

Thesis Title : Participation of Women's Groups in Educational and Development Activities of Puang Community, Thung Hua Chang Sub-District, Lamphun Province

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Abstract

This Research was aimed at studying the components, procedures, and factors influencing the participation of women's groups in educational and development activities in Puang Community, Thung Hua Chang Sub-District Lumphun Province. The methods of data collection used in this study were structured and non-structured interviews, participant and non-participant observation, study of related literature and research. The target groups consisted of the women in Puang Community both those registered as members of the women's group and those not registered as well as the Community leaders, goverment authorities, non-goverment organizations, and other community members. The findings revealed that women directly participated in activities which brought extra income for their families, and that they indirectly participated in communal activities such as cultural and traditional activities, irrigation activities, and community development activities.

The procedures of participation were as follows. Members of the women's group participated in sharing ideas and in establishing the rules and regulations concerning activities that brought extra income for the families. They also participated in implementing community and school activities. With regards to benefiting from their participation, the women received funds, materials and equipment, as well as gaining more knowledge and experience. It was perceived that participation in communal activities was induced by the desire to serve the community. Therefore, there was no formal inspections of either the members or non-members of the women's group since participation in these activities reflected their social conscience as members of the community.

There were various factors influencing women's participation. Firstly, an economic factor. The women wanted to earn extra income for their families, so they formed a group. Secondly, a political factor. They are supported by the community leaders and the village committee who also provided advice and helped solve their problems. Thirdly, a social factor. They wanted to show social conscience as members of the community. Lastly, a cultural factor. The belief in the ancestral spirits helped make these women join the group in greater number. Moreover, the support received from the government authorities and non-government organizations operating in the community was an influential factor encouraging women to join the group. The provision of funds, materials, equipment, and markets for their products, prompted many women to join the group in order to participate in activities that would bring more income for their families.