REPORT
THE PLIGHTS OF BURMA’S DISABLED POPULATION

I. A Background on Disability

As of March 2008 the world’s population was estimated to have reached over 6.65 billion\(^1\) with between 282 and 608 million of these people classified as disabled, according to World Bank estimates\(^2\). Alarmingly people with disabilities make up 15 - 20% of the poor in developing countries (The World Bank)\(^3\). There are an estimated 150 million children with disabilities in the world, most of whom live with the reality of exclusion as a result of their surroundings. According to USAID up to 300 million women and girls alone are living with a mental and / or physical disability\(^4\), a statistic further confirmed by the World Health Organization (WHO), which claims women with disabilities comprise 10% of all women worldwide.

The population of Myanmar has grown to 56.51 million (ADB)\(^5\), with over 60% of the population women and children\(^6\). As in previous years at the most recent release of population data the Burmese government omitted information concerning numbers of women and children living with disabilities, although it is widely accepted the numbers at a minimum echo those found worldwide. According to our survey on Koh Dut village in Ye township, Mon State, we estimate that in a population of 6,000 there are at least 10 to 15 disabled children in the village.

Interestingly, there is no specific definition of disability in Myanmar. However, Dr. U Tha Moe, Senior Medical Officer of a hospital dedicated to treating people with disabilities believes by defining the terms ‘healthy’, ‘impairment’, ‘disability’ and ‘handicap’ we can have a better understanding of disability. In the March 2002 Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation department’s country profile on the Union of Myanmar those being healthy was defined as, “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity,” while having impairment may be, “any loss or abnormality of psychological,

(Footnotes)
\(^1\) From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
\(^2\) STAKES, National Research and Development Center for Welfare and Health
\(^3\) STAKES, National Research and Development Center for Welfare and Health
\(^4\) USAID Women in Development
\(^5\) Asia Development Bank & Myanmar (2007 fact sheet)
\(^6\) Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region
Message From
Woman And Child Rights Project (Southern Part of Burma)

Woman and Child Right Project (WCRP) is a 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.

physiological or anatomical structure or function." He goes on to discuss being handicapped as having a disadvantage as a result of impairment, or being disabled. The impairment is usually such that the individual is limited or even prevented from being able to fulfill a role that is usually considered normal for that individual, taking into account age, sex, and social and cultural factors. He then finally defines disability as, "Any restriction or loss of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being as a result of impairment." 7

Similarly, the United Nations (UN) uses those same terms to characterize disability and states that being ‘handicapped’ is quite simply a function of a disabled person's relationship with their environment. “It occurs when they encounter cultural, physical or social barriers which prevent their access to the various systems of society that are available to other citizens. Thus, handicap is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others” 8.

II. Types of Disability

As part of their country profile, in 2002 different types of disability prevalent in Burma included learning disabilities, fits, other disabilities, difficulties in moving, strange behavior, numbness in limbs, hearing impairment and visual impairment. 9

In Burma, as with other countries worldwide, the origins of a disability may be multifaceted, or begin from any number of factors. These include, congenital diseases or abnormalities, infectious diseases, nutritional deficiencies, lack of immunization, land mines, accidents, poorly or incorrectly administered injections, using expired medication, using incorrect medication and, potentially, eating a lot of spicy foods when pregnant.

Giving examples of common occurrences a in the region, a Ye town doctor told us,

“When a mother gets pregnant she is sometimes issued with the wrong drugs, and eats food that can be detrimental in a pregnancy, including very spicy food. In this case, her child is more likely to be born disabled. After the birth when immunizing their children some doctors provide either incorrect or expired inoculations. When all this is coupled with the types of diseases already prevalent in Burma it is not difficult to encourage a high rate of disability in the community.”

III. Vaccinations

Vaccination programs are run by the government, but by international NGOs who cooperate with the health department’s work on vaccinations including

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7 Country profile on Disability Union of Myanmar, March 2002 Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department
8 THE CENTER FOR AN ACCESSIBLE SOCIETY (The Definition of Disability BY DEBORAH KAPLAN)
9 Country profile on Disability Union of Myanmar, March 2002 Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department
the polio vaccination program even in rural or urban area. Some parents have less awareness of health care issues and therefore fail to send their children to receive their polio immunization. The polio vaccination program has also been linked with directly causing disability, although it is unclear whether it is the injection itself or the result of it being poorly administered. The parents of an 11 year-old paralyzed girl said her illness was caused by childhood vaccines.

