
The Participation of People in the Administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province

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Abstract

The research on “The Participation of People in the Administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province” has objectives to: 1) study the level of people’s participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan province, 2) compare the people’s participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization classified by personal factors, and 3) propose appropriate guidelines in people’s participation regarding the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan province. This is a quantitative research in which the sample size was drawn at 379 individual from 11 villages within the territory of the designated study. The questionnaires are used to collect the data and are analyzed by using descriptive statistics in terms of mean, percentage, and standard deviation. The data was then analyzed by t-test, F-test as well as Pearson correlation coefficient.

The results showed that 1) the level of participation from the people in the area is at the moderate level. When the consideration was placed on each separate item, it was found that the respondents have moderate participation concerning decision-making, operative activities, and work benefits while the item on an assessment is quite low. 2) The respondents with differences in sex and occupation have a difference in administrative participation at the statistical significant value of 0.05. And, 3) The appropriate guidelines in participative administration should focus on: (1) communication and public relations concerning various development projects that have impact on community, and (2) public hearing and an organization of a forum to seek relevant data and/or problems from each village.

Keywords: Participation, administration, sub-district administrative organization

1. Introduction

The local government institutions have existed many mechanisms through which people participate in decision-making process. It is also believed that participation of community people in local government institutions is not only an opportunity for them but also an apparatus of empowerment (Nasir Uddin, 2019). Many people feel a sense of commitment to their neighbourhood and are actively involved in activities to improve the quality of life there. This is called ‘citizen participation’. For example, local residents engage in voluntary work, organize litter-clearing campaigns, set up collective to purchase solar panels of form local care cooperatives. They may also be involved in the decision-making about the municipal budget (Government of the Netherlands, 2022). Thailand has encountered with economic, political, and social changes constantly. There were various types of reformation, for instance, the acceptance of participation principle from the people in relative context. At the same time, there are many efforts towards a reform pertaining to administrative structure from a centralized management style into a decentralization. In this respect, there were enactments of Sub-district Council Act, B.E. 2537 together with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2540. With the said Sub-district Council Act and the sub-district administrative organization, Thailand has come to enjoy a new form of government that relied on an increased

decentralization as it was witnessed by the establishments of 6,745 sub-district administrative organizations around the country. Moreover, the new constitution has designated an increase in a more delegation regarding financial affairs. On this regard, the constitution has specified that the local administrative budget should not be less than 20 percent of an aggregated national budget in the fiscal year of B.E. 2544. And in the fiscal year of B.E. 2549, the local administrative budget should be less than 35 percent of the total budget. This incident resulted in an expedite effort towards decentralization made by the government in terms of money, work, and people. There were also many changes against various legislations and amendments of law in response to decentralization processes and a new legislation. Decentralization is seen as a means to build public participation in terms of policy designation, decision-making, economic, political, and social aspects. It also includes public control and verification against governmental operations (Kusuma Saengraksawong et al, 2018). The principle of local administration concerns about a delegation of power from a central unit into a local administration in order to initiate a self-administration based on the people's will in the respective area as specified in the Constitution B.E. 2540, Section 282. The local administration is expected to provide an extensive and thorough services that are hoped to serve particular needs of the people residing in each locality. On top of that, it is expected to support and promote the learning of democratic regime. If the local administration would achieve the designated goals, it must hold on democratic principle regarding the people's participation in managing their own sub-district administrative organizations in terms of policy formation, and economic, social, and political plan development. Besides, there must be an assessment towards the use of official power at every possible level. This is to guarantee that the operation of sub-district administrative organization would create the highest benefits based on the desire of the local people (Phramaha Seksan Panyavutho (Jommanee) et al., 2020).

The sub-district administrative organization as one of the local administration in Thailand has continuously developed into a much more concrete manner. This can be seen in the constitution of kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540, Section 9, regarding local administration, and Sub-district Council Act as well as Sub-district Administrative Organization Act, including the amendments up until the 3rd copy B.E. 2542. The sub-district administrative organization is still holding tight on the decentralization concept in which the people's benefits are held up high. However, the previous decentralization in Thailand happened at the central unit in a form of a top down approach that delegated some authority over trivial public services to the local people and did not provide an opportunity to the people to get involved with the management of local government organizations (Athiwat Udomkantong and Alongkorn Arkkasaeng, 2561: 79). Therefore, in order to have efficient and beneficial operations towards local people, the participation from the people in managing various affairs by sub-district administrative organization becomes a basic important mechanism in order to achieve the goals based on people's participation. The said participation is autonomous and is to make independent decisions, having an allotment of power, equality within the society, social factor integration, personal rights protection, structural flexibility in operation, verifiableness, transparency, and the recognition of stakeholders' needs for resources (Anujit Chinasan, 2021).

The constitution of the kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540 had an intention to give birth to people's participation in the government under the democratic regime both at the local and national level. Besides, much more emphasis was placed on the decentralization pertaining to local administration. Even though the constitution B.E. 2540 has been canceled, various Acts have been in active based on the said constitution. At present, the constitution of the kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 has prescribed on local administration in Classification 14, Section 249, the State must provide local administration by holding on the principle of autonomy derived from the intention of local people. The establishment of local government organization depends

on the basis of ability towards self-regulation in terms of income, number, population density, and responsible area (Wichan Ritthitham and Weerasak Bamrungta, 2021).

