

Abstract

This is a qualitative study of the dynamic of Banchang people in solving environmental problems: a case study of Banchang District. Its purposes are to study the environmental problems caused by the growth of Map Ta Phut Industrial Estate in Banchang District and to investigate the environmental problems rectification of people's dynamic of communities located in Banchang District. Population of the study includes community mainstays, businesspersons living in Moo 2, 3, 4, and 6, local administrators, local politicians, local government officials, former government officials, and the experts from the National Economic and Social Development Board. To collect data in this study, deep interviews, observation aids, cameras, and recorders were used as the instruments. The period of data collection started from November 2007 to March 2009.

From the study it is found that Banchang District is the land near to the sea. It formerly had plenty of natural resources and most of people in the district worked as agriculturists. However, due to the establishment of American soldier's military base and the growth of Map Ta Phut Industrial Estate under the eastern coast development project, Banchang had always changed. It was found that the number of industrial factories continuously increased since that project started its operation. Afterwards the city plan was revised in order to expand the industrial estate into Banchang District. Consequently, the mainstays and people concerning about pollution problem caused by the industry gathered and formed the group called Phitak Banchang Group in order to call for revising the city plan. The results of the oppose of the Phitak Banchang Group Era 1 showed that its operation was successful; that is, there was no construction of primarily petrochemical industrial factories in Banchang District areas. The factors contributing to that success included prestigious leaders, national politician approach, sufficient budget, and leaders having no conflict of interest. Then, there was a request from the industrial factories to withdraw an announcement not to use the area of Banchang District for the construction of primarily petrochemical industry, and this appeal was accomplished. As a result, the Phitak Banchang Group Era 2 was formed.

Nevertheless, the oppose of the Phitak Banchang Era 2 was failed because it lacked strong leaders, sufficient budget, and some leaders and some groups of people had conflicts of interest with the industrial factories. After the Phitak Banchang Group Era 2's failure in opposing the government not to withdraw the announcement, the petrochemical industrial factories were constructed in Ban Chang areas. Afterwards there were pollution problems affecting the environments and people's health. The Phitak Banchang Group Era 3 then was set up. The group changed its opposing strategy by joining as the partner with the people's network in Eastern Part, and it also adjusted its roles by investigating the environmental problems caused by the industrial factories in Banchang District areas. The positive effect, which was the results from the combination of an environmental network group of BanChang District and the people's network in Eastern Part, was that the government established 2 funds; the Strength of Rayong Fund and the Quality of Life and Environment Fund, both for the purpose of helping people.

The findings indicate that inappropriate design of the industrial estate could cause the community problems. Moreover, due to the lack of the leader position transition and conflicts of interest of the mainstays, the power of the Phitak Banchang Group Network lost its strength. Besides, the cooperation of the group and the people's network in Eastern Part helped to increase the group's bargaining power, and people could not solve a big problem that was related to the government authority and the power of the capitalists alone; that is, the group had to gain power from the network's partners. From the study it is recommended that the construction of big projects that may affect the environment and people's quality of life should have people's participation and listen to every opinion. Furthermore, it is necessary to set up appropriate measures by constructing buffer area so that the industry can coexist with the community. The revision of the city plan should be done carefully and people should truly participate in that process of revision also. In addition, government sector should support the network's development by allocating the budget, and moral principle system should be established among businesspersons and let them know that they should not

focus on their profits only. For the operation performed by people sector, it is advised that they develop the leaders and prepare new generation leaders in order that they can substitute for the old ones. The practical propose of this study includes the forming of four teams of committee so that each team can solve the problems caused by the industrial factories. Also, the environmental network group of Banchang District, a subgroup of the people's network in Eastern Part, should be developed by continuous providing knowledge, and the government office's performance related to industrial sector should be followed more strictly and straightly.