

# **Integral Resolving Poverty Problem by Community Organization Case Study Northeast Area in Thailand**

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## **Abstract**

The findings indicated that the poverty problem resulted in the increase of poor people and the problem could not be resolved by the factor because of prolongation and complexity of multidimensional causes. Bu Klang, Nong Phra, and Na Doon villages applied the integration for the community organization and village development projects, which was a social capital in the villages. The integration was also employed as machinery to drive poverty problem solution, leading to establishment of the community organization with financial institutions in the communities and operation of village development projects with activities for improvement of quality of people's life. The integral development also supported learning processes, people participation, community organization management, social networks, and efficient development planning, consistent with contexts of the villages. Thus, people in the communities held potentials for development and abilities for resolving problems by themselves and self-reliance, resulting in sustainable development and social and economic security of their families and villages. For example, people could resolve their debt problems, had occupations, enhanced their quality of life and environment, kept on local wisdoms, patronized and sustained

family institutions, and prolonged the villages along with development dynamics. All of these developments reached to modern societies.

**Key Words:** Poverty, Integration, Community, Organization, Adaption

## **Significance**

Adaptation processes of economic, society, politics, and Thai cultures partially resulted from development policies of Thai government, leading to an establishment of a modern society. The establishment of National Economic and Social Advisory Council in 1959 resulted in The First National Economic and Social Development Plan in 1961, the model scheme defining development and investment strategies of Thailand aiming to enhance the standard of living of people. The plan would focus on economic growth for increased national income of the country, by integration of social capitals to reinforce industrial sectors and services (Wongkul, 2002). Regarding these strategies, it entirely led to continual economic growth and increased average incomes (per person). Additionally, some products of Thailand were the world best export merchandises.

Nevertheless, the development perspective for a modern economic society was disputed on administrative power and social equity, directly correlated with economic growth. Most advantages were probably provided for only few groups of people, who worked for the industrial sectors and service organizations, while the majority especially in agricultural sectors did not receive the reasonable benefits from the growth and could not reach social capitals equally (Pan-piemras, 1990). The majority, furthermore, were considered as marginalized people because government agricultural policies created a plenty of social problems and totally affected lifestyle of these people. Originally, people maintained their agricultural production for self-reliance in terms of economic and society and consumption in their households and communities. Then, they changed their original production to rely more on market mechanism, for increased produces, and the produce would be provided for industrial production processes and the market system, rather than household consumptions.

It could be indicated that the new agricultural production, under the government support, negatively caused the destruction of natural resources, low quality of life, and social conflicts among people who

absolutely competed each other to occupy limited resources. These contributed to economic, social, and cultural crisis, implicitly effected people lifestyle and their living conditions. They would also confront impoverishment and higher debt: some families lost their land and lived under the poverty cycle (Chiangkul, 2004). Thus, the community agricultural sector, the core production of Thailand, was in the weak condition and then was not self-reliant.

Consciousness of problems related to economic, society, and culture under the development policies drove into an adaptation among people, who worked as farmers in the northeastern region of Thailand and faced weak the economic condition and poverty. Regarding the adaption, they could learn changing situations from several dimensions of problems for cooperated problem solutions in their communities. Also, they would be self-reliant without any helps from the government and community organizations. The good case studies could be found in Ban Bu Klang in Nam Yuen district located in Ubon Ratchathani province, Ban Nong Phra in Pho Si Suwan district in Sisaket province, and Ban Na Doon in Lue Amnat district in Amnat Charoen province. The communities created a social mechanism for sustainable crisis management, consistent with adaptation processes, by establishment of social and community organizations which instituted social space for suffered people. They had knowledge of result-based management for resolving poverty problem which is the main crisis of Thailand by themselves. In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate dimensions of adaptation processes of the three communities related to their power, existence, and integral resolving of poverty problem.

### **Preposition of the study**

The development placed importance on economic and social modernization, unconditionally affected living conditions of people especially villages in rural areas. They confronted bankruptcy and lacked of knowledge management to resolve their own problems and they could not develop the community to be self-reliant.

