in which remittance has been flowing for about a decade and where its impacts have been noticeable. Indeed, the impacts of remittance are implicitly far reaching, having both bad and good results. The analysis is confined within the roles of networks in the redistribution of remittances for community development and the exploration of remittances' effects on cultural practices, social relations, and some social problems in the community.

### **1.5.3 Data Collection Methods**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology. In order to understand the roles of community networks in the redistribution of remittances for community development, I interviewed 8 key informants representing the four church and 3 key informants for the community network, as well as the community leaders. For obtaining information regarding the effect of remittances on cultural practices, social relations, and increased social issues, I conduct both in-depth interviews with key informants, who are knowledgeable within the village social and cultural context before and after the migration. In addition, I also employed a household survey in interviewing 15 households for collecting data on the impact of remittance on the remittance receiving households. For ethical consideration, before conducting any interviews or collecting any data, I informed what I was about to ask and what I would use the data for and got the prior consent from the people. As a researcher, I made clear to my informants that any information gathered would be used for academic purposes. To protect the privacy of the key informants, I use pseudo name.

I spent one month in Vanzang village. I stayed in a house of one of my key informants whom I can share and ask different questions and gain their perspectives on migration and remittance. Once, I used to live in this village for one year in 1995 while my father was posted to this village. Many of the older people still recognized me and are happy to talk and discuss matters with me. By introducing myself and my family, the villagers considered me as part of their village as we had lived in Vanzang for a couple of years. I quickly built a rapport with different people in the village, though the younger generation did not know me personally. I discussed with the people that I was working on a research project for my thesis, investigating the impacts of remittance on the migrant households and how the Vanzang people make use of different networks to mobilize remittance for their community development. I interviewed them in Chin

language, called “Lai” that all the people in the village speak. At first, they tended to ask questions to as to why I were investigating and collecting data. They are afraid of interrogation by the military and talking about how they spend remittance. Two assumptions came in my mind. The first one is that, I assume the villagers as a whole, feel insecure when a set of comprehensive questions are asked as they have experienced the Burmese Army’s atrocities which often occurs after interrogations. The rural people are suspicious of any questioning including for academic purposes. For the latter, I noticed that many of the people I interviewed felt uneasy to discuss their financial situation. The second assumption was that there could be a lack of hard data. For some people, they did not have any records whereas some kept detailed records of receipts and expenditures. As I explained, the purpose of this research and where the information would be used, they opened up and I could have conversations and get remittance expenditure data on households. The main methods of my research are in-depth interviews, group discussion, household survey and observation of the various projects that are implemented with remittance.

### **(1) Key Informants Interview**

At first, I do a preliminary inquiry in selecting key informant in the village and my key informants are those many of the villagers suggest to me as knowledgeable and active participants in the development of the Vanzang village. I choose key informants from those persons who are involved in different community projects and key communicator for mobilizing remittance among overseas Vanzang migrants. In other words, these persons are the key players for various community and religious projects and whom Vanzang overseas group called Global Vanzang Development Group (GVDG) make contact and consultation on matters relating to Vanzang village development.

### **(2) Household Survey**

During my field work, I spent most of my time with the key informants or undertaking the household survey which was done either in the morning or in the evening. I held discussions and interviews depending on their availability. For some of the interview, I arranged appointments depending on their free time. Sometime, we had discussion and interviews in the night as they preferred and while at the other times I would interview them in the morning before they go to work. When I interviewed the

head of the household for expenditure of remittance, most of the heads of the households would turn to the housewife as they tend to be the keeper of the money and manage of it for family, so the mothers became important informants for household survey. When I was in the field it was not harvest time, the main job of the housewives mainly was at that time gathering wood either in the morning or in the evening. Sometime I interviewed them when they were available at home. Other times I made an appointment for interview.

