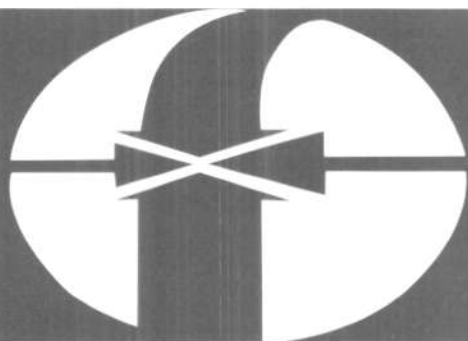


Savings and Development



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Quarterly Review - No. 2 - 2002 - XXVI

Spedizione in abbonamento postale al 70% - Filiale di Milano



Savings and Development

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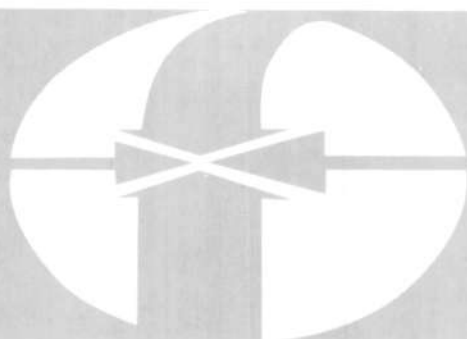
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Milan - Italy

Quarterly Review - No. 2 - 2002 - XXVI

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Contents

SELF-EMPLOYMENT OF MICRO AND SMALL ENTREPRENEURS IN URBAN NORTHERN THAILAND AFTER THE ASIAN CRISIS

by Klaus Peter Dickhoven and Gertrud Buchenrieder 117

SHG BANKING: A FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY FOR VERY POOR MICROENTREPRENEURS

by Hans Dieter Seibel and Shyam Khadka 133

MEASURING INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL LIBERALISATION IN CARICOM

by Carlene Belford and Kevin Greenidge 151

TESTING LONG-RUN NEUTRALITY OF MONEY IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY

by Muzafar Shah Habibullah, C. H. Puah and M. Azali 165

VOLATILITY INTERACTIONS BETWEEN STOCK RETURNS AND MACROECONOMIC VARIABLES: MALAYSIAN EVIDENCE

by Mansor H. Ibrahim 183

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MICRO FINANCE SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

by S.M.P. Senanayake 197

SELF-EMPLOYMENT OF MICRO AND SMALL ENTREPRENEURS IN URBAN NORTHERN THAILAND AFTER THE ASIAN CRISIS

Klaus Peter Dickhoven and Gertrud Buchenrieder
University of Hohenheim

1. Introduction

From the beginning of the 1980s till the mid 1990s, the Thai economy grew very rapidly and the financial sector grew even faster. Nevertheless, during this period of unprecedented economic growth, often referred to as the 'Asian Miracle', income inequality grew substantially among the population. For example, in the four years from 1988-92, the top 20% of households saw their combined income rise from 54% to 59% of gross domestic product (GDP), while the combined income of the bottom 20% of households dropped from 4.6% to 3.9% over the same period (National Economic and Social Development Board, 1997). The increasing income disparity was sought to be reduced by changing the political framework. However, the eruption of the Asian Crisis in the middle of 1997 has pushed the Thai economy into a deep recession that reinforced the negative trends in income distribution. The economic recession caused real GDP to fall by 8.5% in 1998, unemployment was 60% higher than in February 1997. Although the dramatic social effects can hardly be estimated, the *Dusit* Study (Sangsubhan, 1998) found that more than 40% of the people who had lost their jobs because of the crisis must take care for at least two other persons. Moreover, 70% of them were indebted.

Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in the informal economic sector often function as employer for this group who got unemployed during the Asian Crisis. MSEs play an important role in the Thai economy. According to the National Statistical Office, 80% of all enterprises fall into this category. While in the past the Thai government tended to discriminate against MSEs, it has now realized that these enterprises play an important role to minimize the social cost of the Asian Crisis in particular and of unemployment in general. For instance, absolute and relative costs of job creation are much lower than in the large-scale industry that produces more capital-intensively. In addition, MSEs absorb better the unskilled or marginally skilled work force due to its propensity to produce in a labor intensive way. However, entering into self-employment in a MSE still requires some level of finance. The startup of a MSE often depends on access to micro-finance (formal or informal micro-financial services). Thus, it can be hypothesized that (1) the Asian Crisis led to a shift from private employment to self-employment in MSEs, (2) the MSEs were crucial in providing adequate income to cover basic needs to the dismissed employees from the private sector during the Asian Crisis and thereafter, and that (3) the access to micro-finance is preeminent for the startup and running of MSEs.