**Purposes of the study**

1. The study aimed to find adaptation processes effected on the existence of the communities.
2. The study aimed to investigate integral resolving poverty problem by community organization.

**Research methodology**

This study was conducted qualitatively to explain in-depth details consistent with the objectives of the study. Obtaining sufficient data could provide proper factors and conditions to describe the results of the study. Also, all collected data could help the researcher to present operational process model of the community organization contributing to the integral poverty solution.

**Approach and area selection**

Qualitatively, this study employed case study research with limitations of place, time, persons, and group of people (Yin, 1994 and Leedy, 1997). The qualitative methodology was presented as follows:

1. The qualitative data consisted of collected documents related to area information and other sources from secondary data such as history, map, development plan, and operational reports of the community organization. The information was significant for explanation of village contexts in several dimensions.

2. Semi-structured interview, with assigned questions and significant statements, was applied for data collection. In this interview, the sample representatives could express their attitude deeply and accurately under the assigned objectives and study framework.

3. Focus group of community organization representatives, village leaders, and villagers was also employed for data collection. Opportunities for independent expression, discussion, and conversation related to themes of the study were provided for them, but the opinions did not implicate other people.

4. Participant observation was applied for data collection in the three communities, by living and doing activities with villagers. This would provide phenomenological facts of social beliefs and participation in development activities.

### **Data analysis**

The collected data was analyzed and checked according to themes of the study. The study tools were used to reorganize, find meaning, separate proper contexts, and investigate correlation of the collected data. The data analysis would identify causes, effects, times and places of situations, stake holders, and related environment conditions. The data was analyzed by both Analytic Induction and Typological Analysis because of different contexts of society, political situations, economic situations, and cultures.

### **Data checking**

The data was checked by two levels. Firstly, Data Triangulation was used to verify content validity of the collected data by consideration of three dimensions such as time, place, and people. Secondly, Data Confirmation was applied to send the collected data back to the three communities to recheck the content validity by arrangement of a people hearing center.

### **Study period**

This study was conducted during September 2007 – July 2009.

### **Results of the study**

The findings found in this study were demonstrated as follows:

#### **1. Adaptation processes effected on the village existence**

Adaptation processes played a key important role to resolve troubles in Ban Bu Klang, Ban Nong Phra, and Ban Na Doon. The processes could encourage people to help themselves in both economic and social conditions. There were supported factors of potential

development and village strength, as describe below.

1.1 Regarding social factors of people and social groups under social relationship, people in the communities altogether determined objectives, ideology, beliefs through knowledge management and people participation. Thus, people were awakened to attend development activities and 50 community organizations were established to enhance economic, social, and culture developments.

1.2 In accordance with economic factors of production and living conditions under the economic adaptation, people in the communities could absolutely summarize problems and find guidelines, approaches, and resolutions of problems. Efficiently, they gave priority to social capitals such as wisdom, man, and resource capitals as a problem explication of production and living conditions in the communities. The establishment of financial institutions and community rice banks was a major power for problem solutions. People held economic adaptation, self-reliance, saving money, vocational training, community welfares, and sustainability of problem management.

1.3 Founding of a social network was an adaptation process in the dimension of development network. The communities provided social space for knowledge management and participant development activities among people in both inside and outside villages. The real practice and information exchange led to application of outside knowledge for problem solution corresponded with the villages' contexts.

## **2. Integral resolving poverty problem by community organization**

It could be said that the poverty problem could not be absolutely resolved because of its complexity of causes connected to other social problems. The solution processes of the communities, in consequence, were successful by integrating the communities as the center to solve the problem efficiently. The main content could be explained as follow:

2.1 Social capitals, used for development mechanism, comprised of abstract and concrete capitals. Abstract capitals consisted of thinking power, harmony, wisdoms, customs, and traditions while

concrete capitals were resources, social organizations, philosophers, and village leaders. The two capitals were applied for the operation of the community organization, with a diversity of activities, effecting positive thinking approach for problem solutions. Hence, people could sustainably resolve troubles concerning economic, society, and quality of life.