“When she was five years old she received her polio vaccination and it was only after that she fell ill and gradually lost all movement in her lower body.”

IV. Land Mines

On the Thai-Burma border, there are frequent clashes between the many different ethnic armed groups, rebel groups and the military junta. In an effort to stop the ethnic and rebel groups the junta launched a military offensive against these groups, using anti-personnel land mines which cause death or serious, debilitating injuries to the innocent people living in the border area.

Among the displaced communities of Shan, Karenni, Karen, Mon, and other ethnic groups in the eastern and southern parts of Burma, land mines and gun battles place much unnecessary suffering and increase greatly the difficulty in caring for disabled people. Despite a five-decades-long civil war in the Thai-border area, there is still no program to care for the victims of land mines across any state or division that borders with Thailand. Land-mines victims and their families have to make their own equipment and prosthesis. Although International NGOs like Handicap International want to work to support land-mine victims in displaced communities, the regime does not allow it. If a disabled person can make the trek to a Thai-border refugee camp they may receive treatment, but basically the life of a person disabled by land mines is grim.

V. Malnutrition

With malnutrition in children linked with developmental and learning disorders, as well as physiological difficulties, the outlook is not good for children in Burma who find themselves in the high risk category. In the Mon Internally Displaced Person (IDP) areas most children face significant nutritional deficits because they are unable to access adequate food supplies from international assistance organizations, and they have to rely on their parents very much. Due to minimal donor assistance many parents are unable to survive on their rations and therefore are forced to work for a meager income that still does little to alleviate their food shortage. Nutrition subsequently takes second place; when the struggle is to buy enough food to fill their stomachs issues of nutritional content are sometimes disregarded.

VI. Being Disabled in Burma

Disabled people in Burma do not have access to a range of support services as in other more developed countries, and employment for a disabled person is unlikely. For this reason disabled people are often reduced to begging, and we therefore only meet them at festivals, bus stations, train stations and other crowded places where money may be given to them freely. If jobs are offered to them they are lowly and poorly remunerated, such as plastic or bottle collecting.

Thus the types of ‘workplaces’ disabled people often find themselves in do little to improve their situation, as diseases run rife on the streets. For women and children especially security may be an issue, and they put themselves in great danger as vulnerable beggars on the streets. Just to survive from day to day a disabled beggar must spend all day begging.

VII. Community response

The vast majority of children with disabilities in developing countries have no access to rehabilitative health care or support services, and many are unable to acquire a formal education (UNICEF). In Burma, a lack of formal education regarding

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10 Woman in Ye town
11 The State of the World’s Children 2006 excluded and invisible (UNICEF)
disabilities, and a still widely held superstitious belief that disabled persons have been made disabled as punishment for bad deeds in a previous life, leaves disabled people neglected, viewed as abnormal and looked down upon.

Generally disabled people in Burma aren’t treated as normal people; As a result, many disabled people become lonely and have feelings of depression. They feel ostracized from their communities, with few (if any) people trying to help or encourage them. Although some community members will acknowledge and assist disabled people, often the attention they receive is unwelcome, hurtful, or confined to looks and expressions of pity. Bullying is also a major factor facing disabled people in Burma, with name-calling and finding the disabled person a source of amusement commonplace.

Some families view their disabled child as a burden, a child that they cannot rely on, nor depend on in the future for income or opportunities. Although many families choose to keep their child and care for them as best they can, some families will go so far as to abandon their child if he/she is disabled.

Where cultural beliefs suggest that to have a disabled child is good luck, and a sign of prosperity for the family, the disabled child is not abandoned. They do not lead a normal life however, and are treated as differently from others in the community.

VIII. Education for Disabled Children

In the Southern part of Burma, it is rare to see special schools for disabled children established and maintained by the government. For children with movement difficulties, strange behavior, and numbness in limbs a regular school is an option, however for children with hearing and/or visual impairment educational opportunities in Southern Burma are non existent.

