

**A Paradigm for Rural Poverty Eradication :
40 years from the Wealth Oriented Paradigm
to the Stable System of Relationship Paradigm , the Case of the Thai State.**

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Abstract

The wealth-oriented paradigm identifies rural poverty within the contexts of materialistic wealth. Consequently, the state compartmentalizes and diminishes the issue of poverty ,removing it from the rural context, in which life and nature relate to each other within the scope of a broader system, viewing it instead only in term of its economic aspect ,while the management of production and material consumption proceed in line with modernization and wealth as standard criteria. This paradigm has influenced rural people’s attitudes, ways of thinking and their conceptual frameworks about life and nature. People place maximum value on happiness gained from material consumption(consumerism), which is possible only when they are rich. Each person seeks individual pleasure, with a minimal relation to others and views nature anthropocentrically.

In fact, rural poverty relates to human and ecological systems that feature various complicated and related dimensions. As a result, the management of rural poverty under the wealth-oriented paradigm of the Thai state has seriously damaged the existence of life-community systems and rural ecological systems. After three decades of disaster ,some people’s movements have revived their own paradigm. According to this paradigm , everything relates to and affects everything else , in a holistic manner. Thus, ways of life under the “stable system of relationships Paradigm” aim at developing and managing various relationship systems in order to achieve stability as a whole. Wealth and material stability are not separated ,while the relationships of “the web of life” system , aiming toward stability , are managed.

At the end of World War II, the United Nations declared the 1960 decade (1960 – 1970) a decade to fight for poverty eradication in all undeveloped countries, and subsequently extended such declaration to cover another decade (1961 – 1971). Throughout that period, tremendous mobilization of budget, personnel, and natural resources by undeveloped countries had taken place plus different forms of cooperation from developed countries and international organizations such as allowances, loans, experts, knowledge, technology etc., with an aim to wipe out poverty–stricken conditions of undeveloped countries and of the entire world. Nevertheless the outcome of development did not fully meet the set objectives. The United Nations once again declared the Year 1996 the International Year for Poverty Eradication and the years 1997 -2006 a United Nations Decade for Poverty Eradication. Later on, just before the Year 2000 the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) jointly announced a determined intention to eradicate the world’ s poverty using an established Slogan “ A World Free from Poverty ” and a policy to spread economic growth all over through concentrated measures and positions to decrease the gap between the poor and the rich. In the farewell speech by

Michel Camdessus, former IMF Chairman (2000), he vigorously repeated the importance of this policy and cited with tears from deeply moved feeling a tragic case he found from poverty.¹

World poverty situation was closely related with poverty situation in Thailand and shared the same characteristics. This was because Thailand joined the United Nations Decade of Development together with other nations since the very beginning starting from the First National Economic Development Plan in 1961 with intimate support from the United States and the World Bank in order to get rid of poverty along the same lines with other developing countries in the Free World. Thailand received assistance for the surveys of fundamental problems of poverty and the readiness for development (International Bank for Reconstruction and Evolution, 1960) as well as money contribution for planned development from the World Bank, the United States, Japan and other sources.

However, after more than 40 years of continuous development, poverty remains the country's big problem. There are as many as 7.9 millions of the ultra poor who are impoverished over generations by the high rate of increase of 22.3 percent during the economic crisis, 1997 (Medhi Krongkaew, 2000, pp.5-6) which indicate certain insecurities in the living of the poor. More noticeably many characteristics of poverty have not been much changed from the beginning of the First National Economic Development Plan in 1961 (Office of the National Economic and Social Board, 2000, p.2) namely:

1) Poverty remains concentrated in the rural areas. There are 8.16 millions or 91.7 percent of rural poor as against 0.74 millions or 8.3 percent of urban poor in the country.

2) Regionally, the Northeastern Region has the highest number of the poor at 5.93 millions. By average, every 1 of 3 Northeasterners are poor.

3) The first 25 poorest provinces of the country house as high as 80 percent of all impoverished villages. Most of them are villages in 18 provinces in the Northeast which are found to be the same provinces selected for development under the Fifth National Economic and Social development Plan in the past 20 years.

4) The majority of the poor earn their living in agricultural sector. They are poor farmers who own small pieces of land for agriculture, have big-sized household and high dependency ratio of obligation in taking care of the elderly and children. It is also found that poor people receive less education than general population.

Although the latest data collected in 2002 find that in the rural areas of 75 provinces throughout the country there are 16,735 villages or 23.0 percent of the total targeted for rural poverty eradication (http://poverty.nesdb.go.thai/province/poor_area.htm / 05-2007). The most serious poverty problem is the increasing gap between poverty and richness as mentioned since the Second National Economic and

¹ A case of a 14 years old boy from an African country who tried to get away from impoverished conditions in his own country by hiding himself in a propeller of an aero plane heading for Europe. At the destination, the officers found him dead due to lack of breathing air together with a letter portraying his dreams of life in a new world that he could never get in.

Social Development Plan (1967). Household income of 20 percent of the highest income group accounts for approximately 56 percent of the total national income with slight increase from the year 1996, while 20 percent of the population in the lowest income group maintain the same ratio of 4.4 percent. Such wide gap makes Thailand a country with the highest problem of unequal distribution of income among countries in the same region (The World Bank, 2000, p.14).