### **(3) In-depth Interview**

For in depth interview, I selected 8 key informants; three for cultural and social transformation and 5 for community and religious network and development. I observed all projects sites funded by remittance. I went to see those sites with key informants, they patrolled and briefed me how they started those projects, the implementation process of the projects and about the mobilization of funds for each respective project. I usually interviewed the key informants before overseeing the project sites and additional inquiries were made as we patrolled those sites. Sometimes, the key informants had more to discuss with me when we were at the sites of the various projects in the village, and they would recall more of the whole story of the projects. Group discussion provided me with more additional information and different views the people have on the same issue. Although I could get detailed information on the various projects that are fully or partially funded by the remittance funds, it was quite difficult to get full information on the management of those funds, especially community projects as my key informants were not responsive on those lines of questions. However, the religious leaders that I interview were very open, informative and provided complete information and details of projects that were funded by remittances for their own churches.

### **(4) Secondary Source**

I also employ village magazine that help understand the historical, social and economic situation of the village before and after migration. In some cases, I especially made use of it in order to understand some of the background of community projects refunded by remittance but locally started before migration. To understand Chin migration as a whole or social and cultural transformation which occurred after migration and remittance, I made use of some Chin relevant magazines. These secondary

sources help to get a better understanding the issues of Chin migration and its impacts on the Chin society, the people expressed in their own language literature.

**(5) Group Discussion**

I held group discussion with the key informants selected for community projects most of them were all male, totaled 4 persons. The reason female was not included was because the women did not involve actively in the implementation and mobilization of the community projects. When I did group interview with Church leaders two are female out of 4 persons for religious networking and development. Additionally, I did group interview with the Friday Prayer group leaders who were also my key informants for household, because they were from migrant families. Mostly they were female.

I wrote the details of the information in Lai language. I had a local guide that helped me in taking notes; all of the information gathered was put in a note book. I also used a camera to take pictures of various sites and some letters that village leaders provided, which often had names of key sponsors and responsible leaders. I was supposed to use video or audio record, but as the interviewees got nervous, to avoid pressure I stopped using it. I took pictures of the key informants, the project sites and the housewives I interviewed.

**Table 1.1** Profiles of Key Informants

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
Community projects	-	3	3
Religious related projects	3	5	8
Households	15	-	15
Social problems and Cultural change	-	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>

**1.5.4 Selection of Key Informants**

Vanzang village has created many community infrastructures through the assistance of oversea migrants, while some of the projects are fully supported and other are only partially supported. Before Global Vanzang Development Group (GVDG) was

started, projects were carried out without a strong connection and managing committee. There is one key person that the oversea migrant usually connect with and this man would act as intermediary between the migrants and the villagers, navigating the communication and implementation process of the village community projects. He would discuss with the villagers and the projects are implemented under the leadership of Vanzang Village Council. My key informant is the key contact person or leader for foreign relations for oversea migrants and the main leader for all remittance funded projects. The function of this networking was a kind of informal, loose networking but having a practical outcome for the village development. However, as the oversea migrants started to form what is known as Global Vanzang Development Group (After this cited as GVDG) in 2008 to better work for Vanzang village development in an organized and systematic way by having a global network which all Vanzang people could access. Similarly, in Vanzang village, a working committee which is part of GVDG was formed. They have a strong networking role with the GVDG, exchanging views and consulting, mobilizing the people, raising funds and implementing coordinated projects for Vanzang Village development.

When I started inquiring about who are the key persons coordinating and leading community projects among the villagers, I was informed that it was those people who had been involved in the implementation of community projects from the very beginning when overseas migrants started to fund community projects. I selected those active participants in the community development activities as my key informants as they are knowledgeable and best placed to provide information about the migrant sponsored projects in the village. These people have been voluntarily working for the social development of Vanzang people since migrants' remittance started driving community development. Firstly, I had an intensive interview with these persons individually and secondly, I had a group discussion with the GVDC sub-committee, formed in the village.

