

Alternative Welfare in Rural Thailand: A Case Study of Khon Kaen Province

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Abstract

There has been generally agreed that state welfare of developing countries is limited, due to the partial growth of employment and industrialization. This paper is seeking to understand the plausible alternative welfare that is appropriate to local context. The empirical data is derived from Ph.D. Thesis titled future scenario of alternative welfare: a case study of Khon Kaen Province. This research was undertaken in Khon Kaen, the Northeast of Thailand, employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain the required data. In regard to the identifying and analysis of alternative welfare, the research adopted a scenario workshop. This study found that although the Thai economy has been constantly grown, most people in Khon Kaen Province continued to be dependent on agriculture, albeit their source of income have been increasingly diversified. In this context the stakeholders attended the workshop of this research identifies the most likelihood future scenario welfare regime of Khon Kaen Province as "wealthy in degraded environment". As natural environment is a primary source of welfare of most people earning their living in agriculture, this future scenario also foresees the weakening of the current mixed welfare regime supporting living of Khon Kaen People. This study recommended that development approach of Khon Kaen Province must put both natural environmental concerns and expanding employment through promoting economic growth into priority.

Key Words: *Alternative welfare, Rural, Khon Kaen, the Northeast of Thailand (Isan).*

Introduction

Study of social policy has long been influenced by Esping-Anderson (1982) formulation, that social welfare is typified into three groups. Using the degree by which people are 'shield-off' or protection from negative impact of the market, Esping-Anderson classified social welfare into three type, the highest level of protection which is characterized as the state welfare, the middle level of protection which the state and the market play the lead role providing security, and the lowest level of protection where security of people are entirely relied on the market provision. However, there has been increasingly argued that Esping-Anderson formulation does not compatible with the types of welfare regimes of the developing worlds. Woods see the welfare regime is dominated by 'informal security regime', while Bevan (2004) argue that in a number of developing and underdeveloped countries, the 'insecurity regimes' is the dominant type of welfare regime. In case of Thailand, the welfare regime can be classified as 'productivist' welfare regime. This is primarily due to the long-time continual high rate of economic growth of Thailand, especially during the 1970s and 1990s. The welfare regime of Thailand is thus shaped by 'production' side, effort of the state was laid emphasis on production, and high rate of economic growth is presumed to result in wellbeing of the citizens.

Although the productivist model may offer alternative way of understanding welfare and social policy of Thailand at aggregated level, this idea contains one important weakness. This is particularly due to the fact that the economic growth of Thailand is unevenly by nature (Pawnwell; 1995). Growth has been accentuated around Bangkok Metropolitan. Income gap has been large. In this light, the productivist welfare regime can be relevant and explained only section of Thai society, especially the section that benefits economic growth. The populations of Thailand living outside Bangkok Metropolitan, particularly those who earn their living from agriculture in rural areas are sustaining their living differently.

From the past few years, the political landscapes of welfare and social policy of the western worlds have changed significantly, due to waves of economic crisis. In this context, social policies of macro level are focusing on rescuing the system rather than developing new options for better life of the citizens. Meanwhile there has been evolving small-scale of actions or coping strategies (Ewert and Evers 2014; 1) that are diverse in forms and localities. This move is also relevant to the developing countries, including Thailand, in that under the limitation of macro social policies, there has been diverse forms of 'coping strategies'. Frequently, these forms of coping strategies are referred to, in Thailand, as 'alternative welfare'.

Khon Kaen: Local Landscape of Social Policy and Welfare

Khon Kaen was assigned to be the 'Regional Capital City' of the Northeast of Thailand from the inception of modern development in the early 1960s. As a result, Khon Kaen became the centre of government services. At present there are more than 484 government agencies of the central government located in Khon Kaen. Khon Kaen has recently been the medical centre and education centre (Khon Kaen Provincial Office, 2013). In the past 2 decades, factories and businesses have grown around Khon Kaen Town, partly due to the growth pole policy in which major towns of the regions were promoted to become regional industrial centre. In 2013, Khon Kaen houses 4,131 factories, employing over 66,000 labourers. The population of Khon Kaen is currently about 1.9 million. In 2010, the official statistics states that Gross Provincial Product (GPP) from agriculture is slightly above 20,000 million Baht, representing roughly about 13 percent of the total, while GPP of non-agriculture is above 135,000 million representing about 87 percent of the total GPP. The average income of the population of KK is 82,000 Baht per year or roughly 2,700 US \$. As mentioned earlier, the average incomes of the population of the Northeast is evidently lower than those of the average of the country.

