Involvement in Community Planning:  
The Case Study of Bang Nang Li Community,  
Samut Songkram Province, Thailand

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Abstract—This paper studied the participation of people of the five villages of Bang Nang Li Community in Ampawa District, Samut Songkram Province, in designing community planning. The population was 2,755 villagers from the 5 villages with 349 people sampled. The level of involvement was measured by using Likert Five Scale for: preparing readiness of local people in the community, providing information for community and self analysis and learning, designing goals and directions for community development, designing strategic plans for community projects, and operating according to the plans. All process items reported a medium level of involvement except the item of preparing readiness for local people that presented the highest mean score. A test of a correlation between personal factors and level of involvement in designing the community planning unveiled no correlation between gender, age and career. Contrarily, the findings revealed that the villagers’ educational level and community membership status had a correlation with their level of involvement in designing the community planning.

Keywords—Community Development, Community Planning, People Participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2550 (2007) [1], the intent of good governance for the benefit of Thai people asserted under the Article 87 stated Directive Principles of Public Participation Policies: (1) To promote public participation in the determination of policies and plans for economic and social development at both national and local levels; (2) To promote and lend support to public participation in political decision-making, the planning of economic and social development and the provision of public services; (3) To promote and lend support to public participation in the scrutiny of the exercise of the State powers at all levels in the form of varying professional organizations or occupational groups or in other forms; (4) To promote political strength of the public, put forth the law establishing a civic fund for political development for assisting the operation of public activities of localities and lend support to the operation of civic groups forming networks in all forms in order for those groups to be able to express opinions and propose demands of localities in their areas; and (5) To promote and provide to the public education on political development and the democratic regime of government with the King as Head of the State and promote honest and fair voting by the public at an election. Public participation under this section is founded upon the consideration of close proportion between men and women. Public participation is a process in which people or stakeholders have their voice for sharing visions and partaking social activities that concern their livelihood beneficiaries. Besides, public voice must be significantly exercised as part of policy making and decision making of the state. In an open system, public participation is conducted in a two-way communication scheme, and can be both direct and indirect. The process includes information sharing among stakeholders, developing public expertise and creativity while enhancing group unity, respect and credibility of each stakeholder [7].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community planning is a process that helps communities solve problems, protect important community features and guide how the community will grow and change in the future. Community planning involves active participation from the people residing in that locality in making decision about the implementation of processes, programs and projects which affect them. Community planning should reflect ways that facilitate people to make a living on self-sufficiency life and reduce external dependency. In order to achieve these, considerations upon the capacity of resources, availability of local wisdom, way of living and local traditions and environment is required. Community planning requires a gathering of people to direct the community’s development goals by utility of a database or availability of and accessibility to useful information, to create plans that directly affect people’s livelihood and activities relevant to community development and problem-solving [2]. Bang Nang Li Community in Ampawa District, Samut Songkram Province has a community-driven development process for the community’s strength, entrepreneurship trainings, Community Enterprise, and local administrative office that promote and support continuous and transparent participation of people in each step. Emphasizing on the importance of public participation, community strengthening, self dependency and inter-dependency among the people in the community and self responsibility for the community, people of Bang Nang Li need to show their roles during the involvement process in

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making the community development plan. The process consists of preparing readiness for local people in the community, providing information for community and self analysis and learning, designing goals and directions for community development, designing strategic plans for community projects, and operating according to the plans. This paper was aimed to study the participation of people of the 5 villages of Bang Nang Li Community in community planning, by focusing on involvement in the processes and determining correlations between personal factors and the level of involvement.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper was aimed to study the participation of people in the 5 villages of Bang Nang Li Community involved the community planning. The methods utilized included secondary and exploratory study. The population of this study was 2,755 villagers [3]. The sampling was based on Taro Yamane calculation at 95 percent significance level, which gave the size of 349 samples. The level of involvement was measured by use of Likert Five Scale as measurement from preparing readiness for local people in the community, providing information for community and self analysis and learning, designing goals and directions for community development, designing strategic plans for community projects, and operating according to the plans. A secondary study was conducted in order to analyze the current community planning and reports, whereas the exploratory study used a questionnaire given to the heads and members of the selected 5 villages and returned back to the author within 60 days (during April and May, 2013). Descriptive statistics including frequency distribution and percentage were used report demographic findings. In addition, mean and standard deviation were used for the findings of level of people involvement. Furthermore, the paper also studied the correlation between personal factors of gender, age, educational level, career and community membership, and their level of involvement in designing community planning, in which the Chi-Square was used to analyze the data.

