

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and setting

At present, it is the era of information and communication technology and knowledge is power which it must be used by everyone. Thus, knowledge and information to be transferred to target personal must be dependent on appropriate communication technology.

The National Research Agenda for Agricultural Education and Communication (2007-2010) Research Priority Areas which explains that Agricultural communications seeks to support and improve human interaction and decision-making related to agriculture, broadly defend. How does information and media delivery affect thinking process, problem solving, and decision making related to agriculture? (Areas, 2007)

The most important thing for human resource development is the provision of knowledge and information through appropriate technology or communication process.(Kaewthep, Yenchabok, & Inthorathat, 2005)

Thailand is an agricultural-based country. Hence, the strengthening of agricultural sector of the country should be based on the understanding of agricultural communication process.

The Thai government realizes on the importance of agriculture, establishing the 10th economic and social development plan (2007-2011) as a result. The plan aimed to develop human resource by using a strategy of technology transfer advocated by Roger (1983). This conforms to a research of UNDP stating that human resource development particularly farmers should be focused on the transfer of technology to improve food and fiber production in Thailand (The Development Project of The United Nations Organization in Thailand).(Project & Nations, 2007)

The concept of the sufficiency economy philosophy was raised for the national agenda to convince the farmers on the importance of the concept (Yenchabok & et.al.,

2004)The sufficiency economy philosophy can help farmers to become more self sufficient and self-reliance resulting in a better standard of living for the Thai people and farmers.

Thus, the relationship of the agricultural communication process has many factors affecting the adoption process of the farmers which they are able to apply the sufficiency economy philosophy concept to their daily life activities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Farmers in Chiang Mai have problems in poverty, lacking of farm land due to limited area of land and an increase of population size, a decrease of farm area holding, and inappropriate using of loans. Besides, they sold yields with a low price due to the 1998 world and Thailand economic crisis which caused the famers to look for loans for household expenses. Based on data obtained from the National Social and Economic Development Committee, it showed that the number of poor people increased from 1.11 to 2.28 million people. Moreover, the data obtained from the National Statistics Bureau indicates the debts per household increased from 80,000 to 100,100 baht or 24.8 percent per year (Manager Weekly Magazine, 2006).

In 2007, households in Chiang Mai had an average monthly income of 14,386 baht whereas they had an average monthly expenses of 12,480 bath (86.8 percent of an average monthly income per household). Meanwhile, they had debts for 93,611 baht per household on average (6.5 times of an average monthly income per household). Most of the debts (64.9 percent) were spent on household expenses and followed by farming (19.8 percent) (Chiang Mai Provincial Statistics office, 2008). Having a high level of expenses and debts case farmers have a hard life or their lands are taken by loan providers. To solve this problem, the philosophy of sufficiency economy can be used as a guideline for alleviating the problem of poverty because it helps farmers solve the problem of debts and reduce external factor dependence.

Based on previous studies, farmers realized and adopted the philosophy of sufficiency economy since they had knowledge and understanding of the philosophy.

Besides, they had positive attitude and adopted the philosophy of sufficiency economy (Wasri, 1999). In 2005-2007, however, the National Social and Economic Development Committee Office established continual economic movement process aiming at encouraging people especially farmers to adopt the philosophy of sufficiency economy as a guideline for daily life activities. Also, the committee of sufficiency economy movement had concluded an important statement that the creation of correct understanding on the philosophy of sufficiency economy for effective application needed to construct intensive learning process. However, it did not have a clear concept whether how to construct the learning process, how to change learning behavior, and what are steps of behavioral change. Therefore, conducting a research on new body of knowledge should play important roles in finding the answers; particularly on the research for learning and social change. One most important factor is an analysis of learning process in a community level which can be an important mechanism for the adjustment of visions and values concerning with methods of production, thinking, and learning ways of life of local people (Phanthasen, 2007).

In fact, the sufficiency economy communication is likely to have an influence towards the processes of perception, learning, understanding, attitude, adoption, and working experience on sufficiency economy of farmers.

With regards to the culture of Thai communication, Kaewthep et.al. (2006) found that the relationship between the message sender and the receiver might be more important than the media and the message. In other words, human factor and sender - receiver relationship are variables which must be carefully considered as much as that of the message - channel - media.

