

The objective of the present research is to study the structure and network of rural informal sector and to investigate the pattern of social and economic behaviour of the involved people. The study also explored the constraints and conditions under which people can have access to this network. Garment subcontracting was served as the basis for this investigation.

Purposive sampling and qualitative approach was employed to explore the complexity of the structure and network of garment informal sector. Three villages of the Tha Moug District, Kanchanaburi Province including Lum, Hoypai and Klongkoi were selected from villages where formal dressmaking training courses were implemented between 1987 and 1991. The eligible villages must have at least 25 villagers who ever attended those courses. Of the three villages selected, one has both work distributors and receivers, the other two have either the work distributors or the work receivers. Respondents consisted of 7 entrepreneurs, 2 trainers and 26 villagers. Data were collected by using the in-depth interview technique.

The study found that garment subcontracting in rural areas emerged from the restructuring of formal export enterprises in order to keep in their profitability and market share. The structure of subcontracting system can be divided into three major tiers : production manager, intermediary and worker. These three tiers are interrelated through their work specialization, each of which requires different factors of production and skill. The social organization of the garment informal

sector is determined by the nature of exporting business through which exporters had made a formal contract to deliver products on specific time. The commitment is based on personal relation between entrepreneurs and subcontractors. Ranks in social stratification are determined by the availability of capital, types and quality of factors of production and personal status rather than position hierarchy and authorities in the business. Garment outworkers must have skill on handling sewing and edging machines. Such skill can be obtained through formal training courses and informal training by apprenticeships. With the regards to the constraints of rural garment subcontracting, the study found that those whose commitments with previous occupational and social groups are weak, can easily establish the relationship with the garment groups and enter to subcontracting employment. Having access to the network does not depend on the villager's qualification. Rather it depends on a number of factors including the strategies employed for obtaining the job and the number of deliverers in community. Necessary resources for being employed are personal status, machine, skill and information. The experiences are the implementary resource which facilitate access to the network as well as strenghten the network. Making an effort to gain specific resource depends on the distributor status and the distribution rule. The working norms tend to conflict with social norms. Generally, the person whose family circumstances allow and possess resources that ease the adjustment tend to be better able to follow the working norms. The outworker can move upwardly to be a deliverer or garment house owner and small garment enterprise that serves local market. However, such mobility requires group-working business, skill development and fund assistance.