2.2 Cognitive process among people resulted in result-based operation and integral activity arrangement for systematic village development. Cognitive process was not only information exchange, but also was the finding of proper activities consistent with perspectives of problems related to economic, society, and quality of life. Also, outside learning provided more vocational and development experiences, consistent with existent social capitals. Therefore, the communities held a diversity of useful activities and met the people's needs of grievance solutions.

2.3 According to development participation, the communities opened social space for all stake holders such as people, community leaders, and organizations for cooperation of planning, decision, and development to reach the final goals. The community organization founding, activity selection, operational development, beneficial management, and monitoring and controlling could efficiently resolve the poverty problem. For instance, it helped people to hold more saving money, managed household debts, promoted vocational trainings, and supported community welfares, etc.

2.4 In accordance with development activities, the organization could expand activities of production processes, decision, and management. The community financial institution played as Working Capital Fund for members. Furthermore, it supported cultural activities, ethical awareness, and quality of life such as community welfares procurement and allurement prohibition in both individual and family levels. Dharma training courses were also arranged in every Buddhist holy day. The community rice bank not only solved paddy shortage of suffered villagers, but also supported events for increased

incomes such as catfish and frog feeding for household consumption, selling, or making merits.

2.5 The development activities of the communities were successful and sustainable because of several factors such as community committee, activities, requirements, financial management, conferences, and audit. All factors did not work together for adhocmissions, but long term continual cooperation.

2.6 The social network was established in two levels: area-based and activity- based networks. Area-based network provided orientation for information exchange and creation of new knowledge sources of community development. Activity-based network, additionally, supported community activity arrangement, drove social networks for cooperation, created negotiation power with outside communities in terms of production, consumption, marketing, and resource management. Therefore, Activity-based network was the entire answer for poverty resolving in the selected areas.

### **3. Outcomes of integral resolving poverty problem by community organization**

It was demonstrated that resolving poverty problem by the community organization, under using of social capitals, cognitive processes, participation, development activities, and social networks was the key mechanism of community development leading to people adaptation and community enhancement. People were more self-reliant and independent to express opinions and manage their community for sustainability. The integration resulted in unity and completeness of the communities especially poverty resolving as presented below.

3.1 The financial institution, served as a working capital fund and a saving center, now occupies over 50 millions THB of its working capital. Also, the rice bank holds over 20 carts (unit of capacity for paddy or rice equivalent to 2,000 liters/a cart) of total reserved rice.

3.2 The financial institution of the three communities provided a loan service for the members for resolving grievance problems of individual and families. The loan service was also available

for occupational trainings. Nowadays, there are over 47 millions THB of a total loan with 1,700 loan accounts. The rice bank of Ban Nong Phra, served as a community organization, provided a food security and the center of paddy seeds for household rice production.

3.3 The financial institution supplied community welfares for members in case of injury and death. It also offered home loan campaigns provided for 16 low-incomes families with occupational training. The welfares could help people to have sufficient earnings and they did not need to work outside the communities.

3.4 The development processes of economic, society, culture, and quality of life were operated continually, leading to development activity expansion under people's support. People gathered to perform activities for integral resolving of all troubles to reach the sustainable existence and completeness of the communities.

3.5 The project of debt solution was available for families with outside bounded debts. The financial institution would carry out a debt negotiation between creditors and members (debtors). After the collective agreement, all debts from creditors would be transferred and managed by the financial institutions. The member could pay, in the reasonable rate based on their earnings, for principles and interests of a loan. The loan contract could be edited by consideration of suitable payment periods. There are now over 50 members of the project.

3.6 Development of technical skills and academic techniques could enhance knowledge perception of people. Organizational committee arranged production and transformation training and organizational management project as a learning and experience exchange center. Also, people could spend their free time worthily to earn more money.

