

Poverty and the Ethnic Minority Groups in Thailand¹

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1 Introduction

Ever since the Government's issuance of the First and Second National Social and Economic Development Plans until the present Ninth National Development Plan, the Government has accomplished implementation at a certain level. Many communities have achieved the aims of the national development plans, whereas a number of

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communities have not. This results in a gap among communities, with the underdeveloped ones being considered lagging behind.

The lifestyles of different Thai communities are already known to have derived from different historical backgrounds. This is because of the various historical events and evolution of different localities. In the past, the nation was formed by a united state power that governed all the towns, each of which had its own ruler, or governor, who reported to the capital. Such a governing system resulted in a great variety of ruling patterns in each region and locality. For instance, the lifestyles of the northeastern people in the past, before the *Laan Chang* kingdom, were derived from pre-historical inhabitants. Cultural characteristics from *Jen-la*, *Tawarawadee*, and *Khmer* had influenced their ways of life. *Laan Chang* itself also influenced the northern part of the Northeast (Khon Kaen University, Art and Cultural Center, 2001: 27-50). Likewise, the other regions' lifestyles were influenced by native inhabitants and ethnic groups who came from other areas. Hence, the way of life of the population of each locality and region varies depending on the different ethnic groups.

2 Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Thailand

To best conduct a study of Thailand's ethnic groups at present, a survey of inhabitants speaking different languages is required in order to identify their racial characteristics, i.e. socio-economic systems, cultures, traditions, religions, and beliefs. The distribution of ethnic groups in Thailand can be classified as follows:

2.1 Distribution of Ethnic Groups in the North

Prior to the influence of the Laan Na kingdom in the northern area of the North of Thailand, the northern people acquired their lifestyles from the Lawa or Lua (as called by other groups) kingdom and from Karen or hill-tribe people who frequently crossed the border from Burma because of war in Burma (Saimuang Wirayasiri, 1986: 11–12; Suntaree Silpipat, n.d.: 152–154). Later, the kingdoms of Sukhothai, Ayudhya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin influenced the northern part of the North until today, while the central north was influenced by Sukhothai kingdom. (Suwilai Premssirat, 2001: 41–42). It can be said that in the northern part of Thailand, the linguistic and ethnological characteristics are greatly intricate, since the northern area connects to Myanmar, China, and the Laos PDR. Over the centuries, different ethnic groups from these countries have migrated into the North. Nowadays, the population is over 13 million. The upper area uses the northern dialect, *Kham muang* or *Thai yuan*. Fifty per cent of the population still speak the different dialects of Tai people whose original domiciles were outside Thailand, namely the dialects of the *Lue*, *Yong*, *Tai Yai*, *Tai Khuen*, *Tai Ya*, *Soang*, *Phuan*, *Lao Isan*, *Lao Lom*, *Thai Loei*, and *Thai Klang*. Less than two percent speak each of the following dialects from the *Mong-Mian* family: *Mong*, *Mian*; and the Sino-Tibetan family: *Chin*, *Chin Ho*, *Burma*, *Li-su* (*Li-so*) , *La-hu* (*Mu-soer*), *Gwong* (*U-gong*), *Uem-pi*, *Bi-su*, *Karen* (different groups), and *Kha-chin* (*Jing-po*).

In addition, there is also a native ethnic group in this part of the country who speak the *Mon Khmer* dialects *Lua*, in Chiangmai and Me Hongson, and *La-wuah*. The past civilization of this group was at a state level with a governing ruler (Nattawee Thotsarot and Suriya Rattanakul, 1995). At present, the population is only one per cent of the area, or roughly 10,000. Another

ethnic group is found in Nan Province, in an area connecting to Chaiburi of the Laos PDR. This group is officially named *Thin*, but is unofficially known as *Lua*. The inhabitants refer to their own dialects as *Mal* and *Prai*, which are spoken by less than one per cent (Chanan Wongwipak, 1987 : 51). Additionally, the following dialects are spoken by less than one percent of the northern population, namely, *Mon*, *Plang*, *Wa*, *Lamet*, *Palong (Dara-ang)*, and *Khmu*. Finally, the *Malapri (Phi tong Luang)* dialect is spoken by less than 200 people.

In the lower part of the north, the majority of the population speaks Central Thai. Some also speak local dialects: *Kham muang*, *Lao wiang*, *Lao lom*, *Laos* as in Laos PDR, and *Phuan*. One can also find a *Mon Khmer* community called *Yahakura* or *Chaw bon*, who have settled down in the Petchaboon area connecting to Chaiyaphum and Nakhon Ratchasima. Less than a hundred people can speak this dialect.

2.2 Distribution of Ethnic Groups in the Northeast

The northeastern population is approximately 22 million. In the lower Isan area of the Chi and Mun river basins, the inhabitants speak *Mon Khmer*, which was mainly derived from the Austro-Asiatic family. More than 1,400,000 people speak *Khmer*, whereas over 400,000 people, or just over 2 per cent, speak the *Kuay* or *Suay* dialect. Roughly 10,000 inhabitants speak the *Yer* dialect. *Mon* is spoken by only some 1,000 people. *Yahakura* or *Chaw bon*, or *Dong krajai* is spoken by some 4,000 to 7,000 inhabitants who live in the border area of Isan (Nakhon Ratchasima and Chaiyaphum) and the central region (Lopburi), and in the lower northern area. The *Korat* or *Thai boeng* dialect is spoken by approximately 800,000 people, or 7 per cent of the population (Suwilai Premsrirat, 2001:39-40).

The upper Isan area is composed of the majority of inhabitants speaking *Tai* family dialects or *Lao Isan*. In addition, *Thai-Loei*, *Phu Thai*, and *Yor* are also spoken, by about 2.25 per cent each of inhabitants. Less than one per cent each speak *Kaloeng*, *Yoay*, and *Phuan*, whereas *Sak* is spoken by just over 3,000 people. Approximately 70,000 people in this area speak *Mon Khmer*, including the *So* and *Bru* dialects. Nearly 1,500 inhabitants speak *So tauweng*, and roughly 20,000 people speak Vietnamese (Suwilai Premssirat, 2001: 40).

2.3 Distribution of Ethnic Groups in the Center

Over 16 million people now live in the central region, which has seen a lengthy historical and cultural transformation. The inhabitants comprise the ethnic groups of the following language families. The first group is classified into the *Tai* family and is spoken by 98 per cent of the population, and includes Central Thai, *Thai boeng*, *Soang*, *Phuan*, *Yor*, *Lao wiang*, *Lao Khrua*, *Lao Ngaew*, *Lao Ti*, *Lao Isan*, and *Yuan*. The next group is the Austro-Asiatic family, which is spoken by less than one per cent. This includes *Mon Khmer*, *Thin Thai*, *Wiat*, *Song*, *Kasong*, *Samre*, *Sa-oat*, and *Kuuay*. Finally, the Austronesian group, or Thai Malay, is spoken by less than one per cent. In addition, minority ethnic groups speak Chinese (different dialects), Burmese, different groups of *Karen*, and *Gwong (U-gong)* (Suwilai Premssirat, 2001: 43-47).