According to a teacher from the Koh Dut village Mon National School, when disabled student Min Seike Htaw attended the government state school his teachers said that he misbehaved, stole classmate's property and fought with his classmates frequently. The teachers then forced him to leave. The truth of the situation is very different; Min Seike Htaw was very keen to study and exhibited excellent behavior at the Mon National School his mother sent him to. The teacher went on, ”We favored him slightly and ensured he received enough attention to understand what was going on. We encouraged other students not to isolate him. Even though we don’t have special schools for disabled children we welcome all students and treat them equally. We also provide funding for parents of disabled children who cannot afford to pay. We would like all children to access educational opportunities.”

This type of attitude is essential in fostering a healthy educational environment for disabled children. It is costly for the schools however, and can sometimes disrupt classes considerably.

XI. Response of Government and NGOs

According to Burma’s child disabilities law article 18 legislated in 1993,

“1. A child with mental or physical disability (a) has the right to acquire basic (primary level) or vocational education at special schools established by the Social Welfare Department or by Voluntary Social Worker or non-governmental organizations, and (b) has the right to obtain special care and assistance from the state.

2. The Social Welfare Department shall lie down and carry out measures deemed necessary so that mentally or physically disabled children may participate with dignity in the community and with a sense of self-reliance.”

Burma signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 to protect and promote the rights of children in Burma. According to CRC article 23:

12Country profile on Disability Union of Myanmar, March 2002 JapanInternational Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department
1. States parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge. Whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conductive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her culture and spiritual development.

4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Although the government legislated their child disabilities law and signed the CRC, they have continually failed to implement any special school education, primary or vocational, in the southern parts of Burma. Disabled persons do not have access to any special care or assistance from the State, with the government effectively ignoring their disabled population by refusing to take responsibility for them. This leaves parents with the great pressure of sole responsibility for their disabled children's education, healthcare and general wellbeing.

Therefore a disabled person's quality of life very much depends on the family they were born into. If their living standard is high, a disabled person may live a satisfactory existence as their family can provide accommodation, food and medical treatment. But for those whose living standard is lower, huge problems arise; a non-disabled person struggles in this environment, and a disabled person needs extra care that will not be available to them. Even when partially independent a disabled person is unlikely to find legitimate employment, especially as the government labor departments does not provide any job opportunities for disabled people.

The news is not all bad for disabled people living in Myanmar; some disabled schools have opened, including the School for the Blind (Sagaing), School for the Blind (Yangon), School for the Deaf (Mandalay), Training School for Disabled Youth (Yangon) and the Training School for Disabled Adults (Yangon). Further, some hospital/rehabilitation centers for disabled persons have opened, including the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital (EENT) and the National Rehabilitation Hospital (Yangon), both of which also provide vocational training and house educational facilities for the community. In Yangon and Mandalay there are about ten Non-Government Organisations who work for disabled persons mostly in the fields of medicine and vocational education. Like the government centres, mostly the NGOs only focus on big cities.

In most rural areas, the military government still fails to provide programs or assistance in setting up hospitals or clinics for disabled persons who need treatment. Disabled communities have no treatment locations and are therefore treated in the village with limited medicine and medical professionals. Besides health care, no programs have been supported in rural areas in order to promote education of disabled persons.

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13Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (Profile of Disability - Related Organizations)
The Mon Women’s Organization (MWO) organized a Mon Women’s Day ceremony on March 18 in a Mon Refugee Resettlement Site called Nyi Sar and invited the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) and the Woman and Child Rights Program (WCRP) to attend the ceremony and the Seminar of Mon Women’s Affairs which followed, running from March 19th to 21st.

Following the invitation received by the Seminar Organizing Committee, the Director of HURFOM acted as key facilitator along with the General Secretary of MWO. One key member of WCRP attended both the Mon Women’s Day ceremony and the Seminar of Mon Women’s Affairs. In the Seminar, the female participants discussed a wide range of issues, including:

- Women and Politics
- Women and Community Development
- Women and Health
- Women and Education
- Women and Religion

The Seminar Organizing Committee also invited a political leader from the New Mon State Party (NMSP), a development expert from an NGO from inside Burma, a Mon doctor, the Head of Mon Education and a leader from the Mon Young Monks Association as speakers to aid in the discussion mentioned above. After the experts spoke, participants were divided into five groups and discussed each of the five issues from the agenda.