An effective and appropriate analysis of communication is likely to effect learning, attitude and experience of the farmers; leading to the adoption of the philosophy of sufficiency economy for sustainable income earning. The main issue of this study is to prepare communication process for the farmers to have the occurrence of learning and adopting of the philosophy of sufficiency economy.

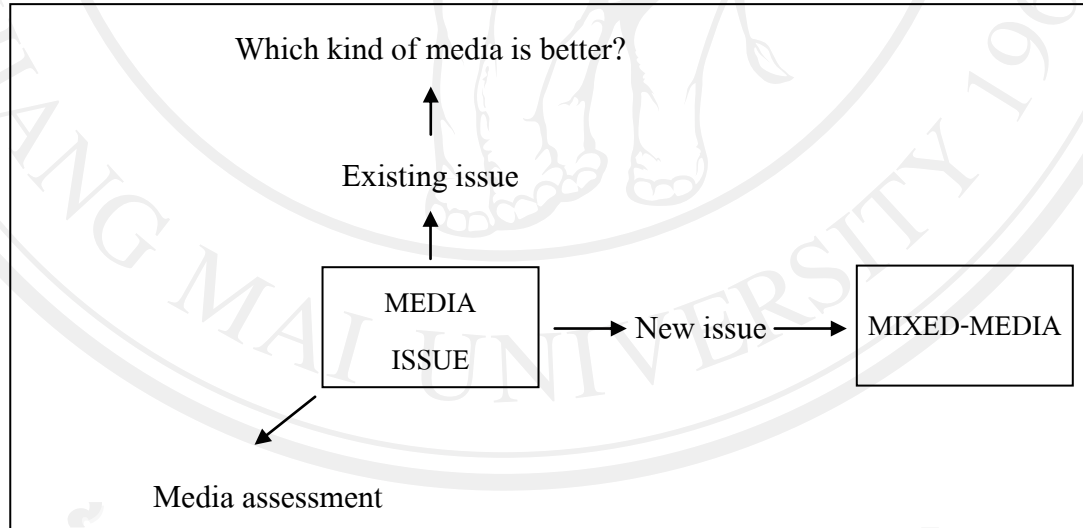
In this study, therefore, the author aims to find how the farmers learn about the philosophy of economy through communication process and the level of knowledge, attitude, and experience in the philosophy of sufficiency economy. This is to find guidelines for the preparation of communication process suited to learning, understanding, attitude, experience, and adoption of the farmers. Results of the study might be beneficial to various concerned agencies in the promotion of the philosophy of sufficiency economy for a better standard of living and sustainability in farmers' career.

Chiang Mai province farmers suffer from poverty caused by the sale of their lands to larger cooperate organizations which consists of 22 districts and 2 sub - districts (537,570 households total, of which 198,598 households are farm families). (Office, 2006) Without land and a lack of knowledge of self-sufficiency, farmers suffer from food insecurity. Farmers do not engage in communication channels that speak to the sufficiency economy philosophy. Therefore, this study will examine the communication processes necessary and possibly lacking among farming communities that would lead to an increased quality of life for farm families. This study will also examine the communication process of farmers, focusing on the process and rate of adoption of The sufficiency economy philosophy. It is important to know how farmers communicate communication networks in regard to adopting The sufficiency economy philosophy. So that government workers and assist farmers in improving their quality of life

- To evaluate the communication process in order to secure high rate and adoption of sufficiency economy among farmers
- To explore the adoption of sufficiency economy of farmers
- By observation, how to evaluate the adoption process of the farmers? This will be the indicator for the adoption.
- Based on the adoption process of the farmers or not, what stage of the communication process effects the farmers adoption?

Media Issue

- Is it true that mass media can access to farmers most?
- There are several researches stating that about 90 percent of the farmers perceive the sufficiency economy concept through television. However, it is believed that television only interests people about the concept because it has no presentation about the details of the concept.
- Mass media like radio, television, newspaper, and magazine play a little role in the concept of sufficiency economy. They just present report, educational tour, and demonstration beds which are not applicable in the real life situations.
- There are obstacles for personal media particularly on the assessment. For example, there are few staff of sub-district center and mostly is one way communication they mostly focus on big scale and rich farmers. Mixed-media concept is analyzed and believed that it is effective. But how to mix it?