2.4 Distribution of Ethnic Groups in the South

The population in the South of Thailand is roughly 9 million, the majority of which are Muslims. Ninety three per cent of the inhabitants speak *Tai* language family or the so-called southern dialect (*Pak Tai*). Nearly

100,000 people or one per cent speak *Tak bai* dialect. Nearly 2 per cent speak the central Thai whereas less than 1 per cent speak Lao Isan. In the south, 3 per cent of the population or around 243,000 speak the language in the Austronesian family, i.e. *Malay thin* (Yawee). Two other dialects in the same family, *Urak lawoay* and *Mogen* or *Moglen* (*Chao Ley*) are spoken by roughly 3,000 and 1,000 people respectively. Chinese language is spoken by one per cent of the inhabitants whereas less than 100 people speak the *Mon Khmer* family which includes *Se mang*, *Sakai*, or *Kensew* savage tribes. *Mon* is found among only less than one per cent. (Suwilai Premssirat, 2001: 47-48)

3 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Ethnic Minorities

3.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Northern Ethnic Minorities

Due to the fact that the northern part of Thailand is connected to Myanmar, Laos, and some areas near China, migration of the inhabitants of these countries is frequently observed, especially among the northern hill-tribe people. These groups of people are categorized as ethnic minorities whose races, languages, religions, traditions, and culture are different from the majority of Thai people. Hill-tribe inhabitants are normally scattered in remote mountainous areas in the North. Historical accounts show that hill-tribe people have contacted and formed relationships with Thai people for over 3,000 years (Seidenfaden, 1967; Keyes, 1977).

The hill-tribe population living in Thailand and in the Northern region can be classified into two groups:

1. Austro-Asiatic group. This includes the hill-tribe people migrating from the south to the north and settling down in Thailand even before Thai

people migrated and founded the country. These hill tribes are the *Lawa*, *Khmu*, *Kha*, *Ho*, *Thin*, and *Phi tong luang*.

2. Sino-Tibetan stock. This group includes the hill-tribe people migrating from the north to the south from China, Myanmar, and Laos to Thailand after Thailand was established. Sino-Tibetan stock can be divided into two sub-groups, namely *Tibetan-Burman*, including *Akha*, *La hu*, and *Karen*; and the former Chinese, including *Mong* and *Mian*.

Regarding the socio-economic conditions of these ethnic minorities, the majority of them earn their living by subsistence farming. Their social ways of life are simple. Generally speaking, their socio-economic conditions differ from one ethnic group to another. The *Karen* and *Thin* (a branch of *Lua*) subsist by revolving farming. They normally grow different field crops during one whole year and then leave the fields barren for 3 to 5 years before returning to grow their crops again. The barren land naturally fertilizes itself during the period, ready for the next crop. Examples of the crops grown are field rice and transplanted rice, grown on steps graded down sloping valleys. These hill-tribe inhabitants also grow some kapok and vegetables, just for household consumption. Additionally, they raise some beasts of burden and some ritual animals for worshipping their ancestors' spirits or the spirits of the mountains and forests, depending on their ethnic beliefs.

Some ethnic groups in the past grew opium as their main occupation, until it was banned by the government. Later, the Royal Project system was established and extended to the hill-tribe people. Ever since that period, they have been persuaded to grow cash crops and sell them to the Project, resulting in more income for them.

The social characteristics of these ethnic minorities are simple. They normally build small houses using natural materials. In general, the family type is nuclear; however, the extended family type can be found among some ethnic groups such as the *Mong*. In some societies, like the *Karen*, a man has to stay with a woman's family for one harvest season, or 7–8 months, before they both can move to their own house, or until another daughter of the family gets married. The new house is usually close to the woman's house. Family lineage among *Karen* is counted from the woman's side, whereas among the *Mong* and *Mian*, it is based on the man's side. Most of the hill-tribe people are strict about a girl retaining her virginity before marriage, and adultery is not common after marriage. However, if a couple divorces, the woman or the man can remarry (Saimuang Wirayasiri, 1986:14).

Most of the hill-tribe people respect and believe in the spirits of their ancestors and the spirits of the nature. Some, however, have turned to Buddhism or Christianity. In general, these inhabitants rely a great deal on their environment.

3.2 Socio-economic Characteristics of Isan Ethnic Minorities

In terms of the Northeastern (or Isan) cultural basis, community settlements can be traced back to pre-historical periods. Although there are many Isan communities holding similar traditional and cultural traits, sub-cultural groups exist in which differences in certain details can be seen, such as in the spoken language, as already discussed under the distribution of ethnic groups in different regions. Cultural assimilation in the Northeast has been a continuous phenomenon.

Chalit Chaikanchit (2000) classified ethnic groups in Isan into two types:

1. The ethnic groups in the Me Kong river basin. This includes Lao ethnic inhabitants or those speaking the *Lao-Isan* dialect, which account for the greatest number. There are, moreover, other ethnic groups including the *Yor*, *Yoay*, *Phu Thai*, *Saek*, *So* or *Kaso*, *Kaloeng*, and *Bru*.

2. The ethnic groups of the lower Isan. This comprises the *Khmer*, *Kuuay*, *Thai-Laos*, *Thai-Korat*, and *Chaw bon* or *Yahakura*.

The economic structures of the above ethnic minorities are different. However, the basic occupation of most of these inhabitants is agriculture, for example, rice farming, cropping, and livestock raising. The ethnic groups in Isan area that are less able to adjust themselves to the current situation are the *Khmer*, *So*, *Bru*, and *Kaloeng*. Their economic status is seen as being inferior to the other ethnic groups in the region. The important point is that these groups do not accept development assistance from the government. Some of these groups, such as the *Bru* and *Kaloeng*, are still dependent on natural resources and the environment; their agricultural economy is of the subsistence type (Somsak Srisontisuk, et al, 1992 ; Banjalak Thraporn, 1995).

The social structure of the majority of the ethnic groups is one that is tied to relatives. Most of the families are of the nuclear type. The ethnic groups which rely on male kinship are the *Yor*, *Yoay*, *Phu Thai*, *Saek*. The groups relying on female kinship consist of the *Thai-Laos (Thai-Isan)*, *Khmer*, *Korat*, and *Kaloeng*. Most Isan ethnic groups are Buddhists and also believe in ancestor spirits.

3.3 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Southern Ethnic Minorities

One important ethnic minority in the South is the Thai Muslims, who speak the language of *Mayawee*. From historical records, Islam disseminated into Thailand before the Sukhothai period, directly through Arab traders and Indian prophets who were converted to Islam (Krongchai Hatta, 1998:57). The population who believe in Islam cluster densely in four provinces in the South, namely Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Satoon.

The economic structure of the ethnic minorities is associated with the fertility of the region's geological conditions. Generally speaking, the provinces along the Southern border are abundant with natural resources and are suitable for growing rubber trees, fruit trees, fisheries, etc. The ethnic minorities living along the coast usually earn their living by fishing.