3.7 Cooperation among social networks could enhance negotiation power, in several dimensions, resulting in efficient poverty solution and entire development of the three communities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 The adaptation process, affecting the village's existence, was an effort to find the method and model of village's survival under the current dynamic period caused by development policies of the country. The villages employed significant methods such as social organization establishment and community-based organization model, the social capital in the villages used as a mechanism for poverty solution. For this reason, adaptation process of economic, society, and culture was appeared and the villagers focus on the importance on mental development by social value establishment. The mental development could change personal attitudes and behaviors for appropriate self-reliance. At the village level, the established organizations played an important role to support and form a movement of balanced and sustainable potential enhancement.

4.2 The integration of social organizations, for problem solution of poverty and poor, was indentified as the cycles of liability and poor, a social phenomenon, were long appeared. The integration, therefore, was the key answer, derived from the combination and application of concepts, methodology, activities and dimensional work processes under social capital of the villages, in order to reach the development objective. The integration processes were ordered to create a completed knowledge source, leading to independent development and self-reliance, in terms of economic and society, of people. Such integration reflected value-based social beliefs, resulting in public peace and strong organizations for efficient poverty solution. The poor had more social spaces to information and knowledge sharing. They also had equal development participation, pride and peaceful association in the villages.

#### **Discussion and Recommendations**

According to findings of the study, there were six discussions and recommendations as following perspectives:

## **1. Social equity**

Although policies of poverty and poor solutions from the governments were urgently determined, the problems were not suitably untangled and they appeared more complicated especially the contribution of government budgets to the villages. This was because lacking of appropriate checking and auditing. Also, attitude conflict concerning budget management, among villagers or between villagers and government offices, were found.

Pan-piemras (1990) and Chiangkul (2004) indicated that development distribution and social equity were directly correlated with economic growth. Majority working in agricultural sectors did not receive economic advantages, consistent with the findings of this study explaining changes of economic, societies, and cultures in the villages under the development policies. It was noticed that the policies affected people life style and living conditions especially unequal distributions of natural resources, incomes, production inputs, and social capitals leading to the poverty problem.

## **2. People's adaptation processes**

The strategic development to modern economic and society was the significant causes of changes of people life style and value, consistent with Wongkul (2002). The union of people and social relationship was effect and villages depended on external factors in terms of production and living. Social relationship was not self-reliant and assistance from government, private sectors, and politicians appeared in the form of patronage system. People focused more on value significance than their unity.

Economic and Society should be strong and secured, based on its backgrounds. People should be more self-reliant concerning production and living. Social capital of communities should be prior considered, as people can wisely live under the dynamic society. If social capitals can be integrally applied for poverty solution policies, efficient solution processes will be seen. This may be a correct answer since village contexts were antecedently determined rather than urgent development

policies of the government but lacking of people participation of all levels in the societies.

### **3. Establishment of integral mechanism for development**

The integral resolving poverty problem depended on significant management by consideration of village's contexts, not just its definition. The findings demonstrated that integral resolving could enhance abundant villages and new knowledge sources by driving of social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions for reaching the shared development objective.

The integral poverty resolving developed the balanced social relationship among people and diversity advancement. Both money and merit system of individual and family should be reconsidered for productive poverty solution.

### **4. Learning process of people**

The findings indicated that learning process and community participation should be determined in all processes of development as they were basic potential development of people for systematic and sustainable problem solution. Unless, problems especially poverty problems, resulted from government development policies related to nationwide people, will be pending.

### **5. Development of community economic and culture dimensions**

Independence of production and consumption of local people led to their absolute self-reliance. The findings pointed out that several villages employed development methodology concerning community economic and culture dimensions consistent with their contexts.

Thus, for efficient and successful integration of poverty problem resolving, government and related participants should give precedence to such methodology, define such it as strategic development, and broadcast it to all sectors of societies. The community will properly survive under consumerism and can resolve social conflicts.

6. In accordance with recommendations for further study, the scope of this study should be broadened because the related studies of are rare especially the focus on specific community case studies. The poverty solution of different community contexts expresses dissimilar methodology and process dimensions. The findings of this study should be raised to determine as the strategic development of the country by application of such model integration, for need access of people. Furthermore, cooperation of several member networks to resolve poverty and poor problems, in all levels, will be perceptible.

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