

The Guidelines to Eliminate Thai Farmers' Poverty In Chaiyaphum Province

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Abstract

This research article aimed to propose the Guidelines to eliminate Thai farmers' poverty in Chaiyaphum province. The methodology of the research is mixed. A set of questionnaires was used to collect data from 403 farmer household samples, 2 focus groups with 30 farmers were interviewed and in-depth interview with 21 farmers, and a focus group meeting with 9 farmers were done to conclude from the Guidelines to eliminate Thai farmers' poverty in Chaiyaphum province.

The research found that with respect to poverty conditions, The comparative proportion of the poor farmer households amounted to 64.34% of the whole farmer household samples in Chaiyaphum province. Most poor households had some correlated functions that the average age of the head householder is 52.61 years old, the highest education level at primary is 78.60%, the average number of family members is 4.24, the average subsistence area is 11.67 rai, the average income is 88,179.90 baht per year while the average expense is 54,476.43 baht per year which can calculate the percentage of the expense rate per the income rate at 66.77%, and the average household debt is 85,724.57 baht. The impact factor on household poverty are sex, age, educational level, number of household members, numbers of occupation-members, number of dependent-members, governmental district of household, logistic system, agricultural subsistence areas, kind of agriculture, water suppliance or subsidy, attitude on occupation, modernity lifestyle, technological lifestyle, pro-changing lifestyle, attitude on loan. The proper Guidelines for Thai Farmers' Poverty Elimination in Chaiyaphum province are as follows : 1. An effective ability and opportunity improvement on occupation development and income making. 2. Strengthening of agricultural economy. 3. Effective public service and social protection for the poor and the disadvantage. 4. Life quality improvement of the poor and the disadvantage in health, mind, and public services access. 5. Governmental system improvement using political participation.

Keywords: Poverty, The Guidelines for Poverty Elimination, Thai Farmers' Poverty

Introduction

Poverty is a world crucial problem. Even if socio-economic development has made humanity have more comfortable life, not only globalization has brought us the acceptance on the development in the trend of capitalism which, but also, has brought us social problems such as inequality and poverty. (Ruangyos Chantarakiri, 2006:1-2). Especially, worst of all, poverty is a long-time accumulated deficit problem. Many countries have tried to find solutions on poverty but it is still a 'no way out'. (Wittaya Chianpan, et.al., 2010: 1). Just like most underdeveloped countries, Thailand is still fighting with poverty. Causes of the problems were from capitalism which has brought inequality of income between the rich and the poor. Lastly, that inequality becomes nowadays settle-down as a deep-root Thailand structural problem and developmental limitation. Even Thai agriculture is extolled as a



‘backbone of Thai society’ but the poverty problem of men and women in rural area agriculture, such as a short of fund, is not only a ‘Chronic disease’ but also makes farmers live in a continuous poverty circle. (Manus Suwan, 2014: 2-3). In short, Thai backbone is now eroded. There is 85% of the poor living in rural area and work in the farm that means there is no way for Thai farmers alone to fight back to-day complexity poverty system without a support from Thai government. There are many factors affecting on Thai farmers’ poverty (WarayutPalasri, 2013: 10). Even Thai government has tried to make solutions on poverty by improving economic development and has had an accomplishment in bringing a lower-poverty line of people up but Thai inequality of income is still in the dangerous status. (Suppajet Chansan, 2009: 71-72).

Chaiyaphum province is located in the North-eastern region of Thailand. Like many Thai provinces, it suffers with poverty and people live their life in poverty causing from low income, cheapen agricultural product price. So, they have got a poverty problem. Chaiyaphum people are farmers using lo-technology in productions which reward a low and indigent income. Moreover, inequality boosted up their poverty. Regrettably, the government project to improve income and life saw no effect on their poverty, even though, it can raise people’s income.

Aforementioned, this research aimed to study on conditions and causes of Chaiyaphum farmers’ poverty, and to offer some suggestions on fighting Chaiyaphum farmers’ poverty. Most of all, it tried to offer the strategies on poverty policy which, hopefully, release Chaiyaphum farmers from their long-time poverty burden.