While share in GPP of agriculture is compared with non-agriculture, the majority of population remains engaged in agriculture. Although most of the households have diversified their sources of incomes, the high amount of people earning their living in agriculture suggested that the contribution of agriculture in wellbeing of the population is greater than that was suggested by share of agriculture in PPP. This forms a multiple layers of welfare in the local policy landscape of Khon Kaen. In the first layer, wellbeing of people in Khon Kaen is remaining clung on agriculture. Generally speaking, agriculture in Khon Kaen is virtually relied on natural ecosystem services (Buapun et al.,), such as rain water, nutrient in soil, etc. These farmers are residing in 'village' community that kin-based relations are a dominant type of institution. Livelihood of people in this context is shaped by agricultural production that found on natural settings. Agricultural production is carried out by farm households of kin groups of community village.

The second layer of local policy landscape of welfare is generally referred to as non-agriculture production. This can be characterized by ranges of sources of incomes outside agricultures that member of households engaged, resulting in the diversification of livelihoods. It has long been recognized that some members of rural farmers in Thailand, including in the Northeast, migrate to work in modern sectors. Riggs, Lemare and Buapun (2007) argue in their recent study that the trope of being in the middle income country of Thailand has been individualized through migrants from rural villages. In other words, while modern sectors provide sources of living or welfare for rural people, migration becomes an important means reinforcing the persistence and inferiority of rural sector to modern sector.

The third layer of local policy landscape of welfare of Khon Kaen comprise of ranges of state provision. This includes universal coverage type of provision, i.e. primary education and health, which was introduced in the past decades. Old people, aged above 60 also receive 500 baht monthly from the government. The other state provision comes under the form of income transfer or development program. From the past decade, Taksin (the previous Prime Minister of Thailand) introduced One Million Bahts Fund for each rural village; the Fund is under management of the Committee at village level. In the past two years, the current government introduce "Rice Motgage Scheme".

Methodology

Welfare regime at local level, in case of Khon Kaen Province, as described above, has undergone, and will be subject to rapid change. Services from natural environment continue to contribute to wellbeing of local people; meanwhile socio-economic change has disintegrated community institutions. The economy of the country has now fully influenced and become a part of global economy which is difficult to predict. The local policy landscape has fallen within a profound uncertainty of the future. In this respect, the scenario methodology will be applied, in order to unfold the 'plausible' story lines of future.

The scenario was first used by military, but has been grown and widely applied in businesses and industries of the western to aid decision-making in the face of uncertainty (Chermack et al. 2001; Coates 2000; Davis 1998). A scenario is a story that offers plausible explanation of how events unfold in the future (Gallopin et al. 1997; Raskin et al. 2002). In businesses the application of scenario methodology is usually started from identifying a set of focal questions which are revolved around key uncertainties or unknowns. The next step is to build storylines by projecting these questions into the future, which can be done either qualitatively or quantitatively. Although the scenario methodology has been widely used for planning, it is less common in social research. Recently, the scenario was introduced into the study of ecosystem services, climate change and human wellbeing.

It has been generally Scenario This research studies on future scenario of alternative welfare: a case study of Khon Kaen Province. The Research aims to firstly study contexts of government social welfare management at provincial level. Secondly, it also tries to analyze households' capacity at a community level to manage social welfare systems. Thirdly, This research objects to develop and propose alternative welfare systems arrangements as guidance. Practically, this research uses mixed methodology between qualitative and quantitative methods. Data collection as interviews, meetings, and workshops would have been organized for target population from formal and informal leaders at sub-district level. All related data and information will be processing through synthesis, analysis, and presentation in this article.

Indeed, workshops and meetings are organized for targeted attending who possess knowledge, thoughts, experiences, and leadership. In fact, there are three times workshops arrangements. Its participants cover 30 individual such as local administrative organizations' mayors, head of sub-district, and head of village, sub-district women development commission, leaders of community volunteer groups, school's director, public health personnel, local wise man, and representative from people organization. Generally, the committed workshops processes so called scenario building which aims to build up participants' future scenarios as well as figure out possibility of alternative welfare management. In this case, participants would have been steering informative via timeline presentation (Gallopin et al, 1997; Raskin et al, 2002). Accordingly, key findings would be found based on existing factors and uncertainties (Vander Heijden, 1996; Peterson et al, 2003).

