

**ABSTRACT**

**Title of Research Paper** : Background of Thai Buddhists in the Urban Community and the Social Structure : A Comparative Study of the Urban Community, the Semi-urban and Semi-rural Community and the Rural Community in Pattani Province

**Author** : Mrs. Tunyaporn Nuchaey

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This basic research was aimed at studying the background of Thai Buddhists in the urban community in Pattani Province and the social structure of the community. It compared these characteristics among the urban community, the semi-urban and semi-rural community, and the rural community in Pattani Province. Also, the study aimed to find out the social structure of the urban community whether it was mainly the factional-system, the patron-client system, or the kinship-system, and whether such a social structure had a relationship with the people's background. An interview schedule was used to collect the data from 423 people. Percentage, mean, and correlation were used for data analysis.

It was found that the factional-system was mainly prevalent, followed by the kinship-system, and supplemented by the patron-client system. Next, no significant difference in the social structure was found when sex, age, education, occupation and income were considered. Also the social structure was found to change in line with urbanization. The progress to the factional-system and the patron-client system was very swift.

It was also found that uneducated and poorly educated people, these in small trades, and those engaged in general employment held onto the factional-system more than other groups because they had to adapt themselves to changes and to build a good personal relationship with those with economic and political influence in order to

survive, They expected to depend on influential people both in the present time and in the future, Thai Buddhist people have freedom to do and to think, The Buddhist principles did not have a definite frame of practice to follow, so individuality was prevailing among Thai Buddhists because they had to study Buddhist teachings by themselves only in order to find the core of Buddhism, Compared to Islam, Islam had a definite religious frame for people to follow since they were born, so Muslims' way of thinking tended to be in the same direction. That is, they believed in the same religion, so they were brothers and sisters.

When the three types of communities where Thai Buddhists lived were compared, it was found that the social structure of the urban community tended to be in line with urbanization.

#### **Recommendations**

1. It was found that the social structure of the urban community was in the form of the fraction-system. So people should be encouraged to form groups to do political activities and to set up occupational groups to earn additional income for their families.

2. To strengthen the community under the factional-system, fair exchange in each group should be emphasized, including respecting each other; otherwise, conflicts may be severe and the community cannot be strengthened.