

บทความวิจัย

*The Role of Muslim Pathan Leader in Southern Isan of Thailand**Farida Sulaiman*^{*}

Abstract

Driving force in all levels radically merges its mechanism to provide guidance for development. A part of the process is usually based on religion root such as Christianity, Hindu, Buddhism, Confucius, Taoism, Islam etc. Major people in civil society groups have strict attitude towards their religious faiths. Especially, Islamic religion emphasizes on human peace (Islam Mualagum). As a result, the role of Islamic living exhibits the movement of generous society providing the respect among community people. Thus Islamic people characterize several aspects of leaderships e.g. economy, society and politic etc.

According to the study of way of life and role of Muslim Pathan settled down in Southern Isan of Thailand, consisting of Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani, Yasothon, Buri Ram and Surin Provinces, the way of living, ethnic identity and the role of Muslim Pathan living with Thai Buddhist in the community with end of distinct religion shined crucially social dimension to community development. Point of view regarding acceptance of leadership role from local people was, therefore, estimated by credibility, principally based on daring determination and providing benefits to society. Some Muslim Pathan have been chosen for administrative leaders from the past till the present both local level e.g. Provincial Administration Organization (PAO), Local Administration Organization (LAO), *kaman*, village headman; and national level i.e. member of parliament.

From the field survey, the Muslim Pathans in all society groups who were religious leaders (imam) and political leader extended their cooperation and cohesion in establishing a variety of activities, for example religion, community development, tradition and culture enhancement in tangible way with local people.

Key Words: Role, Community Leader, Muslim Pathan, Islamic Religion

^{*} Member of the House of Representative, Surin Province, Doctor of Philosophy Program in Regional Development Strategies, Surindra Rajabhat University.

บทคัดย่อ

สังคมในทุกๆระดับมีการขับเคลื่อนให้เกิดแนวทางต่อการพัฒนา ส่วนหนึ่งเป็นการใช้หลักคิดพื้นฐานมาจากรากเหง้าของศาสนา อาทิ ศาสนาคริสต์ ฮินดู พุทธ ขงจื้อ เต๋า อิสลาม ฯลฯ ประชาชนส่วนใหญ่ในกลุ่มสังคมมีทัศนคติต่อความศรัทธาตามหลักคำสอนของศาสนาอย่างเคร่งครัด โดยเฉพาะศาสนาอิสลามที่มุ่งเน้นความสันติสุขแก่เพื่อนมนุษย์ ทำให้บทบาทในการดำรงอยู่ของชาวมุสลิมมีลักษณะของสังคมที่ให้ความเอื้อเฟื้อเผื่อแผ่ซึ่งกันและกัน เป็นที่เคารพรักต่อกันในชุมชน บทบาทของคนมุสลิมจึงมีลักษณะเป็นผู้นำในด้านต่างๆ อาทิ ด้านเศรษฐกิจ สังคม และการเมือง

จากการศึกษาวิถีชีวิต และบทบาทของคนมุสลิมปาตานีที่มีการตั้งถิ่นฐานในเขตอีสานใต้ของประเทศไทย ประกอบด้วย จังหวัดศรีสะเกษ อุบลราชธานี ยโสธร บุรีรัมย์ และสุรินทร์ ทำให้เห็นถึงการดำรงชีวิต อัตลักษณ์ของชาติพันธุ์ และบทบาทของมุสลิมปาตานีที่มีการอาศัยร่วมกันกับชาวไทยพุทธในชุมชน วิถีแห่งการดำรงชีวิตที่ต่างศาสนาเป็นมิติทางสังคมที่มีความสำคัญต่อการพัฒนาชุมชน มุมมองในการยอมรับบทบาทความเป็นผู้นำของคนในชุมชนจึงถูกกลั่นกรองตามทัศนะโดยให้ความเชื่อถือต่อความกล้าตัดสินใจ และสร้างคุณประโยชน์ให้กับชุมชนเป็นแกนหลัก ส่งผลให้คนมุสลิมปาตานีบางส่วนถูกเลือกสรรให้เป็นผู้นำด้านการปกครองเพื่อการพัฒนาชุมชนอย่างต่อเนื่อง ตั้งแต่อดีตจนถึงปัจจุบันทั้งในระดับท้องถิ่น เช่น องค์การบริหารส่วนจังหวัด องค์การบริหารส่วนตำบล กำนันผู้ใหญ่บ้าน และในระดับประเทศ คือ สมาชิกสภาผู้แทนราษฎร

