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PUTTASORN WATTANAUDOMWONG. : STAKEHOLDERS AND THE WATER
QUALITY PROBLEM OF THE MAE PING RIVER : A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT. THESIS ADVISORS : SITTIPONG DILOKWANICH, Ph.D.;
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This study examined environmental problems of the Mae Ping river and activities that are causes of the problems. In the study, the political and socio-economic context underlying the problems, from past till present, was investigated. In order to understand the problems in a holistic manner, the studies of concepts, understanding, awareness, satisfaction, needs, expectations and roles of various stakeholders involved in the management of the Mae Ping river were also taken into account. Through the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of involved stakeholders, the study intended to seek guidelines for a sustainable co-management of the water resource among diverse partners.

In this qualitative study, a review of documents, observation, and in-depth interviews with representatives from eight stakeholders were conducted. About 51 people, who were government officers, politicians, members of the local news media, businessmen, local leaders, NGOs workers, academics and people in the area, were interviewed. Field study was carried out in Amphoe Muang, extending along the Mae Ping river for about 10 kilometers, where Tambon Sanpeesua and Padad were located.

It was found that water pollution problems of the Mae Ping river had not yet been solved due to lack of coordination among various agencies, discontinuity of project implementation and the absence of people participation. Governmental sectors and non-governmental organizations played a major role in solving water quality problems of the Mae Ping river. On the other hand, the role of remaining stakeholders who dealt with the management of the Mae Ping river was trivial. Each stakeholder worked independently, dealing with water quality problems according to their own specific responsibility. They also encountered the problems of improper management, inadequate budget and manpower, technological deficiency and ineffective alternatives to the problems. Among stakeholders there are some similarities and some differences in level of understanding, awareness, expectations, roles and satisfaction. Most stakeholders believed that collaboration among multiple partners was an appropriate solution to the problems but implementation guidelines were still not clear. It was also revealed that each stakeholder has a unique combination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which was beneficial to the analysis of solutions to sustainable water management of the Mae Ping river. To achieve sustainability in managing water quality of the Mae Ping river, it is proposed that law enhancement, the strengthening of local community and the promotion of awareness among local people should be emphasized. Involved stakeholders should try to minimize conflicts by revising their roles and compromising with each other. Guidelines for specific roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder should be clearly determined.