The objectives of this paper are (1) to give an overview of the immediate effects of the Asian Crisis on the labor market in Thailand, particularly on the labor market in the Chiang Mai Province, (2) to describe the supply side of financial sources for MSEs, and (3) to present a systematic analysis of the self-employment activities among micro and small entrepreneurs in the urban Muang district in Chiang Mai in Thailand.

The primary and secondary data analyzed in this paper were collected from February to May 2000. Three analysis levels are used: the macro, the institutional, and the household level. The effects of the Asian Crisis on the labor market in Thailand are discussed at the aggregate macro level, the supply side of finance for MSEs is examined from an institutional perspective, and the self-employment activities among micro and small entrepreneurs are researched at the micro level. In total, the self-employment activities were surveyed by using a structured questionnaire among 85 informal and 42 formal micro and small entrepreneurs. The collected micro-economic data was analyzed using explorative statistical instruments.

2. Effects of the Asian Crisis on the Labor Market in Thailand

This section discusses the first hypothesis, which states that the Asian Crisis led to a shift from private to self-employment in micro and small enterprises (MSEs). Micro-enterprises do not employ more than four persons while small enterprises employ between 5-49 persons. Micro-enterprises are said to employ simple technologies and know-how, require very little capital and have a low degree of productivity. The same is true to some degree for the small enterprises, however their registered capital should exceed 0.5 mn Baht. Micro-enterprises dominate the manufacturing sector in Thailand with 74.5% in 1996 (National Statistical Office, 1998). They are often linked to the informal sector. The informal sector in Thailand is defined as a sector that consists of enterprises typically operating with a low level of organization on a small scale, low and uncertain wages, and no social welfare and security. In contrast, the formal sector is said to consist of organizations which have defined mana-

¹ In Chiang Mai province, 46.2% of all manufacturing enterprises could be classified as micro-enterprises in 1998 (National Statistical Office, 1999).

gement and administrative systems and which employ at least ten persons (Allal, 1999; National Statistical Office, 1999). Thus, the majority of MSEs would have to be counted to the informal sector. In the empirical part of this work, however, enterprises have been assigned to the informal sector when they were not registered with any public authority, regardless of the size of their labor force (Dickhoven, 2000; National Statistical Office, 1998).

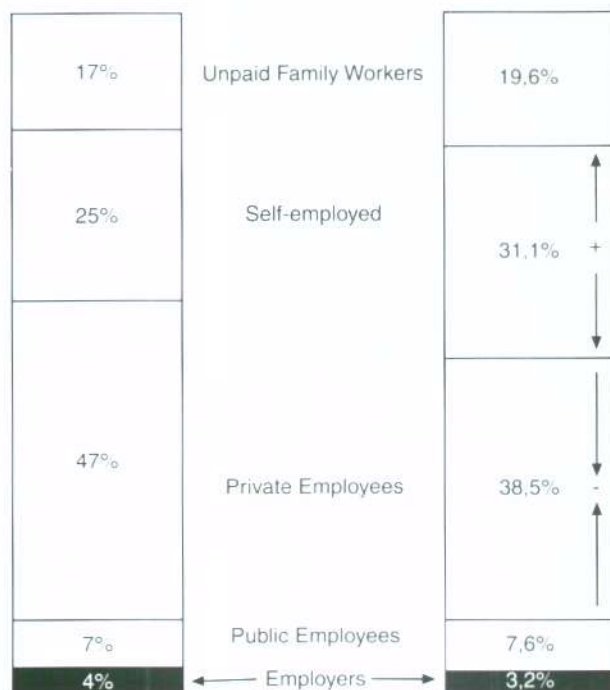
The Asian Crisis began in the middle of 1997 in Thailand as the fixed peg of the Baht to the US dollar came under increasing pressure. By July 1997, the Thai National Bank was unable to defend the peg and the currency commenced a sharp devaluation. This led to a severe collapse of real GDP. The annual change of GDP dropped from above 7% to minus 8% in 1998. Due to substantial layoffs, unemployment rose sharply. For example, the number of private employees in Chiang Mai province decreased by 22% between February 1997 and February 1999 (from 404,593 to 316,707 employees). The number of employers decreased even more, namely by 30% (Dickhoven, 2000). During the same period, the proportion of self-employed increased from 25% to 31.1%, whereas the proportion of private employees dropped from 47% to 38.5% (see Figure 1). Clearly, the unfavorable economic climate encouraged self-employment activities in the informal sector.