ผลการศึกษาภาคสนามพบว่า ผู้นำมุสลิมปาตานีทุกกลุ่มในสังคม ได้แก่ ผู้นำทางศาสนา (อิหม่าม) และผู้นำทางด้านการเมือง มีการประสานความร่วมมือในการรังสรรค์กิจกรรมทางด้านต่างๆ อาทิ กิจกรรมทางศาสนา กิจกรรมการพัฒนาชุมชน กิจกรรมทางด้านการส่งเสริมประเพณีและวัฒนธรรม ร่วมกับคนในพื้นที่ได้อย่างเป็นรูปธรรม

คำสำคัญ: บทบาท ผู้นำชุมชน มุสลิมปาตานี คำสอน ศาสนาอิสลาม

Introduction

From the background survey of Muslim Pathan settling down in Isan Thailand , their primary residences were the areas in Sri Khora Phume District in Surin Province and Krasang District in Buri Ram Province where became immigrant communities during the World War I, in the same period of lower Isan railway construction crossing over Dong Phaya Yen mountain range–Khao Yai Forest. From 2000, Nakhon Ratchasima, Surin, Ubon Ratchathani Provinces were the locations where the first group of Muslim Pathan have settled down in Isan.(Chatthip Natsupha. 1984: 85). They lived among Thai Isan society where most people adhered Buddhism and there were plenty of various ethnic groups with totally different belief on tradition and culture. Mazhab Hanafi and Pashtun tribal code are regarded as tradition and way of life of Muslim Pathan, code of living with 9 regulations of Pashtunwali namely: 1) Warmly guest welcoming 2) Protection 3) Fairness 4) Courage 5) Honesty 6) Justice 7) Belief in God and doctrine 8) Self-esteem 9) To honor to woman (Ismail Khan. 2010: June 20)

According to the study and census of Muslim citizen in Thailand (year 2000), the result was found that there were 2,777,542 Muslim populations: 1,376,874 males, and 1,400,668 females. The major Muslim, with 2,246,399 people, lived in the South region or equivalent to 80.9%; while the least lived in the Northeast region or Isan with 0.7% of nation Muslim population(Thai Muslim Health Plan. 2004: 2) From Muslim population statistics, there were less Muslim population living in Isan comparing to the other regions. Based on Thai Muslim Health Plan(2004 : 2–3), the Muslim census in the Northeast region as of 1 April 2004, the findings was that there were 18,069 Muslim population, consisting of 6,844 males and 11,225 females. Major Muslim population lived in Nakhon Ratchasima Province with 3,464 people and the least in Nong Bua Lam Phu with 236 people. The proportion of female Muslim dominated higher rate than male Muslim in every Northeastern province.

At present, Isan Muslim Pathan plays important roles in socio-economic and political aspects, especially the latter. The findings in the study area was that the total 32 local politicians and nation politicians, both female and male in Southern Isan, namely Surin, Buri Ram, Si Sa Ket and Ubon Rathcathani Provinces as tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1 Name List of Mulim Pathan Local Politicians and Nation Politicians

Province	No.	Name–Surname	Position
Surin	1	Mr. Darun Prathan	Former <i>Kamnan</i> of Rangang Subdistrict
	2	Mrs. Biyan Prathan	Former <i>Kamnan</i> of Rangang Subdistrict
	3	Mr. Pairoj Prathan	Former <i>Kamnan</i> of Rangang Subdistrict (passed away)
	4	Mrs. Farida Sulaiman (Prathan)	Member of the House of Representative
	5	Mr. Danai Prathan	Vice President of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	6	Mr. Dawut Akaraphisan	Former Advisor of President of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	7	Mr. Somsak Prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	8	Miss Somruedee Prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	9	Mrs. Fariya Prathan	Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	10	Miss Chamaiphorn Prathan	Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	11	Mr. Adam Prathan	Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	12	Mr. Arakhan Prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) (passed away)
	13	Mr. Ekaphot Prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) (passed away)
	14	Mrs. Jintana Prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) (passed away)
	15	Mrs. Samphorn Prathan	Vice President of Subdistrict Administration Organization (SAO), Rangang Subdistrict
Si Sa Ket	1	Mr. Nisit Vejsiriyanan	Former Member of the House of Representative
	2	Mr. Klamkhan Pathan	Former Member of the House of Representative
	3	Mr. Rai Pathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)