In order to develop and present alternative welfare management guidance, social and environmental contexts are found as key driven factors of possible alternative welfare development trends. Based on two particular driven factors, there are four possible alternative systems management guidance regimes as "peaceful society", "wealthy in degraded environment", "poor in healthy environment", and "poor in degraded environment".

Identifying Drivers and Trends of Change of the Local Landscape Policy

In the long run, welfare of people at local, in Khon Kaen Province, is engulfed in uncertainties. The workshops identified key drivers that contribute or shape uncertainty of welfare of people in the future as follows:

Firstly, the development policy that promoted Khon Kaen to the industrial center and the transportation hub is an important driving force. In respect with agriculture industries, Khon Kaen places a focus on biofuel industries. This policy will further promote and enhance nonagricultural sources of income of people in Khon Kaen. The will also further drive fuel crop production to be more important than food crop production in the future.

Secondly, the growing proliferation of different forms of social problems, such as absent-parent child, unskilled labour and unemployment, drug abuse, disease caused by consumption such as diabetes etc. These problem will shape both welfare policy as well as coping strategies of the households or micro agents¹

Thirdly, the further degrading of natural environment, such as soil erosion, insufficiency of clean water supply and pollution, forest degradation, etc. The degradation of environmental resources is directly resulted by the intensification of use driven by development policy

Fourthly, people attitudes, particularly the expectation of welfare provided by the state. People have been made to be the 'clients' depending on services from the state. This has evolved a dependent attitudes of people, and this type of attitudes will be continued.

Along with these drivers, the workshops also identified major trends by which welfare of people in Khon Kaen could be shaped as follows.

- 1) The chronic indebtedness of rural families will be continued, and this problem could be generating other problems such as drugs, crime, and resources grabbing.
- 2) Waste disposal and management are increasing.
- 3) The growing rampant of consumerism, change of lifestyle and the disintegration of family and community institutions.
- 4) Natural disasters, especially floods and drought would be increased, causing damages for agricultural and non-agricultural sector.
- 5) Disputes among local political constituents will be increased following to national political conflicts.
- 6) The growing mechanization in agriculture.
- 7) The lowering of food crop and the growing of energy crops.
- 8) The intensification of environmental degradation.
- 9) The increasing modernized farming, especially the application of modern knowledge in farming.
- 10) The growing flow of labour from agriculture into non-agricultural sectors.
- 11) The growing concentration of land ownership, smaller people own most agricultural land.

The Story Line of Welfare Alternative in The Future

Significantly, changes of society and environment are key driven factors to impact on welfare systems accordance with emphasized guidance and trends. Regarding environmental and social changes, during 1992 to 2002, welfare systems trends have been varied. After 2012, the trends could be possibly expected that alternative welfare systems will considerate with four possible scenarios based on the details below.

Guidance to Alternative Welfare Systems in the Midst of "Peaceful Society"

In the past, the lifestyle of households and village communities in Khon Kaen province have mainly been attached to the community culture, which is called "Heat Sib Song Khong Sib See". There was a limitation on obtaining services from the government or the economy through the labor market. As a result, households have shifted their focus to family relationships and different forms of informal social

relationships. They have also resorted to religious, household, and community institutions. Their trust and generosity has been formed as a foundation from the historical community culture. Regarding the environment aspect, households and village communities in Khon Kaen province have obtained benefits from public resources. Community members owned and shared resources, including forests, animal farming areas, brooks, swimming holes, canals, ponds, and rivers, etc. Gaining benefit from resources among community members has been conducted with rules and regulations in order to control co-benefits, which are considered "community-property regimes". Therefore, resources have been balanced between households and village communities in Khon Kaen province. Few environmental problems and pollution have been found. In addition, forest areas have a variety of flora and fauna.

As for the advantages and disadvantages of a happy society scenario, with a dramatic expansion of the industrial sector due to policy support that focused mainly on the service industry, the agricultural sector has been driven by various factors from the service sector. These include the need to have hygienic food or the expansion of ecotourism, even though the agricultural sector has not received direct policy support. Considering the advantages of this happy society, it could be seen that the expansion of the labor force in the service industry has brought in greater income distribution. This form of expansion will not create pressure on the monoculture or generate high degeneration, and even maintain the level of degeneration, which can be restored later. At the same time, needs from the service sector that have increased through its expansion, will not cause as much environmental deterioration as the need for hygiene food, or the need for ecotourism. Moreover, those needs could help with the improvement or restoration of the areas of the environment that have been damaged from hazardous materials used in agricultural areas.