Obviously, the crisis caused a shift from private to self-employment as unemployment benefits and social security packages were absent. Overall, the unemployment rate increased from 1.5% (1996) to 2.2% (February 1997) and to 5.3% (May 1999). It is estimated that 20% of the newly created jobs in the modern sector before the crisis were lost during this period. Especially for low-paid workers, often rural-urban migrants, unemployment threw them below the poverty line. The poverty risk was particularly eminent since the traditional welfare mechanisms through the extended family were weakened in the course of urbanization. Nevertheless, in addition to dismissing workers and thereby coping with the economic crisis, many companies reacted by reducing the wages. According to Mahmood (1999), the reduction of the average living standard by 21% came mostly by the drop in income per earner and not so much by unemployment. For instance, the number of registered motorcycles declined by 20% from 1997 to 1998 in Chiang Mai (National Statistical Office, 1999). Since motorcycles are the preferred mode of transportation for low-income people, this can be used as an indicator of the effects of the Asian Crisis on their income situation.

The trend of rapid poverty reduction in the pre-crisis period had been stalled or even reversed due to the Asian Crisis. As a reaction to this development, the Thai government implemented the "Social Safety Net Regime" in 1998 with the support of the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (Ministry of Finance, 1999). This program offers, e.g., limited employment schemes to persons who have lost their jobs as a result of the Crisis, free medical treatment, and micro-credits and training for persons who want to start their own business.

Figure 1: Work status in total labor force in Chiang Mai province (2/97 versus 2/99)

Source: National Statistical Office (1999)



3. Impact of MSEs on Income and Employment in Muang Chiang Mai District

When asking inhabitants of Muang district in what way the Asian Crisis has affected Chiang Mai's appearance, many mentioned the increasing number of so-called informal night markets that border major streets. For instance, when driving on Huay Kaew Road, as many as four informal night markets were in operation at the time of survey in 2000. The largest night market on this street had 150 lots. For the survey, 85 MSE from seven night markets (Amari Rincome, Suanproong, Sanpakhoy, Auchan, Central Plaza, Rajabhat, CMU Entry) were interviewed, none of which had existed prior to the Asian Crisis. Even though business growth in the formal sector was not as obvious as it was in the informal sector, one could observe the opening of various new formal MSEs such as restaurants or internet shops. Therefore, restaurants and silver handwork businesses on Tha Pae and Wualai road (both roads had been randomly chosen) in the Muang district of Chiang Mai were also included in the survey. Silver handwork has a long tradition in that part of town (Dickhoven, 2000). Overall, 85 informal and 42 formal MSEs in the survey were interviewed. The sample represents 17% of all informal night market stalls and 21% of the formal MSE in Muang Chiang Mai district. Based on this sample, this section evaluates in as far newly established or expanding MSEs were crucial in providing income to cover basic needs to the laid-off employees from the private sector during the Asian Crisis and thereafter.

More than half of the informal micro-enterprises (58%) and 38% of the formal MSE in the sample had been founded during and after the Asian Crisis in 1997. Four clusters of interviewees could be distinguished in the informal sector: (1) students, (2) jobless former employees, (3) employees, and (4) traditional micro-entrepreneurs (see Table 1). A large proportion of the surveyed entrepreneurs in the informal and formal sector were dismissed employees (39%) who had started their enterprise during or after 1997. Part-time entrepreneurs were also frequent with 43%.

Table 1: Entrepreneur clusters, in percent of MSEs

	Informal sector (N=85)	Formal sector (N=42)
Students	11	10
Jobless former employees	29	57
Part-time entrepreneurs	55	19
Traditional entrepreneurs	41	62

Source: Dickhoven (2000)

Note: Column percentage exceed 100%, because some respondents fit several cluster criteria.