	4	Mr. Sod Pathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	5	Mr.Somvej Pathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	6	Mr. Sirirat Pathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	7	Mr.Tan Vejsiriyanan	Advisor of Vice President of Subdistrict Administration Organization (SAO), Phayu Subdistrict Subdistrict
	8	Mr. Alikhan Tayukane	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
Buri Ram	1	Mr. Praphan Samarn–prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization(PAO) (passed away)
	2	Mr. Parinya Samarn–prathan	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization(PAO)
	3	Mrs. Paleerat Samarn–prathan	Mayor of Muang District
	4	Mr. Ithisak Pathan	Former Member of Krasang Subdistrict Municipality Council
Yasothon	1	Mr. Ronrithichai Khankhet	Member of the House of Representative
	2	Mr. Wichan Khankhet	Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
Ubon Ratcha thani	1	Mr. Chuvit Phithak–pornpalop	Member of the House of Representative
	2	Mrs.Janthana Phithak–pornpalop	Former Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)
	3	Mr. Nathawat Nisan	Member of Provincial Administration Organization (PAO)

From the data in Table 1, according to the view point of local community, Muslim Pathan were respectable and acceptable in politician role, in succession from the past till present. Though the Muslim Pathan is the community minor group, the characteristics and way of living present their loyalty, daring reckoning, daring determination with leadership, charity to neighbors and society and fait adherence. The precedent characteristics enhance dominant roles and unique identity of Muslim Pathan widely accepted by Thai Buddhist and Muslim.

Leadership and Political Role of Muslim Pathan

Etiquettes of Muslim Pathan's leader groups taking political role whose nurture are fostered by ancestors with adherence based on race, religion, and traditional way of practice, tolerance, generosity for community people, rule adherence, interest loan free for supporting community people in subsistence, regardless of hatred for cultural and religious groups. As a result, the image of Muslim Pathan's political leadership (shown in Figure 1) towards the citizen as the leader of community development enhance the local community progress and better well-being.



Figure 1 Local Muslim Pathan in Surin and Buri Ram Provinces Having Outstanding Success on Community Development with Acceptance from Community People

From Figure 1, the presentation depicts feminine and masculine role raised from community people to support local political way as local leaders. They still assist and develop the progressive area and elevate villagers' quality of life for better living following to mainstream society amidst of continuously unstable economic changes.

...Political working is the matter of sacrifice, self-devotion for society in order to prevent from inequality, unfairness. The local people learned my sincerity in earnest for working so that I was elected as Kamnan for taking care of villagers' happiness and sufferings. Then, I awarded Kamnan Naeb Thong(reward for outstanding Kamnan) in 1995 from Ministry of Interior. After retired, I have continued to assist the villagers as much as I can do. Because of our lineage,

Muslim Pathan typically characterize the kind-heartedness and sincerity to everyone. So people in the community still pay respect to me. It's all the same I was Kamnan. I have been assisting the villagers both education and occupation enhancement...

Biyani Prathan, Former Kamnan of Rangang Subdistrict, Surin Province

Kindness and sincerity to unceasingly assist the community people for better living and social development in various aspects became the community acceptance in every election vote. That established my private sector community development in cooperation with the stakeholders according to H.M. the king speech "Those who are kind-hearted and generous to others reflect their gentle heart with well mental perception. Whenever we are tendered and delicate, our working would be in progress and be successful. (Bhumibol Adulyadej, Phrabat Somdet Praparaminthara Maha. 2009 : 75)

In addition to working in local level, after interview of Mr. Parinya Samarnprathan, the former mayor of Buri Ram Province, the findings constitutes the leadership's principle concepts towards political point of view in respect of his role for social development causing substantial changes.