In the meantime, city expansion related to service industrial section growth will lead to an invasion of the agricultural zone or even wetlands areas through construction or facilities, including hotels and resorts. It also a clearly negative effect on various aspects of the environment. Moreover, there will be increases in the demand for water to respond to the needs of consumers from industrial and service sectors, which will lead to limited water allocation in agricultural areas. Moreover, pollution from the expansion of accommodation and city areas will lead to problems in the environment and ecosystem. With this progress and economic development, households have become more stable, plus there will be increased opportunities to supplement income for households and the community. Workers in the labor force will gain employment and the social security fund will find expanded coverage. As a result, wages will be rise, resulting in increased savings for households and the community that will boost security for themselves and families. Eventually, this will lead to life and social insurance systems from birth to death. Since accommodation stability has been found, free from the necessity of renting and depending on others' responsibility, there is a community organization networking system which has emerged with systematical and modern communication technology. Therefore, community members will have stable accommodation without creating a burden for others.

It was agreed upon that the government will be able to fairly arrange educational welfare to reach all areas. Similarly, health welfare would be provided equality and thoroughly. Households and communities will receive good nutrition, which will lead to an increase of the average lifespan. In terms of cultural welfare, households and the community will restore Thai identity, tradition, and community culture. Due to modern and rapid communication, households and community have increased their communication. Increases in support and help have also been found. For safety and security, it was stated that households and the community are safer from the threat of burglars and thieves, who violate physical boundaries. Those increases in safety and security are derived from the readiness of the community in preparing patrol shifts to take care of each other, with clearer roles.

With stronger economic growth, community members earn more income, and the dependence on forests or natural resources has become less important. As a result, rehabilitation of forests and other resources has become prominent. Abundant resources have been pinpointed. Guidelines for preparing selective welfare for a happy society according to the community perspective were addressed and welfare preparation was

highlighted as a responsibility of the state. The state-welfare program should focus on a social welfare fund that the state will use to look after the welfare of the population. Both life and social insurance have to be included from birth to death. Education welfare should be arranged thoroughly according to local wisdom-based practices. The community should determine the curriculum. A fair and thorough health security system should be provided. The community should get involved in every activity. An arrangement that is close to the current activity is the social security fund, which has expanded to include informal workers. These are agriculturists who work in the agricultural sector. However, the fund has not succeeded in making inroads to the target group yet because of various conditions that insured people have to support. As a result, this fund has not received much attention. Arrangements for educational welfare following state policy (free education for 15 years), and a health insurance system based on universal health care coverage policy also need to be improved.

Due to limitations of the current budget, resources, and state human resources, plus community potential for welfare arrangement; guidelines for arranging alternative welfare under the “happy society” scenario will be conducted with stakeholder participation from many sectors. Responsibility will not be given to only one party.

Guidance for Alternative Welfare Systems in the Midst of “Wealthy in a Degraded Environment”

During the age of development expansion to the community area, as well as industrial development (B.E. 2520-2535), Khon Kaen province was appointed as the center of the Esan area. Since the First Plan of the National Economic and Social Development Plan, Khon Kaen was set to be a “secondary urban growth” hub. The approach to motivate investment in the center of this region has led different industries to Khon Kaen province to support continuous expansion in the past 20 years. From 2536-2555, different factories opened production sites in the Nam Phong area, including a paper factory, a liquor factory, a sugar factory, and a tapioca flour factory. In addition, agriculturists have shifted their interests to monocultures instead, like eucalyptus, cassava, and sugar cane, so that they could send their products to those factories, resulting in income increases. On the other hand, community members have higher expenses because of their need to use fertilizer and chemicals for their farms, which led to debt increases. It was also found that there were more laborers hired in the agricultural field and increases in agricultural technology, instead of community members helping and supporting each other. As a result, the ecosystem and the environment have changed. The soil has become degraded. Land utilization purposes have also been altered, resulting in decreased forest areas and less biodiversity. Water pollution from factories has also increased, and water quality has become a problem. In 2556-2565, there were more factories for monoculture products. Increases in the yield per rai as well as the scale of farms were also found, which led to higher demands of agricultural laborers. Even though household income increased, problems with insufficient earnings were still pointed out. More foreign workers were brought in. There were more problems with polluted soil and a lack of water in farming and industries. A conflict over water usage has become an issue. In 2566-2575, there are more industrial factories, better economics and increased cash flow, which led to increases in overseas labor hiring. Hence, there are various cultures mixing, resulting in criminal activities and drug usage problems. Larger plots for farm production have been used. New technology to support increases in the yield per rai are a focus. The number of rice farmers has been reduced. New generation are disinterested in rice farming. Instead, they have turned their attention to raising energy crops, resulting in the degeneration of the ecosystem and the environment. Even though households in Khon Kaen have increased their earnings in the agricultural field, the environment has deteriorated.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of a deteriorated environment scenario, it is obvious that industrial expansion leads to a dramatic expansion of the labor force. Households who mainly depend on an agricultural living earn more income from the industrial sector. As industrial expansion and agricultural importance decrease, less severe land usage is found. Agricultural households do not need to only rely on the agricultural sector for their living. However, the downside of these situations is that households and communities have encountered environmental quality problems due to industrial expansion, including air