Students = Respondents between 21-30 years of age aiming at an university degree

Jobless former employees = Difference between those respondents who had a regular job as employee or laborer in 1996 and those who were still in a regular job at the time of survey

Part-time entrepreneurs = Difference between total number of respondents and those who identified themselves as full-time entrepreneur

Traditional entrepreneur = Number of those respondents who managed already in 1997 at least one enterprise

The majority of the informal micro-enterprises was in retail (68%), followed by food stalls (22%), a combination of food and retail (7%), and manufacturing (7%). The formal MSE sample comprised micro (43%) and small enterprises (57%). The formal MSEs were mainly in the restaurant business (67%). It is also interesting to note that the majority of the entrepreneurs were women: 53% of the informal and 64% of the formal entrepreneurs. The micro-entrepreneurs in the informal sector were on average 36 years old. When comparing the age structure of the Muang district with the sample, it becomes obvious that the younger age group (21-30) and the middle age groups (31-40 and 41-50) are over-represented (37%, 33% and 23% in the sample versus 16%, 18% and 16% in Muang district). This indicates that self-employment in the informal MSE sector provides a buffer for the lack of dependent employment in the formal sector. This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that 29% of the informal micro-entrepreneurs had been employed prior to the Crisis either in the formal (47%) or informal sector (53%).

The 85 informal micro-entrepreneurs provided employment for 48 family members and 25 non-family members, i.e., 0.86 employees per informal micro-enterprise. Interestingly, the average number of non-family employees in informal micro-enterprises tripled from 0.086 (1996) to 0.29 persons (2000). Family members in the informal sector did not receive a salary. The 42 formal MSEs employed 64 family members and 131 non-family members, i.e., 4.6 employees per MSE (1.7 employees per formal micro-enterprise and 9.4 employees per formal small enterprise). In other words, each MSE in the formal sector provided employment for 4.6 persons of which 3.5 received a monetary compensation. While the tax-free income of employees in the informal

sector was slightly higher than the Northern Thai Region's minimum daily wage rate of 137 Baht (Bank of Thailand (1999)², the average wage in the formal sector clearly exceeded this ceiling (see Box 1). Permanent employees in the formal sector enterprises received on average 290 Baht per day and temporary employees were paid 200 Baht per day. Between 50% and 60% of the non-family employees in the formal and informal sample enterprises came originally from rural regions. The majority of the interviewed entrepreneurs stated that demand had declined as a result of the Asian Crisis. Half of the informal entrepreneurs and 68% of the formal entrepreneurs reported a decline in business activity.

Box 1: Micro-entrepreneurs in the informal sector and their income potential

A mobile street vendor of food was observed at the night market at Amari Rincome Hotel on April 29, 2000. Mobile vendors normally do not have to pay any rent or electricity (At the Amari Rincome night market, the monthly rent per lot was 2,000 Baht. This includes electricity and a guard during daytime). Within 3.5 hours, the mobile vendor had a turnover of 400 Baht. The gross margin totaled 80 Baht (excluding opportunity cost for labor). Assuming that the micro-entrepreneur was conducting the same business during daytime too, profits may have reached 120-150 Baht. However, as demand is varying in the day to day business, working time may have easily reached 60 hours per week.

A food vendor with a permanent stall at the market was observed thereafter. Turnover totaled 1,500 Baht. Deducting total expenses, the gross margin (again excluding opportunity cost for labor) was 230 Baht. If the weather conditions are unfavorable, however, turnover may easily drop to a very low level. Micro-entrepreneurs in the retail business appear to do better, nevertheless, the market entry barriers are higher. A retailer in perfumes realized a turnover of 2,000 Baht on April 27, 2000. Because the profit margin is close to 100%, it was estimated that the gross margin reached about 900 Baht that evening.

Source: compiled from Dickhoven (2000: 65f)

Note: The daily minimum wage rate at the time of the survey was 137 Baht

² The average exchange rate for the survey period (Feb. – May 2000) was 38.16 Baht per USD (low: 37.32 Baht/USD, high: 39.45 Baht/USD). During the Asian Crisis (July 1997 – June 1998), the exchange rate varied between 24.20 and 56.50 Baht per USD, with the average at 40.19 Baht per USD.

The case studies from Box 1 illustrate that there exist at least two distinct groups among the self-employed. The first group reaches substantially higher earnings than the average whereas the second group falls below the average income. One demarcation line is based on the type of business and product. Non-food retail represents an activity which generates relatively high incomes, although it may be associated with high risks if the sold goods are so-called imitated brand-name goods since this is illegal. The other demarcation line is related to the size of the enterprise. Relatively larger enterprises with a permanent location tend to be more productive. Net income from self-employment is part of the total household income. The entrepreneurs were asked to compare their present household income status to the status before the Crisis in 1996 (see Table 2). More than half of micro-entrepreneurs in the informal and formal sector noted an improvement of their household income. Nevertheless, compared to the formal sector, a larger proportion of MSEs in the informal sector noted a deterioration of income. The entrepreneurs reacted to the change in income by reducing their expenses for so-called luxury food items (45% of respondents), clothing and footwear (39%), recreational activities (36%), alcoholic beverages (31%), and transport and communication (30%) (Dickhoven, 2000).

