The process of integration among Burmese refugees in Finland

The aims of study were to examine the immigrants' integration process in many aspects of living in Finland amongst Burmese families as a quota refugee. Their expectations for moving to Finland, social services and living conditions, the situation in labour market and education, social relations in personal connections and networks were important issues in examining the process of integration. Furthermore, in a relationship between parents and their children considering the cultural succession could appear the parent's ethnic identity, which might have affected their child's education.

This study was based on the face-to-face interviews of Burmese refugees according to qualitative research method. The study followed the previous researches of immigrants and the integration process in Finland from different perspectives. The theories, which relate to the themes, such as immigrant identity, acculturation and family relationships, were used for analysing the material of the interviews.

As a result, they were satisfied with the services in accordance with the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers (493/1999) in their living, learning language and career education for three years in the integration programme. Nevertheless, they had difficulties to get a job because of their weak language skills. They wanted to keep their identity with the language and culture in Finnish society and they hoped to teach their own language and culture to their children.

The conclusion was that the Burmese refugees recognised their identity and importance of culture, when they tried to adjust themselves to a new culture in the new country. Their own identity and culture was also expressed in their child's education. Employment and language skills played an important role in the integration process. Having good relations with Finns supported their cultural adaptation in the society. Moreover, Burmese refugees were having a positive thinking and attitude in the integration process compared to previous studies of refugees even though they have had similar problems as other refugee groups.

Avainsanat: immigrants, integration, identity, culture, Burmese refugees

Muita tietoja: Additional information