

This study set up the process of rural center planning on the following steps; 1) regional resources analysis and rural settlement development profile, 2) determination of the present centrality and hierarchy of settlements, 3) determination of hierarchical level and setting of standards and norms concerning nature and number of functions, threshold value and service area of center at each level, 4) determination of locational plan and delineation of marginal areas being unserved by the proposed centers and 5) guiding on development framework of services and facilities, strengthening of linkage and articulation and identifying development constraints of the proposed rural centers.

Some appropriate planning techniques were recommended in the above-mentioned process. The important ones were appeared in determination of centrality and hierarchy of settlements as well as determination on standards and norms for locating rural centers and identification of influence area. Those are Scalogram Analysis and Weighted Centrality Index, Peaks and Troughs Analysis, Distribution of Functions Analysis, Threshold Analysis and Functional Service Area Index. It was found from the case study that the recommended techniques can be used integratedly and in line with the planning approach recognising techniques and methodologies easily applied by local planners.

According to the case study of Nampong District, the settlement system can be divided into four tiers hierarchy as follows:

1. Locality Towns : approximate indicators; radius of influence 15 kms., service area 800 sq.km. number of population in center averaging 7,000 persons, possessing district level functions by nature. There are two locality towns in the study area namely Nampong and Wangchai Sanitary Districts.

2. Rural Service Center : approximate indicators; radius of influence 8 kms., service area 200 sq.km., number of population in center averaging 2,500 persons, possessing sub-district level functions by nature. There are 7 rural service centers in the study area.

3. Service Village : approximate indicators; radius of influence 4 kms, service area 50 sq.km., number of population in center 1,312 persons, possessing functions for a group of villages by nature. There are 13 service villages in the study area.

4. Dependent Village : being a non-rural centers and mostly possessing basic service functions of village level. There are 75 dependent villages in the study area.

The guidelines, process and methodologies presented in the study may be helpful to rural center planning in Thailand, particularly at the provincial and district levels.