The social structure of Thai Muslims and their lifestyles are strictly in accordance with the principles of Islam. Women, for instance, must wear the *Hi-yab*, which is a head cloth covering the head, revealing only the face. The blouse is long-sleeved, and the skirt is long. Men wear white hats and sarongs. The written and spoken language is Malay, which is used to a great extent in three provinces, Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. These Muslims use the *Yawee* alphabet in their written language in order to facilitate their religious teaching. Formal education is not regarded as essential, since they mainly aim for religious knowledge. Islamic principles are taught during the weekday evenings and often in religious classes at weekends. Muslims live in nuclear families. Their marriages and family life patterns strictly follow Islam preaching.

3.4 Analysis of Socio-economic Characteristics of the Ethnic Minorities

The following case studies indicate that ethnic minorities are regarded by the government as the neediest communities in their province. These selected cases include a *Karen* ethnic community in Chiangmai, a *Thin* ethnic community in Nan, a *Kaloeng* ethnic community in Sakon Nakhon, and a Thai Muslim ethnic community in Pattani.

The ethnic groups of *Karen* and *Thin* (or *Lua*) selected for the study are dependent on the natural environment. Their economic structure is of the subsistence type, and their social structure is closely knitted with the community and kinship. They also believe in spirits, which render a lot of benefits in terms of ethnological social control.

The lifestyle of the *Kaloeng* ethnic community being studied can be said to rely on the natural environment to the point that they are officially considered the poorest in the province. However, at the same time, this ethnic community has a leader who has been trying to maintain their culture and has set up an *In Plang* group. This group is officially known as a self-reliable community that can maintain its own culture in a globalized world. Still, some members of the community who have been influenced by the development trend, or those who accept the development provided by the government, become aware of their own poverty when compared to other communities.

The Muslim ethnic group under study is different from the ethnic groups above. This is because Muslims are different from the majority of Thai population in terms of religion, and so the Muslims are classified as an ethnic minority. Their economy relies on their religious principles as a basis for leading their lives and earning their living. Their social structure is closely knit and opposed to materialism. It can be said that the Thai Muslims are strictly

Islamic. Muslim communities receive special attention from the government in terms of development. However, there are still many obstacles, such as the disturbances that occur in the South.

4 Poverty in the Perspective of the Ethnic Minorities

4.1 Poverty of the Ethnic Minorities

The results of this study indicate that poverty is related to the ethnology of some groups of impoverished people. The impoverished people in all the communities under study are from separate ethnic groups. This means they are disparate; as a result, it is difficult for them to join together and form a negotiating power to solve community problems. In some urban communities, impoverished people are discriminated against, according to their ethnic groups. The following are statements by some impoverished people.

Most of us are Laos, but there are also Suay, Khmer, Yuan, Yer who came from adjacent cities. [A male, holding a trading occupation, aged 66 years, from a densely populated community, Srisaket]

The image of the hill-tribe inhabitants held by Chiangmai urban people is still negative, for example:

The problem of drug addiction is brought about by hill-tribe people and the two blind men who are hill-tribe people and came to live in our community. They sell amphetamines. [A young female, aged 15 years, Salae Community, Chiangmai]

This shows that relationship between ethnic groups in communities is becoming estranged, with the consequence of poverty in urban areas where

variation in ethnological cultures exists. Additionally, one impoverished person said:

Some ethnic groups are diligent, some are lazy, and some lead a troublesome life. [A male trader, aged 66 years, from a densely populated area in Srisaket]

And, here is a comment about the Burmese at Kampaeng-ngoen, Chiangmai, related by a group discussion assistant:

There is a division between the community area and the area where migrating Burmese live. [A 33-year old female, inhabitant of Kampaeng-ngoen Community, Chiangmai]

This reveals that even impoverished people distinguish themselves from others of different ethnic groups. It may be worthwhile to observe that an association between poverty and urban ethnic groups relies on individual personality and qualities which vary from one culture to another. Ethnological traits consist of the inhabitants, the language, culture and traditions, social values, etc., which could be thought of as urban ethnological characteristics.

However, poverty is usually found among the same ethnic groups living in communities. This makes it possible to study the ways of life and ethnological characteristics of these impoverished people in communities.

4.2 The Meaning of Poverty from the Perspective of the Ethnic Minorities

Considering the meaning of poverty as seen by the ethnic minorities, it is found that impoverished people's economic status and their hardship lead to their poverty. It can be said that poverty creates marginal conditions among

the impoverished people. This obstructs them from understanding the importance of poverty. Impoverished people feel they become poor because they have been oppressed and taken advantage of by the rich. For example, rich people usually bargain the prices of forest items impoverished people sell.

We never earn enough money. Our lives are always short of everything.

[A 60-year old female hired worker from the Kaloeng ethnic community, Sakon Nakhon]

We have no income. I have to work so hard to get some wages. It is often so late for the children to have some food to eat because it is a long way to get home. In the past when it used to be cold, we were short of clothing. We had no money to buy clothes. Growing rice is never enough. [A 44-year old male paddy farmer from the Karen ethnic community, Chiangmai]

Poverty is hardship. [A female field-crop farmer, aged 18 years old, from Thin ethnic community, Nan]

I'm poor because I suffer hardship. I suffer from hardship because I don't have any job. If I had a job, I wouldn't be in trouble: there would be some income. [A 49-year old small-scale fisherman, Muslim ethnic community, Pattani]

Another reported:

Poverty means our father and mother did not have money and had to live from hand to mouth. [A 45-year old male hired laborer from Kaloeng ethnic community, Sakon Nakhon]

It can be concluded that poverty, from the point of view of the ethnic minorities, is defined from the perspective of their economic structure. They see themselves as individuals who have to work laboriously in order to earn some money to support the family. However, these impoverished inhabitants are greatly patient. They may complain about the rich taking advantage of them, but they admit it. This leads to a conclusion that the ethnic minorities see the meaning of poverty as a perceptive discourse of the governmental development activities that have brought about impact on their ways of life.

4.3 Causes of Poverty

The causes of poverty in the opinion of impoverished people from the Kaloeng ethnic community include: having too many children, barren or no subsistence land, and poorly paid occupations, as can be seen from the following statements:

We have a small house. We have no food to eat. Having too many children makes us poor. [A 60-year old male who hires out his labor in rice fields, Kaloeng ethnic community, Sakon Nakhon]

We have no subsistence land. We only have debts. [A 75-year old male who hires out his labor in rice fields, Kaloeng ethnic community, Sakon Nakhon]

Look at our status, our clothes. We have no occupation to support us. [A 42-year old female, a hired worker in rice field, Kaloeng ethnic community, Sakon Nakhon]

It can be seen that there is a shortage of subsistence land. The impoverished people have to become hired laborers in rice fields.

Unfortunately, their income is never sufficient, especially when there are many children in the family, resulting in poverty.

