
Context, Understanding, and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Practice of Baan Thon Na Lab Community Members, Baan Doong Distric, Udonthani Province

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This study aimed to investigate understanding and practice of the sufficiency economy philosophy context of Baan Thon Na Lab community members, Baan Doong district, Udonthai province. It employed mixed methods approach: qualitative and quantitative research. In-depth interview was used for data collection administered with a sample group of 190 Baan Thon Na Lab community members obtained by snowball selection. Data collection was done from 1st June to 30th August, 2016. Obtained data were analyzed by using percentage, frequency, and mean. Results of the study revealed that most of the informants were male, 51-60 years old, married, farmers, elementary school graduates, and had 4 family members. They gained knowledge about farming from the school. The respondents generated an income for 200,000 baht and above per year and their supplementary job was business owning. Most of their social position was the head of village house group and their years of service was 10 years and above. Most of the informants wanted to find additional knowledge about farming continually and they joined the community organizational savings group most. Family debts were found to be their problem encountered most and followed by topographic problem in cultivation and livestock rearing. Most of the informants (90.59%) had heard about the sufficiency economy. Findings should that, as a whole, the informants understood the principal of sufficiency economy philosophy at a moderate level but virtue was found at a high level. Regarding practice, it was found that, as a whole, the informants could do it at a high level in 4 aspects. Practice in accordance with virtue condition was found to have a highest average mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.14$).

Keywords: community context, understanding, the philosophy of sufficiency economy, community activities

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Introduction

Baan Thon Na Lab community is a self-reliance community having a clear guideline in the community development. At present it is a strong community conserving its traditional lifestyle in terms of farming and handicrafts. In fact, this community has adopted the philosophy of sufficiency economy particularly on self-reliance with reasonableness. Baan Thon Na Lab community can produce organic fertilizers for use and selling to other communities. Hence, there is a call for community rights on its area which is it was done through the civil society venue. In 1997, Thailand faced the economic crisis which resulted in bankruptcy of enterprises and unemployment. Also Baan Thon Na Lab community had a severely effect on this matter. Besides, this community always faces a problem in flood for a long time. The community members' main occupation is rice growing but their income from this is rather low due to soil deterioration, high production costs and fluctuated yield price. Moreover, the cost of living at present is high and does not cope with household expenses and these results in migration for an employment opportunity. All of these problems make community leaders and members find a guideline for solving the problems in order to have a better standard of living. This aims to make their community be strong, without drug addiction, and for self-reliance.

Consequently, they held a civil society venue in order to make the community committee and members participate in the regulation of the society with the adoption of the sufficiency economy philosophy for problem solving and self-reliance. This includes the reduction of the reliance on external marketing system but assistance among people in the community (Kaewnimit, 2009;; wongboonsin, 2015; Thandi, 2010, Kaewsri *et.al.*, 2007; innupat, 2007). According to the success in the problem solving of Baan Thon Na Lab community, the team of researchers as Agriculture teachers agreed to conduct a study on understanding and practice of the sufficiency economy philosophy of Baan Thon Na Lab community members based on the dimensions of their general conditions and the family of community members. This aimed to perceive the context and tendency to be happened with community members in the future. Besides, obtained data would be used as basic data for the community development in other dimension in the future.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study aimed to investigate context, understanding, and adoption of the sufficiency economy philosophy of Baan Thon Na Lab community members, Baan Doong district, Udonthni Province.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

There were 2 dimensions to be investigated: 1) general condition of community members and their family and 2) dimension on the understanding and adoption of the sufficiency economy philosophy. This could be basis data used for the explanation of various phenomenons happening in the community as well as the development plan or solving of problems which many happen in the future.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative research and in-depth interview was used for data collection

1. Population and sample group in this study were Baan Thon Na Lab community members obtained by non-probability sampling using snowball selection method. Data collection was done for 3 months.

2. Research instruments in this study was a structured interview schedule consisting of 3 parts: 1) general data of Baan Thon Na Lab community members; 2) general data of community members' family; and 3) understanding and adoption of the sufficiency economy philosophy. The structured interview schedule was in the form of 5-rating-scales. The criteria in the interpretation of levels of understanding and adoption of the sufficiency economy philosophy were adopted from the computation formula of Leekitwattara (2012) as shown below:

$$\frac{\text{Highest criterion} - \text{Lowest criterion}}{\text{A number of all criteria}} = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.80$$

| Legend | descriptive equivalents |
|-------------|---|
| 4.21 - 5.00 | = understand / adoption at a highest level |
| 3.41 - 4.20 | = understand / adoption at a high level |
| 2.61 - 3.40 | = understand / adoption at a moderate level |
| 1.81 - 2.60 | = understand / adoption at a low level |
| 1.00 - 1.80 | = understand / adoption at a lowest level |

3. Data collection, The team of researchers collected data from the sample group by themselves. This was mainly done on Saturday and Sunday (4.00 – 7.00 p.m). It lasted 3 months; from 1st June to 30th August, 2006. The sample group consisted of 190 persons.