Concerning remittance sent for development of religious infrastructure, I selected key leaders in different churches to interview. After the formation of the GVDG, remittance was mobilized for building churches in the village as part of the community development which does not take into consideration which nomination the church is. Only one church was built under the leadership of GVDG. I interviewed the church

pastor and chairman, and other members of GVDG subcommittee who helped in raising the issue to the GVDG. Without the contributions of the GVDG leadership, one church would not have been built. I interviewed each church chairman for a better understanding of how the church initiated networking with overseas Vanzang people who used to be members of their church. They mobilized overseas migrants utilizing their social capital immersed in the membership. Sometimes, the migrant themselves reconnected with their own church and felt called upon to contribute to their previous affiliated church. This can be described as part of trans-national religious connectivity.

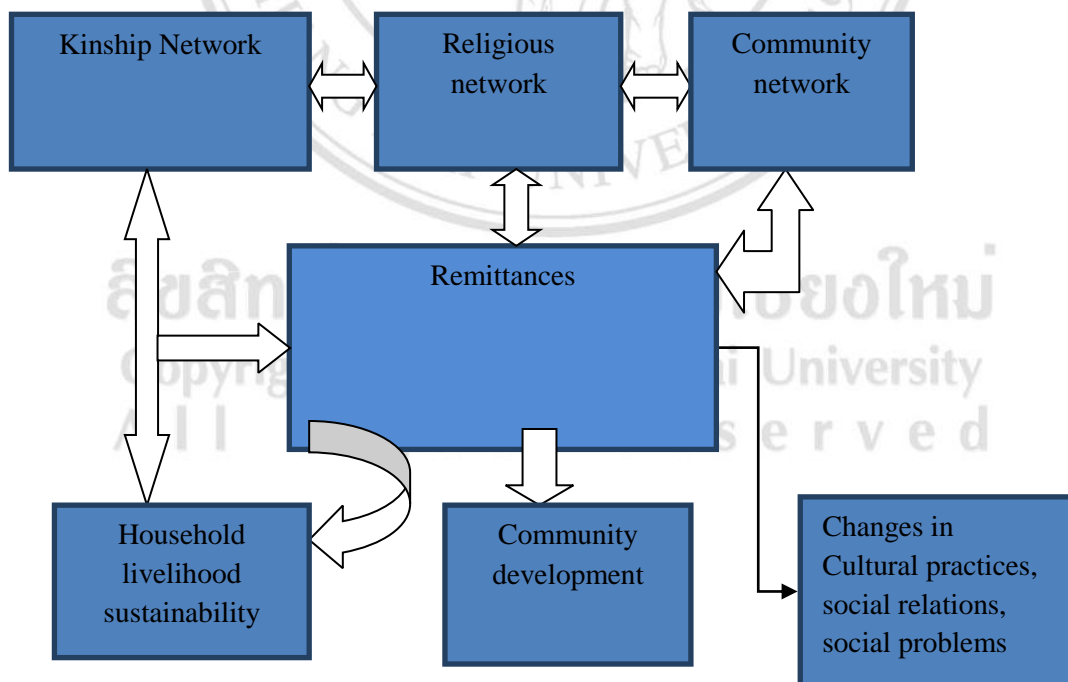
Since my study focused on the Vanzang village, I did not make any interviews with the overseas migrants who have made sustainable contributions to the church or other projects in the village. The interviewees are those who are leading a local church and/or acting as the key communicator with the overseas migrants and often the implementer of the project. I interviewed a pastor from one church who has not contacted any overseas migrants for funding their local church building. However, the local church members have their family member living in overseas and these members give one tenth of the remittance they receive to the church. Therefore, remittance has also indirectly impacted on the local church. There were cases where members of this church connected their own relatives, informing them of a need of the church and remittance was mobilized by independent individual members. I could not interview these people individually as they are out of the town while research was undertaken.

There are changes in cultural practice and emerging social problems caused by migration and remittance in the village. To make specific inquiry of this phenomenon, I selected three older people who are knowledgeable about the cultural and social aspects on the village. In the village community, as a result of remittance flows, people become wealthier; their rate of consumption is increased. In social relations, the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming wider and wider. Migration is socially costly, causing divorce, drug use and grievance to some migrant families. Remittance has shifted the meaning of some cultural practices in the village community. These key informants are knowledgeable about the socio-economic condition of the village prior to and after massive migration. They are informative on the cultural shift and its practical results.