...Progress in social development need to be conducted in parallel with material and mental aspects. For being the leader, there are three principles to be adhered: 1) the leader must have the vision of trouble shooting and create social benefits. 2) daring to propose the new things for villager choices 3) daring determination and further practice for serious development and utmost benefits to the community people with participatory process of stakeholders both public sector and private sector. All cooperation would establish various development cohesion in collaborative environment with the most efficiency...

Parinya Samarnprathan, Buri Ram Former Mayor, Buri Ram Province

The role of community leader in politics is a leadership challenge to bring the community into the development. The villagers and relevant agencies are needed to participate together with to coordinate the mutual interests in all community activities in order to drive and change the social context to improve. Hereof, this leadership is not only the deed of the leader, but also the deed of both the leader and his adherent with purpose of the public interests. (Wittayakorn Chiangkul. 2010 : 25)

IMAM : The Role of Community Development in Education

Under the social and cultural conditions of Muslim Pathan, their ways of lives are mainly respected to the Islamic doctrine in aspects of living in society, perception, attitude, belief in Allah, and have been fostered by the doctrine of Na Bee Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. These doctrines can touch on their souls and ways of lives and can encourage them to help their neighbors. Consequently, the Muslim Pathan plays the leadership role in the community, especially for the role of religious leadership like the center of the Muslim community.

The religious principles are applied to be the core practices of their living and drive a community way of life to be hospitality, kindness to human beings and courage to make decisions and benefits to the society. So, the role of religious leaders or Imams is important to the Muslim community in the ongoing civil society regarding social, economic and politic. From the field survey, it helps to illustrate the concepts and attitudes of many religious teachers who share interesting opinions about the approaches in developing the community by means of an educational foundation to encourage the community development into practice and potentially develop the community people.



Picture 2 The Role of Religious Leader (Imam) on the Education of the Community in Buri Ram Province and Surin Province

...We try to make a clear educational policy. This is very important because the education will change and develop our community. Firstly, the children and young people should previously attend the basic education, and the religious teachers will provide additional training in the mosque after school every day altogether with their parents to take care and coach their children. Then, the young people will grow up with quality, good morality in their future ways of lives...

Manakhun Sukhachok, Imam, Buri Ram

Islamic laws cover all aspects of life relating to human peace, conduct the Muslim way of life to behave and practice under the moral and ethical doctrine as a norm of thought and as a factor in the coexistence of a solidarity society. The psychological foundation consists of love, kindness, resulting in social morality. (Organizational Committee of *Kutabah* Book, 2006: 75) Seeing that Muslims respect and believe in the Islamic doctrine being directed their lives into peace and kindness to each other, (Viroj Pathan 2011: January 1), their communities grow stronger. In 1982, the first Muslim group was formed in the Northeast (Isan) for educational promotion and development through the summer training course in 17 provinces in the Northeast (Isan). The working paradigm is to foster the education for young people from the past until the present. This is to force the

development of the Muslim people to play roles in society, to take part in solving economic problems and arranging political activities with the intention that they can take on local and national political election continuously.

The leadership of Muslims come from the Islamic doctrines, comprising of the principles of faith and practice (Muhammad Suri 2011: January 2), which are applied to social development at all levels. According to the principle of practice (Sunna) of Na Bee Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, the doctrines on complementary helping human being, family members and behaving in society have been accepted by all people. (Darun Prathan. 2010: December 31) The faith of people in the community leads the Muslims to be accepted greater in society as well as to play roles and contribute in the community development. Muslims in Thailand have ethnic diversity such as the Muslim Malays, Arab, Indian, Cham, Chin Haw and Pathan. Besides, they play the different social roles in community and civil society. From the field study by collecting the empirical data in the Southern Isan of Thailand, it helps to understand the role of Muslim leadership obviously, especially for Muslim Pathan in Sisaket, Yasothon, Ubon Ratchathani, Buri Ram and Surin Provinces. Muslim Pathan has settled in Thailand during the World War I and II by migration from Pakistan to various areas, such as migration from Myanmar's to the Southern of Thailand and from Malaysia to settle in different regions of Thailand. (Wanahudson Sakhunkhan 2010: December 31) Primarily, the majority of Muslims work as security guards in many places, cowmen, cloth sellers and butchers sold to the community.