4. Data analysis, Obtained data were analyzed by using quantitative and content analyses in accordance with the qualitative research method.

Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for the statistical treatment.

Results

Most of the respondents (81.50) were male. Their age range was 51-60 years old most (37.89%), followed by 41-50(30.53%), 61 and above (23.16%), and below 40 years old (8.42%), respectively.

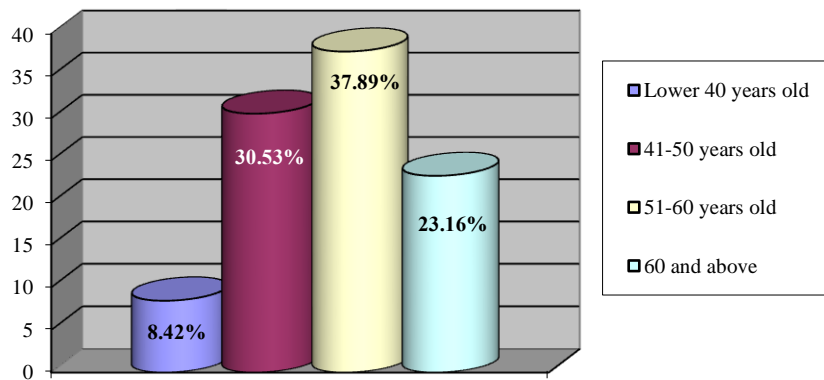


Fig. 1. Age of Baan Thon Na Lab community members

Most of the respondents (82.11%) were married and the rest were widowed, divorced and single (8.42, 5.26, and 4.21% respectively). About one – half of the respondents (27.37%) had 4 family members, followed by 2 family members (25.79%), 3 family members (16.84%), and 5 family members (17.37%). About one-third of the respondents(34.74%) were elementary school graduates, followed by lower secondary school graduates (31.58%), upper secondary school graduates (18.95%), and bachelor's degree graduates (17.37%).

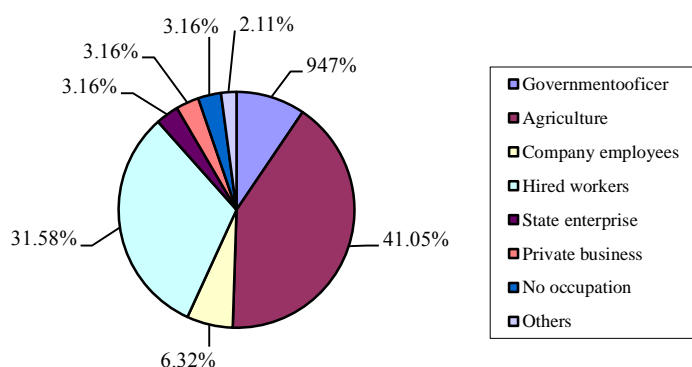


Fig. 2. Main occupation of Baan Thon Na Lab community members

Baan Thon Na Lab community members' occupation was agriculture most (41.05%). This was followed by hired workers (31.58%) and company employees (6.32%). More than one-half of them (58.95%) were engaged in agriculture as a supplementary occupation. Most of the community members (41.05%) had an annual income for 200,000 baht and above, followed by 150,000 – 200,000 baht (32.63%), 100,000 – 150,000 baht (21.65%), and less than 100,000 baht (5.26%), respectively.

Table 1. Positions of Baan Thon Na Lab community members

| Position | n | % |
|---|-----|-------|
| Village head | 19 | 10.00 |
| Village head assistant | 17 | 8.95 |
| President of community council | 9 | 4.74 |
| President of district administrative organization | 7 | 3.68 |
| District administrative organization members | 11 | 5.79 |
| Head of house groups in the community | 127 | 66.84 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

More than one-half of the community members (66.84%) were heads of house groups in the community. This was followed by village head (10%), village head assistant (8.95%), district administrative organization members (5.79%), president of community (4.74%), and district administrative organization members (3.68%), respectively. About one – third of the community members (35.26%) had ten years of service and above, followed by 8-10 years (26.32%), 4-7 years (21.05%), and 1-3 years (12.39%).

