SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SIAMESE IN PERLIS, MALAYSIA.

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to (1) study the development of society according to general concept and theory, to (2) investigate the development of the Siamese society in the State of Perlis, and to (3) find the model of social development of the Siamese people in the State of Perlis. This qualitative research was conducted through data collection from documents, in-depth interviews with key informants, and focus groups, and content analysis was employed to analyze.

Findings revealed the followings:

1) Concepts of social development in the mainstream groups include evolutionary theory, classical evolution theory, modernity theory, dependence theory, globalization theory, potential and diffusion theory, modern communication theory, theory of cultural spread whereas the secondary concepts and theories are; social network, concept of social actors, concept of people's participation, new theory, concept of civil society, the wisdom concept, and social development theory.

2) Development of Siamese society in Perlis indicates adaptation, establishment of cultural identity with the network process leading to power and unification viz., the network Thai language, Thai temple network, ethnic network, network of traditions, and the living together social network and these can heighten Siamese community maintain the balance of the Siamese social development process.

3) In finding of the Siamese social development model in the State of Perlis, it was found that the collaborative model, southern local Thai Language network, dressing in Thai costumes in religious activities, and the daily life has been employed.

Keyword: Social development, Social Development Model, Siamese society

Introduction

Social development is a multifaceted working process targeting peaceful society, continuous cooperation to help each other leading to the human security in every dimension. Looking back on the past development plan from the 1st -10th National Economic and Social Development Plan, it was found that each plan showed adaptation to accord with social conditions of each era to enhance the social wellbeing, warm life, normal life with culture and the environment well.

Development is a concept based on interest caused by observation on social and cultural changing phenomena which are clearly described the social and culture of mankind is constantly changing for a number of reasons as given below:

1. Changing the Physical Environment
2. Population Change
3. Isolation and Contact
4. Social and Cultural Structure

From the past social phenomenon, it was found that social and cultural change is a natural occurrence that cannot be avoided to consider change, understanding of the direction of change, the magnitude of change, time of change, the cause of change or resistance to change. Activities arranged for group members to participate can well strengthen group's power (Saigne, Saijan, & Pinyo, 2015)

Siam Society in Perlis, the northernmost of Thailand border with the coast of Satun province and the land of Songkhla province. It is the smallest state of Malaysia with prosperity and high relationship in ethnicity. From the survey, community with location of Buddhist temples indicates that (Lertkrai & Nilkarn, 2016) there are two villages of Siamese people around 400 families consisting of 2,500 Siamese people, 4 temples viz., Wat Matchimaprasit, Wat Suwankiri, Wat Kubangtika, and Wat Phrom Vijit, 2 monasteries i.e., Kwuankhanun Monastery and Thung Tong Monastery with devout Buddhists who have followed the doctrine of the Buddha till present.

The study of social development in general concepts and theories is to learn in the process of social development and to explore the development of Siamese society in the State of Perlis in order to understand the process, the Siamese Social development model in the State of Perlis that make the Siamese society in Malaysia firmly preserve Thai cultural identity in different environment cultural contexts (Samakkee & Lertkrai, P., 2014).

Research Objectives

1. To study social development based on general concepts and theories
2. To study the development of Siamese society in Perlis.
3. To find the social development model of Siamese people in Perlis.

Research Methodology

The study aimed at exploring the development of Siamese society in Perlis. To study, the researcher studied the concept, theories and related concept with a conceptual framework consisting of social development based on the general concept and theory of social development, Siamese social development, and the model of social development of Siamese in the State of Perlis.

Key informants

Key informants of the study were five Buddhist monks, five local scholars, and ten villagers.

Scope of area

The scope of area of the study consists of four temples and two monasteries in the Perlis State, Malaysia. The data obtained for a qualitative study focusing mainly on fieldwork data were based on three aspects; documentary research, in-depth interview with key informants, and focus group discussion (Glser, 1978).

Research area and key informants

Siamese community in Perlis State, Malaysia consists of 5 communities around the temple including:

1) Wat Matchimaprasit community
2) Wat Suwan Khiri (Kuan Mueang) community
3) Wat Kubangtika community
4) Khuan Khanun monastery community and
5) Tung Tong monastery community.