Explanations for failure to eliminate poverty both internationally and nationally including Thailand are mostly directed to administration and management deficiencies i.e. the lack of transparency, high corruption, lack of people's participation, outmoded legislation and people's limited opportunity to pursue secondary education (The World Bank, 2000, pp.5-6), all of which result in low capacity for economic competition with foreign countries, as well as the lack of knowledge and other technologies essential for development (The World Bank, 1999, chapter 8).

The main substance that the author aims to deliver in this article is to point out that paradigm factors or fundamental philosophy and beliefs toward poverty¹ used by the State in rural poverty management are related also with rural poverty situation.

Paradigm for Rural Poverty Eradication: 40 Years of Wealth Oriented Development

“Should we find the ways to increase the quality and quantity of agricultural produces by cutting down the cost of production we can solve all problems. We will solve our internal problems concerning the people's cost of living, the living conditions of farmers and many other economic problems.”

Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat: December 2, 1959

“Although this government has been in service for only one year, we have successfully solved poverty problems and the prices of agricultural goods. Just recently the problem concerning rubber prices has been solved.....

Should this government stand for two terms, that is we are re-elected, poverty problems would be much or totally solved, as we work systematically without corruption. We believe that our farmers will have a monthly income of not less than 10,000 baht per family.”

Police Lieutenant Colonel Taksin Shinawatra: August 23, 2002

¹ Definition : “paradigm” means a constellation of concepts, values, perceptions and practices shared by a community, which forms particular vision of reality that is the basis of the way the community organizes itself (Capra, 1997, pp.5 – 6)

“Poverty” means the situation of living with income below the standard set by the State measured by per-capita income or the poverty line calculated from the basic needs for food and necessary commodities (NESDB Newsletter, 4th year edition, volume 1, 2000). This income poverty leads to six other poverty phenomena namely: 1) natural resource poverty; 2) social poverty such as the needs for love and care, including the collapse of the family and community; 3) political poverty which is the lack of participation in politics; 4) educational poverty; 5) cultural poverty; 6) spiritual poverty (NESDB Newsletter, 34th year edition, volume 2, 1998, p.34)

One can see that two state leaders in more than 40 years far apart, one gains the power from Coup d' Etat, the other one from democratic election with more than 10 millions votes, both hold the same identical paradigm for development. They strongly believe that the growth of produces as well as of income is an important medicine formula for poverty eradication and can lead to the solution of all other problems. "Growth" therefore is the ultimate goal of the state both in the era of country's development toward modernization during the Cold War when the world was divided into two extreme poles, and in the present era of globalization. The unchanged or limitedly changed paradigm or belief consists of the followings:

1. The development is a progress which is a technical matter and must be handled by experts (Preston, 1982) or "Kurus" in various fields such as economists, scientists, executives, CEO governors etc. who utilize technical concepts for the fulfillment of developmental planning, assuming that development is the growth which is measurable by durable materials, especially by various aspects of technology.

2. Developed countries especially the United States are models of highest desirable development, that is the Society of Wealth with high citizen's and national income, glamorous and convenient life-styles, and technical progress in all aspects. The American Standard is the model which other countries have to catch up with.

3. Thailand has maintained the same ways of thinking on development as adopted since the 1960 decade starting from the First National Economic Development Plan (1961) onward. This orientation is known as "Missing Factor Approach" using the method of finding out what are factors Thailand are lacking or missing that cause the country's underdevelopment 40 years ago, and currently what factors are missing that cause Thailand's inability to catch up with globalizes competition. At the same time "Single Factor Approach" is simultaneously adopted with a belief that there is a single factor which is a master key to enable Thailand to become modernized like other developed countries. At present "Single Factor" is the principal factor to push Thailand on the runway to overtake globalization stream.

To concretely understand this paradigm and its concepts, an example of Thai State paradigm and thinking methods at the beginning of the First National Economic Development Plan (1961 – 1966) is hereby illustrated:

1. The situation of underdevelopment or poverty is traditionally existed in Thailand and is most intensively in the rural areas, the nature of which is an absolute poverty.

2. Rural poverty exists because Thailand has not been developed toward modernization which requires necessary factors such as capitals, industrial production using machines, modern technology, know-how, systematic management and official mechanism, modernized attitudes and values which enhance scientific thinking, non-believing in empirically unjustified matters or occurrences, as well as all knowledge must be accurate and verifiable etc.

The Thai paradigm of economic growth and modernization assumed that the country's poverty, especially rural poverty, had been caused by the lack of capital, knowledge, machines, professional management and modernized values, as most people still retained their traditional values and beliefs. Evidently therefore factors essential for the road to modernization were extremely short of at the beginning of development. As a matter of fact, capital and management were not at zero but they were at low level, same as national growth products, national income, or savings. Although the State readily had bureaucratic mechanism and some development projects in the rural areas, they were scarce, off-and-on, and non-directive. Factors

that were completely lost in the rural areas were industrial production, modern scientific knowledge, technology, technical know-how, and scientific thinking. More importantly, the State viewed that values, beliefs, traits and ways of thinking of rural people were contradictory and obstructive to economic development and modernization and needed to be dealt with. However, the State believed that there existed in the rural areas positive factors that could generate capital development, especially natural resources which were still plentiful and could be transformed into development capital as well as a stand for industrial and urban development.¹

At the same time, the State viewed that the important single factor to wipe away underdevelopment and poverty was the establishment of economic growth which could be made possible with highest efficiency through the promotion of industrial and service industries, and through the shift from agriculture to industry, because industrial production created more value-added products which influenced higher rate of economic growth. Should the State be able to boost high enough growth to a trickle down level, poverty and underdevelopment would be gradually vanished. Other than that the State would be able to gain more capital (or budget) to be used for modernized development in other areas while individuals would also have more income and savings for the betterment of their quality of life. Income or money was therefore thought of as an important key for development under this paradigm.

