



MACROJOURNALS

The Journal of **MacroTrends** in **Social Science**

An Application of Buddhism Principles with Sufficiency Economic Philosophy in Developing the Quality of Life of Social Network Group in Thailand

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Abstract

This research is aimed to 1) study the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in developing the quality of life of communities in Prae province. 2) study the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in establishing the social network group in Prae province. Regarding this research, the population and sample used in this study included 150 participants from agencies, organizations and villagers as participants in the training, and visiting the application of Dharma principles with sufficiency economic philosophy for improving the quality of life, using the interview form used for 13 project responsible persons of social network group in Prae province in relation to the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy for additional information. The analytical statistics used the study included percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Keywords: *Buddhism Principles, Sufficiency Economic, Quality of Life*

1. Introduction

Such Dharma principles of teaching on Buddhism has been contributed and consistent to the project implementation resulting from the royal initiative as a whole, particularly, in accordance with special consistency as the concept of "Sufficiency economy" due to the royal initiative is consistent with the Dharma principles of teaching on Buddhism under the middle path or Matchimapatipata which is "the fitted practice" featuring the obvious characteristics of equilibrium or balance and fitted practice. This is the balance in lines of practical and psychological terms, and this is the significant basis that His Majesty the King has applied in order to resolve the crisis of the nation and leded main people of the country beyond the

economic crisis and is able to get into the good life, having the equilibrium according to Buddhism¹

2. Research Methods

To achieve the objectives, the project team has designed the project implementation in term of Participatory Action Research which has learned together with the studied communities and the followings are sequences of research implementation:

1. Preparation of meeting for project team and the first screening was made at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Phrae campus in order to prepare the team work and build the understanding of the key concepts of sufficiency economy and the goals of project objectives together including to choose the targeted communities.

1.1 Scanning, it was to search for determining the target of strong community with economic self-sufficiency in Phrae province resulting from the implementation of numerous supporting development agencies in the past, for example, the project on community master plan for solving the poverty undertaken by the Board of National Economic and Social Development and resulting from the initiation of the community itself.

2. Screening 1-2, it was selection of modelling community with strong economic self-sufficiency in order to find the community that having features on level of learning center level of sufficiency economy.

The author and team has prepared the meeting for selecting the targeted communities by choosing the studied strong community resulting from the implementation and support of organizations in the areas. This was gained with having criteria for consideration from the communities and households where they understood and applied the Dharma principles and sufficiency economic philosophy for improving the quality of life and social networks into real practice in daily life. The research team selected seven different areas as the targeted communities, i.e. 1) Group of agricultural sufficiency village 2) Group of integrated agriculture 3) Group of industrial community 4) Group of sufficiency economy learning center 5) Group of economic, community organization 6) Occupational group and 7) Group of funding community management.

3. Review the related literature and collect the documents in accordance with the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in developing the quality of life and social networks for processing and synthesis for creating the conceptualization and the overall situation in term of strong sufficiency economic community.

4. Get the field trip in the workshop areas by using the depth structured interview with those responsible groups, i.e. 1) Group of agricultural sufficiency village 2) Group of integrated agriculture 3) Group of industrial community 4) Group of sufficiency economy learning center 5) Group of economic, community organization 6) Occupational group and 7) Group of funding community management to crystallize the ideas together of the guidance on driven approach in

¹ Phra Dhammapidok (Por. Or. Payutto), Characteristics of Buddhism, Bangkok: the Buddhist Foundation, 1996, p.9.

application of sufficiency economy and the application of Dharma principles with sufficiency economy philosophy for improving the quality of life and social networks.

5. The author and research assistants provided the field trip into areas for distributing the questionnaires and collecting the data for studying the guidance of occupying the career and way of life in three aspects as follows:

- 1) Implementation under the project.
- 2) Application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in developing the quality of life of social network groups in Prae province.
- 3) Achievement in application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in developing the quality of life of social network groups in Prae province.

