

CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE

When formulating, implementing or analyzing any development project, it is essential to understand the relationship it has on the migration of the people affected. As more and more rural and urban development programs are established, it is important to know whether outward movement improves or worsens local prospects for development. Two relevant issues throw some light on this matter. It has been found that although outward movement is often a response to poverty, it is rarely the poorest in any community that move. In addition, although most rural development projects aim at reducing rates of outward movement, in many cases, the opposite effect occurs. To pragmatically review each program and share the information may lead towards a clearer means of stemming the flow of migration into the urban center. This would help maintain the cultural heritage of Thailand and allow her industrialization to develop sufficiently to maintain employment and reduce the problems that urban developers are facing today.

It is important for development workers to understand this issue and develop programs that help reduce the urban migration before the problems become insurmountable. The aim should be to maintain Thailand's resources, economy and cultural heritage through the people.. Villagers are the key toward a balanced progression into the future. If they can understand and appreciate their own potential without being blinded by material values, this will lead to a real long-term development, not only benefiting the villager but Thailand in general.

This research study will provide a comparative analysis of various villages from the McKean Village Extension Service. These villages were targeted because they were receiving no external benefits from outside agencies due to the stigma attached to people affected with Leprosy. Without outside input, it was easier to monitor implementation practices. In addition, this research paper can be used to compare information between the villages that receive government agricultural extension services and the villages covered by McKean.

Presently, many different organizations are conducting rural development projects in northern Thailand. However, there is no center for exchange of information between the various groups and as a result, overlapping of project areas and over-concentration of personnel and funding occurs in some areas while others are virtually ignored. At the same time, information regarding problems and difficulties encountered and the resulting action taken when implementing certain aspects of these programs could benefit others involved in similar ventures. A perspective of development priorities in low-land northern Thai communities can be determined when looking at past and current development programs. Discussions with villagers can lead to an understanding of whether these priorities were consistent with their values and expectations. This information, in turn, can be made available to other project workers in planning future development projects in the north. The information presented in a research paper of this nature depicts only a small part of the total development picture. When added to the available materials about current development projects in northern Thailand the scope of rural development options are enhanced. These are made available, for use by the public, at a resource center, such as the Research and Development Institute of Payap University. This information will also be made available for international groups interested in conducting or analyzing rural development projects in Asia.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To provide an overview of the objectives, problems and methods used to implement the program.
2. To provide case studies of three projects currently in operation with;
 - a. close examination of the differences in their objectives, priorities and goals.
 - b. costs and benefits of each project.
 - c. problems encountered and actions taken.
 - d. statistics- resources, demography, land area, potential land capabilities, manpower, mechanical power, village output/input, target groups and how they are affected.
 - e. priorities - past, present and future. Were they met?
 - f. community awareness.
 - g. objectives - Are they meeting stated goals? Are the goals consistent with the priorities of the country?
3. To provide good examples of structural guidelines for implementing model village development projects.
4. To determine the impact of the projects on the local farmers.
5. To determine the feasibility of dissemination of the existing program.
6. To assess the farmer's attitudes and understanding of the information and methods of the projects.
7. To determine whether the various activities of the projects are appropriate to their objectives.
8. To determine possible alternative methods of dissemination.

METHODOLOGY

1. Review the existing project data/information.
2. Formulate the questionnaires and conduct preparation/ training of the interviewers. Review the questionnaire with project officers and PRDI staff.
3. Conduct field observations and gather data using the Rapid Rural Appraisal Method for Phase I of the research. Use semi- structured questionnaires to interview participants of projects.
4. Compile data using computer analysis and discussions to determine the results and formulate recommendations.
5. Conduct a follow-up study (five years later) of the Village Extension Service to determine the impact and changes that have occurred, using the Participatory Evaluation Method.
6. Submit the final report.