These statements are in accordance with the causes of poverty in the Muslim communities in the South. Small-scale fishermen were deprived of their fish resources by bigger commercial trawlers. It is even worse for some fishermen who have borrowed money for investment in fishing, and who are now faced with less catch. Consequently, they become even poorer. This can be seen in the following statements made by some impoverished people in the area:

We are poor because we cannot earn enough money from fishing. People just come and fish where we used to fish. [A 17-year old female from the Muslim ethnic community, Pattani]

We don't know what to do to rid ourselves from debts. There is no way really. We earn just enough to eat, but it is hard to pay our debts. [A 49-year old male fisherman from the Muslim ethnic community, Pattani]

The northern ethnic minorities under study are similar to those in the Northeast and the South. They also lack subsistence-land resources because their subsistence land and accommodation are in conserved national forests. Furthermore, the population is increasing.

There is no place in which to subsist. Every place seems to have to be conserved. There is no land whereas the number of people is increasing. Subsistence land is decreasing. [A 37-year old male, from the Thin ethnic community, Nan]

In the past our fathers and mothers were in trouble. All our lives we have had to buy food from the market. A bundle of “Ma-kwaen” used to be 50 satangs. One thing that could solve our problem was raising livestock. There were not enough rice fields because we have many siblings. We always lack food and consumer items. We want to have more rice fields. We want to grow more “Ma-kwaen”, for a bundle is 25 baht now. It’s better. [A 34-year old female from Karen ethnic community, Chiangmai]

It has been shown by the analysis of poverty in the ethnic minorities that this poverty has been caused by a number of reasons, the most important of which is the shortage of resources – subsistence land. As a result of government development, outsiders have arrived in their communities and have used the resources. Additionally, the populations are increasing, and competition for the resources is even higher. If ethnic minorities are able to adjust themselves to the new conditions, their problem is not serious. However, if these ethnic minorities cannot adjust themselves, they eventually become impoverished.

4.4 Poverty Solution in the Perspective of the Ethnic Minorities

Most of the ethnic minorities believe that the solution of poverty problems cannot be accomplished by themselves. They see that it is a structural problem, and as so should be solved by the government. For instance, the Kaloeng ethnic community wants the government to provide rice fields for the impoverished or those who want subsistence land. As one pointed out:

I wish they would provide rice fields for the impoverished as the first priority. (A male Kaloeng in Sakon Nakhon, aged 60 years, a hired worker in rice fields)

A *Thin* (Lua) in Nan also said:

Poverty is the problem to be solved by the government. [A 37-year old male from the Thin ethnic community in Nan]

This is in accordance with the problem of small-scale fishermen in the South, who have no power to prevent trawlers from entering the 300-meter area around the coast line. What is now being done is superficial solutions to the problem, for example demonstrations, or keeping an eye on trawlers and reporting them to the marine police. One said:

There is no way to solve the problem from those trawlers, for people like us have no power. We can do nothing. [A 39-year old fisherman's housewife from the Muslim ethnic community, Pattani]

However, these ethnic minorities still desire to solve the problem of poverty in the long run for the next generation. They have an expectation to rid themselves from poverty, as a Karen has said:

I don't know whether what I think can solve it or not. My first wish is to have a strong and united community. The second wish is for the younger generation to be free from drugs and to help their families earning the living. Children should receive higher educations while our culture is still maintained for the youth. If the community wants more, damage may occur. For example, when rice production is not good, the use of chemicals should be considered

carefully, for it may bring about adverse effects to the community. [A 44-year old male from the Karen ethnic community, Chiangmai]

It can be concluded that the solution to poverty, as seen by the ethnic minorities, is structural; thus the government should dispel poverty problems. However, in the long run, the youth in ethnic minorities believe that solutions at a community level require a strong community. The youth should be encouraged to have higher educations so that they can understand and find some means to mitigate the problems of poverty in the future.

5 Impact of Government Development on the Ethnic Minorities

Thailand has undergone a number of national development plans. Most of these plans consist of programs and projects led by top-down policy. This results in the fact that many programs and projects fail to meet the needs of the population, which comprises many ethnic groups and different ways of living. Even though the Eighth National Development Plan accents the development of human resources, with the population participating in proposing bottom-up plans and policies; the thinking process of policy-level administrators has not changed in terms of development perspectives. As a result, previous national development work has not been completely successful. The gap between the rich and the poor is being widened. Moreover, the national policy of free economy has been at the expense of the various lifestyles of the ethnic population, which have not been seen as important. This has led the country into the global economic system, leading to the economic crisis of 1997, which still has repercussions today (Somsak Srisontisuk, 1996).

The government's development work in the past has rendered the following impact on the ethnic minorities.

5.1 Social Exclusion

Social exclusion of the ethnic minorities is associated with the uniqueness or identity of each ethnic group. The system of ethnological relationship or ethnicity demonstrates the extent and the level of social relationships among different ethnic groups (Suthep Suntonpesach, 1999: 89-90). Social exclusion of the ethnic minorities in the Northeast by the majority is not clearly evident in terms of social aspects. However, some ethnic groups are not able to adjust themselves to the developmental trend. This is because the government has been particularly aware of and emphasized the development of the Northeast, due to the fact that the highest proportion of impoverished people live in this region. Many governmental and non-governmental organizations have been developing the quality of life of the people in the region ever since 1961, when the first national social and economic development plan was implemented. The northeastern population has therefore been subject to continual development. Nevertheless, although cultural harmonization has been achieved, ethnological identities still remain. The languages, cultures, and beliefs of these ethnic minorities have not changed with the state's development trend. As a consequence, the government entertains the opinion that some ethnic groups are not interested in development, while the ethnic minorities believe that the government never attempts to understand their ways of living and that the past development work has only brought about hardship.

In the North, social exclusion of ethnic minorities is evident in the implementation work of officials following the government's policy prohibiting

hill-tribe people to live in the forest. The government has announced that natural forests are national conserved land and has forced these hill tribes from the conserved forests. The government does not understand the ways of living of some hill-tribe people who can live in the forest with their own methods of environmental and natural conservation, inherited from their ancestors. These hill tribes include, for instance, the Karen, Lua, and Thin. These people are not allowed to use the forest areas where they used to settle long before the government's announcement of the areas as national conserved forests. These hill-tribe people therefore live with suspicion and do not feel confident in their own lives and in the use of their surrounding natural resources.

However, there have been social movements in which demonstrators fight and call for the government's understanding of the hill-tribe lifestyles. These movements are supported by non-governmental development organizations and foundations, and lecturers from Chiangmai University, who have conducted research studies and confirmed that the thinking processes and wisdom of the hill-tribe people enable them to live appropriately with the forest. At present, the national community forest decree is on the agenda in parliament, waiting to be legislated as an ultimate community forest law. The hill-tribe people will then have the right to live with the forest and help conserve natural resources.

