

ABSTRACT

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

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This basic research was part of the package research on the social structure of the community. This research focused on the social structure of the Thai Muslim rural community. It aimed to find out the relationship between the social structure of the community and the background of Thai Muslims. It also compared the social structure of the three kinds of community : the rural, the semi-urban and semi-rural, and the urban communities. The assumption of the study was that Thai Muslims in the rural area were strict to the kinship-system in all aspects. This assumption was different from the theoretical assumption about the social structure of the rural community that the kinship, system was mainly prevailing, followed by the patron-client and supplemented by the fractional-system.

The data were collected from 793 people from Muang, Yaring, Nongjik, Kokpho, and Mae Lan districts. An interview schedule was used to collect the data. Percentage and mean were used for data analysis.

It was found that the social structure of the Thai Muslims in the rural community was of mixed type. People mainly depended on the kinship system, followed by the patron-client system and supplemented by the factional-system. They still held onto the kinship-system, although their backgrounds were different. However, difference

in the use of the factional-system were found when education and income were considered. The growing importance of politics hardly influenced the social structure. The social structure of Thai Muslims tended to change very slowly. They were still strict to the way of Muslim life and reproductive cultural practices, such as Lamad, fast, etc. Muslims were conformists and social control was strictly enforced. They warned each other when any violated the Islamic principles. Noticeably, the kinship-system was reduced in its importance, while the other two system tended to become more important.

Recommendations

1. The knowledge about the social structure can be used for community development. The development policy should take the social structure into consideration. The kinship-system should be used as a basis for development, as this system will promote people participation in community activities.
2. The kinship-system should be retained by promoting the Muslim routine practices in order to keep unity in the community.
3. The research only revealed the broad picture of the social community. Further research should be conducted in depth on this topic along with history of the community.