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Transnational labor migration and family planning in a rural village of Laos*Chihiro SHIRAKAWA (Japan)*

This research intends to examine the relationship between transnational temporal labor migration and contraceptive activities among the villagers, particularly women, of Lao PDR. The research village is located approximately 65 km south-east of Savannakhet city and has 119 households as of the end of 2014. All villagers are ethnic Lao. The villagers' livings are highly depending on rice cultivation in unirrigated paddy fields as well as temporal labor migration to Thailand, especially to its capital city Bangkok. The migration started more than 30 years ago. As a result, quite large number of villagers, either men or women, have experiences of working several years in Bangkok. It is speculated that more than half of the young villagers under the age of 35 are currently working there as temporal workers such as sales clerks and small-scale factory laborers. On the other hand, the use of contraceptive majors mainly pills and injections is remarkably popular among the female villagers, particularly those under the age of 45. This tendency now brings fertility decline in the village. Why, and how, has the use of contraceptive majors become so popular? Does this tendency have any relationship with the villagers' labor migration to Bangkok? The research attempts to answer these questions in particular.