Table 2: Household income of micro and small entrepreneurs before and after the Asian Crisis, in percent of MSEs

	Informal sector (N=85)	Formal sector (N=42)
Increased strongly	39	31
Increased moderately	16	21
Remained the same	19	28
Decreased moderately	7	10
Decreased strongly	19	10

Source: compiled from Dickhoven (2000: 67 & 71)

4. Micro-finance and Thai MSEs

In this section, the hypothesis is assessed whether access to micro-finance is pre-eminent for the startup and running of MSEs. The section provides first a summary of what the term micro-finance means, its principles and strategies. This is followed by a presentation of empirical evidence on the finance structures of 85 informal and 42 formal micro and small entrepreneurs in the urban Muang Chiang Mai District in Thailand.

4.1 Basic principles of micro-finance

From a relatively obscure orphan in the early 1980s to everyone's favorite child today, micro-finance is attracting a lot of attention (CGAP, 1997). It is defined as the provision of appropriate financial services (savings and credit) to large numbers of poorer and hitherto neglected customers, in particular micro-entrepreneurs and women by specialized financial intermediaries³. Two principles are common to all micro-finance approaches: outreach and sustainability. Outreach refers to the objective of reaching as many people as possible hitherto without access to financial services. Sustainability may refer to financial or overall sustainability. Financial sustainability refers to operational stability whereas the latter one includes the institutional sustainability (Bittner, 1995). Micro-finance intermediaries employ adapted financial technologies, e.g. non-traditional collateral to reach a clientele segment that is ignored by traditional financial intermediaries such as banks. These technologies ensure on the one hand that the clientele becomes bankable (Theesfeld and Buchenrieder, 2000) and, on the other hand, that the intermediary minimizes its transaction costs thus keeping operational cost reasonable. Needless to say that cost covering interest rates are also crucial for reaching financial sustainability. According to a worldwide inventory by the World Bank (1996a and 1996b), there have been almost 1,000 micro-finance intermediaries in 1996 according to the following three criteria: (1) offer micro-finance services, (2) have a minimum of 1,000 clients, and (3) were founded in or before 1992. The number of such micro-finance intermediaries in East Asia and the Pacific totaled 122 in 1996.

4.2 Micro-finance and MSE

Micro-enterprises (< 5 employees) are characterized by very little investment in fixed assets, minimal inventory and business on a cash-only basis. Furthermore, the micro-entrepreneur usually does not distinguish between household and enterprise

³ Micro-finance intermediaries can be informal, semi-formal and formal organizations. The formal financial sector can be differentiated from the informal sector by using the criterion of whether the intermediary is subject to capital, reserve, liquidity regulations and the control of the central bank. So-called semi-formal financial intermediaries require an official authorization and are obliged to obey certain regulations in contrast to informal intermediaries (Bittner, 1995; Johnson and Rogaly, 1997; Pischke, 1991).

cash-flow. Thus, lending to micro-enterprises is normally considered as personal lending in Thailand (Laetkau, 1999). Lending to small enterprises (5-19 employees) does not create the same difficulties in terms of (1) high transaction costs due to very small transactions, (2) lack of suitable collateral, and (3) psychological and socio-cultural barriers (Bittner, 1998). Table 3 gives an overview of the credit characteristics faced by MSEs in Thailand. The Department of Public Welfare needs mentioning because it has been running five small enterprise promotion projects (Dickhoven, 2000):

1. "Thais Help Thais Vocational Groups Project" started in 1998 and targets unemployed people adversely affected by the economic situation. The maximum loan is 4,000 Baht per person.
2. The "Occupational Assistance Revolving Fund" concentrates on low-income individuals with children. The maximum loan is 10,000 Baht to be paid back without interest within five years.
3. "The Fund for Mitigating the Impact of Lay-Off/Unemployment" lends to people with a employed guarantor up to 15,000 Baht to be paid back without interest within five years.
4. The "Revolving Fund for Job Creation for Women" lends up to 15,000 Baht, repayable interest-free within one year. Because women were primarily working in the export sector, they were more severely affected by the Asian Crisis than men (Mahmood, 1999).
5. "The Loans for Self - Employment Business Investment Projects for People with Disabilities" extends loans up to 15,000 Baht to be paid back without interest within five years.