1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims at finding guidelines for an appropriate communication process effecting farmer adoption on the sufficiency economy philosophy.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the communication process on the adoption of sufficiency economy philosophy by farmers in Chiang Mai province

This study will examine the communication processes necessary and possibly lacking among farming communities that would lead to increased quality of life.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study were included the following:

1. To investigate learning condition on the philosophy of sufficiency economy through the communication process of farmers in Chiang Mai province ;
2. To find out levels of knowledge, attitude, and the adoption of sufficiency economy philosophy of the farmers ;
3. To find factors effecting the adoption of the philosophy of sufficiency economy of the farmers ; and
4. To synthesize guidelines for the preparation of an appropriate communication process effecting the adoption of sufficiency economy of the farmers.

1.5 Definition of terms

1. Elements of communication refer to elements on communication used for technology and knowledge on the sufficiency economy philosophy transfer (Berlo, 1960).

This comprises the following:

1. Sender
2. Message
3. Channel
4. Receiver

2. Adoption process refers to the farmers having acquired knowledge through communication factors or various media and they have adopted in accordance with the adoption process (Roger, and Shoemaker, 1971)

1. Awareness
2. Interest
3. Evaluation
4. Trial
5. Adoption

3. Farmers refer to Individuals doing agricultural careers of all types.

4. Socio – economic characteristics refers to age, sex, income, and educational attainment, size of land holding, and being members of various groups.

5. Behaviors on information perception refer to exposure to information and knowledge on the sufficiency economy philosophy which is developed from the following:

- sources of information and knowledge
- content of information
- frequency in the perception of information
- reliability of information
- application of the information

6. Sufficiency economy may be referred to moderate daily life activities which make people be happy and satisfied with what they are and have. That is, people or the community needs not to be rely on outsiders. The most important thing is that they can be self – reliant. They can make use of the resources that they have in their daily life activities.

The sufficiency economy philosophy (The Office of the Committee for National Economic and Social Development, 2004) can be investigated in the following:

- 1) guidelines for practice in accordance with the sufficiency economy philosophy

- 2) the sufficiency economy philosophy applied for daily life activities based on self – reliance
- 3) basic concept on earning based on the sufficiency economy philosophy
- 4) Basic factors on knowledge and understanding for daily life activities.

1.6 Scope & Limitations of the Study

1. Locality - this study will be conducted in Chiang Mai province.
2. Content - This study will focus on the concept of sufficiency economy for the farmers in accordance with the Royal initiative based on the principles of the three steps of the New Theory as follows : 1) Moderacy - this is based on the basic of thrift (Angkasith ,2007). This conforms to a study of Phatthanochai (2008: P.27) that guidelines for using of the philosophy of sufficiency economy in agricultural development in a household level focuses on multi- production i.e. Mixed farming , the New Theory farming , agro- forestry , reduction and cancellation of chemicals pesticides, and yield processing for added value .
3. Area - this study will be conducted in Chiang Mai province
4. Sample- this study will be conducted in Chiang Mai province farmers (leader of households)
5. Content - Communication elements effecting the adoption process of the sufficiency economy philosophy. This will investigate the following:
 - 5.1 Sender- An individual: academician, community leader, neighbor, relative, merchant
 - Specific action: manual, brochure, poster, exhibition.
 - Mass media: newspaper, radio, television, news tower
 - 5.2 Content the adoption of innovation
 - Comparative benefit - relevant to the existing one
 - Simple - can be tried out - can achieve the goal

5.3 Communication channel

- An individual: visiting and asking for suggestions
- Group: lecture, educational tour, demonstration
- Mass media: newspaper, radio, television, internet, exhibition

5.4 Receiver- consciousness – realization - needs

5.5 Behaviors on exposure to information

- Sources of information
- Content of information
- Frequency in exposure to information
- Checking of reliability of information
- Application of information

1.7 Basic Assumptions of the study

This study assumed that:

Communication process is the part investigate variable - senders, message, channel, and receiver for the adoption process of the sufficiency economy philosophy.

1.8 Significance of the study

Results of this study will show the communication process and the adoption process of the farmers

Results of the study can be further applied by the farmers because data collection will be done from the sample group. Statistic method can explain and find relationship for the reference of other farmers living outside Chiang Mai province