Nevertheless, after the implementation of 2 – 3 National Development Plans, there was much more impact beyond the expectation of the academics who were the State's backbones, therefore new factors the State thought contributive to the set goals were successively injected. For example:

- The adding of population policy upon finding out that the increasing rate of population affected a decrease of the increasing rate of national gross income and national gross products, along with the formulation of rural “fundamental necessities”;
- The adding of natural environment preservation factor upon finding out that rural ecosystem had been deteriorating as a result of the development;
- The adjustment of “industrial” factor from import recompense industry to export-oriented industry;
- The adjustment of knowledge factor by promoting higher level of education to serve the labour market in the branches that were short of supply and were essential for modernization;
- Political trend toward more democratization, together with globalization stream necessitates the State to add such factors as people's participation, local wisdom, community economy, decentralization, civil society, good governance and grass-root economy (i.e. village fund, the Poor Bank, One Tambon One Product etc.) to the State Development Paradigm. Lastly, Thailand would have to develop the knowledge on genetic engineering to make use of biological diversity of existing resources, and also information service system to catch up with globalization that emphasized the importance of genetic engineering science.

Throughout the past 40 years, despite the fact that the State had injected many factors under the Missing Factors Approach concept, it never changed the original belief that economic growth is a Single Factor which is an important key

¹ *FM Sarit* mentioned that rural development was the support for the making use of hidden resources, while *Lt.Col. Taksin* declared that sometimes the community had to sacrifice ecosystem for public development.

opening up all other developmental factors at the times of modernization and globalization. “Money” was therefore the most important factor for development both at national and personal levels, while “Growth” automatically became the “Goal”, not only the “Tool” of development.

Evidently the State paradigm as mentioned above was fragmented in its ways of thinking, management, and mechanism used. The paradigm narrowed down poverty problems to cover only situations of no income, no capital, insufficient knowledge, moral deficiency, big family, unhealthiness, lack of participation, shortage of money in the community and inefficient marketing. The State then tried to successively put in the missing factors and promised a new hope that poverty would be replaced by prosperity. Evidence of the failure of the past 40 years of development is the collapse of rural communities, since fragmentation is totally opposite to rural reality that all things survive through relationship among people in the community as well as relationship between man and nature. Moreover, various components of the community (economy, values, social structure, learning process etc.) cannot be divided apart, unlike materials or machines which can be put in and out anytime. All community factors are interwoven and move as part of one another.

For this reason, the State’s creation of “new factors” for the modernization of the community such as capital building, modernized production, new values and knowledge occur simultaneously with the destroying of certain traditional community factors regarded by the State as obstacles for “development” such as traditional values system, knowledge and beliefs (which were considered as non-scientific). This result in the collapse of overall community system as the new feedings did not possess the same quality as the eliminated ones. Obviously the State’s new education system (schools) has demolished the community’s learning process and knowledge transfer (local wisdom) which used to be functioning not only as knowledge building but also as important factors for establishing social relations, religious values, social interaction, and horizontal social structure, all of which are components of healthy community. The management of new form of education has ruined both the learning process of the community and the above-mentioned factors, while the State’s “new knowledge” become alienated in the community context and is against the real conditions of the community.¹ Forest reclamation for commercial single crop cultivation has also destroyed complex ecological relationship of soil, water, air, temperature, and life cycles of plants and animals to the extent that rehabilitation becomes difficult because the components of the forest system has been feed-out with no feed- back mechanism. The returns in the forms of rubber plantations, tapioca plantations, eucalyptus plantations or lobster farms etc. cannot compensate, repair or rebuild the traditional system to remain at a self-organizing level with sustainable rotation.

The State’s endeavor to add or adjust the missing factors more efficiently failed to generate rural rehabilitation mainly because the state’s ideology was directed only toward matter or content changes, then created “Holistic” by combining together those matters or contents assuming that they were already “integrated” despite the fact that “the whole is more than the sum of its part”. That is to say “Holistic” is not originated from adding together of minor things, but from the “relationship” of those components as part of one another until they are separated. Whatever separated will no longer have the same quality as before,

¹ See Uthai Dulayakasem and Aurasri Ngamwittayaphong : Education System and the Community : Concepts and Proposals for Research. (Bangkok : The Thailand Research Fund, 1977).

meaning that the “quality” of each component exists only when it is related to all other parts. By this implication, structure, pattern, and process are altogether the same thing (see footnote 1).¹