Research Objectives

1. To study environment, weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats which affect Chaiyaphum farmers’ household poverty.
2. To offer the Guidelines on Thai Farmers’ Poverty Elimination in Chaiyaphum province.

Scope of the Research

1. The scope of population and sample : 112,815 Chaiyaphum farmer households and stakeholders, administrators, officers.
2. The scope of context : problems and causes of Chaiyaphum farmers household poverty; environment, weaknesses, strengths, opportunity, and threat which affect Chaiyaphum farmers’ household poverty, and the Strategies for Thai Farmers’ Poverty Elimination in Chaiyaphum province.

Literature Reviews

Literature review on Thai farmers’ poverty has brought up a framework as follows: private factors, social factors, economics factors, psychological factors, government projects factors.

1. The concept of poverty in economic or income (Monetary Dimension) has been described by Somchai (2001:7) that the definition of poverty is based on income levels or economic status of individuals but that income is not sufficient to meet the minimum standards of living, or having an income below the minimum acceptable standard of living in harmony with society. Wichai (2012) provides a definition of poverty that it means those who do not have enough money or can not meet the basic minimum required for nutritious food, housing and consumer goods suitable for living a quality life in the benchmark, or having on income or ability to respond to the needs of people living below average in the same society.



2. The concept of poverty other than having an income or not is the lack of social, educational, healthcare opportunities, self development, rightful power, as well as the fall in risk and terror in society as Makha (2014) provides a definition of poverty that though income is used as a standard of the poverty level of income. The definition of poverty is also based on the non-income dimensions on the other side. It is broader than income alone, such as a shortage of opportunities in various fields. The lack of power and rights of individuals. By definition, non-income poverty as the tool used to measure poverty has widened as well. That is to look at the potential of the poor that has been fostered and developed enough, however, expanded opportunities to access basic social services in the state, such as education, health, coupled with the increase in access to inputs. production and marketing as well as the decentralized management of resources and political power to local authorities to be involved more. This is consistent with the concept of Supachai (2009: 74), which explains the lack of comprehensive poverty housing, the lack of access to health services, the lack of educational opportunities, joblessness, the rightful power as well as the fall in risk, fear and insecurity in society.

Research Methodology

1) Quantitative Research

Population and Samples. The population comprised 112,815 Chaiyaphum farmers households. The samples were calculated using Malholtra formulation with 5% scalable into 403 households. The samples derived from multi-stage sampling in segregation of the governmental province and took out 4 districts using simple random sampling; then with systematic random sampling took out 403 households by drawing lots from address numbers in household accounting.

Research Instrument. This comprised an 8 part questionnaire: 1) Farmers' private characteristic data. 2) Farmers' social characteristic data. 3) Farmers' economics characteristic data. 4) Farmers' attitude characteristic data. 5) Government project characteristic data. 6) Farmers' income-expense characteristic data. 7) Farmers' opportunity in public service access and, 8) suggestion.

Data Collecting. The researcher and assistants surveyed the samples' data (farmers' households in target areas). In data collecting in fieldwork, the researcher interviewed the samples as the informants by informal chatting, and then filled out the questionnaire by the researcher. Timing of survey was 12 months (October 2014 – October 2015).

Data Analysis in Quantitative Research. Raw data were checked for correctness and completeness. After being edited, the data were analyzed using the following statistics:

1) Descriptive statistics using in nominal data were frequency, percentage, mean, and S.D. In addition, in this research, researcher took the National Statistical Office's 2014 North-eastern region household poverty line at 2,355 baht per man per month was used as the reference in dividing the poverty/non poverty households. 2) Inferential statistics were used to analyze poverty factors to bring out causal factors affecting farmers' poverty, and then did the Path Analysis and Logistic regression analysis to bring out poverty opportunity factors using Maximum likelihood in the Estimated Coefficient.