and water pollution from factory emissions. Even though there is increased labor force from industrial expansion, there are groups of community members are not employed, especially individual agriculturists, due to a lack to skill. As a result, this group of individual agriculturists will face difficulties finding work to support themselves. They also do not receive support from the province, which lead to a negative quality of life.

Households and communities are now focusing on a welfare arrangement including rehabilitating the environment and cultivating public awareness of community resource conservation. They also put emphasis on creating awareness of public resources, suggesting that everyone has the right to use and maintain resources together. Trainings should be undertaken to increase public awareness regarding environmental rehabilitation through the conservation approach. There is also a push to raise public awareness in determining rules and regulations to properly use public resources, including land, water and forests. Additionally trainings should pinpoint the use of pesticides and chemicals for agricultural fertilization in order to share information and resources among community members. Environmental rehabilitation and conservation networking regarding land, water, and forests should be set up to increase public awareness. Youth should be invited to participate through educational welfare. It is also recommended to improve the communication system to ensure that it is up-to-date and utilizing proper technology. Increasing women's roles is suggested to encourage their leadership in the community to restore participation in the festival of gathering for growing rice.

Knowledge management in the community should be undertaken in order to improve and strengthen the community and households. It is also important to give precedence to the community regarding increasing discipline in environmental conservation. A civil society forum should be arranged as an approach toward community administration. Guidelines for preparing selective welfare are to be more focused on self-reliance. The local administration organization should be involved in playing a role to improve human resources and welfare arrangements to take care of children, elders, and people who lack opportunities in the community. They should also initiate group-welfare in order to creating harmony and participation in the community, which will lead to a pattern based on the "participation of group administration management as regards the economy and the environment".

Scenarios that are close to current circumstances include welfare arrangements for children, elders, and people who lack opportunities in the community, and which are currently a part of the government policy under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. However, those supports are still carried out with limitations and a need to assess qualifications before receiving welfare. It was found that the local administration organization was able to take care of more target groups after decentralization. However a lack of participation from target groups was noted. Since the process on qualifications assessment has been undertaken in a simple way (for everyone who is aged over 60 years), they do not see value or importance of this offer and instead wait for the support. Moreover, the leaders of many local administration organizations use this welfare benefit for their political campaigns and to create attention for themselves. Currently groups in the community are formed for different activities, like a savings group, an occupational group, a cremation welfare group, an environmental conservation group, an elderly group, etc. In some groups, profits from group activities are arranged as welfare for members. On the other hand, for groups that do not have a budget, activities will be voluntarily conducted to help each other and the community. The groups were organized informally. Welfare activities were not of much variety and they mainly stayed close to their communities.

The researcher does not see the future possibility of this scenario. Even though the government policy focuses on ensuring a happy society, the government needs to determine measures to prevent this development from having an impact on the environment. Guidelines for selective welfare arrangements suggested by the researcher are that the local administration organization has to be the networking center. In the meantime, the community sector has to become a party to improve selective welfare for a happy society.

Guidance to Alternative Welfare Systems in the Midst of “Poor in a Healthy Environment”