Thus rural poverty and development crisis were caused and augmented by different levels of relationship system being destroyed by the State’s endeavour to separate economic factors (production, consumption etc.) from the community’s traditional system and replaced them with some factors believed to be for the betterment. When it was not so, the State puts in other factors such as social matters, environment, participation, spiritual values etc. and tried to improve mechanism efficiency in uniting various components to become “holistic”, which, according to the author, it was not “holistic” mechanism that could save the development crisis especially the poverty because it is a holistic of matters, not of relationship and ways of thinking.²

Therefore under this ideological framework later Development Plans (8th to 10th Plans) which stipulated that there was a change of paradigm from fragmentation to holistic, having people as centre for development, adding spiritual issues, social opportunity etc. might not be the change of paradigm from fragmentation to holistic because it was just the pooling of added matters with an expectation that relationship among them would follow later on (or never at all). It is difficult for the State’s “holistic” development to run smoothly with its long time fragmentation that might be persisted even with bureaucratic reform, since real holistic situation must first be originated from relationship management of various developmental components. In the case of development it includes the management of power relationship (i.e. decision making and rights), knowledge relationship, and resource relationship among stakeholders. At the same time, relationship management concerning human system must be in harmony with a wider system namely ecosystem to enable totally sustainable development.

In conclusion, the real sustainable development is difficult to succeed or it may not be able to occur at all if the development fails to renew relationship management of power, knowledge, resource etc. among stakeholders in Thai society (the state, people, and business sector) with special emphasis on relationship between man and ecosystem, by not arbitrarily using the resources for only man’s wealth or security.

Fundamental Beliefs and Visions in the State Paradigm of Poverty Eradication

The more than 40 years of firm beliefs on growth has reflected the ultimate goals of the State’s development either for modernization or globalization that all of them are from the model of the same paradigm which was fragmentary. Its intention is to generate wealth, the Western World’s dreams moulded by the historical philosophy in the ages of Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution during the 14th to 18th Century that

¹ For example human brain is capable for functioning only when it works in relation with all other systems of the body including the mind. Whenever the brain is separated, it can no longer work. Therefore, the separation of Einstein’s brain from his body and mind means that the part separated is no longer Einstein’s brain (according to holistic paradigm the cloning of outstanding genes to maintain original quality is impossible because personal qualification rises from the functioning of the whole system, not just the genes).

² In this analysis, the author applies the Web of Life Theory by Fritjof Capra which is influenced by oriental philosophy, especially Buddhism.

largely changed the worldly outlook of the people. They all wanted to get away from natural oppression (epidemics, natural disasters, chilly shivering winter etc.) and society full of sufferings, suppression, and killings because of different religious beliefs, and liberation from religious ruling authority and tyrants which constituted historic prolonged sufferings of western society in the Middle Age and during the Reformation.

Modern imagination of human beings after the Middle Age includes healthy life, material happiness, freedom of thoughts, knowledge searching and wealth according to the capability of each individual. Important sciences in the formulation of social organization that can push forward the materialization of the imagination for desirable way of life and happy society consist of pure sciences, technology, medical sciences and social sciences (political sciences, law, economics, etc.)¹ Therefore the development to achieve either growth, modernization, or globalization each has the same goal, which is the desire to lead a healthy and wealthy life, free from all oppressions in the past, or to adopt “as you like it” life-styles.

This goal of development has been set up from human paradigm toward self and nature or ecosystem. Once human beings have their belief in the answers to the questions like what is life?, where do you come from and what for?, where do you go after death?, what is the happiness in life?, where can you find the values of life? etc. They naturally can manage their own lives and the society they live in according to those beliefs and call it a “progress” or “development” which signifies betterment or more prosperity, while human paradigm toward nature determines how to use natural resources to match with their goals in life.

The meaning of “betterment” or “more prosperity” is intended to be material increase or wealth which has been developed from the history of people being overshadowed and maltreated by the religious ruling authority over 1,000 years ago and by the ruthless Crusade during the Reformation. Sciences Revolution establishing new explanation for the knowledge in cosmology, ontology and methodology has weakened the religious ruling authority. The separation of religious domain from the kingdom resulted in the birth of new type of states and new ways of life based more on scientific paradigm and material technology, while religious rejection resulted in complete denial of spiritual matters.² Under this paradigm, life is the searching for “happiness” which consists of physical well-being, unlimited merriment and extravagance as long as an individual is capable to transform his own expertise or other capitals into “money” to purchase anything he wants from modern market and modern entrepreneurs who have everything for consumption and are ready to provide things to serve the demand of consumers whether or not legal or decent, i.e. sexual goods (human being), narcotics, evil paths, tempting goods and services etc.

Moreover the extreme rejection of religious and spiritual matters has caused the modern man to live with no other intention except to seek happiness from consumption as much and as long as possible due to the belief that there is only one life. Such belief even more promotes the search for material “happiness” and strange feeling from material consumption (i.e. excitement, violence, abnormal

¹ Dhamapitaka Thera (Prayudh Payuto). Mong santiparb loke paan poomlang arayadham lokapiwatana (Glancing World Peace Through Globalization Civilization). Bangkok : Dhamasarn, 1999.

² See details of the changes in S. Sivarak. Logkrab watanadham farang (Molting Western Culture). Bangkok : Agsornsarn, 1987.

sexuality, drugs, etc.). Concurrently, tremendous resources are devoted for in-depth research on human genes to find ways to prolong elderliness and death. Modern man believes that all natural resources belong to human beings who can manage and utilize them through scientific and technological instruments.