2) Qualitative Research

Target Population: 1) 2 groups of farmers, 15 each, 2) 21 stakeholders in poverty fighting, 3) 9 informants in focus group meeting, and 4) 5 connoisseurs. Qualitative research instruments are: 1) A group interview form in current situation, causes, and solutions on Chaiyaphum farmers' poverty, 2) An in-depth interview form in current situation, causes, and



solutions on Chaityaphum farmers' poverty, 3) A focus group discussion recording form together with participation-observation in discussion on poverty fighting and solutions.

Information Collecting: by respecting in freedom of informants' comments.

Information Analysis: by using the Triangulation checking and did the Content analysis to bring out the consensus in the information summarized with the Documentary research.

Research Results

The poverty condition and household characteristics found are that 64.34% of them is poor with an average income is 88,179.90 baht per year; an average expense is 54,476.43 baht per year; a ratio between average expense per income is 66.77%; an average household debt is 85,724.57 baht. In public service access factors it was found that farmers have access to basic education, most farmers can access to healthcare system, and 64.84% of farmers participate in community cooperation. On factors affecting household poverty, the study substitutes 1 to refer to a poor household and 0 for a not-poor household. The correlation analysis between factors is not in the form of linear but in the form of logistic regression. The researcher used logistic regression technique in finding opportunity and the maximum likelihood in regression coefficient analysis; then brought independent variables derived from literature review process in to analyze the relation between household poverty factors for Sig. and B. (0.05) as follows:

$$Y = -3.531 - 0.397 (X_{11}) - 0.050(X_{12}) - 0.030 (X_{13}) + 1.912 (X_{14}) - 0.384 (X_{15}) + 0.501 (X_{16}) + .925 (X_{23}) - .208 (X_{25}) - 0.449 (X_{31}) + 0.497 (X_{32}) - .032 (X_{33}) + 0.148 (X_{41}) + 1.168(X_{42}) - 0.584 (X_{43}) - 0.108 -(X_{44}) + 0.611 (X_{45})$$

From the summation it was found that the model is appropriate. By using Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi-square test in verification the model = 6.192, Sig. = .569 > .050 which means the model is appropriate. In summary, correlation factors are private factors in sex, age, educational level, number of household members; social factors in governmental segment, logistic system; economic factors in amount of agricultural subsistence areas, water support and subsidy; psychological factors in attitude on work, modernity, attitude on occupation, modernity lifestyle, technological lifestyle, pro-changing lifestyle, and attitude on loan.

SWOT Analysis found that 1. Internal Factors found that 1) Strengths consist of appropriate areas for (1) agricultural production, domestic animals and fishing, (2) water suppliance development for agriculture because Chaityaphum is the water source of Chi river, (3) inter-regional logistic linking development, (4) forestry, mine and wild animals resource, (5) latency natural, historical, and cultural tourist site, (6) agricultural product transmutation (7) native and cultural textile, garment, and silk industry, (8) civic movement on empowerment and cooperation. 2) Weaknesses consist of (1) lack in appropriate water suppliance, (2) drought areas, (3) alkaline soil and sandy soil areas, (4) some farmers own no land, and some own no land certificate, (5) migration causes a lack of both agricultural and industrial labor, (6) vulnerable, ineffective, and lack of market on agricultural product transmutation, (7) lack of knowledge in technological, marketing, entrepreneur managing in production of native products, (8) ineffective in community enterprise production and no networking in bargaining on prices of agricultural, (9) ineffective and inability about resource management in some tourist site, a lack of good governance and participatory system. 2. External Factors found that 1) Opportunities consist of governmental policies (1) to push on and magnify His Majesty Projects, (2) to provide occupation opportunities and sustain income making, including skill



development in women, the vulnerable, etc. (3) to push on effective and sustain social stability, saving, and social welfare, (4) to make solutions in landless farmers, conserve forest from transgression by charter and regulations, (5) to push on an educational reform to enhance appropriate skills and knowledge, (6) to promote economics and consumption, (7) to foster and support agriculture sectors in appropriate income, reduce production cost, and agricultural subsidies, (8) to motivate tourists to visit Thailand, tourism site and facilities development (9) to invest opportunity in globalization, consumerism, and capitalism. 2) Threats consist of (1) trade barrier, especially in agricultural products, (2) climate change, drought, and flood from the greenhouse effect, (3) a competition with adjacent provinces – Nakhon Rachasima province and Khon Khaen province, (4) a fluctuation of agricultural cost affected by global market price, price and quality competition, (5) effect of public debt in EU countries on a decrease of purchasing power, (6) Asian countries became a competitor in world agricultural market.