In addition, the hill-tribe people have increasingly made requests for Thai nationality, because social exclusion has slowed down the process of confirming Thai nationality. The government claims that there is no evidence of their entrance into the country, and this has made it impossible to issue Thai nationality to them. The government also associates hill tribes with national instability, alleging that most of the hill-tribe people sell drugs. In fact,

only some of them do. The call for Thai nationality is continuing, and, in a certain sense, it shows that the impoverished hill-tribe people do not have any power or right to plead.

In the South, social exclusion of the Muslims has been persistent, even though it is gradually decreasing. It can still be said that a lot of Muslims in the South feel inferior to the majority and exclude themselves by staying in groups. Their relationship with other people is not good, as each group sees that there is nothing in common. In addition, they never trust other people. Consequently, the ethnicity of the Muslims is one of solidarity. As far as language and cultural identities are concerned, Muslim people have always been regarded as a hindrance to the administration of the area. The problems of this ethnic minority have emerged from religious differences, and differences in cultures, beliefs, and feelings. They have been trying to retain their identity through special identity consciousness, resulting in contradiction and selection of similarity in identity.

Thus, social exclusion of the Muslim ethnic minority has arisen from a lack of understanding of the Muslim culture by the governing officials. This leads to wrong implementation of policy as far as religion is concerned. Government officials avoid their responsibilities, which results in selective implementation toward the Muslim ethnic minority. Moreover, the languages used in communication are different, causing misunderstanding and forcing social exclusion.

Nevertheless, the government is starting to become aware of its own problem. They are realizing the importance of understanding Muslim culture and of learning the Yawee dialect. Living together in a multi-cultural community is beneficial and valuable. Integration policy should be enforced,

meaning acceptance of different nationalities, languages, cultures, and religions.

We can draw a conclusion that there are levels of social exclusion of the ethnic minorities, which depend on structural concepts of society and culture. The impoverished ethnic inhabitants, in particular, are loathed and more socially excluded than the ethnic inhabitants who are not so poor. The solution to their problem, by clustering into intimate groups, such as in the case of the Thai Muslims in the South, reveals their objection to social exclusion, in practice government policies that oppose the minorities' existing cultural practices.

5.2 Existence of Cultural Strength among the Ethnic Minorities

During the past 40 years, in which the government has implemented the national development plan system, the primary impact on the ethnic minorities has been the introduction of certain cultural practices. For instance, their economic lifestyle has improved, while the traditions and culture of each ethnic group still remain and are strongly maintained. This can be regarded as cultural strength. At present, it has been each ethnic group has shown its own identity and wisdom to the point that the government is starting to accept them. However, the impoverished people in each ethnic group still have fewer opportunities and are not able to act against the coming changes. Their ways of living thus remain unchanged. The more remote they are from civilization, the less chance for development. On the other hand, according to a different point of view, the more remote they are, the greater cultural strength has formed in that ethnic group. We can see that the ethnic minorities under study have shown the existence of strength in language, culture, and religion.

5.3 Instability of Food Supply and Decrease in Natural Resources

Instability in the food supply occurs among the majority of inhabitants in the Northeast, i.e., the *Lao-Isan* group. The increase in population has resulted in shortages in the food supply, leading to a great deal of competition for natural resources. The ethnic minority groups aware of the problem of food supply instability and decreases in natural resources comprise the *Kaloeng* in Isan, the hill tribes in the North, and the fishermen in the South (as discussed above under the topic of the causes of poverty). These ethnic minorities are capable of acquiring a food supply and natural resources via their subsistent lifestyles. However, due to competition for natural resources with outsiders, their communities' natural resources are decreasing.

Most of the northeastern ethnic minorities are still able to maintain and conserve their environment and natural resources, especially the *Kaloeng*, who lived in the forest area for over 150 years before the government announced the area as a national forest. This reveals that ethnic minorities' access to natural resources used to be easy.

Nevertheless, each household of the ethnic minorities has meager subsistence land, resulting in farm productivity insufficient for consumption. The ethnic inhabitants have to hire out their labor in agricultural sectors and elsewhere, both inside and outside their community. Furthermore, a proportion of the income of these inhabitants is from selling accumulated forest items, such as wild vegetables, mushrooms, and bamboo shoots. This is because their community still has access to fertile forest resources, which is situated in the north of their homeland and is known among the community as *Phu Ka Soer*. It is a well-known place from which forest items can still be found for trading.

Villagers look for forest items at Ka Soer forest near their village. There are things like bamboo sprouts, mushrooms, and some vegetables (phak waan). Wild animals that are plentiful during certain seasons are rats, tree shrews, and wild pigs. Most villagers find food from the forest. [A 42-year female farmer and laborer from the Kaloeng ethnic group, Sakon Nakhon]

In the past there used to be wild pigs, deer, and elephants. They're no longer there. They have been gone for about 20 to 30 years because people cut down the trees and destroyed the forest. [A male laborer, aged 67 years, from the Kaloeng ethnic group, Sakon Nakhon]

Access to natural resources is decreasing because outsiders have encroached upon and destroyed the forest. In the past, impoverished inhabitants of the Karen and Thin ethnic groups used to have appropriate access to natural resources. They never destroyed the nature, as can be seen in the following account.

In the past there were 2-3 layers of forest, depending on the size. We used to have food from the forest. Now they let us guard the forest, but we cannot find our food there. They let us grow vegetables at home. This year they are promoting "Ma kwaen" from Prae Province. But it died after we planted it. [A male Karen from Chiangmai, aged 44 years old]

Nevertheless, at present the ethnic minorities have to live in the national conserved forest area. People from outside have encroached on and destroyed the forest, and their access to natural resources is decreasing.

Even the Muslim fishermen in Pattani are confronted with similar problems. They used to do small-scale fishery and earn some income. They knew how to appropriately fish in a way which did not reduce the resources. Currently, commercial trawlers have entered the area to compete against native fishing practices. As a result, lifestyle of the fishermen is becoming worse.

It can be concluded that food supply instability for each ethnic group is different, depending on each community's specific identity. If their identity is such that it enables them to strictly retain their vernacular culture, then it is likely that they can retain their ethnic identity and base their cultural life on natural resources where forest food is still available. On the other hand, if any ethnic group has changed its ways of living and has destroyed the natural environment, such as can be seen with some hill tribes who cut and burned the forest in order to grow opium, or the majority minority ethnic group in the Northeast (the *Lao-Isan*), who encroached on the forest and grew kenaf, cassava, and sugar cane, then forest resources have reduced. In the South, when commercial trawlers come in to catch fish in the area, fish resources are decreasing.

5.4 Lack of Opportunity for Access to Health Service and Education of the Ethnic Minorities

It can be said from the study of the ethnic minorities' poverty that the impact of government developments promoting health for all of the population is clear. The ethnic minorities who are impoverished also have less access to health services in times of illnesses. They usually go to the nearest health station or to a medical clinic. They rarely go to hospital because they do not have enough money, except when they are seriously ill. In that case, they

have to spend a lot of money for the treatment. The 30-baht medical care policy for all diseases is thus something that impoverished people can depend on. However, they still hope they can get free medical care or be entitled to a medical card for low-income people.