These projects can be described as supply-led approaches because they do not require the eligible MSE to pay any interest or accumulate any savings. This indicates that these projects do not aim at reaching financial sustainability but are a temporary instrument used to reach a certain policy objective, in this case provide unemployed with self-employment opportunities.

While the above-mentioned projects do not emphasize cost covering interest rates or credit collateral, collateral is crucial in the formal financial sector. Often, access to credit is restricted among MSEs, not because they cannot pay the demanded interest rate but because they lack suitable collateral. Most MSEs do not have any collateral such as land or real estate. Others are unwilling to leverage their land or real estate titles. Therefore, the acceptance of non-traditional collateral is one of the most promi-

nent features of innovative microfinance intermediaries (see Table 3). The best known alternative to traditional collateral are joint-liability schemes whereby loans are given to a credit group. The credit group allocates individual loans to its members. Nevertheless, the whole group is responsible for the repayment. The Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) successfully applies this scheme in rural Thailand (Erhardt, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, more than half of the informal micro-enterprises (58%) and 38% of the formal MSE in the sample had been founded during and after the Asian Crisis in 1997. The entrepreneurs were asked to describe the obstacles that they had faced when they entered self-employment. In the informal sector, 32% stated that they perceived the lack of credit to be the most prominent obstacle when starting their business. Therefore, it does not surprise that 84% of the informal and 81% of the formal entrepreneurs financed the startup costs of their business in total or partly from personal savings (see Table 4). If credit was sought, the majority approached the informal financial sector. 22% of the informal and 36% of the formal entrepreneurs received a credit from close family members, 14% (12% of the formal entrepreneurs) from friends and relatives and 11% from moneylenders (Dickhoven, 2000). On average, start-up costs totaled 25,000 Baht.

Given that on average, the micro-enterprises in the informal sector had been running for five years, this amount represents about 33,000 Baht at current market value of the survey period (and corresponds to about 865 USD). In the formal MSE sector, access to credit was not mentioned as the major obstacle. Only 12% mentioned access to credit as a possible constraint. This sample group perceived the building of networks as problem with 14%. Nevertheless, shared ownership arrangements among the 24 small enterprise owners appears to be a way to circumvent financial problems (38%). Table 4 displays the sources of capital for founding and running the MSE in the informal and formal sector of Muang district of Chiang Mai.

The respondents were asked for their reasons of preferring own savings for financing business activities. The majority responded to have had access to external sources but did not have any demand (60% of the informal and 57% of the formal entrepreneurs). Between 20% and 26% of the entrepreneurs in the informal and formal sector, respectively, stated to have access to external finance but did not like the market conditions (e.g., interest rate). Less than 20% of the entrepreneurs (19% in the informal and 17% in the formal sector) responded to have no access to the financial market.

Table 3: Overview of the credit characteristics from different sources in Thailand

	Below market rates	Lend to micro enterprises	Lend to small enterprises	Accept non-trad. collateral	Number of positive answers
Informal financial sector					
Family members	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Moneylenders		✓	✓	✓	3
Private pawnbrokers		✓	✓	✓	3
Rotating savings & credit clubs		✓	✓	✓	3
Semi-formal financial sector					
Bureau of Cottage & Handicraft Industries	✓	✓		✓	3
Credit unions		✓			1
Department of Public Welfare	✓	✓		✓	3
Official Pawnshops	✓				1
Small Industry Finance Corporation			✓		1
Small Industry Credit Guarantee Corp.			✓	✓	2
Urban Community Dev. Organization	✓	✓		✓	3
Formal Financial Sector					
BAAC		✓		✓	2
Commercial banks			✓		1
Government Savings Bank (GSB)		✓	✓		2
Industrial Finance Corporation	✓		✓		2

Source: inspired by Paetkau (1999) in Dickhoven (2000: 86)

Note: ✓ = yes

Table 4: Financial sources for start-up and on-going business of SME

	Informal sector (N=85)		Formal sector (N=42)	
	Start-up in %	Current account in %	Start-up in %	Current account in %
Personal savings	84	98	81	95
Credit received from:				
• family members	22	7	36	5
• relatives & friends	14	8	12	7
• moneylenders	11	6	...	...
• private pawnshops	...	...	...	2
• official pawnshops	...	...	...	2
• GSB	...	...	...	...
• commercial banks	4	4	5	14
• credit unions	1	1	...	...
• non-governmental organizations	...	...	...	...
• rotating Len shares	2	5	...	...
• others	...	...	...	2

Source: compiled from Dickhoven (2000: 63, 64, 70)

Note: Multiple answers were possible, thus the column may not add to 100%.