It is found that throughout more than 40 years of development, the State never discards the western paradigm for poverty eradication by creating wealth, despite the fact that wealth is responsible for the crisis of human relationship system and ecosystem. Nevertheless, ecosystem crisis and social problems had stimulated an endeavour to adjust the State's paradigm in the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997 – 2001) by mobilizing community opinions all over the country for the first time until a conclusion was reached that the State's 40 years of development had brought about "good economy, problem society, and unsustainable development", while "good economy" applied to only a minority group. However, the adjustment endeavour was not successful when Thailand had to face severe economic crisis in 1997. At the beginning of the 8th Plan, the development was intended for crisis correction, especially when Pol.Lt.Col. Taksin Shinawatra became Prime Minister. The goal of economic development and poverty management went back to wealth creation and the catching up of globalization stream as appeared in the Prime Minister's address cited earlier in this article. This reflects that the State holds fast to the paradigm mentioned above while trying to spread out more money to the poor and the disadvantaged, especially to those in the rural areas in order to lessen political conflicts which is another strategy of the State and the business system (including the World Bank) to enable further implementation of the paradigm on wealth development amongst disasters arisen from the development itself. The said strategy is intended to mould the target of the people's paradigm to be in harmony with the State's wealth target. The ways to set up the State's wealth paradigm may be concluded as follows:

1. In the initial stage of development toward modernization, the State reorganized rural development mechanism by centralizing all decision-making power centres and all management, then assigned public officials to local administration units to oversee the development procedures designed by the State in the capacity of a catalyst with an ideal to help eliminating rural poverty and bring wealthiness to the people everywhere. At the beginning, the State was able to fully extend its role with the support from foreign countries in the age of the Cold War, especially the extension of communication routes to reach rural areas, and with minimal obstruction due to the existing high influence of political culture that emphasized patronage and powerism, together with the State's propaganda that poverty would disappear by modernization and would prevent Communism that aimed at overthrowing the Monarchy Regime and Buddhism.

2. The State strengthened the Wealth Paradigm by creating a new paradigm of life with new definition and new objectives agreeable to the wealth target known as "Happiness" Paradigm. The new paradigm established new cultural values through propaganda, discourses, education system etc. in order to change the rural paradigm to become responsive to the State's policy by such popular slogans as "Work is Money, Money is Work, They both create Happiness", "Good Education, Money Possession, Freedom from Diseases, All lead to happiness", "Having many children causes prolonged poverty", "Everyone needs to work for money, prosperous country needs economization", "Chote-Chuang-chatchavarn (Prosperous and shining (economy)) etc., all of which motivated the thinking toward

material importance and a conclusion that material management was a solution of all problems.

3. In the context of globalization development the State maintained the paradigm through marketing, mass media, public relations, education etc. which were essential for the promotion of Wealth Paradigm. Under the materialistic paradigm, poverty was caused by the lack of income and the lack of “potentiality” (education and skill) to gain income for consumption. The Wealth Paradigm established a new culture namely consumerism which highly influenced the attitude, beliefs, and living values of individuals in both urban and rural society. At the time when “Growth” had been increasingly criticized during the crisis, “education” had been talked about as an important Single Factor of globalization development which required a knowledge based society. Through intensive documentary study, it would be found that knowledge-based society was the base of wealth under the original paradigm.¹

Alternative – Survival Paradigm: From Wealth to System Oriented Stability

The author finds from the study that poverty eradication using methodology and definitions of the State’s paradigm has originated deep negative impact which is difficult to objectively understand in a short time. The principal impact has been the taking place of a big change at different levels in rural communities. Such impact is the fundamental cause of poverty and of many rural problems because the relationship system has been changed due to the implementation of the State’s paradigm in the following manners:

1) *Relationship system within the family*: Formerly in rural communities family was the most important base of learning the management of relationship system between the community and outside society as well as ecosystem at different levels, beginning from the relationship within big families consisting of members of different ages, different sexes, different functions etc. Family is a centre of socialization and of transferring culture, world views, morality and others to children who are new members of the family and of the community to inherit the development of their own lives and the community. The State’s paradigm and management to eradicate poverty under the National Development Plans results in the following changes of rural family’s relationship:

(1.1) Theory of Modernization Development believes that extended family system damages the development because it does not encourage the rise of leaders, entrepreneurs, and personal savings which is different from single family or parting from the family upon marriage (Pairuch Krisanarnit, 1982, pp.16-17). Rural extended families are looked at by a single individualistic dimension that they can never create growth and economic competition. Therefore the decrease of extended families and the increase of western-styled single families are regarded as development progress, believing that the school system and the parents can equally perform the duty of personnel development.