The Strategies on Thai Farmers' Poverty Elimination in Chaiyaphum provinces are as follow: 1. Income and occupational ability and opportunities improvement. 2. Strengthen agricultural economics 3. Infrastructures and public services improvement and the security protection for the poor and the vulnerable. 4. Quality of life improvement of the poor and the vulnerable in health, mind, and others. 5. Public service improvement which support fighting on poverty based on participation.

Conclusion and Discussion

Conclusion From the Chaiyaphum farmers' poverty conditions and causes analysis it was found that even though poverty tends to decrease by the impact of socio-economics development but samples of Chaiyaphum households had a comparative poverty proportion with the whole households at 64.34%. Most poor households had some correlated functions that the average age of the householder is 52.61% years old; highest education level at primary is 78.60%, the average number of family members is 4.24, the average subsistence area is 11.67 rai, the average income is 88,179.90 baht per year while the average expense is 54,476.43 baht per year which can calculate the percentage of the expense rate per the income rate at 66.77%, and the average household debt is 85,724.57 baht.

Discussions are as follows:

1. Chaiyaphum household poverty has ratios between the poor and the not-poor households at 64.34% and between expenses per income at 66.77%. The average sample's debt is 85,724.57 baht. Poverty evaluation referred to the National Statistical Office's 2014 North-eastern region household poverty line. To take it as a Chaiyaphum poverty measurement may cause some mistakes for this evaluation.

2. The impact factors on household poverty are sex, age, educational level, number of household member, number of occupation-members, number of dependent-members, governmental district of household, logistic system, agricultural subsistence areas, kind of agriculture, water supplience or subsidy, attitude on occupation, modernity lifestyle, technological lifestyle, pro-changing lifestyle, attitude on loan. These accorded with Ananchanok Sakontawat (2012) which found that the first impact factor was household population characteristics and the second factor was low property and capital holding. Warayut Palasri (2013) also found that householder's educational level, subsistence area size, wealth, and debt affected on household poverty. So, the Strategies on Thai Farmers' Poverty Elimination in Chaiyaphum provinces are; 1. Income and occupational ability and opportunities improvement. 2. Strengthen agricultural economics. 3. Infrastructures and public services improvement and the security protection for the poor and the vulnerable. 4. Quality of



life improvement of the poor and the vulnerable in health, mind, and others. 5. Public service improvement which support fighting on poverty based on participation.

Suggestion

1) From the poverty affected by private characteristics, the government should provide projects or policies to promote and increase farmers' knowledge, to support an occupation and income development. From the poverty affected by psychological characteristics, the government should promote communities' cooperation to construct a learning community and bargaining power on price and production input factors.

2) From the poverty affected by social characteristics, the government should earnestly decentralize bargaining power and developmental policies to local governments to make policies concordantly with communities or social contexts. From the poverty affected by economic characteristics, the government should subsidize production input factors, especially water suppliance system for agriculture.

3) Thai poverty elimination projects should have a distinct planning, focus on ability and opportunity improvement and on income and occupation development, strengthen the agricultural economics, improve public infrastructures, promote quality of life of the poors and vulnerables in heath, mind, and public services access, and rely on participatory culture.

Suggestion for the next research:

1. This poverty evaluation referred to the National Statistical Office's 2014 North-eastern region household poverty line that may cause some mistake for this evaluation, so it should be used as a research factor to calculate the new and up to date poverty line in the next research.

2. It should find the ways to increase income and decrease inequality.

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