3. Results

1. Regarding the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in developing the quality of life of communities in Prae province, it found that it has used the Middle Path principles in working in terms of spending life with self-sufficiency in consuming, in agriculture with sufficient farming whether it would be animal or planting farms by not doing too much or too little to suit with their own lives and the rest of yield was able to sell or give the knowledge to interested persons. This included using the principle of *Mattanyata* or being moderation in sufficient with fitting for the consumption. The fitting that helped the quality of life meeting with the satisfaction for spending life in appropriate way, not too much or too less of consuming. In addition, the principle of exploitation is not hurting the others, and respecting our rights and rights of others, equally, having the honesty, not greedy. Moreover, to use the principle of right livelihood, it must not cheat the others as well as the gained yield to be sold at fair price, not taking advantage to the consumers, and the goods must be qualified, not using the chemicals in order to let the consumers get the optimal benefit as well as using the principle of self-reliance.

2. Resulting from the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in establishing the social network group in Prae province, it found that provision of training on self-reliance to numerous community groups has been made within the province by building the learning center of sufficiency economy as the place for people in the community exchanging the knowledge both in way of life and the way for occupying the career. The Dharma principles that the learning center of sufficiency economy has applied in practice included the principle of Middle path by spending life with sufficient manner, not too much or too less of consuming as well as using the principle of nonviolence or it was not hurting the others, do respecting its rights and rights of others, knowing the estimation of expense in daily life by teaching the household accounting (income and expense) statement. In addition, the learning center has provided the training, practically, for interested persons in attending training course in agricultural field such as rice farming by using the effective fertilizers or effective microorganism (EM) and doing the fishing farm in small plastic pond, rearing the chicken with termites as food supplement which the villagers have received the knowledge in real practice and being able to bring the gained knowledge distributing to their communities and well expanding the body knowledge. Moreover, teaching and learning to live with nature

without hurting each other to the community has been made as well as given the suggestion how to recognize the importance of environment by using the principles of threefold precepts, i.e. morality, mind, and wisdom, having the feeling ashamed to the sin, having strong spiritual and firm manner, concentration and understanding what is going on according to the natural process, not being greedy and not hurting anyone both life and nature by preparation of these trainings, and the participants will be the senders of knowledge of gained application of Dharma principles with sufficiency economy philosophy distributed to the people in their own communities, afterwards.

4. Commentary

Regarding the application of Buddhism principles with sufficiency economic philosophy in establishing the social network group in Prae province, it found that provision of training on self-reliance to numerous community groups has been made within the province by building the learning center of sufficiency economy as the place for people in the community exchanging the knowledge both in way of life and the way for occupying the career. The Dharma principles that the learning center of sufficiency economy has applied in practice included the principle of Middle path by spending life with sufficient manner, not too much or too less of consuming as well as using the principle of nonviolence or it was not hurting the others, do respecting its rights and rights of others, knowing the estimation of expense in daily life by teaching the household accounting (income and expense) statement.

5. Suggestions

1. The principle of sufficiency economy should be made by giving the public relations to the people to follow in practice in terms of honesty, diligence, patience, good manner in practice and spending life in simple and sufficient ways by holding the principles of sufficiency economy philosophy.

2. Training on the application of Buddhist principles with the sufficiency economy philosophy to interested persons should be made.

3. Building of network to let people in every community participate in using the sufficiency economy philosophy for their way of life.

Acknowledgment

This research report "An Application of the Buddhism Principles with Sufficiency Economic Philosophy in Developing the Quality of Life of Social Network Group in Prae Province" was completely finished with great mercy and cooperation from qualified experts of the Buddhist Research Institute, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, who provided some advices and suggestions for improvement and correction of beneficial terms. This helped the research carry out along with the correct guidance with great success. Thanks and keep pleasures the committee with high appreciation.

Thanks to the library staff's' Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Phrae campus for providing the facility in order to finding the documents, literatures and related research works for this study, and the unforgotten person who provided information beneficial to the research.

Reference

Phra Buddhimpidok (Por. Or. Payutto), **Characteristics of Buddhism**, Bangkok: the Buddhist Foundation, 1996.