(1.2) The paradigm that regards the family as a production and consumption unit to increase wealth has damaged relationship within the family whether intentionally or unintentionally. Starting from single family separation, the parents spend most of their time in production for income and does not have time to

¹ The World Bank. World Development Report 1998 – 1999: Knowledge for Development. <<http://www.worldbank.org/wdr/contents.htm>>

closely look after the children especially when they enter the school system in search of knowledge the family relationship become even more loose. Worse than that the poor with insufficient income are in debts caused by agricultural production factors and high cost of living while the selling prices of the produces are low and nonnegotiable since they have been set by the markets outside the community. Being taken advantage of in many ways, the rural people have to struggle for survival by migrating both temporarily and permanently to work as sugar cane cutters, planters, construction workers, sexual partners and exported labour with more increasing number since the 4th National Development Plan. The lack of time and physical factors of living closely together in a family hinder family relationship system and the family can no longer be a place to raise and nurture quality children. The former family relationship in rural communities has been gradually demolished by a new form of development and aggravated by poverty oppression originated from fragmentary development. The family significance has been left only with its economic role and with no other factors or mechanism to compensate its functioning since schools and monasteries have also separated themselves from the community.

2) *Relationship system within the community*: Before having the development plans, local bureaucratic system was rather loose and concentrated mostly on local administration. Public activities were organized by self-supported community cooperation such as the construction of facilities for public use (roads, temples, schools, pavilions etc.) merit-making and traditional festivals. Community cooperation created an opportunity for people in the community to learn about one another, to fasten their relationship, and to automatically create a learning of interdependent living to the young generations.

The above-mentioned relationship system has been affected by the State's implementation of the development paradigm and the centralization of policy, planning, resources management, budget etc. through bureaucratic mechanism. Roles and number of government officials spread out most widely in all aspects of development at each community level. In this manner, the State in its capacity of an expert in modern development, became "the manager" of the development, beginning from the structural change of production and consumption within the community from self-reliant and interdependent community economic system to production of restricted agricultural goods for sale and take the money to buy consumption goods from outside markets. The new type of economy has led the community to the establishment of intensive relationship with the world market, middlemen, exporters, loan agencies etc. both directly and indirectly. Individualism in production and consumption, struggles against debt problems and personal problems deprived individuals from steadfast interaction with others as before (Vibul Kemchalern, 1986). Poverty problems have totally become the problems of individuals, especially for those without relatives or with relatives but they also are poor.

Almost all aspects of state administration put people in rural communities in the position of "recipients". Different activities that the community use to do by their own decision and management have been bit-by-bit transferred to the state management. For example, community education is transferred to the Ministry of Education, religious matters to the Religious Affairs Department, public health to hospitals and health stations, security to the police etc. according to the development paradigm or modernization which believes that these activities should be managed by formal institutions or organizations and with the use of modern

knowledge. It always happens that once the state development reaches the community people's relationship with public activities tends to be diminished or destroyed. Among activities managed by the State, economic factors and education have the highest direct effects on the increase of rural poverty problems. The State's justification is that rural communities are short of "knowledge" to generate a society of modernization and wealth, therefore education must be centralized to respond to industrial and urban development. This justification leads to the extension of compulsory education, the establishment of public schools and technical schools in rural areas and the rapid expansion of regional universities. The State's new definition of "knowledge" and its confinement to only in schools and educational institutions with teachers, lecturers, experts and academics etc. results in the fading-out of former knowledge base and its contents. Education under the State's management has damaged the diversity of contents and relationship at all levels and is limited to only one dimension of life which is education for occupation, employment or modernized agriculture. The State's paradigm has turned rural people into "unknowledgeable" persons with the lacking of potentiality to establish relationship with other persons, organizations, or even with their own offsprings, and with no alternatives for the development of their own agricultural occupation.

In addition, a new relationship system has taken place upon the decrease of self-dependency. That is the relationship with political system and outside business for self-benefits of the people in the community, especially the community leaders officially appointed by the government who seek benefits from the budget of development projects and share them with government officials and local politicians. This system of power-oriented relationship gives rise to political canvassers, influential individuals and hooligans right from the village, tambon, and higher levels respectively which is an obstacle against fully utilization of government budget allocated for poverty elimination. Corruption problem and the sharing of benefits among the accomplices creates a wider gap of income and discrimination within the same community as clearly indicated in the evaluation of the Project of Income Distribution to Rural Areas (Ngun Pann Kukrit) in 1975 during the 3rd National Development Plan (Krikkiat Pipatsereedham, 1976).

The newly born relationship system mentioned above has yet created poverty and poor individuals due to their "marginality" which means inaccessibility or being excluded from the sources of power and new benefits at the local level. The state of marginal poverty becomes more evident during the second phase of development (5th – 8th National Development Plans).

3) *Relationship system among the communities:* Formerly each community developed relationship with other near and far communities i.e. the sharing of forest and water resources or the exchange of different natural resources which was the origin of such culture like "poog siew (intimate buddies) in the Northeastern or "klur khao klur lae (hill and sea companions) between fishing and farming communities in the South. Such types of relationship served as a base for the guarantee of four basic necessities in the communities, as well as continuation of learning process and new innovations. Communities in the past were not at all static as assumed by modernization development concepts. The above-described relationship had been disappeared and being replaced by dependent relationship with the State, politicians and influential individuals in the community and outside.

4) *Relationship system between human being and nature:* In the past the community produced and consumed through an establishment of relationship with ecosystem or nature by learning, observing and experimenting their ways of

production and consumption to be in harmony with the seasons and abundance of different natural produces, as well as by adjusting and imitating nature to achieve better production and consumption. Therefore constant improvement of tools and technology was carried out and not being left on destiny as understood by the modernization concepts. Relationship with ecosystem was not for the purpose of gaining wealth from nature or “well-being”, but for the utilization and management based on sufficiency values or moderate living to recover and sustain the nature system.