In the past 10 years (B.E. 2546 – 2555), the government has had a policy to promote value-added features for agricultural products, and to position agricultural products to be “local products” (OTOP). There was some encouragement to grow other plants, apart from sugar cane and cassava, such as rubber, with a policy on agricultural product price insurance. New technology emerged to help with agricultural production. There was also expansion on the concept of health and consumption safety in society. In 2556-2565, growing plants for consumption and for sales have been of interest. The concept of safe and hygienic food has drawn more attention. Since consumers are interested in safe and hygienic food, special markets/products have become necessary in order to support the expansion of products. Producers also improve their product standards, like obtaining certification on product quality and standards. The new generation labor force migrates from the community in order to work in industry and service sectors. From 2566-2575, enforcement of research in order to find technology to increase productivity and land usage will be taken into account. A shorter time frame, a reduction in the labor force, and improvements in productivity to increase value are all pinpointed. The new generation who obtained higher education prefers to choose more integrated agriculture. There is a reduction in using chemicals for fertilizing agricultural products as well as rehabilitation of land, water, and forest. Furthermore, agriculturists are able to access financial sources more easily. Groups are formed to exchange knowledge in production. A tendency towards natural disasters, which will impact industrial and agricultural sectors, is still an issue. From 2576-2585, the trend on health and life safety as well as carefully food selection has received more attention. The campaign to promote this concept has expanded. Producers and consumers have greater awareness. Improvements in basic infrastructure, transportation, and markets are found, which leads to insufficient products when compared to market needs. Therefore, product research and development still remain important in order to help reducing those problems and to supply products to the Asian market.

Advantages and disadvantages of this scenario include increased agricultural products and benefits from the ecosystem, especially from land that can be used to grow sugar cane, cassava, rice and other kinds of plants. It was stated in the study that increasing agricultural products in the past always created many disadvantages. Reducing forestry areas for agricultural expansion in order to gain more productivity is given as example. This kind of situation will not happen in the future because forestry areas will have been completely invaded. Losing forest areas outside conservation forestry areas, like community forests, forests around farming areas, or single trees would help agriculturists produce more agricultural products due to increases in the amount of land. The most severe disadvantage in order to obtain basic benefits for this scenario is to increase agricultural products and the necessity of water and new agricultural technology, and increase the amount of chemicals added to agricultural crops. The negative impacts are the high investment to supply water, the shortage of current water sources, low water quality due to runoff of chemicals used in agricultural fields, and the increased amount of land used for energy crops, particularly sugar cane and cassava. These two crops will easily and significantly deteriorate surface soil, resulting in low quality soil. It is necessary for agriculturists to invest in increasing amounts of chemicals or improve soil by using organic substances. Therefore, the income of agriculturists decreased. Chemical runoff to water sources, plus soil erosion to water sources will continuously impact underwater habitats. These kinds of disadvantageous results are currently found but they could create more severity in the future.

It can be concluded that the findings from these scenarios are that agricultural productivity increases and links to expansion of the agricultural industry. Agriculturists earn more income and their quality of life improves. Agricultural productivity increases could help economic growth in general. It could also help to save on imported energy. These outcomes mostly occur in the short period. However, these results have to be kept track of. The downside of these increases are soil and water quality deterioration, plus a lack of fresh water. Eventually, these impacts will worsen in the long term.

Hence, some guidelines for arranging an alternative welfare system is to share experiences and to focus more on self-reliance; which includes providing coverage of education welfare; improving modern

communication systems; strengthening the quality of educational human resources in order to reduce the educational gap; organizing a community forum to share experiences, social events, culture, and history; enforcing investment; supporting community enterprises and OTOP producers so that they can earn household income; advocating social group formation; setting up a voluntary system – friends help friends; helping people who are unemployed and lack social opportunities; promoting a savings groups and a cremation welfare group; preparing basic infrastructure in the community; increasing the responsibilities of the local administration organization; and decreasing infrastructure construction like roads, electricity, and water supply.

Scenarios that are close to the current circumstances are found in educational welfare arrangements. The government has tried to provide an educational system through free education policy for 15 years so that it can be accessed by each household. However, there are still problems with educational quality, educational human resource quality, and unequal education. The advocacy of community enterprises, the OTOP producer group, the saving group, and the cremation welfare group are alternative welfare options that are mainly carried out by government agencies or private organizations for development purposes. Those support measures are given in the form of money, education, materials, etc. Therefore, many different groups are able to provide more welfare to members; whereas the local administration organization is still taking little responsibility on this.

Possible future alternative scenarios of being “poor in the midst of a healthy environment” could happen because they conform to the guidelines and policy of nation development that focuses on self-reliance. Therefore, guidelines for arranging alternative welfare is comprised of advocating social group formation, helping people who are unemployed, the elderly, and addressing the lack of opportunity in the community. An example is given in the case where elders live with family, a tax deduction is applicable. Communities will link and integrate their work with the local administration organization and government agencies as a stake holder.