5. Summary and Conclusion

As result of the Asian Crisis, the share of self-employed people in the total labor force grew by 6% while the share of dependent employees in the private sector declined by 8.5%. Clearly, self-employment activities helped to minimize the social costs during and after the Asian Crisis caused by income losses and unemployment, particularly among the low-income labor force. The present analysis shows that MSEs are able to adapt more flexibly to unfavorable economic conditions than middle-sized or large companies. Moreover, they provide a considerable employment potential for marginally skilled laborers as they produce in a labor intensive way. Thus, they are an important economic force to reduce poverty. Furthermore, the study revealed that the effective demand for credit to finance start-up or running costs of MSEs is very limited. In fact, effective demand is largely restricted to the informal financial sector and there, particularly to family members and friends. The reasons for not accessing the financial market lie mainly in the high debt service costs in as far as money lenders are concerned. A moneylender credit for 40-60 days, repayable in daily installments carries a flat interest rate of 20% (Erhardt, 2001). The analysis showed, however, that the MSE sector could grow if appropriate measures were taken to offer this sector access to financial services at costs lower than observed among the money lenders.

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Abstract

The eruption of the Asian Crisis in the middle of 1997 has pushed the Thai economy into a deep recession. The economic recession caused real gross domestic product (GDP) to fall by 8.5% in 1998, unemployment was 60% higher than in February 1997. Although the dramatic social effects can hardly be estimated, the Dusit Study found that more than 40% of the people that had lost their jobs because of the crisis must take care for at least two other persons. Moreover, 70% of them were indebted. Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in the informal economic sector often function as employer for this group who got unemployed during the Asian Crisis. MSEs play an important role in the Thai economy. According to the National Statistical Office, 80% of all enterprises fall into this category.

The objectives of this paper are (1) to give an overview of the immediate effects of the Asian Crisis on the labor market in Thailand, (2) to describe the supply side of financial sources for MSEs, and (3) to present a systematic analysis of the self-employment activities among micro and small entrepreneurs in the urban Muang Chiang Mai District in Thailand. The primary and secondary data analyzed in this paper were collected from February to May 2000. In total, the self-employment activities were surveyed by using a structured questionnaire among 85 informal and 42 formal micro and small entrepreneurs. The collected micro-economic data were analyzed using explorative statistical instruments.

Résumé

Le déclenchement de la crise financière en Asie au milieu de 1997 a poussé l'économie thaïlandaise dans une profonde récession. Cette récession économique a eu pour conséquences la chute du Produit Intérieur Brut (PIB) de 8,5% en 1998, et l'augmentation du taux de chômage à 60% par rapport à février 1997. Bien que les effets dramatiques sur le plan social soient difficiles à estimer, l'Étude Dusit a trouvé que plus de 40% des personnes ayant perdu leur emploi à cause de la crise ont à charge au moins deux personnes. En outre, 70% de ces personnes étaient endettées. Les Micros et Petites Entreprises (MPEs) assument souvent le rôle de pourvoyeur d'emploi pour ce groupe de personnes dépourvues de travail depuis la crise. Ainsi, les MPEs jouent un rôle important dans l'économie thaïlandaise. D'après le Bureau National de Statistiques, 80% des entreprises thaïlandaises rentrent dans cette catégorie.

Les objectifs de ce papier sont: (1) donner un aperçu des effets immédiats de la crise sur le marché du travail en Thaïlande, (2) décrire la provenance des moyens financiers pour les MPEs, et (3) faire une analyse systématique des activités des micros et petits entrepreneurs dans le district urbain de Muang Chiang Mai en Thaïlande. Les données primaires et secondaires analysées dans ce papier ont été collectées de février à mai 2000. Au total, l'enquête a porté sur les activités de 85 entrepreneurs du secteur informel et 42 du secteur formel. Les données micro-économiques ont été analysées en utilisant des outils statistiques descriptifs.