If it is a simple illness, we just visit a doctor. If the doctor at the hospital is not good, then we'd go to a clinic. [A 70-year woman who stays at home, a Muslim ethnic inhabitant, Pattani]

The 30-baht medical care for all diseases doesn't help impoverished people. We should be given free medical care. It is troublesome for us. [A 43-year female who hires herself out as labor, from the Kaleong ethnic group, Sakon Nakhon]

A similar situation is found in education among the impoverished ethnic minorities; that is, they lack educational opportunities. Some of them have no money to send their children to school, and the children therefore have to stop school. Hence, educational levels among the impoverished people are low. This reveals that the government development, as far as schools are concerned, has not been accessible to the impoverished ethnic minorities. There is also a lack of interest in adapting the curriculum according to the lifestyles of these ethnic groups, resulting in unsuccessful ethnic minority education.

No children go to school now. They only completed Pratom 6. Me, I just finished Pratom 3. [A 60 years old fisherman from the Muslim ethnic group in Pattani]

The children generation should have better education. People who go to school should be better. We have been poor for a long time and always hope to be better. [A 34-year old Karen woman, Chiangmai]

I want to continue school; I want to gain a lot of knowledge. [A 15-year male youth, from the *Thin* ethnic group, Nan]

I wish they could have good educations and help their father and mother with the household chores. [A 60-year male farmer and hired worker from the *Kaloeng* ethnic group, Sakon Nakhon]

The above statements show that impoverished ethnic minorities expect that their future lives should improve if their children receive higher educations. At least they should be rid of their poverty. Besides, these statements show the failure of past government development in terms of education. It is the hope of the impoverished people to be able to see government developments in the education of their children in the future.

5.5 Various Problems in the Ethnic Minorities

The impact of development on the lifestyles of the ethnic minorities is the same as that on the majority of the population; i.e. an imbalance in urban and rural development and various social problems, such as family problems, poverty, and drug problems. This can be seen in the following statements.

We quarrel when we have no money. [A 43-year old female hired worker from the *Kaloeng* ethnic group, Sakon Nakhon]

The more the children grow up, the greater the impact. But that's not too much. There aren't many people addicted to opium because they

have to find the place in the village that sells opium. Here, in our community, no one sells it. We can take care of ourselves. But those who are addicted are hard to handle. [A 44-year old male from the Karen ethnic group, Chiangmai]

The Karen ethnic community under study is a community in which transportation is not convenient. This facilitates the trafficking of drugs. This area is also a rendezvous place for trafficking.

6 Conclusion and Suggestions

6.1 Conclusion

It is already known that the ethnic minorities have fewer opportunities in many social arenas, when compared to the majority of people who receive development from the government. The results of development include the inescapable poverty which has arisen among the ethnic minorities. These people think that they have different cultures and traditions from the majority. Languages, clothes, and beliefs are different from the majority of the population. Therefore, these ethnic minorities have adjusted themselves in order to be accepted by the former, according to the ethnicity system. The ethnic minorities themselves are different from one community to another. However, in general, the poverty that arises is at the ethnic level.

Thailand consists of various ethnic inhabitants. Studies have been conducted on the distribution of languages in Thailand. It is reasonable to suppose that the difference spoken languages determine ethnic differences. Economic conditions for the majority of ethnic inhabitants are of a subsistence pattern. In terms of social conditions, family and kinship still predominate.

These ethnic groups are strictly religious people, according to each set of ethnological beliefs.

From the poverty perspective, the structure and economic points of view have shown that the ethnic minorities are much affected by the government's development discourse. This has been up to the point that they accept poverty as part of their lives and conform to the state's development trends.

The causes of poverty from the perspective of ethnic inhabitants reveal that they understand and are aware that they have to compete with outsiders for the natural resources, which so reduces resources. Increases in population are another cause of the decreasing resources, having much impact on their lives and lifestyles and leading, eventually, to poverty.

The solution to poverty problems, from the ethnic minorities' perspectives, is to attack the root cause. A means should be found to increase natural resources or to return the resources to former conditions. Management of the natural resources has to rely on the state's power. Solutions within the communities are impractical. Ethnic minorities also look for long-term solutions, ones which promote fundamental and higher education, ones which do not destroy vernacular culture, and ones which enable the community to understand and solve their own poverty problems.

The impact of government development on the ethnic minorities includes the following: social exclusion, or alternatively cultural strength; food supply instability, decreases in natural resources; lack of access to health services and education; and other various problems arising in their communities.

6.2 Recommendations

The following two sets of recommendations are made in order to improve the lifestyles or cultures of the ethnic minorities. These recommendations should be carried out in parallel so that the ethnic minorities will be released from poverty. Their lifestyles and ways of living will be improved.

6.2.1 Policy and Development Recommendations

(1) Governmental and non-governmental units should be aware of and understand the cultural varieties of the ethnic minorities. Each ethnic group has its own cultural identity, closely tied to their lives and hearts, and they are able to adjust dynamically in a society in which creative thinking exists together with social and environmental changes.

(2) Governmental and non-governmental units should study the communities and analyze the culture of each ethnic group historically, using cultural dimensions based on the ethnic minorities' perspective. Hence, the system of thinking, creativity, potential for adjustment, and solutions necessary for their survival would be appropriately understood.

(3) Governmental and non-governmental units should adapt their thinking processes from cultural development to culture for development, by planning development intervention with each of the ethnic minority groups. They should also accept variations in ethnic minority development and then gradually withdraw themselves when each community can plan its own development.

(4) Governmental and non-governmental units should rely on the ethnic minorities as the center for development in order to achieve a holistic view of the problem and emphasize the inhabitants' thinking processes.

(5) Governmental and non-governmental units should support the formation of population organizations through development that is principally based on the communities' needs.

6.2.2 Development Recommendations from the Ethnic Minorities' Perspectives

(1) They want governmental and non-governmental units to understand and accept the cultural differences of each ethnic minority group.

(2) They want governmental and non-governmental units to transfer development knowledge which is appropriate to the culture of each ethnic minority group.

(3) They want governmental and non-governmental units to be aware of and cooperate with the ethnic minorities in joint developmental learning processes.

(4) They want governmental and non-governmental units to accept the potentiality of each ethnic minority group, which is knowledgeable and capable of uniting into a population organization and solve problems on its own. Appropriate access to different resources should be made available to each ethnic minority group.