This type of relationship has been totally changed by the wealth-oriented development. Technology, mechanical tools, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and many other substances have been used to increase the products to meet the target set by the producers, the business (capitalists) and the State, as well as to meet the demand of the world market. The utilization and management of ecosystem to principally serve external needs has led to the utilization without proper preservation or rehabilitation. This is partly because the users think that their consumption needs not come from nature, but from their income earned. Relationship system based on human needs has brought about the deterioration of ecosystems more clearly in the 3rd Development Plan and has finally affected the quality of the produces, soil, water, and others.

As relationship with ecosystem in the past was the base of learning of individuals, the change deprived them of conditions for learning, observing, training and investigating whatever new, except for the application of tools or technical training recommended by goods producers or by government officials. Without a process of new knowledge accumulation as had been continued for many generations, the individual’s potentiality had not been developed for having more alternatives.

A clear example of systematic impact was malnutrition problem first visible in the 3rd Development Plan and became more severe in the 4th Plan (55,000 children below 6 years died annually from malnutrition). This fact should have reflected a significant change in certain relationship systems in rural communities. Not just only poverty that caused the children die from malnutrition. The author views that this situation reflects the problem of relationship within the family and the community and also of ecosystem relationship. This means that deterioration of ecosystem as a result of the New Plan for Agricultural Development and the form of production which has been changed from self-consumption to selling and has affected the community’s food security which used to depend on nature’s plentifulness being changed to buying food for consumption with income gained. Migration for employment of adults (not only mothers) results in children’s deprivation from close attention, community ways of life that individuals are struggling for survival, change of benevolent moral conduct, and loss of traditional knowledge on mother and child care. All of these are real factors of malnutrition, not just only the lack of income or modern knowledge, but also the changing ways of life and the reorganization of relationship in rural development.

Therefore, the standpoint that poverty derives from the lack of income and it is necessary that people’s income must be raised is not altogether correct. On the contrary, it is this paradigm that causes poverty and other problems in the rural areas by paving the way for the State to damage the relationship system which for a long time used to be the base of rural security.

Nevertheless, during over 40 years of development there is another type of paradigm pararely existed without the state recognition as “development”

paradigm.¹ This “informal” paradigm had existed for a long time in the history of tribal community relationship even before the birth of Thai State. This old development paradigm had been a factor of importance for community system and ecosystem’s sustainability before the change at the time of Field Marshal Sarit. In reality this paradigm still exists under different conditions throughout the country, and is gradually becoming a strong movement since the 5th Development Plan from the descending Communist threats, enabling many organizations to work in rural communities more often.

The above paradigm wipes out the State’s belief that villagers are not knowledgeable by the rehabilitation of local wisdom, and wipes out the belief that villagers do not have “capital” by expanding “social capital and cultural capital” to reduce the role of the State as well as to open up more opportunity for participation. We may call this paradigm “Stable System of Relationship Paradigm” (or System Oriented Stability). The term “system oriented stability” is intentionally used by the author to explain important characteristic of the paradigm which is mapped for the development of relationship among various systems. It is different from the term “security” which conveys more material thinking such as “food security, four necessities of life, income, organization, institution, etc.

The author views that the important key of stable system relationship paradigm in the past lies in the management of relationship system among various factors within the system itself as well as with other partner system. For example community stability is originated from the relationship of many systems in the community i.e. economic system (production, consumption, product distribution) and relates as a part of community value system and of learning process system, and vice versa. This community system then also relates to other sub-systems or other communities (i.e. relationship in the form of intimate buddies etc.), forest system, life system of land and aquatic animals, soil and water system etc.)² with an aim to maintain well-balanced and harmonious relationship. The balanced relationship is therefore a guarantee of stability and sustainability more than the products (matters).

Besides, the stable system relationship paradigm must contain values, beliefs and imagination of ideals, religious precepts, spirituality or “supremacy” as principal concepts in order to be simultaneously a paradigm to refine human behavior and mind, which is different from the establishment of material security (basic needs, four necessities of life, the guarantee of agricultural goods’ prices, social welfare etc.) which does not help developing relationship between man and other systems, since it has material benefits as principal target and is not interested in establishing any relationship.

Community in the past arranged relationship on the basis of Buddhist values and belief, together with the belief in spirits which had been Thai cultural root for a long time. This fact influenced the management of relationship with man, other organism and nature at a degree of “sufficiency”, “satisfaction” or middle path, i.e. living for just maintaining the security of fundamental necessities of life more than accumulation of material wealth, with a life target or happiness level not higher than physical needs while giving values to religious ideals which are spiritual

¹ The term “development” has been used just before the Buddha Midway Year (1957) in “Rural Development Project, 1956” under *Field Marshal Pibulsongkram*. The term of similar meaning before that was “reconstruction” i.e. Rural Reconstruction Project, 1951.