The following conclusions were drawn after lengthy discussions:

- Mon women’s knowledge on politics is very weak. MWO needs to arrange at least two political education training days or workshops per year for women

- The Women’s Health Education Program must be extended and MWO should collaborate with the health department to provide training for a community health worker to take care of general women’s health in the area

- A program to encourage Mon parents and Mon girls to complete high school education must be conducted

- Female community development workers must be trained and women must be encouraged to participate in community development activities

- Religious (especially Buddhist) organizations and local community women’s organizations must collaborate in Monastic Education in order to provide education for poor children

This was the 2nd Seminar on Mon Women’s Affairs and women participants were actively involved in the discussion to improve the rights of women in various fields in Mon communities.
Villagers Forced to Fund Government School

WCRP: February 2008

In Kalot Tot village, Mudon Township the headmistress of Basic Education High School of Burma announced her plan to collect more money in the coming academic year beginning in June, 2008, with a view to build a new school. She has already printed and distributed receipts to some parents.

Students’ parents were concerned after receiving the information about increased funding requirements; last year in June a similar increase was required during the registration period however the increase was related to grading fees. A first standard student would cost parents one thousand Kyat, a second standard student two thousand Kyat – right through to ten thousand Kyat for a tenth standard student.

During the school year teachers began collecting money from students, but were forced to cease their collections after the education department of Burma released a statement that every student must pay a maximum of three payments Parents and Teacher Association Payment (PTA), School Fee and Extra Curricular Activities; Stationary and Library Fee, and schools were not allowed to ask for any more money from students. This meant some students paid more than others, however no funds were returned. Regardless of last year’s announcement the school will go ahead with further collections this year, in the name of rebuilding the school. The current High School building of Kalot Tot was built in 1998-1999.

The extra funds required of parents this year are determined by the number of students per household. One student attracts a fee of 6,000 Kyat, two students 7,000 Kyat and three students 8,000 Kyat. Parents who paid extra money last year will not receive a discount, as their previous contributions are not recognized.

One mother expressed that she did not want to pay any more money to a headmistress that she views as corrupt. Having paid extra money last year she does not feel it is necessary or fair to pay again this year, a view echoed by many parents. Normally, when parents cannot pay the amount requested by the school, they feel forced to withdraw their children, causing major disruption to their child’s education and future.

This practice is not uncommon in Burma, where parents and villagers are frequently asked to provide extra funding. Although the government will claim responsibility for any positive developments, such as a new school building, they have little if anything to do with funding construction and development and instead encourage soliciting funds from parents and the community.

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Mon woman, working in Samut Sakorn, raped by six men

WCRP: March 29, 2008

A sixteen-year-old Mon woman was raped and left for dead by a gang of six men in Maharchai, Samut Sakorn Province, Southern Thailand, reports her uncle, who recently spoke with a Mon human rights worker on the Thai-Burma border.

In the early morning of March 29th, four men grabbed the girl and threw her into a car as she and another woman left a shop after buying food. The four men bound her with rope and beat her until she lost consciousness. They, along with two friends who were waiting outside of town, then raped her and left in the bushes, thinking her to be dead.

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Photo by AWM
A child in Hongsawatoi Ward, Thanpyuzayat Town, was killed after eating over fifty castor-oil seeds in December 2007, his neighbors recently reported to a Woman and Child Rights Project field reporter. In January, two other children were also hospitalized in nearby Wait Rat village.

The two children, aged eleven and twelve, were studying in standard three. The two were playing near a motor road along which rows of castor-oil trees have been planted, and each ate about thirty seeds. They soon became sick and, after throwing up, were taken to the Thanpyuzayat hospital by their parents.

The children like the taste of the castor-oil seeds, comparing them to cashew nuts, report their parents. The seeds are colorful and enticing and parents report that they are worried more children will eat the seeds.

The regime has ordered castor-oil trees to be planted all over the country, especially along motor roads and in front of people's houses, gardens, fields and farms. The campaign began in 2006, and though people cannot refuse to plant the trees, sign boards have been posted reading "Let's plant Castor-oil trees as our fences." The project was advocated without warning of the plant's dangers, and state-owned MRTV broadcasts almost every day, championing the plant's positive uses and providing instructions explaining how to grow the plant.