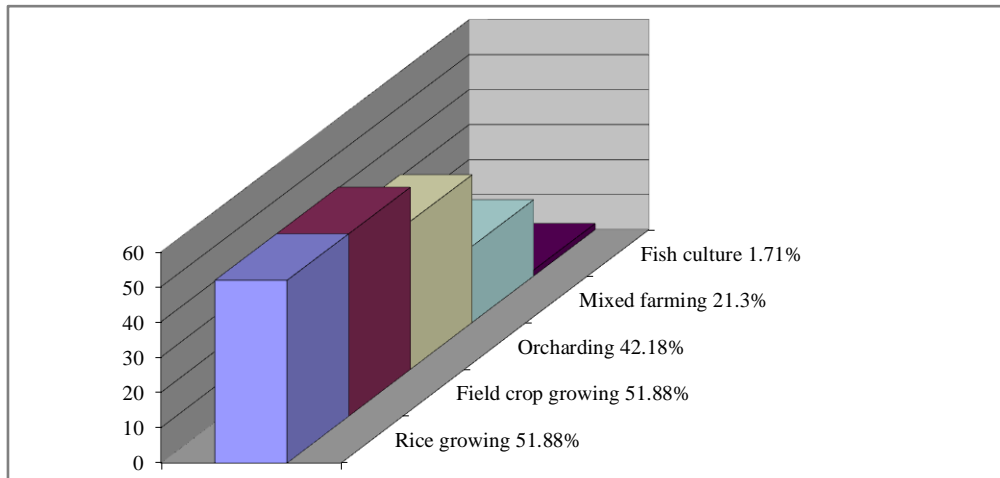


Fig. 3. Agricultural careers of Baan Thon Na Lab community members

About one – half of the community members (51.88%) were engaged in rice growing and field crop growing. This was followed by orcharding (42.18%), mixed farming (21.77%), and fish culture (1.71%), respectively. About one – fourth of the community members (26.26%) gained farming knowledge from the school. This was followed by family member (12.12%), radio (11.92%), trial and error (10.71%), agricultural journal (10.10%), newspaper (2.90%), and neighbors (7.88%), respectively.

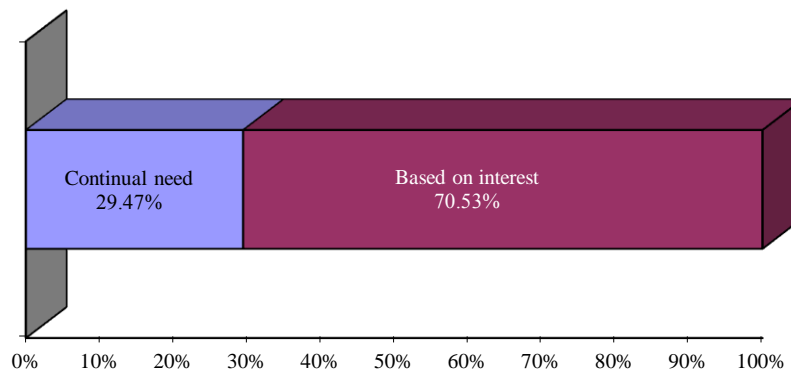


Fig. 4. Needs for increased knowledge in agricultural of Baan Thon Na Lan community members

Only 29.47 percent of the community members wanted to have an increase in agricultural knowledge continually but the rest (70.52%) did not, based on their interest

Table 2. Family problems of Baan Thon Na Lab community members

| Problems | n | % |
|--|-----|--------|
| - Topographic condition in cultivation and vestock rearing | 54 | 28.42 |
| - Expenses did not meet an end | 13 | 6.84 |
| - Household workforce | 13 | 6.84 |
| - Family debts | 75 | 39.47 |
| - Health of family members | 21 | 11.05 |
| - Other | 14 | 7.37 |
| Total | 190 | 100.00 |

The community members faced the problem in family debts most (39.47%). This was followed by topographic condition in cultivation and livestock rearing (28.42%), and health of family members (11.05%). Most of them (90.53%) had heard about sufficiency economy.

Table 3. Understanding and adoption of the sufficiency economy of the informants

| Item | Understanding | | | adaption | | |
|---|---------------|-------|-------------|-----------|------|-------------|
| | \bar{X} | S.D. | description | \bar{X} | S.D. | description |
| Moderation | 3.28 | 1.06 | Moderate | 3.76 | 1.12 | High |
| Reasonableness | 3.35 | 1.13 | Moderate | 3.74 | 0.99 | High |
| Good immunity | 2.69 | 1.21 | Moderate | 3.45 | 1.14 | High |
| Knowledge carefulness in earning a living) | 2.66 | 1.085 | Moderate | 3.30 | 1.18 | Moderate |
| Virtue(honestly, tolerance, diligence, mercy) | 3.96 | 1.10 | high | 4.14 | 0.88 | high |
| Mean | 3.19 | 1.03 | moderate | 3.96 | 1.07 | High |

As a whole, the informants had a moderate level of understanding in the principles of sufficiency economy (\bar{X} = 3.19). Based on its details, they had a high level of understanding in terms of virtue (\bar{X} = 3.96). As a whole, however, they had a high level of adoption (\bar{X} = 3.96). Based on its details, the following were found at a high level: 1) virtue (\bar{X} = 4.14), 2) moderation (\bar{X} = 3.76); 3)

reasonableness (\bar{X} =2.75); and 4) good immunity (\bar{X} =3.45), respectively. However, knowledge was found at a moderate level (\bar{X} = 3.30).