...My father came from Pakistan which was formerly located in India. He wanted to work, venture to fate and earn money. Firstly he was a security guard and then became a butcher. After met my mother, who was a Buddhist, he decided to live here and earned living as a butcher. The daily life still had a prayer at mosques on a regular basis. We deeply respect and believe in Allah.. Every Friday, all Muslim nationalities will take part in religious mosques strictly. Therefore, mosque is like a center of religious education...

Chanchai Pathan, Imam, Ubon Ratchathani

The majority of Muslim Pathan immigrants often worked as security guards and butchers. However, currently their ways of lives have been changed to definitely conform to the social context, such as enhancing the economical development by means of food sellers, constructors, farmers, para rubber gardener, cosmetic traders and cloth sellers, etc. Considering the social role of Muslim Pathan, they are in cooperation and coordination inside the community for different development such as being a committee of community development, promoting local tradition and culture, etc. In addition, the Muslim Pathan are prominent in politics. They are always entrusted from the local people and constantly assigned into the political administration bath at local and national level. The said role was formed upon the religious doctrine, which was the heart of Muslim lives. The study process of the Al-Quran Bible is a system of compulsory education that Muslim people must pursue and practice strictly and learn continuously. The role of education is closely correlated with the Islamic doctrine in every context of Muslim society.

Conclusion

Muslim Pathan has migrated from Pakistan during the 1st World War 1, then continuously moved and scattered into all regions of Thailand. The Muslim Pathan leaders are courage in making decisions and helpful to their neighbors. According to the image of community leaders, they have been entrusted to take on the leadership role in the community at anytime.

The role of community leader of the Muslim Pathan contains multi-dimensional characteristics of leadership in economy, social and politic. These leadership characteristics have been fostered under the foundation of Islamic doctrines. These doctrines don't affect the living concept and the way of living practice in case they live with people who have different religion and tradition such as Thai Buddhists and Muslims. In contract, they significantly support, mutually depend on each other like relatives and efficiently promote the development.

Bibliography

- Organizational Committee of *Kutabah* Book, 2006. **Glorified *Kutabah* on the occasion of The Sixtieth Anniversary Celebrations of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne.** Bangkok : Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives of Thailand.
- Chatthip Natsupa. (Editor). 1984. **History of the Thai Economy until 1941.** Bangkok: Thammasat University.
- Chanchai Pathan. (2010: December 31) Imam (religious teacher). Interview.
- Darun Prathan. (2010: December 31) a Former Subdistrict Headman of Rangang Subdistrict. Interview.
- Biyan Prathan. (2011: January 3) a former Subdistrict Headman of Rangang Subdistrict. Interview.
- Prarinya Samapathan (2011: January. 2), a Former Mayor. Buriram Province. Interview.
- Reinforcing Plan of Thai Muslim Health Care. 2004. **The 2000 Thai Muslim Population Census: Whole Kingdom.** no publisher : no date of publication.
- Reinforcing Plan of Thai Muslim Health Care. 2004. **The 2000 Thai Muslim Population Census: Northeast region.** no publisher : no date of publication.
- Bhumibol Adulyadej, Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramintharamaha. 2009. **Father's Teaching:** Processing of His Majesty Royal speech and the Supreme Court regarding the sufficiency economy. Printed No. 8. Bangkok: Bangkok Publisher.
- Manakhun Sukhachok, Imam, Buri Ram (2011: January 2) Imam (religious teacher). Interview.
- Muhammad Suri, (2011: January 2) Imam (religious teacher). Interview.
- Wanahudson Sakhunkhan, (2010: December 31) *Dawah* (Islamic cleric). Interview.
- Wichan Chuchuy. 2010. **Muslim Society in the Northeast.** MA thesis. (Thai studies), Graduate School. Srinakharinwirot University , Maha Sarakham.
- Vithayakorn Chiangkul. 2010. **Science and Art of Leadership in the Modern World.** Bangkok: Sai Than.
- Viroj Pahan. (2011: January 1). Community leader of Mosque Kut Roh Tu Islam, Yasothon. Interview.
- Ismail Khan. (2010 : June 20). Muslim Pathan. Interview.