Regarding the households' income and expenditure, the impact of remittance on household's livelihoods and consumption, I interview 15 households who have overseas

migrants. Mainly, I select those families who have their family's members living in developed countries like, USA, Australia, and Europe. While migrants are in Malaysia, the amount of money they send home is minimal and has brought smaller impacts on the community and households. As Vanzang people start moving into overseas countries in the early 2000s, the amount of remittance flows has increase drastically and has changed household's consumption on clothes, health, education, food, property and social events. I use the household survey to find information for these indicators. There is a big difference on expenditure among the migrant households as the flows of remittance into families is so much dependent on the duration of stay the migrant has in developed countries, and their success or failure in economic terms. Furthermore, I asked questions in the areas of; financial dependency on foreign remittance, the productive investment of the money and the assistance extended towards members of kinship. I also investigated the role of networking in mobilizing remittance for kin and in raising funds for religious and community projects.

### I.6 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.2** the Roles of Networks in Community Development

In most Chin society, three kinds of networks - kinship, religious, and community - are the integral part of the Chin social and cultural life, this might play an important role in migration and remittances of the Chin people as well. Kinship networks play an instrumental role in family migration and Chin people use their social capital embedded in this kind of network in calling for remittance and its impact reaches even extended families. The role of Chin kinship network in migration and remittance, thus, needs further study. Furthermore, whenever the Chin people find themselves in foreign countries, they tend to form their own community, building a community network with their origin of place. For example, if five families live abroad, these families tend to care for their community needs back in Chin State and a network is formed trans-nationally. In this network, exchange of ideas, information and resources takes place and provides a sense of belonging to the same village or community. Religiously, Chin is a devout Christian society in which Christianity influences all spheres of the Chin people - social, economic, and political. In Chin society both the religious institutions and community leaders get involved in providing community needs, and the church has a binding effect on people's life and acts to heighten Chin social cohesion. As a consequence, there are many cases of remittances being used for the services of religious institution and for other community development projects that the churches initiate.

These networks can provide an analytical lens into the study of the locations of networks and how they get access to different resources for different groups and how they use those resources in their livelihood and development of their community. The flows and uses of remittances for different purposes, the way it impacted the household, Chin community and their social relations is looked at from the lens of the community networking. Importantly, my study explores the relationship between and among these networks - kinship, community, and religious - and their relationship to migration and remittances of the Chin people. It examines how these networks have been appropriated as a mechanism in the redistribution of remittances within the community for community services and development.

## **1.7 The Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into seven chapters including this introduction chapter. In Chapter 1, I discuss the background of Chin migration in general and the people of Vanzang in particular. It presents the focal points of the study, the research questions, sites, research methodology and fieldwork. Chapter 2 presents the literature review on remittances, its impact on the receiving community and followed by reviews on the concepts of community networks and capital which is used to analyze the networking of overseas Vanzang people and the villagers on the kinship, community and religious level. In addition, the related study done in Myanmar is further reviewed. Chapter 3 looks at the kinship network and its role in migration and in calling for remittance and the impact of remittance on the remittance receiving household through indicators such as basic needs, health, education, economic investment and social and religious events. In the Chapter 4, the community network between overseas Vanzang people and the villagers is discussed and the mobilization of overseas migrants and implementation of different community projects are the focal points of the chapter. Additionally, it discusses the religious network between the local churches and their overseas migrants. It also looks at how the local churches and their members mobilize overseas migrants through the religious network for development of their churches. It further details each religious development, especially the church buildings constructed and funded by overseas remittance and the women prayers group and their role in the development of community religious life. In Chapter 5, the social and cultural transformations that have taken place after massive migration and the flows of remittance into the community is discussed and analyzed. Chapter 6 concludes this thesis with some discussion, observations and findings.