IV. FINDINGS

The demographic findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were female, 55.30 percent, followed by male respondents making 41.55 percent. Three point fifteen percent (3.15%) of the respondents responded no answer for the gender question. The age group between 51-60 years old was reported as the majority, at 31.52 percent, followed by the age group between 41-50 years old at 26.07 percent. The educational level finding revealed that most of the respondents finished primary school as their highest educational level making 57.02 percent, while another 17.48 percent had finished lower secondary school. It was also found that most of the respondents or 41.83 percent worked in agricultural sector, followed by those who were temporary workers. Among these 5 villages, the majority of respondents who responded to the questionnaire were from the fourth village, making 23.21 percent, followed by 22.35 percent the second village.

Table 1 presented the level of involvement in the community planning process, measured by mean and standard deviation. The figure explained a medium level of people involvement with an average mean score of 3.48 ($\bar{x} = 3.48$). All process items reported medium level of involvement except the item of preparing readiness for local people which presented the highest mean score of 3.63 ($\bar{x} = 3.63$) implying a high level of involvement. The following showed a medium level: providing information for community and self analysis and learning, and designing strategic plans for community projects, both had mean score of 3.46 ($\bar{x} = 3.46$), the items of designing goals and directions for community development and operating according to the plans, both had a mean score of 3.42 ($\bar{x} = 3.42$).

A test of a correlation between personal factors and the level of involvement in community planning unveiled no correlation between gender, age and career, with a significance level of 0.05. Contrarily, the findings revealed that educational level and community membership had a correlation with their level of involvement, at a significance level of 0.05.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Meaning of Level of Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparing readiness for local people</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing information for community and self analysis and learning</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Designing goals and directions for community development</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Designing strategic plans for community projects</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Operating according to the plans</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. DISCUSSION

An average level of people involvement in designing the community planning was at a medium level. The findings can imply that the majority of people in the community perceived an importance to community planning, had an understanding towards participation as the public role in designing directions and guidelines of community development to meet with the current social conditions, and towards urgent needs of community development for a better living quality of the residents. This discussion on the findings is made in accordance with the steps in the participation process as follows:

The stage of preparing readiness for local people presented a high level of involvement from the community people. The finding could be explained through the practice within Bang
Nang Li Community of providing sufficient publicity about the importance of participation, knowledge of participation and directional guidelines for the community planning provided by the local governmental office such as sub-district municipality or sub-district administrative organization (SAO). The people have a shared understanding towards basic information of the community such as geographical location, weather, culture, traditions and festivals, local resources and way of life, which are useful in making community plans.

The involvement in providing information for community and self analysis and learning was reported a medium level. The reason was based upon an insufficient knowledge and comprehension of the community leaders and members in the community. They do not have sufficient knowledge and skill in making SWOT analysis, environmental scan and scanning for problems which are useful for prioritizing problems and solution, and brainstorming. Thus, relevant knowledge and skill must be provided for the community leaders and members.

Community involvement in designing goals and directions for the community development presented a medium level. The community members’ role for sharing ideas in designing goals and directions for the community development is still vague. Besides, the members have a shortage of knowledge and understanding towards local resource capacity development. They should therefore be trained and given opportunities for sharing ideas to increase involvement in this stage.

The finding disclosed a medium level of people involvement in this stage, designing strategic plans for community projects. Importance of public policy, project and strategic management knowledge could be raised in this stage, in order to be utilized in community planning. The community planning must be in accordance with governmental policy. Therefore, community members are required to recognize and make a comprehension on this aspect, in order that they will be able to perform their role productively in designing the community planning.

Operating according to the plans stage also presented a medium level of people involvement. The finding unveiled that not all members were involved in the stage of operating the planning due to a lack of publicity of relevant information for the members. This leads to a reduction of attention and recognition of the members towards the development and evaluation of the community plans.

The community planning requires an entire membership of the community in performing their role in participating in every stage of the designing the community plans, regardless of personal factors. Nevertheless, the factors of educational level and community membership status were found to have a correlation with a level of involvement. This finding points towards a need of the community members, especially those who had lower educational level, for a better quality of life. With this recognition, they have therefore a motivation in partaking in the community planning process.

VI. FUTURE STUDIES

Suggestions to be made in accordance with the findings addressed an issue of public relations and advertisement for tourism in Thailand. As Thailand is a land of Buddhism with friendly people. Content to be produced to promote this uniqueness should be focused, for example memorable experiences in terms of Buddhism, religious travel with association to art and culture. This will enhance value to be perceived by tourists who visit Bangkok and Thailand. Moreover, as the findings revealed that it was likely that tourists had less loyalty at an attitude level than at a behavioural level, the public and private sectors in tourism are suggested to initiate policy and action to accelerate the number of tourists’ revisits, such as incentive provision and discounts for revisiting tourists to increase their loyalty in Bangkok and Thailand.

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REFERENCES