

Thaksin University

Research Project Title : Contemporary Writers of The South: Group Formation and Roles

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Financial Support : A research project supported from Government budget of 2011 Financial Year amounting
300,000 Baht

Research Period: 2 years from 1 October, 2010 to 30 September, 2012.

The research entitled Contemporary Writers of The South: Group Formation and Roles aimed to study general basic information of contemporary writers in the south of Thailand and investigate group formation and roles of contemporary writers in the south of Thailand

The results of this study revealed that the literary work circle of the south that were clearly formed, as considered by key information of historical background, a list of members, and continuous roles, consisted of 3 groups; the Nakhon, the Klue Mai and the Phuket. The Nakhon group had 50 members, but only 23 members had produced their written works continually. The Klue Mai group had about 20 members, but only 7 members had produced their written works continually. The Phuket group had about 20 members, but only 10 of them had produced their written works continually. The study found that all 3 groups showed similarities and differences in some aspects. The Nakhon group started to collect together as a group in B.E. 2525 (1982) with 2 – 3 writers from educational institutes and other bodies in the south of Thailand especially in Phattalung province, Songkhla province, Nakhon Si Thammarat province, and Suratthani province. This group did not have clear regulations or management measures. There were no exact numbers of members and supervisors who took care of the members. The majority of the writers of this group preferred to produce short stories and poems. However, short story was regarded as outstanding literary work of the Nakhon group. In the later period of time there was a decrease in numbers of those who played their roles on behalf of the Nakhon group causing the members to criticize that the Nakhon group had come to the end. The Klue Mai group started to collect together as a group in B.E. 2524 (1981) with two members who were interested in reading and composing poems while they were studying in universities. Members of the group gradually increased and new members shared the same interest in poems. This group ceased to play their roles in particular periods, but in the end they revived to their normal state once again. Management system was introduced to improve

their work. The Phuket group was formed by two members who were interested in literary work. Later, there was an increase in numbers of members. Then in B.E. 2541(1998), almost 20 years from the beginning, the Phuket group or the Pan Kopi group was founded. The members of this group increased to more than 10, and they all shared interest in literary work and other branches of arts. However, the Phuket group's special interest relied on short story.

The key roles played by these literary groups were literary work production, the encouragement on the production and the consumption of literary work, and others. The research showed that every group had played their key role in producing literary work quantitatively and qualitatively, and encouraging members to produce and consume literary work. The Nakhon group importantly played its role in producing a variety of literary works quantitatively and qualitatively. They had created their literary identity in writing style, content, and ideas (views) that harmonized clearly with the southern region of the country, especially in short stories. The Nakhon group had employed the brotherhood culture as a membership tie. They closely exchanged ideas, especially on local issues. Written work and participation in cultural activities were regarded as a role in encouraging members to produce and consume literary work. Moreover, the group also took part in encouraging young people to produce and consume literary work, and other roles including guest speaker, activity organizer, key person, and advisor. Unfortunately, after 25th anniversary of the foundation, the roles of the group in almost every aspect decreased, especially in literary work production, because many of the group members stopped their writing and paid attention to other activities. In the meantime, the Klue Mai group had shown their strength step by step in producing literary work, and encouraging group members and young people to produce and consume literary work. Group members created their written work continuously. Especially their poems received public attention and quite a number of them were awarded. The role in encouraging young people to produce and consume literary work was considered an outstanding performance of the Klue Mai group. They organized literary work camps in order to enhance reading and writing abilities of school children of all levels of education enforcing themselves to become professional in organizing literary work camp. Networks for young people who shared the same interest in literary work were also established. The Phuket group or the Pan Kopi group was recently formed. Some of the group members had experience in literary work production and their works were recognized publicly. So, they were able to continue such tasks as soon as the group was formed. Their role in literary work became consecutively clearer and more outstanding. This could be seen through a number of national awards given to their works which included short stories, novels, and poems. However, the role in encouraging young people to produce and consume literary work and other roles were not outstanding.