From the above reasons, the researcher has a keen interest in the study of people's participation in the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province in order to discover the level of people's participation in the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization in terms of decision-making, operation, benefit, and assessment aspect and to make some suggestions regarding the participation in the administration of the mentioned sub-district administrative organization.

2. Research objectives

1) To study the level of people's participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan province.

2) To compare the people's participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization classified by personal factors.

3) To propose appropriate guidelines in people's participation regarding the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization, Ampkoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan province.

3. Research Methodology

This is a quantitative research that is based on a survey method. The population of the study is the people from 11 villages in Tambol Huai Ruam, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan province at a total number of 4,010 individuals (Huai Ruam Sub-district administrative Organization, 2565). The sample size of the study is 351 persons and it is derived by using a table for determining sample size for a finite population prepared by Krejcie and Morgan (Syed Abdul Rehman Bukhari, 2021). The data were collected by using questionnaires. The collected data were then analyzed by using t-test, F-test, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

4. Research Findings

The study of "The Participation of People in the Administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province" has obtained the results as follows:

1. The general information

From the study, it was found that there are 351 respondents to whom 157 (44.73 percent) persons are males and the others are females (55.27 percent), 149 persons (42.45 percent) are with the age of below 40 years while 102 persons are over 40 (57.55 percent) years old. Out of this number, 300 persons (85.47 percent) were holding lower than a bachelor degree and 37 persons (10.54 percent) are with a bachelor degree or higher. There were 171 persons (48.71 percent) who engaged in agricultural activities, 24 persons (6.84 percent) working in governmental units or quasi-organizations, 98 persons (27.92 percent) were in trading business, and 50 persons (14.24 percent) were general employees.

2. The participation of people in the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization.

From the survey, it was discovered that

2.1 The participation in the decision-making: the participation of people in the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization in term of a decision-making was at the moderate level (). The result showed that the highest level of people's participation is the exercise of voting right towards the election of member of the sub-district administrative organization council and sub-district administrators respectively.

2.2 The participation in the operation: the level of participation concerning the operation of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization was at the moderate level. In this respect, the tax-payment operation as notified by the organization was at the highest level.

2.3 The participation in the benefit: the results showed the moderate level of people's participation in the benefit aspect. The highest value of participation lied on the religious activities organized by the sub-district administrative organization.

2.4 The participation in the assessment: the respondents had a low level of participation towards the operational assessment of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization. The participation in collecting information used for the evaluation of various projects organized by the sub-district administrative organization showed at the lowest value.

The following Table shows the level of participation of the respondents classified by each item.

Table 1: The level of participation of the respondents classified by each item

Type of Participation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Result
Decision-making	2.7665	.61783	Moderate
Operation	2.6243	.64491	Moderate
Benefit	2.7111	.67525	Moderate
Assessment	2.5135	.65257	Low
Total	2.6786	.57689	Moderate

3. The comparison of the people's participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization classified by personal factors.

The results revealed that people with differences in marital status and occupation have a difference in level of participation towards the administration of the sub-district organization. The following Table 2 and 3 demonstrates the comparison between personal factor and the participation of the people in the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization.

Table 2: The comparison between marital status and participation

Marital Status	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig.
Single	2.4760	.56711	8.084	.003
Married	2.7692	.54681		
Divorce	2.7408	.81944		
Widow/Windower	3.1536.	.35158		
Total	2.6786	.57589		

Table 3: The comparison between occupation and participation

Occupation	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig.
Agriculturists	3.0289	.54037	8.388	.000
Gov. officers and State Enterprise Employees	2.7394	.56802		
Business Entrepreneurs	2.6621	.48501		
General Employees	2.4712	.59000		
Others	2.3359	.51253		
Total	2.6786	.57184		

4. The proposal of appropriate guidelines in people's participation regarding the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization, Ampkoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan province.

4.1 The participation issue: the respondents expressed their views against the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization in the respective manners. 1) The Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization did not provide an opportunity for people to participate in its operation especially in the management issue. 2) The said organization did not provide sufficient information and relevant data for the people. 3) Most of the people did not express their ideas and/or concerns towards various projects organized by the sub-district organization due to the lack of information. 4) The community leaders did not provide sufficient and comprehensive information regarding the development of community infrastructure. And 5) Most of the activities being held by the said sub-district administrative organization did not have an assessment method/form so the assessment effort could not take place.

4.2 The guidelines for the participation: the sample group have proposed its ideas concerning the guidelines for the participation in the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization that: 1) the said sub-district organization should provide an opportunity for the people to participate in decision-making process and to extensively explain as well as to publicize various development projects that have impact on community. 2) The sub-district organization should encourage people to participate in various operations and to listen the voice of people by having a small forum in discovering genuine data of each village in order to arrive with a problem at the sub-district level. 3) The community leaders should thoroughly understand and uphold to the community resolution in proposing any possible development project to the sub-district organization committee. This is to make sure that the project is in response to the real needs and wants of the local people. And 4) The sub-district administrative organization should organize a systematic assessment towards each activity especially among the groups of youngsters and senior people.