The key informants in the in-depth interview were divided into 2 groups:

1) Five Buddhist monks consisting of the Vice Ecclesiastical Kedah / Perlis Governor, the Abbot of Wat Suwan Khiri (Kuan Mun), the Chief Monk of Wat Kubangtika , the Chief monk of Tung Tong monastery.
2) Ten people consisting of heads of village or two community committee.

The key informants in the group discussion were divided into 2 groups:

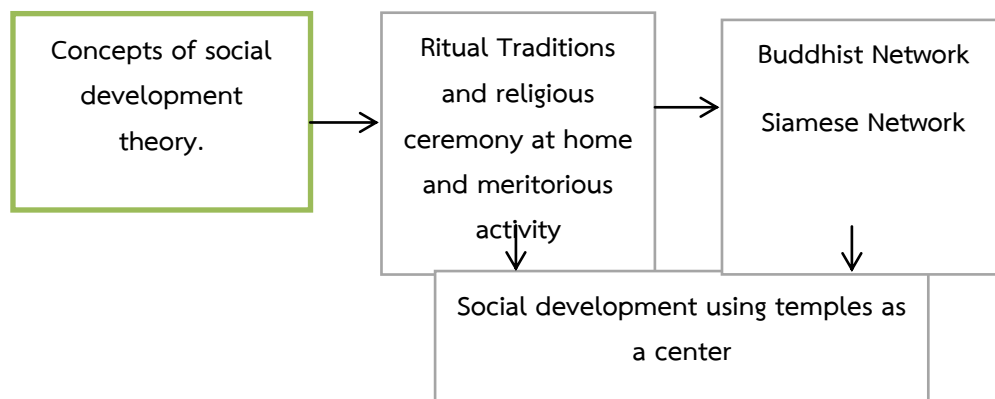1) Four Buddhist monks including the Vice Ecclesiastical Kedah/Perlis Governor the Abbot of Wat Kubangtika , the Chief monk of Tung Tong monastery.
2) 20 informants from heads of village community committees (two persons from each community).

Key informant selection

Purposeful selection is a rigid and unstructured selection of procedures and procedures that are not complicated. The main aim of selecting this sample is not for obtaining representative clusters, but for obtaining the best possible sample. The selected samples for the concept and objectives of the study are   the "case-rich case" of which is very informative and can best reflect the reality (Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012). And this can provide important information that best suits the aims and objectives of the study.
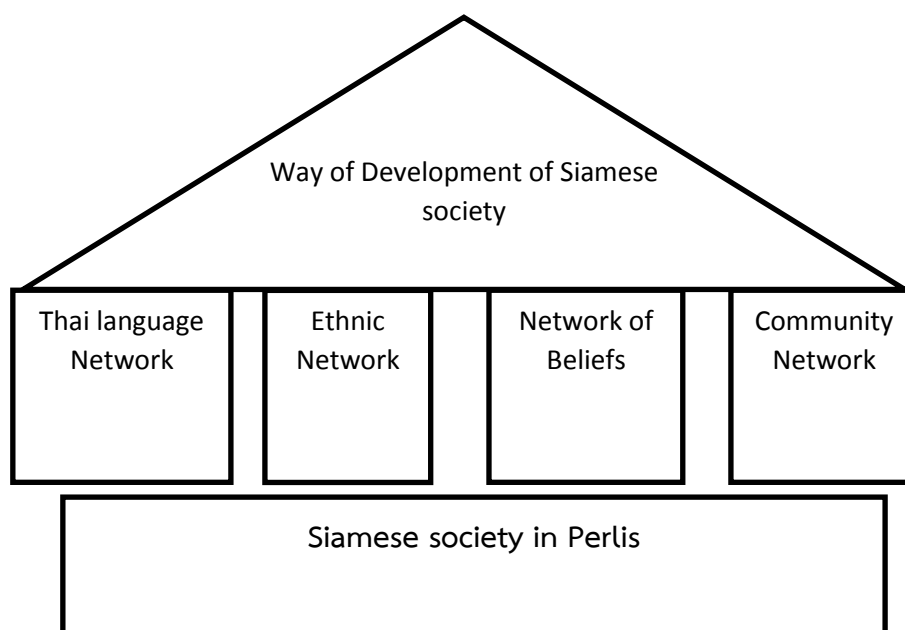
Research findings

Theories of social development in the mainstream groups include evolutionary theory, modernity theory, and potential and diffusion theory, cultural diffusion theory. For social networking concepts, people's participation concept, new concepts in wisdom for social development, it was found that the most social development follow the social networking concept, cultural diffusion and the use of wisdom mainly for social development.

