

The Community Development according to the Principle of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of Ban Dongbang

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Received: December 1, 2021
Revised: December 20, 2021
Accepted: December 21, 2021

Abstract

The work used a mixed method research. It aimed 1) to study the way of life according to the principle of the sufficiency economy philosophy, and 2) to explore the community development according to the philosophy in question at Ban Dongbang. The samples were 103 households. Statistics used in data analysis were means and standard deviation. They were divided into three groups: key informants, practitioners, and general public. Data in this part were analyzed by means of a content analysis. The research found that: The sufficiency economy philosophy has been used at all levels to a great extent. Considering the results of implementing the principle of sufficiency economy, it was found that the implementation was at a high level. The accomplishment factors in the community development according to the sufficiency economy philosophy are a leader's good vision, a community's strength and participation, wise use of natural resources and indigenous wisdom, self-reliance, and supportive networks. The main problems and obstacles are lack of knowledge and understanding on individuals' part concerning

the spending and receiving accounting, debt-related issues, and insufficient state support.

Keywords: community development, principle of the sufficiency economy philosophy

Introduction

“Sufficiency economy” is the philosophy introduced by King Rama IX of Thailand in order to be used as the guideline for the way of life. It is based on the principle of moderation, rationality and carefulness. The king has cautioned about the national development which had to be balanced economically and socially. What he had suggested is what is called “a step-by-step development” (Office of policy and plan, 2017).

The 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan were made amid the fast-changing global situations. The principle of the sufficiency philosophy has been used to make the national development more sustainable, stable and more balanced. (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017)

The philosophy prioritizes the economic foundations of society and communities in order to maintain balance and resources available. It aims to encourage and motivate society to think critically and consider the ideal principle of life. It is based on the moderate or middle path (Puang-ngarm, 2010).

Ban Dongbang (a village) in Tambon Nongbo in Ubon Ratchathani’s Mueang district is a rural community. Its residents are mainly engaged in agriculture (95%). They often faced agriculture-related problems and their income is insufficient

for their livelihood. Thanks to perennial problems regarding their life and income, the local residents had sought the solution to deal with the difficulty facing them. As a result, they had made use of the philosophy of sufficiency economy in their community. The principle they used is based on participation of all members and support from all relevant parties. All community members participated to mobilize the activities which were focused on local natural resources so that they were able to be self-reliant. They were encouraged to cut their spending, to increase their income, to save and conserve environment and to be hospitable. These goals had been realized in 2012. The researcher became interested in studying the communal development according to the principle of sufficiency economy, which could prove useful to economic development in other contexts in the years to come.

Objectives

1. To study the way of life according to the principle of sufficiency economy at Ban Dongbang in Tambon Nongbo, Mueang district, Ubon Ratchathani province.
2. To study the development of communities according to the principle of sufficiency economy at the village in question.

Scope of Research

1. The place of research is the village of Dong Bang, an outstanding village which was awarded 'the village of sufficiency economy'.
2. The work is aimed at studying the context and way of life the village residents according to the principle of sufficiency economy.

3. The population in the study was 138 individuals from 138 households. Thirty experts and those concerned were selected for the qualitative study.

