



tative and qualitative, were complementary to one another.

The major findings obtained through this research were as follows.

1. The identity of VHVs is firmly rooted in the community, in the light of their socio-demographic characteristics, as well as their sense of commitment to the community.

2. Their role perception is closely linked to; i) their interest in essential drugs and drug fund, ii) community works such as latrine construction, and iii) their mediator role between the villagers and the tambon (sub-district) health center.

3. As the health volunteers, they are more oriented to the official assignments rather than to jobs they themselves are identified with in the community.

4. Lack of initiative and group actions by VHVs for the community health are at least partly explicable by the fact that the MOPH officials, including tambon health workers, have been reluctant to encourage them in that direction.

5. Village drug funds in the study areas are in transition from participatory, cooperative movement to de facto private ownership by VHVs. In this sense, it appears that the idealism in PHC movement of the early 80s, based on the people's participation, has failed to prevail. Basic knowledge and training of bookkeeping and accounting are

urgently needed for the VHVs in charge of drug funds.

6. The attrition problem seems to stem mainly from;

i) migration, ii) high opportunity cost, iii) poor relationship with tambon health workers.

Three recommendations are presented based on the study results.

- More encouragements and supports are needed by the health officials, including the tambon health workers, so as to facilitate spontaneous group actions for health by VHVs in their community.

- Supervision and training of VHVs should be based on their 'real' and 'felt' needs. A human relations approach is required to improve the quality of supervision.

- In order to have a better understanding of local health problems, the qualitative methods should be more widely applied to, and integrated into, the community research.