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┌─────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│ Concepts of     │     │ Ritual Traditions│     │ Buddhist Network │
│ social          │ ──► │ and religious    │ ──► │                  │
│ development      │     │ ceremony at home │     │ Siamese Network  │
│ theory.          │     │ and meritorious  │     │                  │
└─────────────────┘     │ activity         │     └──────────────────┘
                        └──────────────────┘              │
                                  │                       ▼
                        ┌────────────────────────────────────┐
                        │ Social development using temples as │
                        │ a center                            │
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The phenomenon of participation in activities follows the social movement corresponding to the social theory. In meritorious traditional activity, there will be members of Buddhist networks in nearby communities, and Buddhist members in networks from different areas or from different states attempting to attend or trying to participate in the manner of support by sending representatives or money and taking part in the events (Nilkarn, 2014). As a result, the activity is very active and make participants realize the importance of participation and involvement including trying to convey the faith and behavioral collaboration to people around relatives firmly and continuously.   Traditional activities arranged based on the concept of network and the social process of using chiefly the local wisdom. With these, Siamese people can perform activities consistent with the context of the community, corresponding to belief, religious faith and later transforming to traditional practice that is adapted to the suitable environment. Consequently, members attend the event, learn and apply it to suit the changing social conditions.

The development of Siamese society in Perlis has been developed with a way of adaptation and cultural identity with the network process energizing the power and unification of the Thai language network, Thai Temple Network, Ethnic Network, Network of traditions, and the network of social living. As a result, the Siamese community can maintain the balance of the Siamese social development process.

Way of Development of Siamese society

| Thai language Network | Ethnic Network | Network of Beliefs | Community Network |

Siamese society in Perlis

Findings revealed that development of Siamese society came into existence with adaptation to the social environment following four main factors; Thai language Network, Ethnic Network ,Network of beliefs leading to holding traditional and meritorious activities (Nganboon–Nanban) and the community network. With these four factors, the activities have been participated and will continue to participate. Consequently, the Siamese community is strengthened.

The Siamese social development model in the State of Perlis in demonstrating the image of the cultural group (Lertkrai, Monliang,& Jitkra, 2016) using the Southern Thai dialect, dressing in Thai costumes with a shawl among women and a loincloth amongst men in the community, temples, and during performing religious ceremonies.

Discussions of findings

Concepts of social development in the mainstream groups are evolutionary theory, modernity theory, dependency theory, cultural diffusion theory, social networking concept, public participation, new theory concept, the use of wisdom and social development theory and the said theory is suitable for the condition and context of Siamese people whose society is united with a strong association with each other and the Siamese society need a group that has the power to cooperate in activities different from the majority in the surrounding

society. The Siamese society wants to mediate people in the society to see the power of society, a unity in the near community and the different community network in strengthening the cultural stability that are the main centers of belief and ethnicity.

The development of Siamese society in Perlis There is a process of adaptation in the context of the socioeconomic environment by virtue of cultural forces. Creating a community network news of the faith in Buddhism perform traditional activities with unity. The ethnic Thai language network allows the Siamese community to maintain a balance of Siamese culture. And it is Malaysian to suit the state of society.

The Siamese social development model in the State of Perlis, Malaysia has used the communication style with Southern Thai dialect, Thai costumes, with a shawl among women and a loincloth amongst men in the community, performance of religious ceremony in important days and performing religious ceremonies and in daily life

Suggestions

1) Theoretical social development in practical procedures should be mainly used according to the suitable context and environment of society, employing only 1-2 main theories and minor theories for designing the action plan and the development process.
2) Organizations or agencies should   take social development by utilizing developing networks along with social integration, communities that want to empower the community   to be clearly visible in the midst of different social environments, especially the minority or marginalized communities.
3) Leadership, organizational leaderless should take the form of social development that emphasizes cooperation by organizing activities to make members realize the significant part of the group, being proud of involving in social development that must be spread and extend to people around and the younger generations.

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