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ความยากจนกับชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์ ในประเทศไทย

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ประเทศไทยเป็นประเทศหนึ่งในเอเชียอาคเนย์ที่ประกอบด้วยชนชาติพันธุ์หลากหลายชาติพันธุ์ได้มีการศึกษาการกระจายของภาษาในประเทศไทย ซึ่งอาจคาดหวังว่าความแตกต่างในการใช้ภาษาพูดก็แสดงให้เห็นถึงความแตกต่างทางชนชาติพันธุ์นั้นๆ การกระจาย ของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในประเทศไทย มีดังนี้

1) การกระจายของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในภาคเหนือ

ดินแดนภาคเหนือของไทยนับว่าเป็นดินแดนที่มีความซับซ้อนทางภาษาและชาติพันธุ์ ตั้งแต่อดีตถึงปัจจุบัน โดยภาคเหนือตอนบนส่วนใหญ่ใช้ภาษาคำเมืองหรือชาวไทยยวน และกลุ่มภาษาตระกูลไท กลุ่มภาษาดั้งเดิมมอญ-เขมร และกลุ่มพูดภาษามลและปรัย สำหรับภาคเหนือตอนล่างส่วนใหญ่พูดภาษาไทยกลาง คำเมือง ลาวเวียง ลาวหล่ม ลาวประเทศลาว ลาวพวนและกลุ่มภาษามอญ-เขมร

2) การกระจายของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในภาคอีสาน

กลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในอีสานแบ่งเป็น 2 กลุ่มคือกลุ่มอีสานใต้ลุ่มน้ำชี-มูล เป็นกลุ่มชนที่พูดภาษามอญ-เขมร ตระกูลออสโตรเอเชียติก ส่วนใหญ่พูดภาษาเขมร ภาษากูย(ส่วย)และภาษาญ้อ และภาษามอญ ส่วนกลุ่มชนญี่ฮกหรือชาวนนพูดภาษาโคราชหรือไทยเบิ้ง และไทยกลาง สำหรับในเขตอีสานเหนือเป็นกลุ่มชนพูดภาษาตระกูลไท ได้แก่ภาษาลาวอีสาน ไทยเลย ผู้ไทย ญ้อ กะเลิง โย้ย พวน แสก ไช้ทะวี่ง ภาษาตระกูลมอญ-เขมร และกลุ่มชนพูดภาษาเวียดนาม

3) การกระจายของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในภาคกลาง

ส่วนประชากรในแดนแถบภาคกลางมีประวัติศาสตร์มาช้านาน ประชากรกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์มีภาษาพูดส่วนใหญ่กลุ่มตระกูลไท ได้แก่ ภาษาไทยกลาง ไทยเบ็ญ ไช่ พวน ญ้อ ลาวเวียง ลาวคร้ว ลาวแง้ว ลาวตี้ ลาวอีสาน ยวน และกลุ่มชนชาติพันธุ์ที่พูดภาษาตระกูลออสโตรเอเชียติกและ กลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่พูดภาษาออสโตรเนเซียน คือ มาเลย์ถิ่นไทย

4) การกระจายของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ภาคใต้

สำหรับประชากรในดินแดนภาคใต้ของไทย ส่วนใหญ่นับถือศาสนาอิสลาม ประชากรกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ส่วนใหญ่เป็นกลุ่มภาษาตระกูลไท ได้แก่ ภาษาปากมูเตลัว ภาษาตากใบ ไทยกลาง และลาวอีสาน สำหรับกลุ่มภาษาในตระกูลออสโตรเนเซียนกลุ่มใหญ่ในภาคใต้ คือ ภาษามาลายูถิ่น(ยาวิ) นอกจากนี้ยังมีกลุ่มภาษาตระกูลเดียวกัน 2 กลุ่มได้แก่ภาษาจีน ภาษามอญ-เขมร

ลักษณะทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคมของชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์

การวิเคราะห์ลักษณะทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคมกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่ได้ทำการศึกษาเป็นกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่รัฐบาลมองว่าเป็นชุมชนที่มีความยากจนที่สุดในจังหวัดนั้น กลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในภาคเหนือและอีสาน อาจกล่าวได้ว่ามีระบบความเชื่อและความผูกพันกับธรรมชาติสิ่งแวดล้อม มีเศรษฐกิจแบบยังชีพ และมีโครงสร้างทางสังคมที่เหนียวแน่นในระบบชุมชนและเครือญาติ ซึ่งมีประโยชน์เป็นการควบคุมทางสังคม การที่ชาวบ้านถูกทางราชการกล่าวหาว่าเป็นชนชาติพันธุ์ที่มีความยากจนที่สุดในจังหวัด แต่ก็มีผู้นำที่พยายามรักษาดำรงวัฒนธรรมของคนไทยตั้งเป็นกลุ่ม ซึ่งเป็นชุมชนที่สามารถพึ่งตนเองและรักษาวัฒนธรรมของตนเองได้ในกระแสโลกาภิวัตน์ สำหรับชาติพันธุ์ไทยมุสลิมที่ศึกษามีลักษณะชนชาติพันธุ์แตกต่างจากชาติพันธุ์ข้างต้น เนื่องจากมีความแตกต่างในด้านศาสนา ลักษณะทางเศรษฐกิจอาศัยหลักพื้นฐานทางศาสนาเป็นวิถีแห่งการดำรงชีพ โครงสร้างสังคมยังมีความเหนียวแน่น ยึดมั่นในประเพณีทางศาสนาอิสลามอย่างเคร่งครัด รัฐบาลให้ความสนใจในการ

พัฒนาท้องถิ่นเป็นพิเศษ แต่ยังมีอุปสรรคต่างๆ มากมาย เช่น ปัญหาเหตุการณ์ไม่สงบที่เกิดขึ้นในจังหวัดภาคใต้ เป็นต้น

ความยากจนจากมุมมองของชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์

ความยากจนของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ มีความสัมพันธ์กับความเป็นชาติพันธุ์ของคนจนบางกลุ่ม คนจนในเมืองมีการแยกกลุ่มคนจนแตกต่างกันตามชาติพันธุ์ “พวกคนลาว เขมร คนยวน” ทำให้เห็นว่าแม้แต่คนจนก็ยังมีการแบ่งคนจนตามความแตกต่างของชาติพันธุ์ด้วย และการมีชีวิตต่างคนต่างอยู่ ทำให้การรวมตัวสร้างอำนาจต่อรองในการแก้ปัญหาไม่เกิดขึ้น ความหมายของความยากจนจากมุมมองของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ เป็นการมองในมิติเชิงโครงสร้างทางเศรษฐกิจว่า “ถูกเอารัดเอาเปรียบแต่ก็จ่ายอม” ทำให้มองว่ากลุ่มชาติพันธุ์มีความหมายของความยากจนในเชิงยอมรับวาทกรรม(discourse) ของการพัฒนาของรัฐที่ได้ส่งผลต่อวิถีชีวิตความเป็นอยู่

สาเหตุของความยากจนในกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์นั้นมองว่า “เกิดจากการมีลูกมาก ที่ดินทำกินไม่สมบูรณ์ การไม่มีอาชีพรองรับ ไม่มีที่ดินทำกิน การไม่มีทรัพยากรในการทำกิน ทำให้ต้องไปมีอาชีพรับจ้าง รายได้ไม่พอกับครอบครัวจึงเป็นการขาดแคลนทรัพยากรทำให้ครอบครัวยากจน” และ “ชาวประมงขนาดเล็กถูกเรือประมงขนาดใหญ่มาแย่งชิงทรัพยากรสัตว์น้ำ และต้องไปกู้เงินมาประกอบอาชีพประมง ก็ไม่พอกับรายจ่ายทำให้ยากจนยิ่งขึ้น” เกิดจากภาวะการขาดแคลนทรัพยากรเนื่องจากการพัฒนาของรัฐ ทำให้บุคคลภายนอกชุมชน เข้ามาแย่งชิงทรัพยากร

การแก้ไขความยากจนในมุมมองของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ ส่วนใหญ่มองว่าเป็นปัญหาเชิงโครงสร้าง จึงควรเป็นหน้าที่ของรัฐบาลที่จะต้องแก้ไข และในระยะยาวควร ส่งเสริมให้เยาวชนได้รับการศึกษาที่สูงขึ้น เพื่อที่จะเข้าใจและหาหนทางที่จะแก้ปัญหาให้พ้นจากความยากจนในอนาคต

ผลกระทบของกระบวนการพัฒนาของรัฐต่อชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์

1) การกีดกันทางสังคม (Social exclusion) การกีดกันทางสังคมที่มีต่อกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ แม้ว่ากระบวนการกลมกลืนทางวัฒนธรรมจะเกิดขึ้นแต่ความเป็นอัตลักษณ์ของแต่ละชาติพันธุ์ยังคงอยู่ในด้านภาษาวัฒนธรรมและความเชื่อไม่เป็นไปตามกระแสการพัฒนา ทำให้รัฐมองว่าไม่สนใจการพัฒนา ในขณะที่กลุ่มชาติพันธุ์มองรัฐว่าไม่พยายามเข้าใจวิถีชีวิตของตน จึงทำให้วิถีชีวิตของชาวบ้านลำบากมากขึ้น ส่วนการกีดกันทางสังคมของไทยมุสลิมนั้น มุสลิมในชายแดนภาคใต้ยังมีความรู้สึกด้อยกว่าชนกลุ่มใหญ่ รวมทั้งเกิดความไม่เข้าใจวัฒนธรรมของไทยมุสลิมของชนชั้นปกครอง ทำให้การปฏิบัติไม่ถูกต้องตามหลักศาสนา และถูกเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐละเลยการปฏิบัติหน้าที่จนกลายเป็นการเลือกปฏิบัติต่อไทยมุสลิม ภาษาที่ติดต่อสื่อสารเป็นคนละภาษา ทำให้ไม่เข้าใจสื่อสารติดต่อกัน ความสัมพันธ์จึงกลายมาเป็นการกีดกันทางสังคมขึ้นได้

2) ความคงอยู่ของความเข้มแข็งทางวัฒนธรรมของชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์ แม้ว่าวิถีชีวิตในด้านเศรษฐกิจที่ดีขึ้น แต่ขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณีและวัฒนธรรมในแต่ละชาติพันธุ์ยังคงอยู่และรักษาไว้อย่างเหนียวแน่น ทั้งนี้เราจะเห็นได้ว่า กลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่ได้ศึกษามีความคงอยู่ของความเข้มแข็งในทางภาษาวัฒนธรรม และศาสนาในแต่ละชาติพันธุ์เป็นอย่างมาก

3) ความไม่มั่นคงทางอาหารและการลดน้อยลงของทรัพยากรธรรมชาติ กลุ่มชาติพันธุ์กะเลิงในภาคอีสาน ชาวเขาในภาคเหนือ และชาวประมงในภาคใต้ เป็นกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่ศึกษาได้ตระหนักถึงปัญหาความมั่นคงทางอาหารและการลดน้อยลงของทรัพยากร ธรรมชาติ อาจสรุปได้ว่าลักษณะความไม่มั่นคงทางอาหารในแต่ละชาติพันธุ์ย่อมแตกต่างกันขึ้นอยู่กับกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ใดมีเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะตัวที่สามารถยืนหยัดกับวัฒนธรรมท้องถิ่นของตนอย่างเคร่งครัด ก็ย่อมดำรงไว้ซึ่งอัตลักษณ์ของชาติพันธุ์ และย่อมมีวิถีชีวิตทางวัฒนธรรมที่พึ่งพิงกับทรัพยากรธรรมชาติ อาหารในป่ายังมีให้กิน

4) การขาดโอกาสการเข้าถึงบริการสุขภาพ และการศึกษาของชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์ อาจกล่าวได้ว่ากลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่มีความยากจนเมื่อเจ็บป่วยจะไป สถานีอนามัยใกล้บ้านและมักไปรักษาที่คลินิก การไปโรงพยาบาลค่อนข้างมีน้อยเพราะไม่มีเงิน ยกเว้นป่วยหนักจริงๆ ในนโยบาย 30 บาทรักษาทุกโรค จึงเป็นที่พึ่งของคนยากจน แต่ก็ยังคิดว่าควรจจะรักษาฟรี เหมือนกับบัตรสงเคราะห์ผู้มีรายได้น้อย สำหรับการศึกษาศึกษาของคนยากจนในกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์นั้นยังขาดโอกาสทางการศึกษา บางครั้งไม่มีเงินส่งลูกเรียน ต้องให้ลูกหยุดเรียน การศึกษาจึงอยู่ในระดับต่ำ แสดงให้เห็นว่าการพัฒนาระบบการศึกษาของรัฐยังไม่ประสบผลสำเร็จ

5) ปัญหาต่างๆที่เกิดขึ้นในชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์ ผลกระทบของการพัฒนาที่มีต่อกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์คือปัญหาความไม่สมดุลของการพัฒนาชนบทและเมืองและปัญหาทางสังคมต่างๆ

บทสรุป

ลักษณะทางเศรษฐกิจของชนชาติพันธุ์ส่วนใหญ่เป็นเศรษฐกิจแบบยังชีพและลักษณะสังคมยังมีความผูกพันและเหนียวแน่นในระบบครอบครัวและเครือญาติ มีความเชื่อในทางศาสนาอย่างเคร่งครัด ตามความเชื่อของแต่ละชาติพันธุ์ สำหรับมุมมองความยากจนที่สะท้อนออกมาคือ มุมมองทางโครงสร้างทางเศรษฐกิจแสดงให้เห็นว่ากลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ได้ถูกวางกรรมจากการพัฒนาจากรัฐเป็นอย่างมาก จนยอมรับความยากจนเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชีวิต และยอมทำตามกระแสการพัฒนาของรัฐ การแก้ไขปัญหาความยากจนจากมุมมองของคนยากจนของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ก็คือ ทำต้องอาศัยอำนาจรัฐที่จะจัดการทรัพยากรธรรมชาติ และมองการแก้ไขในระยะยาวที่ต้องส่งเสริมเยาวชนรุ่นหลังให้มีการศึกษาสูงขึ้น สามารถแก้ปัญหาความยากจนด้วยชุมชนของตนเองได้