5. Discussion

The study of "The Participation of People in the Administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province" found that: 1) the level of people's participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam Administrative Organization was at the moderate level. This is in relevance to the research undertaken by Patcharin Sopa and Sittidej Sirisukkha (2016) on "People Participation in Management of Subdistrict Administrative Organizations in Phetchaburi Province" in which it revealed that the people participation in a subdistrict administration organization was at moderate level. The descendible level of participation started from participation in decision-making, beneficiaries, operation, and finally evaluation perspective. The results of this particular study is also in line with the work being done by Batong Sub-district Administrative Organization (2018) on the "4-Year Development Plan" in which it concluded that people participation in the administration of Batong sub-district administrative organization, Rueso district, Narathiwat province was at the moderate level. 2) The comparison of participation towards the administration of Huai Ruam Sub-district Administrative Organization classified by the personal factors found that people with different marital status and occupation have differences in level of participation. This findings are in the congruence with the discoveries of Phramaha Seksan Panyavutho (Jommanee), Suraphon Promgun, and Pasakorn Dokchan (2021) in their research title called "The Public Participation in Government of Sripana Sub-district Municipality, Seka District, Bueng Kan Province" in which it concluded that sex, age, and work experience have no relationship with the level of participation.

The research findings upon the guidelines for the participation of people in the administration of Huai Ruam administrative organization, Nong Bua district, Nakhonsawan province indicated that the sub-district organization should sometimes organize a meeting on public holidays in order to draw more people to participate into the program that has a great impact on community lives. The operations of the sub-district organization should concentrate on transparency and fairness. Moreover, the sub-district organization should establish an occupation promotion group to provide a support and assistance in a creation of suitable job for the people in the area. In term of education, the sub-district organization should provide more budget in basic education in the hope that public education would have a better quality at the same level of a private one. These guidelines are in the same direction of research work being done by Anujit Chinasan (2021) on “The Administration of Local Administrative Organizations in Excellency of Accountabilty and Encouragement on Citizens Participation: A Case Study of Local Administration in Nakhon Ratchasima” in which it wrote that the people’s participation in the administration of sub-district administrative organization depends on the excellency of transparency and the promotion of people’s participation through the application of work. And it is also in the same vein of work accomplished by Wichan Ritthitham and Weerasak Bamrungta (2021) on “Sub-district Administration Organization: The General Content, Statement of the Problem and Guidelines to Reform” in which it suggested that the reformation should be directed towards orders, legislation, supervision, budget increase, and participation from the people in term of management to examine rascality and misconduct of officers, members of the sub-district administrative organization council, and executives in order to maximize benefit for people in the sub-district.

6. Conclusion

The study of “The Participation of People in the Administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province revealed that the overall value of people’s participation with regard to the administration of Huai Ruam sub-district administrative organization, Nong Bua district, Nakhonsawan province in terms of decision-making, operation, benefit, and assessment was at the moderate level. However, the study also pointed out that the participation regarding the assessment aspect was at the low level. The study has made some guidelines and suggestions in the effort to improve the level of participation from the people in the areas, for instance, the sub-district organization should consider holding up a meeting on public holidays in order to draw more people to join such a meeting and to discuss their ideas on important matters. Another suggestion included the extensive public relations on community plan to rest assure that the messages have been heard. The organization should organize a mobile unit to meet with the people at least once a year in order to listen to the problem or need of the people. On top of that, the sub-district administrative organization should adopt a referendum on the huge project that has great influence on every life in the community.

7. Suggestions

The study of “The Participation of People in the Administration of Huai Ruam Sub-District Administrative Organization, Amphoe Nong Bua, Nakhonsawan Province has made some suggestions as follows:

1.1 The participation in the decision-making. There should be a seminar for the people on the authority and responsibility of the members of sub-district administrative council. There should be an encouragement for the people to participate in making a community plans that would consequently appear in the sub-district development plan. The key focus is concentrated on the democratic regime and good governance.

1.2 The participation in the operation. The people should have an understanding of local election. The people should be stimulated, realize, and increasingly participate in local political activities by providing various types of opportunity in expressing the ideas.

1.3 The participation in the benefit. The people should get involvement in community development plan with the sub-district administrative organization. They should work with their respective villages in the organization of meetings to publicize information regarding the development in the areas. This is to create an opportunity to cooperate with the community activities and to impart towards the enjoyment of benefit from the development on equality basis.

1.4 The participation in the assessment. There should be a project or activity that arouses people to realize in the importance of political participation in a form of a representativeness. Also, the people should understand the importance of performance follow-up of the sub-district administrative organization with regard to the problem solution and the fulfilment of needs.

8. Future Research

The future research on people's participation regarding the administration of sub-district administrative organization should be conducted by using a mixed-research method in which the quantitative and qualitative research designs are utilized to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. Since many research questions cannot be fully answered by either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Mixed methods studies use both qualitative and quantitative components and can be a good approach to more fully explore the research questions both in breadth and depth.

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