Ostensibly, the seeds can be used to produce oil for biodiesel, but actual fuel yields have been minuscule. But sources within the National League for Democracy say that the campaign began after Daw Kyine Kyine, wife of General Than Shwe, was told by an astrologer that planting castor-oil through-out the country would lead to defeating opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

In many cases, victims or their families are forced to pay money to the abductors, or be sold into slavery as prostitutes. In this case, however, the men thought the victim to be dead and did not attempt to ransom or sell her. She awoke at ten that morning and, with the help of a trash collector working in the area, contacted her uncle who took her to a nearby hospital.

The woman, from DuYa Village, Ye Township, has been working as an illegal factory night worker for six months. The girl, like many without a work permit, has had difficulties finding work and has had to settle for night work, from six pm until three am. During the day she has to hide in home of an uncle, who lives in Thailand legally.
On February 24th, 2008, a sixteen-year-old Mon girl in Thanpyuzayat Town, Burma was raped by two migrant farm workers from upper Burma, reports a Woman and Child Rights Project field reporter in the area.

The girl was attacked in the evening as she rode her bicycle home from the farm on which she works, located twenty minutes from the home of her family. Then men blocked her path, knocked her off her bicycle and kicked her repeatedly before raping her.

Her parents complained to Town Authorities, who asked her to point out the perpetrators from a group of Burman men. The perpetrators were not in the group, but authorities have taken no further actions. When she could not identify her attackers among the men rounded up by authorities, it created the impression that she had fabricated the incident. The victim’s aunt expressed frustration with the authorities, who have done little and make the girl feel public shame if she seeks justice.

Though the family will admit privately that the incident occurred, publically they say that nothing happened.

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Thanpyuzayat authorities arrested 13-year-old Mi Seik Hlone at 11:30am on the 13th of February, 2008 as she attended her Mon National School class. The arrest came about after her father, Nai Sai, was found guilty of manslaughter, following a violent argument between him and one other man on the 1st of February; he and his wife fled shortly after the incident.

The argument broke out between Nai and 17-year-old Mam Htop Phar and resulted in Sai beating Phar to death. Phar was from the island village of Kalar Gout in the northern part of Ye Township.

The police arrested Mi Seik Hlone on her father’s behalf close to final exams and held the 13 year old in custody for one week. Her release came only after the New Mon State Party’s liaison officer of Thanpyuzayat Town together with Mi Seik Hlone’s teacher apologized to authorities many times, pleading for her release prior to the final exams, and drawing attention to her age.

One activist who works for the rights of children expressed her feeling that the state authorities should not arrest a child and should definitely not keep any child in custody for a crime committed by someone else.

“This case is a clear example of the State disregarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and directly affecting a young girl’s chance at education. In this case the girl’s future in the community has also been jeopardized, as she has now been ostracized as a criminal.” She went on, “The State’s action in this instance completely disregards child rights, and placed a young girl in jail for her father’s crimes.”

Unfortunately this case is not isolated; other instances of town authorities using children to get to parents who have committed a crime is common practice and violates children’s rights, as they are effectively held hostage as ransom for their parent’s crimes.

Mi Seik Hlone has returned to study fifth standard in Halock Cha village, Thanpyuzayat Township, Mon State, Burma.
News from other Sources:

Ministry of Education running fake diploma mill

Kaowao: March 2, 2008

For a small fee, the Ministry of Education, Myanmar Examination Board is handing out illegal recommendation marks obtained in matriculation examination for university graduates.

According to a Burmese student who studies in Thailand, "Any student who wishes to study abroad but who was unsuccessful in the matriculation examination could obtain the tenth standard official document and other various kinds of recommendations from the examination board through brokers."

He claimed, "A certificate for tenth standard recommendation is 50,000 or 60,000 kyat, a university degree goes for 100,000 kyat through a broker. Moreover, we could buy subjects, at least 3, written into the certificate."

Daw May Nyein, a retired Burmese Lecturer at a Burma University commented, "The youth lack many opportunities, they have no access to education, no training opportunities and they have no chance at receiving high quality education, so I have proposed to the Burmese authorities to take responsibility in solving this ongoing fabrication of certificates and degree and apply justice as soon as possible."

