

Abstract

The objectives of this research were to study development of community way of Thale Noi related to management of natural resources and to identify the patterns/projects and activities in natural resources management. The study also focused on the promotion and creation of awareness and participation of the community in the management of natural resources as well as provision of opportunities for the community to exchange learning experiences from within and among the communities. The sample for the study included groups of residents of Tambon Thale Noi and Tambon Phanangtoong, Khuan Khanon District, Phatthalung Province. The qualitative data were collected in community studies during fieldworks to acquire information on social and cultural environments. The researchers took part in participation observations of the communities, having conversations with key informants as community seniors, learned men, official and natural leaders. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were made and the findings of the study, presented using the descriptive analysis, reveal the following.

The ecological conditions of the area before 2007 were rich in natural resources. The communities around Thale Noi Basin were farm-based society and dependent on natural resources for a living. Villagers were self-sufficient and capable of acquiring necessities for lives. After the period after 2007, the purposes of utilizing natural resources changed from self-reliance to commercialization. For that purpose, the natural resources were devastated in an accelerating speed and exploited for maximum profits, resulting in environmental impacts and deterioration of bio-diversities. The way of lives and occupations of the people changed and more and more natural resources were destroyed. More people moved to settle in the area and the communities were crowded. Occupations of the people, particularly small scale-fishery, have changed.

Production activities of the people have changed due to impacts from deterioration of natural resources. Consequently, community residents attempted to find a way to restore dependence on natural resources for their living. To achieve such

purposes, people have grouped together to organize the following activities: 1) Sustainable Management of Natural Resources as Alternative Farming (Sue Haeng Panya Phatthana Karn Kaset Yang Yanguen). The production focused system has been turned to conservation of soil, water, local rice stock, establishment of organic rice fields, local vegetable plots, and community fertilizer production plant, 2) Management of Natural Resources for Tourism. Previously, the main occupation of the people was small scale-fishery. However, due to impacts of deterioration of ecological system, engaging in small scale-fishery in Thale Noi alone could not make the people survive. The people then use their fishing boats as transportation for tourists visiting the area to watch waterfowls and lotuses in the lake, and 3) Management of Natural Resources for Conservation and Preservation. Volunteer groups of residents were formed for the purpose of conservation of natural resources, establishment of relationship with local agencies responsible for the management of natural resources, creation of awareness for conservation and participation in community activities.

For the overall role of the community in the management of natural resources, it can be stated that the cultural environment in the community is inclined for the success of the management. Rural people are generous; they help each other, and respect the elders. Learned men in the community play a role in providing guidance, muster unity and trust among community members. This leads to the synthesis of thoughts, nurturing of intelligence and expertise as well as propagation of knowledge, all for the solution of problems. In this way community members are able to exchange knowledge naturally. The community pattern as a whole having a role in the management of natural resources through various patterns/projects reflects the social power of the community enabling it to retain social dynamism and sustainability.

This research identifies problems, obstacles and opportunities for community groups in participative development. The purpose is to establish guidelines for reinforcement of community strengths in terms of academic promotion, participation in conservation of natural resources, group management and organization of appropriate activities. The researchers have suggested guidelines for co-management, coordination

with government agencies concerned, local governments and the community to generate cooperation on a continual basis, for promotion of group activities with patterns beneficial to community groups and guidelines for a participation procedure in the management of natural resources. It is recommended that the information acquired in the research be utilized by the agencies concerned for use in their development plan and budget allocation for community groups. A proper utilization of the information will benefit the communities and residents in carrying out the proper and sustainable management of natural resources.