Conceptual Framework of Research

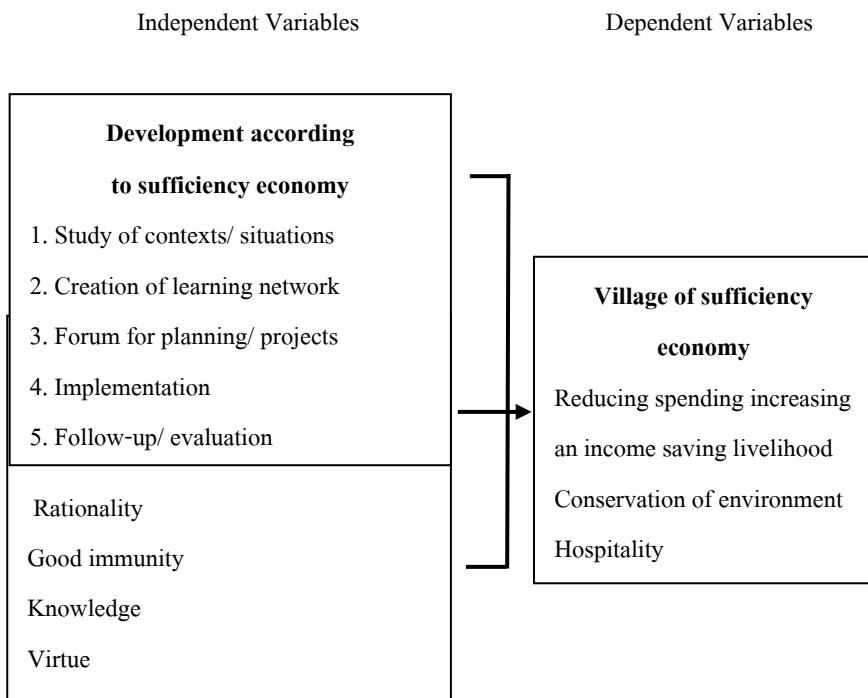


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of research

Research Methodology

The work was a mixed research using both the quantitative and qualitative methods. The place of the research was Ban Dongbang in Tambon Nongbo, Mueng district, Ubon Ratchathani province.

Population and Target Groups

1) Population was 510 from 138 households of Ban Dongbang (village). The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan's table, and the samples were derived by a simple random sampling. 2) For the qualitative purpose, the target groups were selected by means of purposive random sampling. They were divided into three groups: key informants, practitioners, and general public.

The subjects derived were 30 experts and those concerned with the philosophy of sufficiency economy. They were divided into three groups: 10 key informants, 10 casual informants, 10 general informants. Data were collected by an in-depth interview and focus group.

Research instruments were as follows.

1. A questionnaire: it consisted of three parts: 1) general information concerning sex, age, income and educational levels; 2) way of life according to the philosophy of sufficiency economy viewed in five aspects (most, more, moderate, less and least); 3) results shown in 6 aspects: reduction of the spending, increased income, saving, livelihood and conservation of environment and hospitality.

2. Interview was conducted to study the guidelines to develop the communities according to the principle of sufficiency economy. Key informants were interviewed and data were gathered based on the interview.

3. Records of the focus group concerning the key issues of the philosophy, factors of success, problems and obstacles.

4. Observation form comprising 1) the records of migration, background of communities, way of life, traditions and culture in a community; 2) possession of resources in the communities, production process, exchanges and consumption; 3) indigenous wisdom and learning; 4) relations between the leaders and groups; 5) environment, landscape and natural resources.

Data collection

1. Documentary data that were studied included books, texts, documents, articles.

2. An interview was conducted on those concerned with the philosophy of sufficiency economy, that is, academics, leaders of the local administrative organizations, and Buddhist monks.

3. Those taking part in the focus group were ten casual informants and ten general informants.

Data Analysis and Statistics

Data were collected based on non-participant observation, analyzed by means of a content analysis, and presented by means of a descriptive method. Statistics used in quantitative data were means, percentage, and standard deviation. Statistics used in qualitative data were classification and content analysis.

Results

1. Concerning the way of life according to the principle of sufficiency economy, it was found that:

1.1 Based on the participatory rural appraisal, the village in the research can be described as follows.

1) Village residents had immigrated from Vientiane of Lao more than two hundred years ago. They had chosen to settle near the fertile lands along the river basin. The place where they had settled is now what is called “Ban Nongbo”. The settlement expanded quickly and then an epidemic broke out in the village. The leader and villagers had moved to settle in other place which now they call ‘Ban Dongbang’. The village is about 17.4 km from the provincial city of Ubon Ratchathani. Its residents are 512 from 138 households. A majority of the villagers are farmers.

2) The villagers live a simple life in an extended family. They have retained their own traditions and culture. A majority of them own their land and are engaged in the production process for their own consumption. Some families have the occupation of planting and selling fruit.

3) As for indigenous wisdom and learning, community scholars who are knowledgeable in basketry and agriculture are responsible for transmitting knowledge and skills from generation to generation.

4) Considering the social relations, there are some respected community leaders, activities and clubs to strengthen the bonds among the village residents.

5) Environments and surroundings are forests and food sources of the community.

1.2 Considering the way of life of the residents under study, it was found that households in the study had applied the philosophy to all aspects at a high level (\bar{X} = 4.08, S.D.=0.14). The maximum aspect was moderation (\bar{X} = 4.10, S.D.=

0.24), followed by virtues ($\bar{X} = 4.11$, S.D.=0.15), learning ($\bar{X} = 4.09$, S.D.=0.09). A minimum aspects were rationality ($\bar{X} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.10) and a good immunity ($\bar{X} = 4.04$, S.D. = 0.11) as shown in table 1.