She continued on by saying that young people from Burma have no exit. In time they discover the only way out is to go overseas and they don't really care whether it's legal or illegal. In reality this is not good but their lives inside Burma are very restricted from having no opportunities, no economic prospects, no training whatsoever. The government must do something fast and do it with justice and fairness.

A student with fabricated documents from a broker told a Kaowao reporter, "Only the Myanmar Examination Board has the power to produce fake matriculation certificates however we now can get it from a dealer costing 60,000 kyat. This document is for used obtaining immigration benefits for leaving the country." He admitted that some of his friends hold fake certificates and now attend university.

A foreign service agent; however, (overseas broker) claimed that these recommendations are not fake, they help the student to study abroad and it costs approximately between 60,000 and 100,000 kyat in Burma.

A broker from Rangoon explained, "This recommendation includes a red symbol stamp after an agreement from the Myanmar Examination Board minister and chairman for Non- Migrant Worker ED (Education)." He added, "Except photo, one needs nothing we can do everything. A red symbol and other stamps are real but in an illegal way."

Ko Soe Naing who is studying at a Thailand university complained about Burma's education system saying, "how terrible the system is and that corruption is hindering the education of young people."

The examination of 2 subjects in a day at southern Mon State' town

Kaowao / March 14, 2008

Ninth grade Basic Education High School students in Southern Mon State have been forced by the regime to take their exams under especially difficult circumstances.

Citing security concerns, officials in Khaw Zar sub-township instructed students to take two exams per day, doubling the usual one-exam-per-day schedule. The increased workload makes passing the exams difficult, according to parents of Khaw Zar students.

They (authorities of town) announced the examination started on the 27th (of February) and must be finished in three days. All the students got tired so they couldn't pass it well. How could they? Their teachers are angry and dissatisfied with the attitude the authorities have towards their students," said one mother of a student in Khaw Zar.

The examinations were scheduled to cover Burmese and Chemistry, English and Physics and Mathematics and Biology in three days.

According to a source close to the Education Department of Ye township, the shortened exam schedule was blamed on ongoing conflict between Mon rebels and the Burmese army. Attacks in the area occur almost daily.

After Khaw Zar village was promoted to the rank of town standard by the SPDC, the Mon High School of the NMSP’s Education Department was dispossessed by the regime to reform the Basic Education High School.

But the Education Department of the NMSP had inaugurated another Mon Middle School (8th grade) at town again.
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 an 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
Woman and Child Rights Project - Southern Burma

According to a recently graduated doctor working at a government hospital, “One of my teachers told me that the government didn’t give any medical assistance to disabled persons in Burma. They have to spend their own money to have medical treatment. If they don’t have money they are unable to get any medical treatment. But in Yangon they have schools for the deaf, incapacitated and blind as well as a safe house.

In the southern part of Burma, there are no government hospitals for disabled persons and also there are very few NGOs who work for disabled persons. There is no land mine victims care program in southern Burma.”

Government organizations and public facilities for persons with disabilities include the Ministry of Health (Yangon) and the Department of Social Welfare (Yangon).

There are some local NGOs and also international NGOs are working for disabilities children. Local NGOs include the Disabled Peoples Organization (DPO Myanmar), Eden Handicap Service Center (for children), Myanmar Christian Fellowship of the Blind, Myanmar National Association of the Blind, and The Myanmar Council of Churches. International NGOs include the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), and World Vision Myanmar.

X. Summary

As with the governmental departments and attempts at aiding disabled people, the base for most of the NGO activity is in Yangon and Mandalay. Disabled people in southern Burma are forgotten and must struggle every day to survive.

WCRP has suggested to International NGOs that along with their health care program, they also need to consider for a specific program to disable persons in providing regular health care and rehabilitation.
In this “The Plight Newsletter”:

Photo by IMNA

Mon Women’s Day and Seminar of Mon Women Affairs in Nyi Sar

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Photo by AW

The rope that bound a sixteen-year-old Mon woman before six men raped her in Maharchai, Samut Sakorn Province, Southern Thailand

On Page 5

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