

Study on Quality and Quantity of Drinking Water and Consumption Behavior of Rural Thai Communities : A Qualitative Approach

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The study aims to examine factors affecting tastes, beliefs and behavior concerning drinking water of people living in rural areas of Thailand. A qualitative approach using the focus group technique was adopted to elicit information from the sample of 136 persons, drawn from women aged 20 to 60 years and men aged 49 to 60 years. The sample was selected from four provinces : Lumpang, Nakornrajsrima, Rajchaburi and Surajthani.

The contents of the focus group discussions covered factors affecting tastes, beliefs and prevalence in choosing the source of drinking water ; quantity of drinking water ; and methods of purifying water before drinking.

The findings revealed that those in Lumpang and Surajthani provinces preferred drinking water from the digging wells located nearby their residence, They liked its taste , colour and smell. Those in Rajchaburi and Nakornrajsrima provinces preferred rain water. However, it was found that the sample in Nakornrajsrima do not have containers to keep the rain water clean and sanitary.

When asked about methods to purify water before drinking, the focus groups disclosed that in practice no one pays much attention to purifying drinking water. They said that boiling or filtering drinking water is considered to be a waste of time, taste and fuel.

When asked about assistance needed from the government, residents of Nakornrajsrima province mentioned big containers to keep rain water for each community. Also, residents in all four provinces mentioned that they want the government to provide assistance on water for agricultural activities.