Guidance to Alternative Welfare Systems in the Midst of “Poor in a Degraded Environment”

To participate in the ASEAN community, Khon Kaen province has adapted their approach to collaborate with the vision of “Indochina Gate”. Before 2555, support for industry and infrastructure systems for their improvement was implemented. From 2556-2565, the needs for services of the industrial labor force have been highlighted more intensely. The policy has been changed so that entrepreneurs can easily hire overseas workers. Some of the new generation labor force have returned to their homeland. Standards of factories have been improved to ensure that their products meet the standards and are accepted by the ASEAN community. A variety of people have come to live together, resulting in changing lifestyles. Instant food has become more common due to limitations of factory working hours. Systems to transfer money have been improved to facilitate workers sending money home or sending money back to their headquarters. Credit cards are widespread. There are other forms of services to respond to the needs of laborers, like restaurants, cloth repair shops, buses, salons, etc. As the government recognizes the mix of people, measures for safety prevention of life and assets have been more strictly applied. The logistics system has been improved to ensure speed and efficiency in order to facilitate the transport of products and raw materials. Urban areas have been spread out to support immigrants. Similarly, areas to produce food and other kinds of vegetables have expanded. As a result, there are more individual agriculturists. Since food is considered the main factor for life, greater attention on food safety inspections has been found. Food processing with various vegetables has been carried out. OTOPs and community enterprises are set up to help agriculturists with product management. From 2566-2575, there will be middlemen to provide distribution products to the target group. From 2576-2585, a service industrial park will be established which will lead to greater numbers and varieties of people. Resources have become limited and ecosystems have deteriorated. On the other hand, ecosystem areas for integrated agriculture will be gradually improved, which will allow for greater forest areas.

According to the brainstorming from the meeting as regards advantages and disadvantages of being poor in the midst of a healthy environment, members agreed that communities are more scattered and self-dependent. The government agencies pay less attention to each community. Less generosity among community members is pointed out, resulting in a lack of a development direction, conflicts on competitions for resources, uncertainty and danger. Furthermore, it encourages theft. Households have to rent land for their livelihood. There are more community members do not own their own land. Insufficient water for consumption and agricultural purposes has been noted. Low incomes, which lead to low household incomes, derive from low pay due to economic situations. More unemployed workers move back to their communities. There are burden increases in households. It is anticipated that future situations will be similar to current circumstances, which are that agricultural ecology will remain diverse, even though there is pressure to change to monocultures. Moreover, even though the agricultural industry and other forms of industries are still encroaching, expansion has not proceeded rapidly.

However, this kind of scenario provides a major advantage to the remaining variety of agricultural activities, both at the individual area and the zone area. Ecosystems involved in land, water, trees, and agricultural crops will not dramatically degenerate. With some beneficial approaches, rehabilitation could be aided as support will be shared among members. Additionally, the diversity of circumstances will strengthen individual agriculturists' work. In particular, it will help agriculturists who are not wealthy and need various channels to supplement their income. Considering the downside of these scenarios in the future, products from each production line will not see much of an increase because of a limitation of specialized skills. Expansion of industry and modern economic sectors may be restricted, which will lead to a lack of new employment opportunities. Therefore, individual agriculturists have to rely more heavily on agricultural income. In such cases, there will be a negative focus on land and agricultural resources. This kind of situation will scope the quality of life improvement among community members. In the meantime society will not have sufficient economic enforcement to improve basic infrastructure.

Guidelines for providing community welfare are geared toward local traditional restoration conservation and the cultivation of awareness on the environmental value as regards land, water, and forests. Other areas for support are educational arrangements to conform to the community environmental identity, boosting participation in the community, health welfare focused on self-reliance according to the "philosophy of a sufficiency economy" in order to create immunity and health care, plus a decrease in health problems. It also focused on health care welfare in the community from birth to death, welfare to create awareness of community participation, welfare for debts incurred pending payment, searching for sources of capital with low interest, advocacy of savings groups and occupation group formation, and coverage of health care.

Scenarios that are close to current circumstances are health care welfare that concentrates on self-reliance following the "philosophy of a sufficiency economy" in order to create a positive self-image. The concept of "creating good health to reduce health repairing" is pointed out. It was found that most activities are provided for building awareness such as various campaigns, and recruitment on human resources for the community or sub-district model. Those areas of support have not been implemented to the level of awareness cultivation.