Conclusions

Most of the informants (81.05%) were female, married (\bar{X} =88.11) and age range of 51-60 years also found most (37.89%). The following attributes of the informants were found most: four family members (27.33%), elementary school graduates (34.74%), agricultural occupation (41.05%), head of house group in the community (66.84%), and 10 years of service and above (35.26%).

For agricultural occupation, most of the informants were rice farmers and field crop growers (51.88%). The informants gained knowledge on farming from the school most (26.26%). Less than one-half of the informants (29.47%) wanted to increase their agricultural knowledge continually. The family problem found most among the informants was family debts (39.47%). Less than one – half of the informants (28.42%) had the problem in topographic condition for cultivation and livestock rearing. Most of the informants (90.53%) had heard about sufficiency economy.

As a whole, the informants understood and adopted the principles of sufficiency economy at a moderate level (\bar{X} = 8.65) but the virtue condition was found at a high level (\bar{X} = 3.9). In contrast, they had a high level of the adoption of the sufficiency economy principle (\bar{X} =3.96) in which virtue condition was found at a highest level (\bar{X} = 4.14).

Discussion

According to results of the study, discussion is of two aspects: 1) Baan Thon Na Lab community, Baan Doong district, Udonthani province is the aging society. This is because results of the study show that there are a lot of people in the community having the age of 51 years old and above. Besides many families there are nuclear ones having not more than 4 family members. Most of the people there still earn a living on farming as main on supplementary occupation but their income is not high or not less than 50,000 baht per head per year. However, it may be enough for them because Baan Thon Na Lab is a rural community which the cost of living there is not high. 2) regarding agricultural occupation, about one-half of people there grow rice and field crops (51.88%), followed by orcharding (42.18%). About one-fifth (21.77%) do mixed farming. This denotes that although people there have adopted the concept of sufficiency economy but they do not truly practice it. Therefore, government and private sectors should promote and support them to practice

farming in accordance with the new theory of farming more than ever. This is because results of the study indicate that the informants mostly gain agricultural knowledge through the school, family members, radio, agricultural journal, newspaper, and neighbors.

The main problems found in community members are a family debts and expenses which do not meet an end. In fact, these problems can be found in many families in Thailand. For the problem in health of family members, this is due to a lot of people in the community are 51 years old and above so it is normally to be a problem of old people. Besides, findings show that, as a whole, the informants understand the principles of sufficiency economy at a moderate level except the virtue condition which is found at a high level. However, they adopt the principles at a high level and the virtue condition is found to have a highest average mean score. This implies that Baan Thon Na Lab community members have adopted the principles of sufficiency economy philosophy. This conforms to the informants who understand the principles of the sufficiency economy in terms of virtue condition at a high level. However, they had a moderate level of understanding in the principles of the sufficiency economy. Based on results of the study, it can be concluded that Baan Thon Na Lab community can still be developed on improved for sustainable progress; particularly on farming in accordance with the New Theory of agriculture application.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for the researcher himself as an agricultural teacher at Baan Thon Na Lab community, Baan Doong district Udonthani province

1.1 Correct knowledge and understanding about the principles of sufficiency economy should truly be extended or provided by introducing the New Theory of agriculture as the priority.

1.2 The New Theory of agriculture and the sufficiency economy should be integrated in agriculture subject and others

1.3 It should have a campaign on the application of the New Thong of agriculture for community members to practice continually in accordance with the sufficiency economy philosophy.

2. Suggestions for concerned public and private agencies

2.1 concerned public and private agencies should coordinate with the community organization and agriculture teachers in the extension of knowledge and understanding about the New Thong in agriculture and the sufficiency economy to community members.

2.2 concerned public and private agencies should continually promote and support community members to adopt the New Theory in agriculture for earning a living

3. Suggestion for further study

3.1 It should have in-depth research on the operation in accordance with sufficiency economy of Baan Thon Na Lab community, Baan Doong district, Udonthani province.

3.2 It should have in-depth research on needs for the adoption of the New Theory in Agriculture for earning a living of Baan Thon Na Lab community, Baan Doong district, Udonthani province.

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