² Relationship in this case the way in which man utilize natural resources suitable to enable the rotation of the system i.e. not to fish during egg-laying season, not to hunt milk feeding animals, rotation of land for cultivation.

or abstract. The belief that security derived from the management of relationship with man living together sustainably in the community and with the nature required a broad base of “security” that was not confined only to property owned. Wealth or poverty under this paradigm depended on the levels of “security” of relationship at different levels with other things. Before the development during the time of Field Marshal Sarit, village people in liberated communities with solid base of resources, social relationship system and virtue system did not have the feeling that they were poor or destituted. Religious values made people in the community feel they were not much differed and accepted the difference with their belief in fate, accumulated merits, and preference for ideals rather than materials. Poverty under rural community paradigm was not in the same context as western wealth oriented paradigm. It involved security, alternatives, natural support as well as social supporters.

Before the time of the development by the State, most rural communities already had their informal welfare system to relieve problems faced by individuals such as orphans or the impoverished and they would not be deserted. In case of natural disasters, drought and epidemic, the communities had relationship network consisting of villages that were related with one another by kinship, streams or creeks, and other resources shared together or exchanged among them to deal with the crisis and were able to manage it by themselves for the most part before it had been destroyed by the State development paradigm which was totally different.

The author has an opinion that Sufficiency Economy as contemplated by His Majesty the King is accommodated in the above paradigm. The Sufficiency Economy Paradigm aims at “Moderation” in all relationship contexts both objectively and concretely, believing that moderation creates security and sustainability of the development having “man” not “wealth” as centre of development unlike mainstream development which believes that once economic wealth and security occur, various demands will automatically follow. At national level, the operation of Sufficiency Economy is an alternative of Localization Development named by Professor Rangsan Dhanapornpan , a thai renowned scholar, as “Rattanakosin Consensus” or local development community to provide an immunity to Thai economy against risks of dependency and domination. Sufficiency Economy has been respectively extended from local market, regional market, domestic market and foreign market (Apichai Bhantasen et.al., 2004). Sufficiency Economy is not a choice between Capitalism and Socialism in the past, but is a seeking of moderation of capital system in a new context that renders justice to all of the things concerned, not only human society but also all living things in the ecosystem. Sufficiency Economy is therefore a vision of an integrated or holistic correction of crisis covering ecosystem, human society or community, or even the development of family relationship system which has been collapsed from the extreme development toward wealth or consumerism.

The Epilogue: When does the Paradigm Shift ? How? and By Whom?

The current snatch of political and economic benefits by various political and interest-groups sometimes make many people think that “Paradigm” has nothing to do with the crisis, but rather is a matter of interest or greediness for power and wealth (raw instinct) of individuals and groups of individuals.

Certainly any social phenomenon cannot be explained by a single factor. Similarly “Paradigm” is not sufficient explanation for the analysis of present crisis situation of Thai society, since there are many more factors responsible for the crisis we are all facing. But if our society absorbs wrong understanding of the importance of paradigm we may not be able to escape from the crisis. The reason that the significance of paradigm has been lessened from its reality might be from the fact that it does not concretely exist in the forms of institutions, organizations, or groups like those of political or economic factors, but in inside individuals and groups of individuals in the forms of value system, beliefs, viewpoints and ways of thinking that individuals as groups of individuals have toward the things related to them. Most people are likely to act according to their values and beliefs. Even political, economic or social groups, each also practice under their value system and beliefs. All human phenomena are related to “Paradigm”.

What is called “benefits” are also being grabbed following the pushing force of beliefs and values according to individual’s paradigm. For example, those who believe that happiness comes from consumption ability and acquisition of wealth for unlimited consumption (more money more happiness) naturally give different definition of “benefits” from those who believe that happiness comes from sufficient moderate living, peace of mind, unspoiled nature, friendliness etc. The first group therefore would fight to death to acquire “benefits” according to their own definition and values.

Crisis of man, society and ecosystem at present results from a group of people who occupy the State’s power and make decisions along their own paradigm on the answers to the questions like what is development?, what are the objections? what is human beings’ “happiness”?, where does it come from?, and how does it happen? etc. After that they use such mechanism and machineries as bureaucracy system, laws, education, and mass media to both enforce and propagandize to facilitate the development along the paradigm accepted by the State and by the capitalist groups within and outside the country. This has been carried on continuously for many decades and is going to pursue along the same path with more complicated tricks. To stop the disaster is not simple but it does not mean impossible, because at least history has asserted fully that there was a change of paradigm¹ even in the era that the principal paradigm was most influential.

There are two important factors that make possible the paradigm shift. *The first factor* is the increasing rise of new knowledge and thinking that washes off and challenges the old paradigm until its energy to explain or to solve the problems is getting more and more limited. *The second factor* is the birth and expansion of communities with members who are interested in the new paradigm. It is evident that Thai society already has this second factor to a considerable extent from former communities that think differently from the State and new communities that reject the State’s paradigm because they have experienced its disadvantages. These social movements are forces that formulate new definitions of “development, benefits, happiness, poverty etc.” in the new paradigm. Factors that are lacking or scarce are body of knowledge to challenge the wealth oriented paradigm and new knowledge that can continuously promote the birth of the Stable System of Relationship Paradigm with its strength for concentrated development.

¹ Thomas Kuhn mentioned about scientific paradigm that it came from cognition component and communal component.

The above new body of knowledge must derive from new methodology which has been changed from life-less physical science outlook with its fragmentation and reductionism to integrated methodology with “kurus” and process of establishing knowledge through a diversity of methods which are no longer monopolized as before.

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