Table 1

The means and standard deviation of the livelihood according to the philosophy of sufficiency economy

Aspect	Livelihood according to the philosophy of sufficiency economy	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Moderation	4.12	0.24	high
2	Rationality	4.05	0.11	high
3	Good immunity	4.04	0.10	high
4	Knowledge	4.09	0.09	high
5	Virtues	4.11	0.15	high
Total		4.08	0.14	high

2. As regards a community development according the principle of sufficiency economy at Bang Dongbang, it was found that:

2.1 The process of the community development consisted of 1) study of contexts and situations of the community, 2) creation of the learning network based on the philosophy in question, 3) forum for the community to plan, 4) implementing the projects, and 5) follow-up and evaluation.

2.2 The implementation of the sufficiency economy at the village was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, S.D.= 0.14). Considering individual aspects, it was found that

the maximum aspect was hospitality ($\bar{x} = 4.25$, S.D.= 0.08), followed by reduced spending ($\bar{x} = 4.18$, S.D.= 0.29), livelihood ($\bar{x} = 4.12$, S.D.= 0.08) and conservation of environments and resources ($\bar{x} = 4.10$, S.D.= 0.14). The minimum aspect was an increased income ($\bar{x} = 3.92$, S.D.= 0.12) and saving ($\bar{x} = 4.01$, S.D.=0.11) as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard deviation of the implementation of the sufficiency economy

Aspect	implementation of the sufficiency economy	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Reduced spending	4.18	0.29	high
2	Increased income	3.92	0.12	high
3	Saving	4.01	0.11	high
4	livelihood	4.12	0.08	high
5	Conservation of environment and resources	4.10	0.14	high
6	Hospitality	4.25	0.08	high
Total		4.10	0.14	High

2.3 The success factors in the community development according to the principle of sufficiency economy consisted of the following: 1) strong leadership, initiatives, self-development, sacrifice, commitment for the common good, hospitality to all, social recognition; 2) self-reliance of the community, a family's good management, clear targets in life, careful spending ; 3) the community's

participation in activities; 4) creation and expansion of the network for development: 5) abundance of natural resources and 6) support from public and private sectors.

2.4 The problems and main obstacles to the development according to the principle in the work were lack of knowledge and understanding concerning spending accounts, debts, and insufficient support from the state agencies.

Discussion

1. The community of Ban Dongbung had applied the principle of sufficiency economy at a high level. It can be interpreted that this kind of economy proves to be a basic foundation on which one can depend (Puang-ngarm, 2010: 142-143). The community under discussion is in a rural one. Its residents are mainly engaged in agricultural activities. In the past, they could earn a small amount of income, which proved inadequate for their existence. As a result, community leaders supported by the state sectors and other networks had utilized the principle of sufficiency economy as the guidelines to develop their community. And the work had proved successful and the village was awarded with the prize of the outstanding village in 2012.

2. The community development consisted of 1) a study of contexts/ circumstances of a community, 2) training, 3) planning/ projects, 4) implementation of plans/ projects, and 5) follow-up and evaluation. Based on the steps mentioned, the development based on the principle under discussion has to be continuously undertaken. The finding was in conformity with the concepts proposed by Pratanchawano (2010) in that the development process was to be undertaken continuously. In addition, the process had to be based on the principle of

participation in the development in all aspects. The general public should be allowed to participate, analyze, decide, plan and implement the plan.

3. The result of the implementation of the philosophy was at a high level. The success factors in the community development according to the principle of sufficiency economy are a leader's good vision, a community strength and participation, wise use of resources and indigenous wisdom for self-reliance, favorable networks. The ideas are in line with the research conducted by Pawala (2018: 110). The work studied the community development based on the principle at Ban Nongphueak in Wapee district, UdonThani province, Thailand and showed that the key factors contributing to the success of the village as the one with sufficiency economy were leaders of the community, society and culture, participation, economy, natural resources, spiritual development and technology.

Recommendations

1. Recommendation for application

1.1 Communities and other agencies concerned should promote the application of the philosophy of sufficiency economy at a family level and a community level. Efforts should be made to make the general public and communities better understand the concept and know how to effectively make use of it in their daily life. Attention should be focused on accounting of receiving and spending, and the debt-related problems.

1.2 The process of the community development should be utilized with special emphasis on the community leaders to make them the leaders of changes. Encouragement should be given to make people or communities more self-dependent. The network of the community participation should be established.

Conservation effort should be encouraged among the communities with the assistance from the state sectors.

1.3 The agencies especially the state sectors should encourage and support the community development according to the principle of sufficiency economy. The development should be comprehensive, adequate and consistent.

2. Recommendations for Further Research

2.1 A further research should be conducted on the development process of the model village according to the philosophy of sufficiency economy.

2.2 A participatory action research should be conducted to develop the model based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy.

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