Having health care welfare in the community from birth to death conforms to the current implementation. The potential future of these alternative scenarios as analyzed by the researcher is impossible since it has never happened in the past that the government would allow such severe circumstances to occur. It could lead to the stage of a "failed government" in the future. Therefore, guidelines for providing alternative welfare are considered to be an approach to raise awareness of community participation more than a way to form an economic group.

According to anticipation on tendency of welfare system change since B.E. 2555 under the above 4 scenarios, guidelines for alternative welfare arrangement are summarized in the below Table 1:

Table 1: Guidelines of alternative welfare arrangement of Khon Kaen province under the different development in society and environment scenarios

Welfare Group	Happy Society	Wealthy in a degraded environment	Poor in a healthy environment	Poor in a degraded environment
Health	-good nutrition, full-coverage health care system, long lifespan, full-coverage health insurance	- using chemicals in agricultural areas	-decreases in health insurance	- sufficiency economy philosophy - health care fund set up in the community
Education	-government provides coverage system based on local wisdom, curriculum is determined by government	- information and resource sharing in the community, raising awareness of community members -community/ households collect and share knowledge in the community	improving community system to ensure it is up-to-date, insufficient coverage in area of educational quality, a lack of educational human resource quality -unequal education	-conform to community needs, provide welfare according to foundation/identity of community, increased participation from households/ community
Basic Infrastructure	- stable, no need to rent from others, self-dependent	-welfare on group formation, advocacy of harmony	-decreases in infrastructure construction -increased responsibilities of community/ local administration organization -lack of attention from government	-insufficient potable water -a lack of water for agricultural purposes
Economic	-have savings, have immunity, sufficiency economy	-tendency of self-reliance, production, marketing	-household income decreases, labor wages decrease, high competition -unemployed community members supported by community	- household income decreases, labor wages decrease, increased unemployed community members returning to community -household members are depending on each other more
Environment	-conservation of land, water, and forests increases; chemical usage decreases; reduction of debt; greater participation in various community activities	-cultivation of awareness on conservation, establishment of environmental rehabilitation fund -conservative network on land, water, forest, using proper technology	-sufficient lifestyle, environmental reliance, usage of hazardous materials decreases	-welfare from local traditional conservation rehabilitation, awareness of environmental value -determining rules, regulations, how to access/obtain benefit
Social/Culture	-community cultural restoration conservation -rapid communication growth -increases in support and help among community members	-care given to children, elders, and people who lack opportunities -local administration organization plays role in human resource development	-volunteers help friends, unemployed community members, and people who lack opportunities in the community	-creating awareness on being a community, supporting group formation, savings group -additional occupations
Safety and Security	-safer from the threat of burglars, thieves, violation of physical boundaries -increased life and social insurance systems from birth to death	-group formation for economy and environment -welfare on group formation to advocate harmony -participation, public awareness	-households lose their lands and fall into debt -problems with crime and drug usage -insufficient water for agricultural purposes	-problems with threat of burglars, decreased land rentals by households

Conclusions

Guidelines for arranging possible alternative welfare in the future for Khon Kaen province will look into the cultural background. It will be conducted in the form of experience exchanges among households and communities based on the community's culture. The community educational forum will be organized in order to share experience as regards social, cultural, and community history, focusing more on self-reliance. Alternative welfare will also be provided according to resources, households, and communities. Action will be taken to draw attention to land, water, and forest resource conservation. A voluntary environmental organization will be established. Community rules and regulations will be clearly determined regarding how to use and access resources. There will be an increase of social and environmental network formation in order to link with the government and private organizations. As regards alternative welfare for the development aspect, there will be educational welfare and modern communication systems improvement. Quality of education should be provided thoroughly. In the meantime, quality of educational human resources should be highlighted in order to reduce the inequality in education. Advocacy on investments, community enterprises, and the OTOP producer group should be undertaken in order to raise household income. In addition, social groups should be formed and a system should be arranged to coordinate the volunteer-based "Friends Help Friends". Other forms of support include helping people who are unemployment and people who lack opportunities in the community. Suggestions to strengthen the savings group and cremation welfare were also noted. Moreover, it was recommended to prepare basic infrastructure welfare in the community. The local administration organization should also pay more responsibilities by decreasing infrastructure construction including road, electricity, and water supply, etc.

Guidelines for implementing alternative welfare in Khon Kaen province in the future will focus on mixed welfare that can be linked with other sectors formally and informally. Problems and needs of community members will be taken on as the main consideration. Public participation will also be pinpointed as one of the factors in a developing society. All parties that are involved with alternative welfare arrangements should share responsibilities and not provide benefits to only one party.

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